

Annual Meeting: "Abide in me as I abide in you"



Vine art by Ron Headings | Photo by J. Tyler Klassen

The symbol of a grape vine reflects the worship theme at the upcoming Annual Meeting, June 22-24.

The image of a grape vine and the text of John 15:1-9 will focus our worship and activities during the Central District Conference Annual Meeting, June 22-24.

Bluffton University in Bluffton, Ohio, will

provide the space for our gathering and the CDC churches in western Ohio, eastern Indiana and Michigan will host us: First (Bluffton), Cincinnati, Grace, Lima, Emmaus Road and Shalom Community.

A special feature of this gathering is guest speaker Drew G. I. Hart, professor, author, activist, and former pastor, who is author of *The Trouble I've seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism*. Another feature is the opening worship led by RAWtools, an organization that works to lessen violence in our communities. (See details of both on page 3.) Seminars, a picnic, time for fellowship, opportunities for prayer, dinners for Mennonite Men and Mennonite Women, and much more is in store at this gathering.

The schedule begins with opportunities for family activities on Thursday, June 22, and concludes at noon on Saturday, June 24. (See detailed schedule on page 2.)

Visit the CDC website

For all details of the Annual Meeting, visit mcusacdc.org/annual-meeting. You will find:

- Registration forms for the gathering, along with forms for childcare, Mennonite Women and Mennonite Men dinners, Pastor Appreciation dinner, and the Golf Outing fundraiser
- Reports, including items requiring action
- Maps of pertinent locations
- Information about housing and meal options
- Speakers, seminars, plenary session

Annual Meeting details

Schedule

Thursday - Family Day

Family Day events are open to everyone! You do not need to register for the Annual Meeting to attend.

11:00am - Golf Outing at Sycamore Springs Golf Course, Findlay

2:00pm - Registration begins in Marbeck Center

3:00pm - Peacemaking Grounded in Prayer Seminar

3:00pm - RAWtools blacksmith demonstration begins outside Marbeck Center

5:00pm - Pastor Appreciation Dinner, Marbeck Center Kreider Room

5:00pm - Backyard Picnic, Marbeck Center Commons.

7:30pm - **WORSHIP** in Founders Hall with RAWtools.

9:00pm - Ice cream social; interacting with Lisa Schirch and her art, "A Tribe Called Mennonite: 500 Years of Peacebuilding" in Marbeck Center Bob's Place

Friday

DELEGATE SESSION 1 in Marbeck Center Commons

8:30am

- Welcome/Introductions
- Getting acquainted around tables
- State of the conference address
- Sharing around tables

9:30am

- Congregational story: First Mennonite Church Bluffton
- Introductions
- Summary review and ACTION on 2016 Annual Meeting minutes

9:45 - 10:15am - **BREAK/Snacks**

10:15am

- Treasurer's report and presentation of the 2017-2018 proposed spending plan
- Presentation of and ACTION on the 2017-2018 slate of nominees
- Commissioning prayer
- Receiving Open Table Mennonite Fellowship ACTION: Vote to receive into membership
- Introduction of congregations seeking membership in CDC: Berea Mennonite Church, Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship, Raleigh Mennonite Church

11:00am

- Missional Church Committee report
- Word from Mennonite Church USA
- Introduction of guests
- Announcements

11:45am - **LUNCH**

12:45pm - **VISITING/DISPLAYS/BOOKSIGNINGS/BLUFFTON ARCHIVES OPEN HOUSE**

DELEGATE SESSION 2 in Marbeck Center Commons

1:15pm

- Announcing membership vote

- Congregational Story: Mennonite Church of Normal
- Historical Vignette/Camp Friedenswald highlights

1:45pm

- Plenary and table group discussion with Dr. Drew Hart

3:15pm - **BREAK/Snacks**

3:45pm - **SEMINARS** in Centennial Hall

- Preparing for Orlando 2017 led by Terry Shue
- Changing the Way the Church Views Racism led by Drew Hart
- Resonate: Shaping a New Worship and Song Collection for MC USA and Mennonite Church Canada led by Bradley Kauffman
- Women, Dig In: Exploring Bible Study for the 21st Century led by Marlene Bogard
- Christian Formation for Children led by Carrie Mast and Louise Matthews

