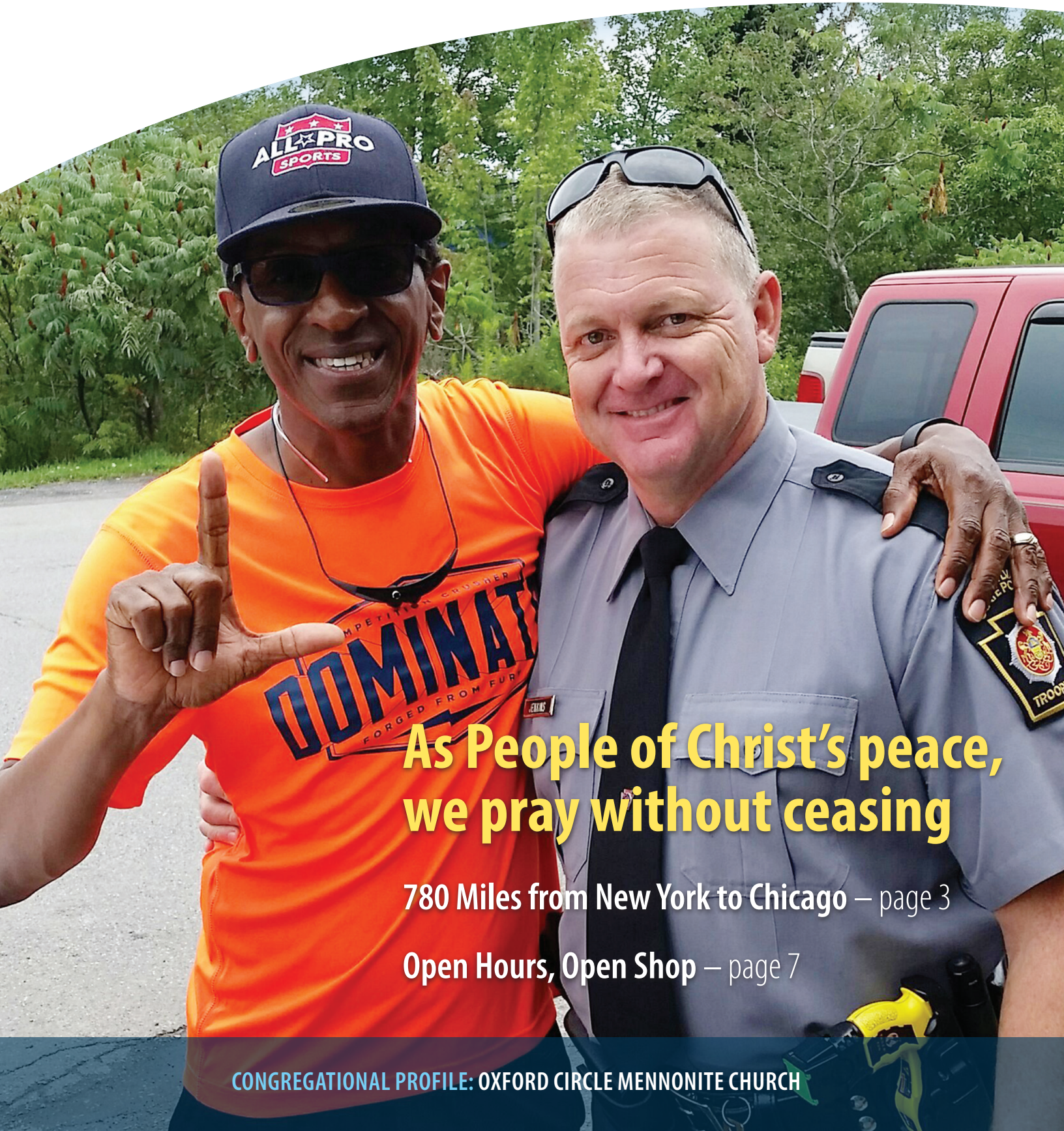




LANCASTER MENNONITE CONFERENCE

Shalom NEWS

JANUARY – MARCH 2017



**As People of Christ's peace,
we pray without ceasing**

780 Miles from New York to Chicago — page 3

Open Hours, Open Shop — page 7

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE: OXFORD CIRCLE MENNONITE CHURCH

EDITORIAL



BY BRINTON L. RUTHERFORD

When *2020 Vision: We See New Life* emerged back in 2010, the hope was for every congregation over the next ten years to seek God's calling for mission in their local neighborhoods. *Shalom News* continues to tell the stories of these adventures toward New Life. This current issue again reflects on the work of several congregations who discovered ways the Spirit was already at work and then partnered with God in that work. These stories are not offered to readers in order to duplicate the practices. Rather they demonstrate how congregations sought God and discovered his activity. That process – seeking and discovering – is the essence of 2020 Vision, not the ministry that emerges. As a consequence, the forms ministry takes in any particular congregation looks very different from other congregations.

Celebration of Church Life in March 2017 will tell six main stories in plenary sessions and thirty more stories in a workshop setting.

