



New York Mennonite Conference

An area conference of Mennonite Church USA

LIFE

In New York Mennonite Conference

Asking the Big Questions

Gene Miller, Conference Minister

I invite us to wrestle with some of the big questions, like...

Why did God bring our congregation into existence? Listen to those with a lengthy history in your congregation or do some digging into your historical records as you discern this.

What is God doing now? What if we asked for fresh eyes to see how God is at work in our midst? So what does this mean for us as we discern the Mission of God for our congregation in our current context?

And finally, what is God's Mission for our congregation now? How do we live out and demonstrate the Kingdom of God? What message has God called your congregation to embody? What is God calling us to be and to do? I believe it's important to wrestle with these questions before we embark on specific strategies and plans for growth.

Jesus was sent by God into our world; in a similar way, congregations are called, formed and sent by the Spirit of God to engage the local context of that particular part of the world where God has placed us.

Here in New York Mennonite Conference we're on an adventure, a deep missional transformation, to become the people of God who are joyfully sharing good news wherever we are. This journey may lead us to more congregations and healthier congregations. I believe we'll be hearing good reports from across the conference in the years to come. Let's be in prayer together as we listen to voice of the Spirit.

Linda Wright Licensed October 11

Sonya Stauffer-Kurtz, Moderator

NYMC celebrated the licensing of Linda Wright for pastoral ministry at The Jesus Church, Addison, NY on October 11, 2009, recognizing and affirming Linda's call to ministry, a call which she has lived out for some time in her work at the Jesus Church along with her husband, Tim Wright. As Tim pointed out in his introduction to the licensing service, he feels deeply blessed to have Linda as his wife, friend, and co-pastor. Tim has served the Jesus Church for 17 years as pastor, with Linda "with him all the time."

Gene Miller, Conference minister, performed the service of licensing towards ordination, noting "We are acknowledging what God has done, and how God has been using you, Linda." Don Siegrist brought the message, reminding us that "God is at work in the world, as well as in the church. There is no brokenness too big for God to heal. God's will is the reconciliation of all things and all people."

Linda then shared her personal story of moving from a life of brokenness, "on the wrong side of the tracks, considered trash," later involved in drugs and alcohol, feeling Jesus and the enemy start to fight for her soul. At one point she gave her life to the enemy,



Linda and Tim Wright

Photo by Jeremiah Jacobson

but God was not finished with her yet. As Linda's gripping story unfolded, it was clear that God IS in the business of reconciliation, and as Linda reminded us, "God's ways are higher than ours. It's better when you just surrender to God and go along for the ride!"

When not working as co-pastor at the Jesus Church, Linda brings the love of Christ into all her daily relationships as she works as regional manager for the Fairfield Inn, Rochester, and as general manager for the Fairfield Inn, Corning.

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Editor: Sue Klassen <sueklassen@gmail.com>

Congregational News Editor: Kirk House <nymclife@yahoo.com>

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Congregational News

Edited by Kirk House

Pleasant Valley: Assisting Unemployed

With Steuben County's unemployment rate the highest in the state outside the five boroughs of New York City, Pleasant Valley is fighting hunger in its community. PV gave \$500 to a Hammondsport Methodist program to provide Thanksgiving dinners for those in need within ten miles of the village. Pleasant Valley makes a monetary donation to the Catholic Charities food pantry in Bath each quarter, and occasional donations to the Hammondsport Loaves and Fishes food pantry. Congregational member Nelson Marvin collects a food donation weekly from Tops in Bath, and delivers it to Catholic Charities.

Alden: Thanksgiving Food Drive

Alden Mennonite is collecting dry, non-perishable foods for the Thanksgiving dinner at Seneca Gospel Mission.

Clarence Center-Akron: Tagless Rummage "Sale"

Clarence Center-Akron Mennonite Church is holding a tagless rummage "sale" on Sat., Nov. 7. There will be no marked prices on any of the items, and monetary donations to MCC's "Food For All" campaign are being gratefully accepted. The youth are holding a bake "sale" (no marked prices) to benefit their winter camping trip.