5:15pm - Transition

5:30pm - **DINNER**

- Mennonite Women, Marbeck Center Kreider Hall
- Mennonite Men, Marbeck Center Bob's Place
- A list of restaurants is available (in delegate packets) for those who are not participating in one of the above dinners

7:00pm - **FREE TIME**

7:30pm - **WORSHIP** at Yoder Recital Hall. Speakers: Doug Luginbill, Jorge Vielman and Lefuarn Harvey

9:00pm - Informal Gathering - Get Acquainted with folks from Berea, Chapel Hill, and Raleigh with snacks in Marbeck Center Bob's Place

Saturday

8:30am - **WORSHIP** at Yoder Recital Hall. Speakers: Anita Rediger, pastor at Emmaus Road Mennonite Fellowship, Berne, Ind., and Emily Hedrick, pastor of Lima Mennonite Church, Lima, Ohio

10:00am - **BREAK/Snacks** in Marbeck Center Commons

DELEGATE SESSION 3 in Marbeck Center Commons

10:30am

- Congregational Story: Hively Avenue Mennonite Church/Eighth Street Mennonite Church
- Constituency Leaders Council Report
- Sharing around tables

11:00am

- Ministerial Committee Report: Recognition of new pastors/credentialed leaders and remembering pastors who have died

11:15am

- MCC Great Lakes Report
- ACTION: 2017-2018 Spending Plan
- Listening Committee Report

11:45am

- Evaluations
- Close of Delegate Sessions
- Songs/Benediction

12:00pm - **CLOSE** of Annual Meeting

RAWtools demonstration and opening worship

Transforming weapons into garden tools is one way that RAWtools works at its mission of moving communities away from gun violence and violence in all forms.

During the afternoon on Thursday, June 22, participants will be able to watch a blacksmith as guns are forged into garden tools. By the event's end, a physical representation of the Bible's prophecy of "beating your swords into plowshares" from Isaiah and Micah is created in actuality.

Learn more about RAWtools at rawtools.org/.

In the evening, RAWtools invites everyone to "Peacemaker," a worship service centered in the Christian faith in which songs, art, stories, and scripture are shared, and a gun is transformed into a gardening hoe.

Worship services

Three worship services are planned during our time together. Check the schedule for locations.

Thursday, June 22, 7:30 pm

Led by RAWtools (see above)

Friday, June 23, 7:30 pm

Speakers: Doug Luginbill, Jorge Vielman, Lefuarn Harvey

Theme: Abide in me as I abide in you.

These invitational words will support our overall Annual Meeting theme,

Abounding in Love. . . Abiding in Grace.

Text: John 15:1-9

Offering for the work of

Central District Conference

Saturday, June 24, 8:30 am

Speakers: Anita Rediger, Emily Hedrick

Theme: That we love one another

Text: John 15:1-9

Communion

If you know someone willing to donate a gun for the blacksmith demonstration which will transform weapons into garden tools, please contact RAWtoolEvent@gmail.com.



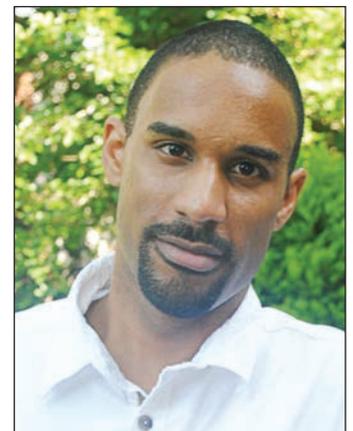
Plenary session

Drew G. I. Hart, professor, blogger, activist, former pastor and author, is the featured speaker at the Annual Meeting plenary session, Friday, June 23, at 1:15 pm.

Hart, who holds Master of Divinity and recently defended his doctoral dissertation, is a frequent speaker in church and community settings where he challenges and encourages listeners to think critically about how race has distorted our views of each other in our culture.

Hart will expand the church's frameworks for understanding racism while providing Jesus-shaped ways of pursuing love that breaks the centuries-long cycle of the church producing 'strange fruit' in our society.

To prepare ourselves to not only hear Hart but also to enter into conversations with each other on the topics he presents, Annual Meeting participants are encouraged to join "The Big Read." Spend time with Hart's book, ***The Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism***. Books and a free, downloadable study guide are available through the MennoMedia website: www.heraldpress.com/titles/TroubleIveSeen/Praise/.



