



# Mustard Seed

## Central Plains Mennonite Conference, 2017

Heather Herschberger

*A Covenant People: Responding to Gods Love* was the theme for the annual meeting of the Central Plains Mennonite Conference held in Sioux Falls, South Dakota on June 15 –18, 2017.

Experiences at Annual Meeting can be divided into 4 parts: 1) Worship 2) Workshops 3) Meetings 4) Food, Fellowship and Fun.

**Worship** The *Sermon on the Mount* congregation of Sioux Falls hosted conference this year, which means planning and leading worship. The worship services were full of symbolism, scripture readings, singing and inspiring sermons brought to us by Meghan Good of Trinity Mennonite Church in Arizona. As is customary, the opening night worship service included presentation of the symbols of our conference, a basin, a pitcher and a peace pipe. This year, each congregation brought water from their church. In the opening service the water was poured into a pitcher and in the closing service water from that pitcher was poured out for representatives to take back to their congregations. This symbolized how we came representing our congregations and were changed by being together and returned as representatives of the conference. The sermons by Meghan Good were a highlight of the conference and can be accessed from the Central Plains website <http://www.centralplainsmc.org/annual-meeting-2017.html>.

**Workshops** Each afternoon there was opportunity to attend various workshops with topics pertaining to different aspects of church and spiritual life. The workshops were an opportunity to meet in smaller groups, ask questions and interact together. Workshops attended by KMC members included ones on millennials and church, planning worship, teaching adult Sunday School, revolutionary hospitality, the Ecuador/Venezuela partnership and many more.

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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- This symbolized how we came representing our congregations and were changed by being together and returned as representatives of the conference.
- There appears to be a lot of grace that comes from learning to turn to God in all situations.

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**Meetings** Each morning and afternoon included a delegate session. Anyone can attend these meetings, and participate in table group discussions. These are the sessions where reports of what are going on around the conference and any voting happens. Along with reports, this year the sessions were filled with discussion on how we see the spiritual practices from “*Being God’s Faithful Community: A Covenant of Spiritual Practices*” being carried out in our various communities and congregations. It was inspiring to hear the stories of our conference as people reported how they see the Spirit of God moving in and around them as they pray, fast, work and worship.

**Food, Fellowship, Fun** In any good conference/meeting, the opportunities to fellowship together over snack and mealtimes should be a highlight. That was certainly true at this conference. Meal times provide an opportunity to break bread with people you’ve just heard share an inspiring story or explain how a difficult situation was transformed into something beautiful and ask questions and laugh and cry together. They are a chance get acquainted or catch up with friends, old or new.

This year conference planners allowed plenty of time for us to explore the beautiful city of Sioux Falls. It has a wonderful park in the center of town featuring – what else – the Sioux Falls. The park has scenic walkways, overlooks and a tower. After a day of mostly sitting, exploring the park was a welcome activity. The city itself is full of sculptures that rotate each year. If you enjoy history, there are plenty of historic markers to read. Sioux Falls also boasts very tasty ice cream shops.

There were 11 people from Kalona Mennonite in attendance at annual meeting this year. Ed V. and Carol Miller, Brian and Heather Herschberger, Wanda Beachy, and Mollie Miller, attended as delegates, Emma Beachy was the youth delegate, Beth Peachey Miller was there as the pastor from Pleasantview Church in Mt Pleasant, Scott Swartzentruber was the Pastor representative for KMC and Carolyn Yoder, Marcus Miller and Jan Swartzentruber were there for support, enrichment and fun. If you have any questions or are contemplating attendance in a future year, these attendees would be glad to share their stories and experiences.