In a similar vein, Celebration of Church Life in March 2017 will tell six main stories in plenary sessions and thirty more stories in a workshop setting. You will learn about five church multiplication networks that started thirty faith communities in ten years. You will hear the story of a congregation that started a youth preaching school to expose young people to the art of preaching. Storytellers will describe a year-long journey of "Courageous Hospitality," a pastor's experience of "chaotic places" as he heard and responded to God's call, and the story of ministry in Philadelphia nail salons that regularly introduces Jesus to people. And, while many readers know about STEP, the pastoral training program for LMC, some STEP stories will give an inside look at training leaders. Don't miss this annual March gathering. ■

Brinton Rutherford is an LMC staff member who works at missional Anabaptist identity, core values, and leadership development. He attends Willow Street Mennonite Church in Willow Street, Pa.



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ON THE COVER: Reverend Al Taylor, pastor at Infinity Mennonite Church, received help mapping part of his 780 mile prayer walk by Pennsylvania State Trooper Eugene Jenkins. Photo provided by Al Taylor.

780 Miles from New York to Chicago

A Pastor's Prayer Walk is Full of Surprises, Hope, and Hospitality

BY REVEREND AL TAYLOR

In 2008, New York City churches began a men's prayer walk in the Polo Grounds, a public housing complex in Harlem. After four homicides in a 30-day period, the objective was to walk into the roughest and most dangerous communities where gun violence and the death of young black teens and children occurred at alarming rates. Since the start of the Polo Grounds prayer walk, the crime rate has dropped, and it was nearly four years before another murder occurred there.

During the formative years of the Polo Grounds prayer walk, former NYPD Commissioner, Ray Kelly, told me about the escalating violence in Chicago. Currently, Chicago has broken its own record for the most murders in a year, exceeding well over 700 to date (dnainfo.com/chicago/2016-chicago-murders/). Nearly 5000 people sustained injuries in 2016. To me, the mission became clear: walk 780 miles from New York to Chicago, praying for people and with people along the route.

The purpose of the walk was to listen, reach out to, and pray with people in need of comfort and liberation, letting them know they matter. Some communities face ongoing individual and collective struggles. By walking through these communities, we wanted to communicate hope and solidarity to all we met. The simple act of holding a neighbor's hand or standing in solitude at a place of unrest showed to others that we are human, we are humane, and we are here. The walk invited the country to corporately reach, touch, and impact the heart of humanity through the platform of prayer walking. Our goal was to encourage and inspire hope for peace.

As preparation, I began several months of training with staff, coworkers, and friends. We averaged 20 miles a day three to four times a week. Although the Chicago walk was set, resources were limited. I hit a low point two weeks before the launch date. Finances were far short of the estimated cost. I recall feeling overwhelmed. I questioned whether I had really heard from

The author (shown in bright yellow below) was impacted by the people and places he encountered during his prayer walk. Photos provided by the author.



The purpose of the walk was to listen, reach out to, and pray with people in need of comfort and liberation, letting them know they matter.

God. My focus shifted from the task, to all the things needed. What was I thinking? While spiraling downward, I received a call from my wife. She shared something God placed in her heart: "God will take you through this and meet your every need." I immediately sensed God's presence and peace. I let go of my plans and followed God's presence.

The Chicago prayer walk began at the United Nations on Sunday, August 7. At the Church of the Covenant, Rev. Dr.



Cornell Edmonds and his congregation provided a special prayer send-off. Then my congregation, Infinity Mennonite Church of Harlem, gave us another celebratory send-off when we passed their location.

From Morristown, New Jersey, to Allentown, Pennsylvania, we received a positive reception among these rural communities that was nothing like the typical nightly news. Pennsylvania State Trooper Eugene Jenkins, nicknamed Mean Jean, met us at a gas station. He helped us map the next leg of our walk. As we parted, Jenkins shared that if we needed anything, we could stop at any trooper bunker, get refreshments, and use the facilities. "If you encounter any problems," he offered, "ask for me." The police officers in the seven states we crossed treated us with courtesy and respect.

One hot morning ten miles from the Ohio border, we encountered three young men preparing to pour a concrete driveway. I exchanged greetings with one of them who asked where we were going. When I told him we were walking from New York City to Chicago, he immediately brought the other workers into the conversation. One offered us cold water, another chips and fresh baked brownies. Fran, the homeowner who had hired them,

God shattered my expectations of mistreatment even as I prayed for and with others.

soon entered the conversation. We shared food and fellowship right there along the driveway. Fran assured us that God had encouraged her and that God would meet our needs.

A few miles farther along, I met a couple who thought we were lost. I shared what we were doing and mentioned meeting their neighbor, Fran. It was during that conversation that I first began to weep uncontrollably. The weeping occurred daily for nearly a week as we walked in Ohio. We experienced the outpouring of love from strangers all along the way. While sitting in a diner, we met John, a truck driver. He was surprised to learn that I was a Mennonite pastor on a prayer walk from New York City to Chicago. John insisted on paying for our meal.