Annual meeting details

Seminars

Participants at the Annual Meeting may choose to attend one of these seminars:

Changing the Way the Church Views Racism, led by Dr. Drew G.I. Hart. This will continue the discussion following Hart's plenary session presentation

Preparing for Orlando 2017, led by Terry Shue, denominational minister for Mennonite Church USA

Women, Dig In: Exploring Bible Study for the 21st Century, led by Marlene Bogard, executive director of Mennonite Women. Let's dig in to *Live Your Call* (2017) and *Faith Travels* (2016), recent Bible study guides from Mennonite Women USA.

Christian Formation for Children, led by Carrie mast and Louise Matthews

Resonate: Shaping a New Worship and Song Collection for MC USA and Mennonite Church Canada, led by Bradley Kauffman. Share your insights and hear about developments for the new worship and song collection.

Children's activities

Activities and care for children are planned during the Annual Meeting sessions.

Care for Kindergarten through sixth grade children is available on Friday from 8:15 am to 5:30 pm, and on Saturday morning. In addition, childcare is provided for children whose parents are participating in the Pastor Appreciation, Mennonite Men's and Mennonite Women's dinners. Activities include a T-shirt craft, making bread, hiking, swimming, a scavenger hunt on the campus, a service project and working with a Bible theme verse. Please read details on the website: www.mcusacdc.org/annual-meeting/Children-k-grade6.

Care for infants and preschoolers is available with a slightly different schedule, including Thursday evening during the worship service; visit www.mcusacdc.org/infants-preschool/ for details.

Additional events

Family Day, Thursday, June 22, afternoon

11 am - Golf Outing: a fundraiser at the 18-hole Sycamore Springs course in Findlay, Ohio. Register by June 9 with the form linked on the website: www.mcusacdc.org/golf-outing/

3-4:40 pm - Peacemaking Grounded in Prayer Seminar: Learn the why and how of contemplation as a way to ground ourselves in the infinite expanse of God's love.

RAWtools demonstration (see page 3.)

Family activities at the Lion and the Lamb Peace Arts Center on the Bluffton University campus

5 pm - Backyard picnic: Eat in the Marbeck Center or take your food outdoors for a time of fellowship before the sessions begin.

9 pm - Ice Cream Social and Art by Lisa Schirch: Talk with Lisa about her exhibit, "A Tribe Called Mennonite: 500 years of Peacebuilding."

Special dinners

Pastor Appreciation Dinner, Thursday, June 22, 5 pm. RSVP by June 10.

Mennonite Men's Dinner, Friday, June 23, 5:30 pm

Mennonite Women's Dinner: Friday, June 23, 5:30 pm

Giving back to the community

GUIDING LIGHT
WOMEN'S HOME TRUTH FOR YOUTH, INC.

The giving project selected by the host congregations is Guiding Light Ministries in Lima, Ohio. Guiding Light is dedicated to providing a safe environment that helps women to learn how to effectively care for themselves and their families. You can contribute when you register or you can bring a contribution with you to the gathering.

Reign of God Grant

Connecting two congregations

Two CDC congregations in Wisconsin—Milwaukee and Madison—invited Hannah Heinzekehr, executive director of *The Mennonite*, to join them for a weekend to get acquainted with her and to introduce their cities to her. A conference Reign of God grant funded the April 29-30 events.

Hannah Heinzekehr and Doug Luginbill, CDC conference minister, spent Saturday morning with the Milwaukee congregation and the evening with the Madison congregation. On Sunday afternoon the congregations met half-way in between at The Crossroads Church

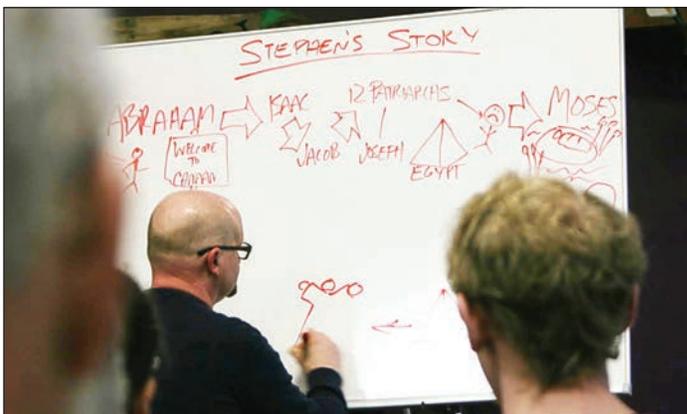
in Johnson Creek. About 110 gathered for a worship service, conversations with Hannah Heinzekehr during a Christian education hour and a potluck meal. In addition, members of North Suburban Mennonite Church, a member of Illinois Conference, joined in the worship service. ☺



Members of the Milwaukee and Madison, Wisc., congregations enjoyed fellowship time at their gathering on April 30.



