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
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.

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.

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

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 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. Di....
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 on a rural road by a cornfield in Ohio. Mr. Knight stopped us on a rural road by a cornfield in Ohio. He insisted we stop at his place to rest and have some refreshments. 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 came 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.

To learn more about Reverend Al Taylor’s prayer walk, visit the prayer walk website at itsalovethingprayerwalk.com.
parar en cualquier refugio policial para descansar y refrescarnos, o si llegáramos a tener ya nos íbamos, Jenkins nos dijo que si llegáramos a necesitar cualquier cosa podíamos en una gasolinera. Nos ayudó a planear el próximo tramo de nuestra caminata. Cuando pasamos por el vecindario.

En la Iglesia “The Covenant” (El Pacto) el Reverendo Doctor Cornell Edmonds y su familia nos recibieron con su presencia y la paz de Dios. Solté mis planes y seguí Su presencia.

Me cuestioné si realmente había escuchado a Dios. Mi enfoque se desplazó de la tarea a limitados recursos. Dos semanas antes de la partida, sufrí un fuerte bajón. Las finanzas de ítems como camisetas costaron más de lo que habíamos establecido. Aún así, enseguida sentí convocada a seguir adelante para completar nuestro viaje.

El llanto me sucedía cada día durante casi una semana atravesando Ohio. Esperaba una respuesta, pero no la recibí. En la Semana Santa, dejé de llorar. Entonces me di cuenta de que Dios me había abierto la vía para despertar esperanza.

Cuando llegué a Indiana, iba acompañado por más de 190 kilómetros de caminata. Cuando me topé con una pareja que creyó que estaba caminando por la ruta y ofreció llevar a su casa. Nos dirigimos a la casa de la pareja y bebimos refrescos. Después de una caminata de dos días, nos encontramos con tres hombres preparándose para unirnos a su 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 él nos ofreció agua, otro papas fritas y guayabas recién salidas del horno. Fran, la dueña de la casa que les había contado, pronto también se incorporó a la conversación. Compartimos comida y charlamos tanto tiempo que llegamos al día siguiente.
lead by Christine Barr from Church World Services. Barr 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.

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 joyous joy in the praise, worship, prayer and testimony filled the sanctuary. The service 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 purposes God has for Mennonite Bible Fellowship in New Haven, Ct.

STATE HILL MENNONITE CHURCH CELEBRATES
State Hill Mennonite Church celebrated the bicentennial of the first meetinghouse 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.statehillmennonite.org.

WOMEN’S REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
On November 12, Stumptown Mennonite Church hosted 21 young women from 21 different regional Anabaptist churches to lead 21 different workshops. As a new adventure, it took adjustable folks to un-adapt 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.

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 discipless 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.”

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 created a new generation of leaders. 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 After school 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 on 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 mission involves new ways to multiply God’s kingdom.

Missional Pathways is characterized as being “from the West to the rest,” whereas today’s mission involves new ways to multiply God’s kingdom. The Pathways process is anchored in a dual call to purpose of God’s mission. This innovative approach is designed to help local churches live out their missional goals more effectively.

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.

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 in 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 outsider 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 phess@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 lancasterconference.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.
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.
lancastermennonite.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

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

Make an investment choice that is bigger than you.

Eastern Mennonite Missions
Church Investment Loan Fund makes mortgage loans and uses the interest toward global missions. CILF investors earn interest to complete the cycle of three-way benefits for investors, borrowers, and kingdom work. The minimum investment is $500.

Learn more at emm.org/CILF or contact Trisha Good at trishag@emm.org.

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.