On another occasion, a motorist made a U-turn when he saw us walking along the road and offered us a lift. He reached in his wallet and put \$20 in my hand. After thanking him, we turned to begin walking when another man jumped from his vehicle and put \$50 in my hand to purchase meals for the team that evening.

Mr. Knight stopped us on a rural road by a cornfield in Ohio because he thought we were stranded. When he heard our story, he insisted we stop at his place to rest and have some refresh-

ments. We rested and chatted about Mr. Knight's passion to serve inner city youth in Cleveland, 45 minutes from his home. We talked about bringing inner city kids to rural communities such as his. Before leaving, he gave us fresh vegetables from his garden.

In Elkhart, Indiana, I met a mother, her daughter, and a friend sitting on the porch of their home. I introduced myself and told them about our walk to Chicago. I learned of the drug-fueled crime in the area. When we offered to pray for them, the mother asked us to pray for her three-month-old grandson. She hurried into the house and returned with a handsome bundle of joy, and we prayed.

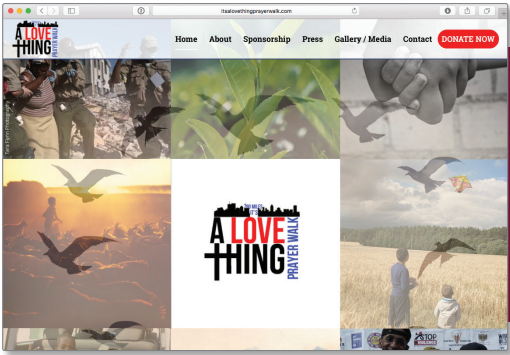
In God's timing, we arrived in Chicago on "Pray Chicago Day" when churches from around the city and neighboring communities come together to pray for the city. Denominations and political affiliations take a back seat on this day. The last mile from downtown Chicago to the Moody Bible Institute was awesome. Nearly 100 saints gathered there in prayer.

As an African-American, I began the journey with my own prejudices and expectations of treatment by rural, predominantly Caucasian communities. As God poured out love to me through the kindness of

strangers, God revealed the reason for my tears. God shattered my expectations of mistreatment even as I prayed for and with others.

I look forward to trekking across the country in the summer of 2017. Imagine rural America and urban America sharing gardening and farming ideas and experiences. **Tell us how you creatively share the gospel. Post a message on the LMC Facebook page or send me a message at ItsALoveThingAlways@gmail.com.**

Reverend Al Taylor is the lead pastor at Infinity Mennonite Church.



SEE MORE ONLINE
To learn more about Reverend Al Taylor's prayer walk, visit the prayer walk website at itsalovethingprayerwalk.com

1200 kilómetros de Nueva York a Chicago

POR AL TAYLOR (traducido por Andrés Prins)

En 2008, unas iglesias de la ciudad de Nueva York empezaron una caminata de oración para hombres en Polo Grounds, un complejo de viviendas públicas de Harlem. Después de sufrir cuatro homicidios en un periodo de 30 días, la meta era personarse en las comunidades más bravas y peligrosas donde con alarmante frecuencia se daban casos de violencia armada y la muerte de niños y adolescentes negros. Desde el comienzo de la caminata de oración de Polo Grounds, el índice de criminalidad ha bajado, y pasaron casi cuatro años hasta que hubo otro homicidio allí.

Durante los años iniciales de la caminata de oración de Polo Grounds, el ex-comisario del Departamento de Policía de Nueva York, Ray Kelly, me contó de la creciente violencia en Chicago. Actualmente Chicago ha roto su propio récord de homicidios por año, con más de 700 en lo que va del 2016 (dnainfo.com/chicago/2016-chicago-murders/). Cerca de 5000 personas sufrieron lesiones en el año 2016. Para mí la misión se me hizo cristalina: caminar 1200 kilómetros desde Nueva York hasta Chicago, orando por y con las personas en el camino.

El propósito de la caminata era escuchar, extender la mano y orar con personas que necesitaban consuelo y liberación, haciéndoles saber que importaban. Algunas comunidades enfrentan luchas individuales y colectivas. Al caminar por estas comunidades, queríamos comunicar esperanza y solidaridad a todos los que nos encontramos. El simple hecho de sostener la mano de un vecino o de estar en soledad en un lugar de agitación mostró a otros que somos humanos y que estamos aquí. La caminata invitó al país a alcanzar corporalmente, tocar e impactar el corazón de la humanidad a través de la plataforma caminando en oración. Nuestro objetivo era animar e inspirar esperanza para la paz.

Para prepararme, comencé varios meses de entrenamiento con empleados, colaboradores y amigos. Hacíamos un promedio de 30 kilómetros por día tres a cuatro veces por semana. Aunque la caminata a Chicago ya estaba decidida, contábamos con limitados recursos. Dos semanas antes de la partida, sufrí un fuerte bajón. Las finanzas distaban mucho del costo estimado. Recuerdo haberme sentido totalmente abrumado. Me cuestioné si realmente había escuchado a Dios. Mi enfoque se desplazó de la tarea a las carencias. ¿Qué era lo que yo había estado pensando? Hundiéndome más y más en mi desesperación, recibí una llamada de mi esposa. Me compartió algo que Dios había colocado en su corazón: “Dios estará contigo y suplirá toda tu necesidad”. En seguida sentí la presencia y la paz de Dios. Solté mis planes y seguí Su presencia.