Hannah Heinzekehr preached at the joint worship service and answered questions about her work with The Mennonite.



During the worship service, Peter Eash-Scott, part of the Milwaukee congregation, drew the story of Stephen's speech to the council in Acts 7 while Ron Adams, pastor of Madison, read the text.

Financial report

April 30, 2017

Year-to-date giving
 from congregations \$157,199
 Year-to-date plan \$154,167
 Difference between giving and plan . . \$3,032

Year-to-date giving
 from individuals and families \$19,930
 Year-to-date plan \$25,417
 Difference between giving and plan . . -\$5,487

Total giving \$186,727
 Year-to-date plan \$184,597
 Difference \$2,130

Year-to-date expenses \$174,384
 Year-to-date spending plan \$185,430
 Difference -\$11,046

Financial support from congregations increased in the last of couple months, which is typical, so fiscal year-to-date congregational giving is now slightly ahead of the plan. Giving beyond the congregational giving is lagging a bit but, overall, our year-to-date income is ahead of plan. Expenses are considerably under the planned amount by more than \$11,000. Thanks to all for the strong support.

Report provided by Roger Nafziger, conference treasurer

Doug's Mug

by Doug Luginbill, Conference Minister

I have some Sassafras Tea in my mug today! In early May I made my first trip to Paoli Mennonite Fellowship in Paoli, Ind., to visit with a newly formed search committee as they are seeking a quarter-time Pastor of Youth



Formation. I arrived the evening before the day of the meeting and enjoyed staying with hosts Wendell Lantz and Doris Weaver. I had some free time so I walked through their woods with Bouncy and Brownie at my side. I noticed some young sassafras saplings

growing along the path and decided to pull one up and enjoy the taste of the tender stem and root. The tangy flavor immediately took me back to Outpost at Camp Friedenswald where I first learned of and tasted sassafras tea.

When I think of Camp Friedenswald, many other things come to mind besides sassafras tea. Most memories include folks who began the week as strangers and ended the week as friends. Many of the friendships were formed around dining tables as we enjoyed a meal or washed dishes together. We didn't drink much tea in those days, but the hot chocolate was sure good, especially as we sat around the fireplace on a cold winter retreat weekend!

On June 22-24, many folks from across the Central District Conference will gather at Bluffton University for our Annual Meeting. There will be lots of people who know each other from camp, from college, from previous gatherings and from serving together over the years. Conversations and relationships will pick

up where they left off.

We will also meet strangers at our Annual Meeting—folks who have never attended a CDC event. Some new attendees will be from congregations who have long been part of CDC. And some will be from congregations that are new to CDC.

Last June in Columbus, we were introduced to Open Table Mennonite Fellowship in Goshen, Ind. As a small "sprout" of folks gathered several years ago, discerning how God's spirit was leading them, they have grown into a fellowship of Anabaptist believers who worship, fellowship, eat and pray together every Sunday. Sip a cup of tea with these sisters and brothers and welcome them to CDC.

We will also meet three other congregations, each of which have formally requested to begin the discernment process of joining CDC. Each will be introduced at our Annual Meeting. As part of this discernment process, Arman Habegger (President Elect of the CDC Board of Directors) and I enjoyed a four-day, 1600-mile tour through Georgia and North Carolina. Specifically, we visited leaders and members of Berea Mennonite Church in Atlanta, Ga., Raleigh Mennonite Church in Raleigh, N.C., and Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship in Chapel Hill, N.C. Our visits included worship and sharing meals (and coffee and tea) with these strangers ... who are becoming friends. Several folks from these congregations will also be joining us for our Annual Meeting.

So, there will be lots of opportunity at our Annual Meeting to share cups of tea (perhaps even sassafras), mugs of coffee, and plenty of good food around the tables as strangers become friends. ☺

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