

## In New York Mennonite Conference

### Mennonite Women Gathered on October 13

Sharon Miller

October's Fall Meeting held much truth and hope. Encouragement from our speaker came through clearly. Barbara Borntreger's hope-filled attitude is evidence of the Lord working His grace in her heart and mind.

A teacher by profession, she is a good communicator. As a mother who had a son die six years ago, she is a compassionate sister in Christ, "Be grace-givers to each other."



Barbara Borntreger exuded strength and joy forged in loss



Sorting Peeps skit illustrated God's unconditional love

One banner in the room said, "Lies are weeds in the garden of your mind." Massive doses of weed killer are required at times. Scripture truth is what's needed in our minds to kill the weeds of lies.

In the unfairness of life and the hard things we go through, we can get stuck in our thinking. God will help us get unstuck and His truths from Scripture truly are life-giving.



"Peter" shares his experience of walking on the water (and sinking)



Over 50 women (below) enjoyed the retreat led by Michelle Thomas (above)



### \$7500 Matching Grant Launched

Join in the work God is doing through Tadelech and Ephraim Matewos and the Bethsaida Evangelical Fellowship. Individuals in NYMC, tapped by Milton Zehr, have pledged \$7500 towards a matching grant for this work. Milton invites congregations, individuals and businesses to contribute generously towards this work. Your contributions will be matched dollar for dollar. In order to meet our NYMC commitment to support Tadelech and Ephraim until their immigration status allows them to work for payment, we need to raise \$20,000

this year. The matching grant initiative is a great start.

Ephraim is now working from his new office in RAMF's building full time. He is available to meet with people as needed. Bible studies are going well. We pray for God's continued guidance as they reach out to meet the needs of a hurting world.

Send contributions to our bookkeeper, John Buckwalter, 5744 East Valley Road, Alfred Station, NY 14803. Make checks payable to NYMC, designated for Bethsaida Matching Grant.

### Advent Resources and the Christian Year

Benjamin Lipscomb

In a few weeks, the traditional church year begins again, with the season of Advent. Serious, thoughtful observance of Advent, and of the church year as a whole, has been on the rise in many denominations. So, too, in MC USA. Two months ago, Brethren Press published the second (and final) supplement to the blue hymnal. While the first supplement, *Sing the Journey*, was organized along the same lines as the

hymnal itself—the elements of individual worship services (e.g. gathering, footwashing) and aspects of Christian experience (e.g. confessing and reconciling)—*Sing the Story* is organized around the seasons of the church year. MC USA is not being trendy in highlighting this ancient Christian tradition. It makes especially good sense

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## November 2007

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# News from Conference Congregations

Editor: Kirk House

## Yorks Corners: Care Groups

Yorks Corners congregation is busy with care groups—weekly small gatherings in different settings for different purposes.

Matt Havens leads the Young Adults Care Group in a study of Philippians and Ephesians.

Frank Engle leads a Care Group studying *An Overview of the New Testament* by John Malseen.

Mike Smith's Care Group is studying *Proverbs and Parables*.

Members of the Men's Care Group take turns leading discussions of *15 Minutes Alone With God for Men* by Bob Barnes.

Linda Calcote and Karen Reed are leading the Genesee Care Group through *Breakaway* by Andy Stanley.

The Ladies' Care Group is studying the book of Ephesians.

Catherine Seebald leads a Care Group in studying *9 Things You Simply Must Do to Succeed in Love and Life* by Dr. Henry Cloud.

## Watertown: Commissioning Leaders

Terry Zehr

On Sunday October 14th, Watertown Mennonite Church commissioned Lois Bast, Judy Shean, and Jason Best to congregational leadership as elders. This

## "You People Should Have a Place to Work From" Corning's Fellowship Grew from Disaster

In June of 1972 Hurricane Agnes killed 23 people in and around Corning, and caused millions of dollars in property damage.

A few days later the first of hundreds of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) volunteers arrived from Canada and the U.S.; by December, they had put in 9,600 volunteer hours. MDS continued working in Corning through 1974.

This volunteer work sparked considerable interest in the community. MDS workers and an increasing number of local people began meeting in the community room of the Erwin Bank.

In 1974 the emerging church chose their first pastor and held their first baptism.

is a significant step forward for us as we anticipate the gifts that will be added to our leadership team. Carolyn Barkley steps out of leadership after many years of faithful, strong service to our church, with our gratitude.

## Harris Hill: Discernment

Joe Haines

Harris Hill Mennonite Church has engaged the services of Mark Vincent from Design for Ministry to help us assess our life together and direction for the future. Many will recognize Mark's name from the Giving Project. He met with congregational leadership and any who wanted to attend for a three-hour session on Monday, October 22. We are praying that the Holy Spirit will guide him and give us light on our path. In the meantime, we are grateful for blessings—a recent baptism, continued faithfulness of the body of Christ here, while we miss a couple and a single man who are moving out-of-state.

## Pleasant Valley: Volunteer

Levi Weaver of Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church spent two weeks volunteering at Victory Bible Camp, a non-denominational ministry in a glacial area about a hundred miles northeast of Anchorage, Alaska. Levi's particular project was to work with a team refurbishing a cabin structure.

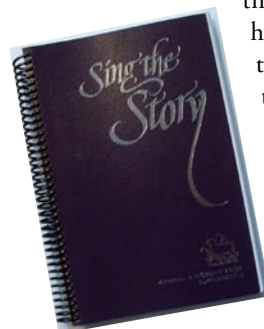
By 1978 the fellowship "multiplied" and formed two congregations—one of which was Community Mennonite Fellowship—Corning.

In 1981 local businessman John Eberenz donated property on Park Avenue to the fellowship. "After the flood," Eberenz said, "every Mennonite this side of the Mississippi was here to help us out. You people should have a place to work from so you can do more now." In November 1986 Community Mennonite Fellowship had a service of celebration and thanks to God for their new building at 290 Park Avenue. *Adapted from the Community Mennonite Fellowship web site.*

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for Mennonites, with our Christ-centered theology, to appropriate this observance.

The pattern of the church year is the pattern of God's action in Christ, and so



the pattern of all history. It begins in the final weeks of the calendar year, with four weeks of reflection on the Messianic hopes of the Old Testament writers. The Advent

symbolism of candles (at a dark time of year) is appropriate to a people living in darkness, longing for light to dawn. Next come the twelve days of Christmas, celebrating Christ's incarnation.

After Christmas, Epiphany (literally, "showing forth"), a season of reflecting on Christ's work of teaching and healing, showing himself to the people. Then Lent, familiar



to us (whether or not we've typically celebrated it) as a time to reflect on Christ's suffering and death. Then Easter. Then Pentecost, and the birth of the church. Finally, we come to the longest season, the season we're still in, called simply "Ordinary Time." It is the season of the church, and of the rest of history, as we work and pray and wait for Christ to return—as we wait (at every level) for another Advent.

There are excellent resources for planning Advent services in the latest issue of *Leader*. It is an important season, especially for a people that proclaims a better way to a frequently self-destructive culture. How many of us have experienced the weeks before Christmas as exhausting? If we observe Advent, they don't have to be. If we delay turning on the lights and dwell in darkness awhile, if we delay our celebrations and reflect awhile on the brokenness of the world, then we can experience Christmas, truly, as an arrival. Which is to say, we can experience it for what it was.