La caminata de oración a Chicago partió desde las Naciones Unidas el domingo 7 de agosto. En la Iglesia “The Covenant” (El Pacto) el Reverendo Doctor Cornell Edmonds y su congregación nos dieron una preciosa despedida de oración. Luego mi congregación, la Iglesia Menonita “Infinity” (Infinidad) de Harlem, nos hizo otra celebración de despedida cuando pasamos por el vecindario.

Desde Morristown, Nueva Jersey, hasta Allentown, Pensilvania, las comunidades rurales nos dieron una recepción positiva, nada parecida a lo que se suele ver en los noticieros. El policía estatal Eugene Jenkins, apodado “Mean Jean”, se topó con nosotros en una gasolinera. Nos ayudó a planear el próximo tramo de nuestra caminata. Cuando ya nos íbamos, Jenkins nos dijo que si llegáramos a necesitar cualquier cosa podíamos parar en cualquier refugio policial para descansar y refrescarnos, o si llegáramos a tener cualquier problema, que preguntáramos por él. En los siete estados que atravesamos los agentes de policía nos trataron siempre con amabilidad y respeto.

Una mañana muy calurosa a unos 15 kilómetros de la frontera de Ohio, nos

encontramos con tres hombres preparándose para verter hormigón para una entrada de autos. Saludé a uno de ellos quien me preguntó qué hacíamos. Cuando le conté que estábamos caminando de Nueva York a Chicago, inmediatamente quiso incluir a los otros trabajadores en la conversación. Uno de ellos nos ofreció agua, otro papas fritas y galletas recién salidas del horno. Fran, la dueña de casa que los había contratado, pronto también se incorporó a la conversación. Compartimos comida y confraternizamos allí junto a la entrada. Fran nos aseguró que Dios la había animado y que él supliría nuestras necesidades.

Unos kilómetros más adelante me encontré con una pareja que creyó que estábamos perdidos. Les expliqué lo que hacíamos, mencionando que habíamos conocido a su vecina, Fran. Fue durante esa conversación que por primera vez empecé a llorar desconsoladamente. El llanto me sucedía cada día durante casi una semana atravesando Ohio. Experimentamos una efusión de amor por parte de personas desconocidas por todo el camino. Sentados en una cafetería, conocimos a John, un camionero. Le sorprendió enterarse que yo era pastor menonita realizando una caminata de oración desde Nueva York a Chicago. John insistió en pagar nuestra cuenta.

En otra ocasión, un motorista se dio un giro de 180 grados cuando nos vio caminando por la ruta y ofreció llevarnos. Sacó \$20 de su billetera y me los puso en la mano. Tras agradecerle y retomar nuestro camino otro señor se bajó de su vehículo y me dio \$50 para comprar la cena para el equipo esa noche.

El Sr. Knight nos paró sobre un camino rural junto a un maizal en Ohio porque pensó que estábamos varados. Cuando escuchó nuestra historia, insistió que nos detuviéramos en su casa para reposar un poco y beber refrescos. Mientras descansamos el Sr. Knight nos habló de su pasión por servir a los jóvenes urbanos de Cleveland, a 45 minutos de su domicilio. Conversamos sobre traer a chicos de la ciudad a comunidades como la suya. Antes de retirarnos, nos regaló verduras frescas de su huerta.

En Elkhart, Indiana, conocí a una madre, a su hija y a una amiga sentadas en el porche de su casa. Me presenté y les conté de nuestra caminata a Chicago. Me enteré de la criminalidad provocada por las drogas en esa zona. Cuando ofrecimos orar por ellas, la madre pidió que orásemos por su nieto de tres meses. Se metió rápidamente en la casa, volviendo con un hermoso y vivaz bebé, y oramos.