## Congratulations!

*These people have reached a milestone, 50 or more years of marriage, or 80 or more years of life*

*Don’t forget to send a card! The addresses are in your church directory.*

### **Birthday:**

Ada Fisher ~ August 8

Gertie Chupp ~ August 15

Mary Jane Miller ~ August 22

Doris Redding ~ August 27

### **Anniversary:**

Elmer & Marlene Yoder ~ 56 years ~ August 1

Cal & Shirley Hochstedler ~ 51 years ~ August 12



# In Pursuit

*Dawn Wyse*

I had the privilege of reading the book, Praying the Bible by Donald S. Whitney. It has opened up new avenues in my prayer life and I would highly recommend it to anyone who is bored or stuck in a rut with their prayer life. The book has led me to try using the Psalms in tandem with my morning prayer time. Here's my confession. I have struggled reading the Psalms. I fully realize many people love the book of Psalms best. For me, I prefer the Psalms in small doses with one exception. I love Psalm 119. Other than that one, I would much rather be reading one of the books of the prophets. Despite my preset feelings toward the Psalms, God has proven to me that I shouldn't rule out any book of the Bible. He has treasure in each and every book to show me. I just need to ask Him to reveal His word and wait expectantly to see what He has for me.

One day this week I spent some time praying through Psalm 34. I want to share with you some things that hit my heart during my prayer time. Verse 5 "**Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed.**" This verse made me think of Moses when he came down from the mountain after spending time with God. (Exodus 34) His face was so radiant that the people were fearful of coming to him. Moses' time with God had a physical effect on him as well as a spiritual one. This verse tells me that if I spend enough time with God then I too will have a God given radiance that will be evident to those around me. So I ask myself, "Am I looking at God enough to live a life of radiance that points others to God?"

Verse 7 "**The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and delivers them.**" If I fear God, then He will have His angel surround me and deliver me. This is an awesome promise. It is definitely something to lean upon when I feel unable to stand up to the things pressing in on me. God will protect and deliver me. However, I must admit I am not sure how well I fear the Lord. I am not even

sure that I know what it takes to live a life that fears the Lord. That is why verse 11 is so good. "**Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.**" God is willing to teach us how to fear Him. It isn't supposed to be out of our reach. We just ask Him to show us and then listen. I am in awe!

Verse 8b "**Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!**" This verse at first pleased me because God can be my place of safety and protection, plus it is a place of blessing. Then I realized that when you take refuge there is generally something you are fleeing. That is quite a conundrum. In order to receive certain blessings you need to have been in a situation you couldn't handle on your own. Does this mean that I had to fail in a situation in order to have gotten to the place where I needed to seek refuge? I don't believe that is the case but even if it is true, verse 22 is of great comfort. "**The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.**" There appears to be a lot of grace that comes from learning to turn to God in all situations.

Turning to God needs to become our automatic reaction no matter the situation. Are good things happening? Praise God. Verse 1 "**I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.**" In trouble? Cry to the Lord. Verse 6 "**This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.**" Have a need? Verse 10b "**but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.**" Need someone to care? Verse 15 "**The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry.**" Whatever we need will be taken care of if we only learn to always turn to God. (Cont. on page 4)

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We need to practice doing this until it is as instinctive as the many things we have taught ourselves to do without being conscious of the mechanics they take, (i.e. walking, talking, picking things up, etc.) It's like the person who wants to be a great free throw shooter. It takes thousands of shots using the correct form to make it happen. So it is with training ourselves to constantly look toward God. The more we do it the more instinctual it will become.

I want to share one last thing about Psalm 34 that God showed me later that day. That night I was talking to a person who needed some encouragement. God

brought to my mind some of His words from Psalm 34 to share in the situation. God's timing is perfect. His words fit the situation. Then to top it off that person had also read Psalm 34 earlier that day. God is so good! How can we not spend all our days looking towards Him?

I challenge you to find ways to encourage yourself and others to look towards God more often than you are now. It is a challenge I am setting before myself as well. Let's work the muscles needed to turn our eyes upon Him again and again and again and again until that's the direction they want to go without fail. I'm praying for it.

As always, in pursuit.

## Little But Mighty

*Eunice Madrene Miller Yoder*

Little words are but sweetest

Springs start out little  
They become sources of large streams  
Little lakes are the stillest  
Little farms now greatest in size  
Little books are read a lot  
Little hearts are fastest beats

Little nails and spikes hold large buildings together  
Little twigs make up a mighty tree  
Little words, a book  
A smile, a frown  
Little songs help us along

Jesus was little, and now he's mighty  
Our world is mighty  
The night is just so gorgeous with little stars

All are little things, but mighty indeed

# WHAT'S HAPPENING!!!

*Ed V and Carol Miller*

My goodness, what a busy time it has been with reunions, vacations, ballgames, county fairs – you would think it's summer!

