



New York Mennonite Conference

An area conference of Mennonite Church USA

LIFE

In New York Mennonite Conference

Leadership Seminar Equips and Inspires

Sue Klassen

Over fifty people participated in the February 1st-3rd Leadership Seminar at Clarence-Akron Mennonite Church—an affirmation of our change from meeting at Delta Lake retreat center. Anne Siegrist of Independence Mennonite Church voiced what many of us felt: “The idea of having Leadership Seminar in one of our churches and having local people host us overnight was inspired. An added feature this year was the Saturday evening concert, which gave us a chance to relax for a few hours. It was a great weekend.”

Not only did we meet “in-house,” but we also tapped “in-house” speakers to speak on our theme, “I will build my church (Matthew 16:18): Equipping and inspiring congregations for growth.” What a wealth of input and stories our speakers provided! (Read “Kid’s Café” overleaf—one of the missional stories.)

I asked several people to share something they were taking away from the weekend:

“Loving people is what we do,” from Ken Landis’ talk. Six words to model fellowship after.

Will Schrock, CCAM

Visiting over lunch



Photos by Sue Klassen

I appreciated the fact that the “stranger” that we are to engage is made of the same stuff we are, and the friendships that we form are to be genuine, they are not to be viewed as just possible conversions. Salvation is of the Lord, we are simply to bear witness and love them.

Richard Burrors, Yorks Corners



Participants in “Leadership Needs” seminar

My take away is Terry’s story about Joe [a brilliant, fear-filled, self-sufficient unbeliever who came to faith through many

months of lengthy conversations with Terry Zehr]. I would that God would give us many more stories like this to share in our conference.

Don Siegrist, Independence

Praying “What is your will, God?” “What are you doing?” can make our prayers, witness and outreach more effective. We can come alongside Jesus, be

Saturday evening Bluegrass concert



co-laborers with Christ.

Joanna Clark, Yorks Corners

The church should be history-makers, not history-stoppers. History-stoppers are totally enmeshed with a culture that doesn’t

follow God. History-makers stand on the fringe of society shouting into the center. Our churches are enmeshed with our culture. We need to reclaim our distinctive voice.

Nate Barker, New Breman



Kristin Riemer of CCAM with youngest attendee

Many thanks to Leadership Commission members Gene Miller, Sonya Stauffer, Phil Martin, and LeRoy Mast for their prayerful planning of the weekend.

“Engaging the Stranger” panel



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News from Conference Congregations

Editor: Kirk House

Corning: Kids' Café

Each Wednesday afternoon at the Mennonite church in Corning a school bus disgorges 15-20 students who run into the building for a Middle School Café. Everyone gets a snack and time for socializing, then highschoolers from the church lead group games like ping-pong pandemonium. In the middle of it all, Margie Seiderman, a magnet Mom and instigator of the café, asks these kids—many who have never been in a church before—to give her five minutes as she talks with them. One day they discussed famous people they know, what made them famous, and why Jesus is on the list. The next 20 minutes they came up with a TV show, “Amazing Things Jesus Did.” Another day Margie talked about how Jesus tells us to live; then they produced commercials showing life before Jesus and after Jesus. The kids spend the rest of their time in the café doing homework, learning a craft, reading, or just sitting and talking. As the afternoon ends there might be a flurry of kids making phone calls to their parents, asking if they can stay for the church’s Wednesday evening soup and bread supper. Sometimes not only the kids but also parents and siblings eat and build relationships with church folks who have gathered for the three small groups which meet that evening. We at Community Mennonite Fellowship pray that long-lasting relationships—not only with us but also with the Lord—will be built.



From Tragedy to Safety Measures

On March 2, 2007 a charter bus carrying the Bluffton University baseball team tumbled off of an overpass in Atlanta Georgia, killing five of the players and the bus driver and his wife. In response to this tragedy and many others, two senators have introduced a bill to improve the safety of motor coaches, including seat belts, increased roof strength, safety glazing of the windows, and improved fire prevention.

Information on both this bill and the Bluffton students can be found at www.motorcoachsafetynow.com. Consider taking one of the actions outlined there, such as signing a petition or writing a letter.

Let us join in solidarity with Bluffton University’s grieving families and support this initiative.

Corning Students on EMU Dean’s List

Three students from Community Mennonite Fellowship of Corning were named to the fall 2007 Dean’s List at Eastern Mennonite University.

Heidi B. Glaesemann, a first-year nursing major, is the daughter of Scott and Sharon Glaesemann.

Daniel Miller, a sophomore liberal arts major, and Darrel Miller, a sophomore undeclared major, are sons of Harold and Karen Miller.

Women’s Retreat

All women are invited to “Women in Conversation: Daring To Let Your Spirits Soar” retreat. Join speaker Carolyn Holderrad Heggen for a retreat designed to explore “women’s unique way of experiencing the Divine.” Weekend includes workshops, worship, pampering and fellowship!

When: April 11-13, 2008 at Laurelville.

To register, E-mail info@Laurelville.org, call 800-839-1021, or go to: www.Laurelville.org/Program/WIC.html. Register

early by March 1 for a \$10 discount. Registration deadline is March 28.

Yorks Corners: Building Project Revived

Several large offerings have come in for the building project. We applied \$7,000 to the balance of our loan, leaving a balance in the building fund of over \$11,000. The Quarterly Business Meeting agreed that Phase II of the building project should begin. Although we have received some large special offerings, our monthly building fund offering has not been enough to make the monthly loan payment. We agreed that building will resume and continue as long as funds are available, while maintaining a balance in the building fund to cover three monthly loan payments. The next step in the building plan is to complete the new office and library. The platform will then be removed from the Fellowship Room (the old sanctuary). These steps are both necessary to allow us to add the handicap accessible rest rooms. The cost of the next phase of the building program will be reduced by volunteer labor for as much of the work as possible. We have seen God’s blessing as we have worked together to build the new sanctuary and the new nursery.

Lowville: Trustee Time

Trustees at Lowville (and in most other churches) have been extremely busy in the past few years. The Lowville team’s accomplishments include: renovating the sanctuary with new lights, new paint, new pull-down screen, and new sound system; a handicap-accessible restroom; new restroom tiles; new paint and new closets in the basement; a new elevator; new paint for one entrance; new vents and roof on the main building; new bookshelves; and a computer desk. Kevin Roggie, Carl Zehr, Jared Zehr, and Bob Widrick have spearheaded this work.

Pleasant Valley: Mortgage Paid

With sale of the original church property, Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church is happy to have paid off the mortgage on the new property.

Save the Dates:

Delegate Assembly ☞ April 5, 2008
in Seneca Falls, NY

Peace Conference ☞ April 11–12, 2008
in Washington DC

Women’s Retreat ☞ April 11–13, 2008
at Laurelville Retreat Center