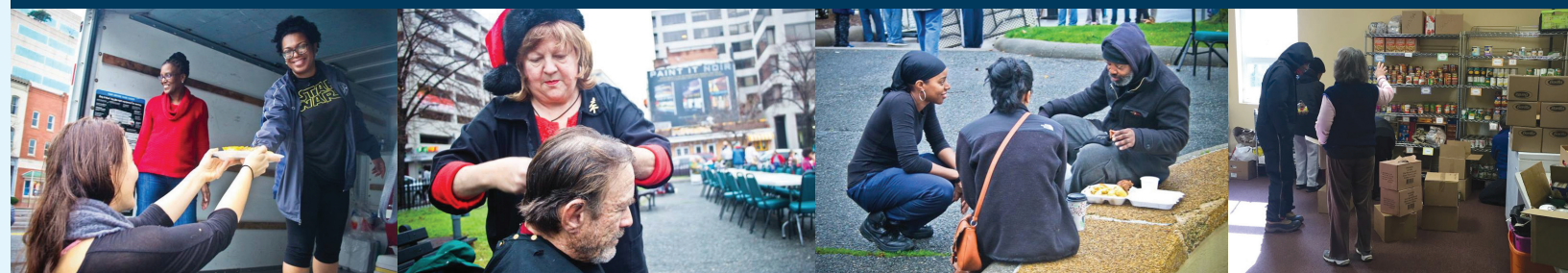
En el “Kairos” de Dios, llegamos a Chicago justo en el Día de Oración por Chicago cuando iglesias de toda la ciudad y de comunidades vecinas se juntan para orar por esta metrópolis. Las diferencias denominacionales y políticas pasan a un segundo plano ese día. La última milla desde el centro de Chicago hasta el Instituto Bíblico Moody fue tremenda. Casi cien hombres y mujeres de Dios se unieron allí en oración.

Como afroamericano, comencé este viaje con mis propios prejuicios y expectativas del trato que recibiría de las comunidades rurales predominantemente blancas. A medida que Dios me fue prodigando su amor a través de personas desconocidas, también me fue revelando la razón de mis lágrimas. Mientras más yo oraba por y con otros, más Dios hacía añicos mis expectativas de maltrato.

¡No puedo esperar para atravesar el país a pie en el verano del 2017! ¡Imagínate la América rural y la urbana intercambiando ideas y experiencias de jardinería y agricultura! Cuéntanos las formas creativas en que tú compartes el evangelio. Publica un mensaje en el Facebook de la Conferencia Menonita de Lancaster o envíame un email a ItsALoveThingAlways@gmail.com. ■

Al Taylor es el pastor principal de la Iglesia Menonita “Infinity”.

OPEN HOURS, OPEN SHOP



BY AKEIA HADDOX-ROSSITER AND JAYE LINDO

If you visit Capital Christian Fellowship (CCF) in Lanham, Maryland, on a Thursday afternoon, you may think it is an unusual time for church. Cars begin arriving around 1:30 p.m., but they do not stop at the main entrance to the lobby. Instead, they stop at the far side of the church at a spot called “Janet’s Garden.” The people have gathered to visit an “Open Hours, Open Shop” food pantry hosted by the partners of CCF.

For years, the church has collaborated with both non-profit and governmental agencies to help provide food through small groups and Thanksgiving projects to those in need. In 2014, this growing and diverse church of over 30 nationalities took a step of faith. In partnership with the Capital Area Food Bank, CCF created a simple food pantry that responded to the needs of the community. “We began with only three families visiting each week, and we were a bit discouraged,” says Lead Pastor Glenn Kauffman. “We had a big heart to reach our community, but we were making only a small impact. We knew that God had called us to serve in this way. So we expanded our capacity by bringing on more volunteers, and God began to bring people.”

The church strives to respect the dignity of each person made in the image of God. They allow people to select food from shelves instead of giving them a preselected box of food. They shop at no cost. The CCF Food Pantry not only provides families with a few days of food, but also offers prayer for them. At CCF, people know they are cared for. Today “Open Hours, Open Shop” serves more than 180 families with food, prayer, and discipleship classes.

1 Peter 4:8-10 says, “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” Serving the community in this way blesses the volunteers of the CCF Food Pantry.

A guest’s request for prayer or counseling generates excitement. Those serving jump at the opportunity to invite people into the ministries of CCF. These include the Wednesday evening

dinner, discipleship classes, a vibrant and well-attended Basketball & Bible Study, English as a Second Language class, and Sunday worship service. Ronnie Patillo and Amber Straughn, coordinators of the pantry, along with the pastoral staff welcome guests to serve in the pantry. Patillo and Straughn support the spiritual growth of all those who interact with the pantry.

CCF considers outreach a discipleship principle. Outreach includes service, hospitality, and evangelism, all sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. As with the pantry and the basketball ministry, the church reaches out to people and brings people in to connect them to the body of Christ. We desire to share life with those in our immediate community, especially at holidays. In November, CCF invited the ESL classes to share Thanksgiving. Over 50 people gave thanks to the Lord together. For the sixth year, the entire congregation traveled to downtown Washington, D.C., on Christmas day to share a meal and to worship with those sleeping on the street. This extension of the outreach ministry to the homeless touches our most forgotten neighbors.

These ministries yield fruit in growing of disciples and in baptisms, both within and without the church building. Reaching out; connecting hearts to Jesus; giving of time, treasure, and talent; and serving with hospitality make up the foundation of outreach at Capital Christian Fellowship. CCF encourages those who partner in ministry to use their gifts and burdens to draw in people and to introduce them to Jesus. This practice has become a part of our DNA. We walk in expectation of how the Lord will grow and expand His church through these heart ministries of Capital Christian Fellowship. For more information on the ministry at Capital Christian Fellowship, see www.capitalchristian.org. ■

Jaye Lindo is Youth Pastor and Akeia Haddox-Rossiter is Pastor of Outreach at Capital Christian Fellowship in Lanham, Md.