Lowville: Homeschool Classes

Lowville Mennonite hosts some 50 homeschoolers every Monday for Kingdom Bound Music and Art School. Music classes include recorder, a Christmas musical, choir, hand bells, piano, Suzuki violin, and Music 'N' Motion. Art classes and a Mom's Cafe add to the outreach, which among other things is establishing ties with families looking for church homes.

Lowville: Missions Efforts

In September the Faithful Workers at Lowville received or finished nine AIDS kits, ten baby layettes, one double quilt, five 60 x 80 quilts, and five knitted teddy bears. They collected \$475 for AIDS kits and committed \$285 to Rosedale Mennonite Missions for bedroom linens in their new international center.

Gone But Not Forgotten

Lowville: Anna Mae Roes, Mary Christina Yancey Swartzentruber
Pleasant Valley: Gladys Moshier

David Boshart at Leadership Seminar, Feb. 5-7

David Boshart, Mission Strategist for church planting in the Central Plains Mennonite Conference, will be our key speaker at our annual Leadership Seminar, February 5-7, 2010, at Rochester Area Mennonite Fellowship.

Using 21st century case studies of church planting, David will explore the "Three Core Commitments: Mission at the Center of Our Community's Story"

David described these three commitments as follows:

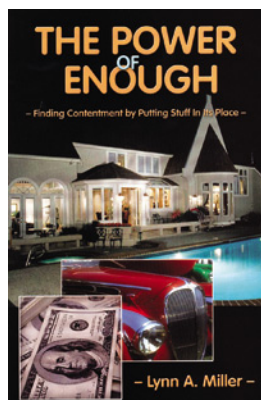
1. Jesus loves me this I know: Ways Mennonites Discern what is True
2. The Farmer's Table: Hospitality in Three Dimensions
3. Building up the Temple: Worship and Community in a MySpace Culture

The case studies about actual church planting situations are an important part of the weekend's learnings.

Save the date, and look here for more details in December.

Gift Ideas: Books that Change Lives

Sue Klassen



At Christmas, birthdays, weddings, and "just because," I find joy in giving books that have touched me.

Lynn Miller's *The Power of Enough: Finding Contentment by Putting Stuff In Its Place* is one I've given frequently. It's short, fun, and powerful, and costs just \$10. In a culture that promotes the lust for more, what better gift can I give than the gift of contentment and joy with enough?

The Power of Enough is also available on CD, for \$25.

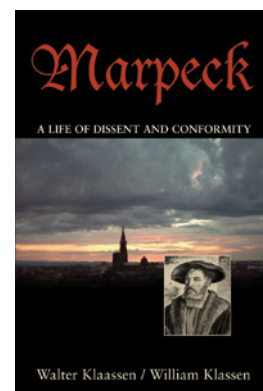


Marpeck: A Life of Dissent and Conformity, tells the story of Pilgrim Marpeck. During the 16th century's tumultuous years of religious reformation and revolution, Marpeck consistently but discreetly stood up to the ruling powers, calling for freedom of religion and separation of church and state. Walter Klaassen and William Klassen, editors of *The Writings of Pilgrim Marpeck*, have deeply mined Marpeck's writing and dialogue with other Reformation leaders. They place his life, work, and theology in the context of his violent, changing times. This thorough biography shows how Marpeck, perhaps more than any other early Anabaptist figure, helped lay the theoretical and practical foundations of the believers church. Adapted from <http://store.mpn.net/productdetails.cfm?PC=834>

Victor, my husband, is in the midst of reading *Marpeck*—Marpeck has just left everything—possessions, high position, daughter, community—to become an Anabaptist. Victor described Marpeck as "living with the tension of a materially comfortable life and an uncomfortable conscience" as he served as an official of the state that was persecuting Anabaptists.

Victor is related to both the authors—William Klassen is his dad's brother, and Walter Klaassen is related through his mother's side. But the book comes with high commendations beyond his kin-folk.

Available at www.mpn.net for \$32.99.



Save the Dates:

Leadership Seminar: February 5-7, 2010, RAMF
Celebration 2010: September 17-19, 2010, Penn-York Camp