FROM AROUND THE CONFERENCE

URBAN MISSIONARY TO LEBANON, PA

Through Missional Pathways, Michael Clancy, pastor at Freedom in Christ in Lebanon, applied to Eastern Mennonite Missions for service as an urban missionary to Lebanon. Clancy said, “In 2002, I was sitting in a jail cell watching a missionary feed starving children in Africa. When I said to myself, ‘That is what I want to do, God, send me,’ I heard God say, ‘What about your own backyard?’” His query to Missional Pathways led him to Eastern Mennonite Missions. There he began an application process for service as an urban missionary in Lebanon.

WE HAVE COME THIS FAR BY FAITH

On Sunday, August 21, Mennonite Bible Fellowship in New Haven, Ct., celebrated the ordination of their Pastor, Cedric Smith. The contagious joy in the praise, worship, prayer



and testimony filled the sanctuary. The church was full with new and returning members, family and friends. Pastor Cedric operates as a pastor to the community, so his relationships among the people brought many into the building to give their blessing to his ministry. Pastor Cedric and his wife said, “To some we might be small in number, but we are mighty in spirit.” This moment begins a step forward into the plans and purpose God has for Mennonite Bible Fellowship. Pastor Cedric called the congregation to “New Life, New Hope – the same in Christ.”

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE SEMINAR

Lancaster Mennonite Conference hosted an information session on immigration and refugees on November 14. The session was

led by Christine Baer from Church World Services. Baer explained how congregations can engage the ongoing refugee crisis around the world. The program included a lecture, questions and answers, and a panel of Lancaster Mennonite Conference members who are part of refugee resettlement in various Conference congregations. About 50 people attended the event.



SLATE HILL MENNONITE CHURCH CELEBRATES

Slate Hill Mennonite Church celebrated the bicentennial of the first meeting-house on the hill. The two-day festivities on October 8–9 started with bus tours in the surrounding region. On Sunday, hundreds of invited guests, including previous bishops, pastors, family members, and friends filled the sanctuary. Bishop Paul Nisly presided over a centennial service. David Weaver-Zercher provided details on the early history of the congregation, started in 1816. Presentations on the missionary outreach and leadership of women at Slate Hill took place in the afternoon. The celebration concluded with a closing prayer by Pastor Lynn Shertzer and a cemetery tour. Printable copies of the information provided during the bus tours, presentations, and lectures are available on the church website at www.slatehillmennonite.org.

NEW PRAYER GATHERING

In November, Lancaster Mennonite Conference sought support for a new prayer ministry focused on church multiplication

from interested residents at Landis Homes. The first group that gathered to pray decided to continue the prayer meeting on a monthly basis in 2017. The group will meet on the third Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Harvest Room in the Harvest View building. Lancaster Mennonite Conference is working toward a significant effort in multiplying disciples and congregations across the Northeast USA. Keith Weaver, Lancaster Mennonite Conference moderator noted, “With the cumulative missions and ministry experience represented by the Landis Homes residents, it seems obvious to seek such support.”



WOMEN'S REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

On November 12, Stumptown Mennonite Church hosted 21 young women from 21 different regional Anabaptists churches to lead 21 different workshops. As a new adventure, it took adjustable folks to understand reasons to “wing it” and be “on call” to serve individual needs instead of the usual pre-registration type of event. The responses from the 160 participants made it apparent that the group received great blessing. The planning team concluded the assembly goals—to provide community comfort, useful resources, and meaningful motivation to empower Christian faith in the midst of today’s complex challenges—were met. One attendee said, “I was so impressed with the hearts of our workshop leaders and so blessed to see the diversity of women attending—how beautiful!” Stay tuned. A second event is scheduled for Saturday, November 4, 2017.

First Sunday of the month “Celebrations” – recognizing birthdays, anniversaries, etc.

Middle: Children from the Healing Hearts Club Camp

Far right: World Food Festival



DISTRICT: Philadelphia

LOCATION: 900 E Howell Street, Philadelphia, PA 19149

DATE OF FOUNDING: 1946

AVERAGE SUNDAY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE: 170

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE: 11:00 a.m.



PASTORS: Leonard Dow, Lynn Parks



CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE:

Oxford Circle Mennonite Church

Oxford Circle Mennonite Church and the allied ministry, Oxford Circle Christian Community Development Association, meet diverse needs in Northeast Philadelphia. We are a very diverse congregation, racially, socio-economically, and theologically. There are a number of mixed race families in our congregation. Having an African American man and an Anglo woman sharing pastoral leadership creates a welcoming dynamic for people of different ethnicities to come together for worship.

Recently we partnered with Carnell Elementary School to implement a school redesign and open a Family Resource Center at the school. People from our congregation teach English classes for adults through the Family Resource Center and in our Adult Education program. These people pray for the families and then work directly with them in teaching English Language Learner classes. Recently two congregants raised money to spend two weeks in Haiti learning Creole and experiencing Haitian culture so they can better relate to their Haitian students from the community.

Community members visit our building most days of the week. Other ministries connected with Oxford Circle Mennonite Church and Oxford Circle Christian Community Development Association include Adult Education classes, General Education Development classes, Mennonite Central Committee food bag distribution, a new Kinder Academy preschool, a new summer Healing Hearts Club camp, a community meal initiative, and many more. The preschool recently hired one member of our church. In this way, we create job opportunities in the neighborhood.

The Healing Hearts Club camp for children ages 8-13 is a trauma healing program developed by the American Bible Society. We are now running our second Healing Hearts Club program as part of our Afterschool program.

Recently a team in the congregation developed a class for youth and adults on racism. We engaged in this topic during our Christian Education Hour. Two women from our church presented at the “Women Doing Theology” conference in November. In December, we hosted our annual Toy Store. Families from the neighborhood and other partners can shop for new toys for their children for a set price of \$5 per child.

While exciting things regularly happen at Oxford Circle Mennonite Church, we struggle to know the best way to love each other and our community. We struggle with having enough volunteers, engaging more people from the congregation in the work, and in developing and releasing more people into leadership. We try new things, but not every new initiative goes well. In spite of our failures, we love this city, and we believe God loves this city. We want to be a part of that. ■

MISSIONAL PATHWAYS

A new Mennonite network wants to help *you* with mission

BY MICAH BRICKNER, EMM COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

Are you sensing that God might be calling you to embark on a new mission? Perhaps you are ready for a missional adventure. Maybe you are actively engaged in an existing venture. Wherever you and your church are in mission, Missional Pathways wants to help you.

Initiated by a conversation about planting new churches, a network called Missional Pathways was developed to help churches think through new ways of engaging in mission. This collaborative network began in January 2016 and now includes leadership from the Atlantic Coast Conference of Mennonite Church USA, Eastern Mennonite Missions, Franklin Mennonite Conference, and Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

Missional Pathways has a vision of seeing all church members become active in creating and multiplying disciples within the communities where they live, work, and play. Mission work has taken a new identity in the 21st century, leaving many churches asking the question, “How do we continue to engage the world around us?” In the past, mission work was often characterized as being “from the West to the rest,” whereas today’s growing trend is for mission work to be “from anywhere to everywhere.” Due to this changing reality, denominations, mission agencies, and churches across North America have begun to reimagine what mission looks like.

The primary goal of Missional Pathways is to serve as a hub of missional networking and resourcing, making local and global connections for churches. Practically, this includes encouraging churches to engage in mission, connecting people with missional passions to facilitators with proven expertise, and inspiring everyone to dream of new ways of reaching people with the gospel. Missional Pathways will not control missional projects or create a centralized system — rather, it seeks to be a collaborative Mennonite network that is passionate about helping all people engage in mission.

Missional PATHWAYS

To get involved in Missional Pathways, talk with your pastor about what a new missional initiative might look like for the church. Missional Pathways wants to encourage and equip missional work in the local church without replacing the critical role pastors play in the mission process. Then, as a missional idea develops, apply to Missional Pathways. After the application process has been completed, a team of facilitators will connect with you to begin assessing needs, building a plan, and connecting with appropriate resources for each missional vision.

The Missional Pathways process is anchored in a dual call to care for the earth (Genesis 2:15) and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). This call is to steward the God-given talents, skills, professions, and resources found in every church for the purpose of God’s mission. This innovative approach is designed to help local churches live out their missional goals more effectively.

While still in its infancy, Missional Pathways has already provided support for people to embrace their missional visions. Facilitators have resourced individuals who are getting involved with urban church development in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, physical therapy in Guatemala, and medical work in Sierra Leone, just to name a few examples. These stories each began with a person asking how God could use them in a new way.

The Missional Pathways process does not simply end with the successful completion of a missional project. Its hope is to multiply more leaders who can serve as future resource persons for Missional Pathways. Each local church is the center of mission; Missional Pathways wants to help you and your church find new ways to multiply God’s kingdom.

Learn more about the process and how to get involved at missionalpathways.org. To submit a request to speak to a facilitator, please contact Missional Pathways by email at info@missionalpathways.org or by phone at (717) 584-4404. ■

NEWS NOTES

CONFERENCE OFFICE UPDATES

The new Western Maryland District of Lancaster Mennonite Conference named Earl Yoder as bishop. He served as pastor of Oak Grove Mennonite Church for 27 years. Earl builds relationships with the leaders in his district intentionally, and he helps leaders become the best pastors possible.



Marcia Mylin started a new position at Lancaster Mennonite Conference in December. She will serve as resource staff for all the various Life Stages across a congregation – children, youth, young adults, couples, singles, and elderly. She will also aid in event planning and help with Conference Minister assignments.

Church on the Other Side, in conjunction with Lancaster Mennonite Conference and Eastern Mennonite Missions, asked Omar Guzman to assume leadership of the church multiplication network. Omar leads the Evangelical Garifuna Church of Manhattan, facilitates church planting for the Garifuna Network, and serves on the Conference Executive Council.

CELEBRATION OF CHURCH LIFE 2017

SAVE THE DATE – Celebration of Church Life begins Friday evening, March 17, 7 p.m. at Weaverland Mennonite Church. The evening will include three stories of congregational engagement in the local community. On Saturday morning, beginning at 9 a.m., the event will continue with three more stories, worship, and two blocks of seminars. Over 30 presenters will tell more stories of congregational engagement, in the two seminar blocks. To assist with logistical planning, **please register for the meal and your seminars at surveymonkey.com/r/CCL-2017 or call 717-293-5246 ext. 100.**

LANCASTER MENNONITE SCHOOLS NAMES SUPERINTENDENT



Lancaster Mennonite School is pleased to announce that Pamela (Pam) Kay Tieszen will become the school’s eighth superintendent, effective January 1, 2017. This appointment marks the end of a national search after Superintendent J. Richard Thomas announced his retirement after 33.5 years of service. Tieszen brings more than 20 years of combined educational and administrative leadership to LMS. “Pam has demonstrated a lifelong devotion to educational leadership, particularly

Anabaptist Mennonite education,” reported Andy Dula, chair of the search committee. Along with her professional involvement in Anabaptist-related organizations, all three of her children have graduated from Mennonite schools and colleges. “I am passionate about Anabaptist/Mennonite education and how it transforms lives,” Tieszen said. She expects to spend the first several months becoming acclimated to the LMS community. “My outside perspective might lend itself to good conversations and team building,” she noted. “Also, it is a year for an accreditation review, which provides a special opportunity to evaluate the school’s strengths, identify goals for improvement and celebrate the success of the school system.” The year also marks the school’s seventy-fifth anniversary milestone.

LMC LEGACY FOUNDATION UPDATE

When WellSpan Health and Philhaven signed an affiliation agreement bringing the two organizations together with a shared mission and vision to improve the behavioral health of the community, WellSpan agreed to contribute a total of \$7.26 million to enable the Lancaster Mennonite Conference to create and operate a new charitable foundation named the LMC Legacy Foundation. The purpose of the Foundation is to assist Lancaster Mennonite Conference to continue its vision of “finding a better way” to promote hope, healing and wholeness through integrative behavioral healthcare resources that nurture mental health, resilience and innovation. A governing board has been named and the board is working with legal counsel to set up the Foundation as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. North Group Consultants is assisting the board in the development of policies and procedures. The Foundation will not be in operation before June 2017. Please feel free to direct questions to the Board Chair, Phil Hess, at phess05@wellspan.org or 717-273-8871.



MENNONITE HOMES COMMUNITIES ANNOUNCES NEW PRESIDENT

John D. Sauder, NHA has recently been appointed as the next President of Mennonite Home Communities effective December 24, 2016. John currently serves as the VP of Operations at Mennonite Home Communities. John has worked at Mennonite Home Communities for 24 years previously serving in roles in Finance, Human Resources, Director of Nursing and VP of Health Services.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Complete calendar and more details available at lanasterconference.org.

Monday Night Prayer Gathering Every first Monday of each month 7:00–9:00 p.m.

Conference office, Lancaster, Pa.
717-293-5246

Multiplication Prayer Gathering Every third Thursday of each month 7:00–9:00 p.m.

Harvest Room, Landis Homes, Lititz, Pa.
717-293-5246

A Conference: Education from an Anabaptist/Christian Perspective March 4, 2017, 8:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Lancaster Campus of Lancaster
Mennonite School, Lancaster, Pa.
[lanastermennonite.org/newsevents/
news/75thanniversary.php](http://lanastermennonite.org/newsevents/news/75thanniversary.php)

Celebration of Church Life March 17–18, 2017

Weaverland Mennonite Church
East Earl, Pa.
717-293-5246 ext. 100

EMM Creative connecting: annual MST resourcing event March 25, 2017, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

The Gathering Place, Mount Joy, Pa.
[emm.org/what-we-do/events/
item/394-creative-connecting](http://emm.org/what-we-do/events/item/394-creative-connecting)

Conference Related Ministries Seminar March 31, 2017

Garden Spot Village, New Holland, Pa.
717-293-5246 ext. 100

PA Benefit Banquet March 31, 2017, 5:45 p.m.

Shady Maple Restaurant, East Earl, Pa.
877-754-8669

Orientation for Newly Credentialed Leaders April 19, 2017, 7:00 p.m.

Conference office, Lancaster, Pa.
717-293-5246 ext. 100

Spring Leadership Assembly May date TBD

Location to be announced
717-293-5246 ext. 100



SAVE THE DATE

Celebration of Church Life

Friday Evening, March 17, 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, March 18, 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Weaverland Mennonite Church
210 Weaverland Valley Rd
East Earl, Pa. 17519

To assist with logistical planning, please register for the meal and your seminars
at surveymonkey.com/r/CCL-2017 or call 717-293-5246 ext. 100.



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