Phelan Hostetler did very well showing livestock at the Washington County Fair. She showed 3 calves and 2 hogs. Her "returning bucket bottle calf" took 1<sup>st</sup> place.



She also had a "market gilt" that took 1<sup>st</sup> place. And to top it all off she won (2) Showmanship Championships while showing calves on Tuesday & Thursday. It was quite a haul. Ask Phelan and her proud papa (Keith) for all the details. Good job!

Now, this is going to press shortly, so I am sure we will have missed other 4-H awards, but it's great having local 4-H chapters in the area. They do a very good job with our young people.

Ed D. & Mary Jane Miller celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary along with all of their family, except for one grandson. So the family came from Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Virginia & Montana and those in attendance were their 5 children & 5 spouses, 10 grandkids & 4 spouses, plus 3 friends (possible future spouses?), for a grand total of 29! They all stayed at a Bed/Breakfast in Homestead, Iowa. Marcus was the only son able to fit into Ed D.'s wedding suit & one of the granddaughters modeled Mary Jane's wedding dress. They all had a great time together.

Tony Hostetler married Mary Johnson in Ashland, Ohio several weekends ago. The happy newlyweds will make their home in Harrisonburg, Virginia where they are also presently employed. Tony works as a Behavior Specialist at an alternative school. Mary works at Parkview Credit Union. Lynn & Janice are the parents of Tony and are very happy to have a new family member! Congratulations to all!

Wilbur & Elsie Mast attended the International Gideon's Convention in Kansas City, Kansas on July 12-15, 2017. There were thousands of people attending and they came from 92 different countries. Lots of good stories were shared and this was Wilbur & Elsie's 1<sup>st</sup> time at the International Convention. Keep telling us those stories you heard!

Phil & Joyce Ropp were on a business trip to London, Ontario and decided to stop in and visit Dave & Mary Groh in Leamington, Ont. Of course the Groh's were very excited to have visitors from Kalona. They still reside in Leamington Mennonite Home and Dave still leads a weekly chapel. Dave and Mary "send greetings" to all their Kalona Mennonite friends! Thank you, Phil & Joyce for visiting our dear Canadian friends!

Chase Murray & Sara Rousseau were married July 1, 2017. It was an outdoor wedding and his Uncle Terry Murray married them. We got to visit with a lot of the Fiordelise Family and also the Murray Family including Grandma Betty from Indianapolis. The final event of the evening was a very nice fireworks display over the pond. Congratulation to Chase & Sara!

Six young people from our congregation were baptized on July 2, 2017 at a farm pond S.E. of Wellman, Iowa. Josh Lundberg baptized Summer Schrock, Joya Schrock, Noah Miller, Kay-

sen Dempsey, Daymen Hunter & Katelyn Lehman. Quite a number of friends and family witnessed the joyous occasion!



Emma Beachy just finished her Junior year at IMS. So she took the ACT test in preparation for college next year. The ACT (American College Testing) is a 3.5 hr. test and covers reading, math, science and English. Her score was a 36, the highest possible score. The average is about 21. Good job, Emma!

The KMC Coffee House turned out to be a great evening. The coffee and food were great, the decorations were great, and the music was excellent! Thanks to Grae Weaver for putting this together!

Well it's time to get those school supplies because before you know it the kids will be back to school. Right now enjoy the sweet corn & tomatoes from the garden – we had our 1<sup>st</sup> BLT of the season. Have a good summer, what's left of it. I just about forgot. If you have never experienced a total solar eclipse your chance is coming August 21<sup>st</sup>. A four hour drive would get you to N.W. Missouri where you could see one. Just a thought. Enjoy your August!

# MCUSA Convention, Orlando, FL 2017

*Stacy and Nate Miller & Josh Lundburg*

MCUSA Convention was held July 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> in the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL. Josh Lundburg and Nate & Stacy Miller served as delegates from KMC. Josh and family were able to be at convention for the week so Josh was able to attend a number of seminars and youth worship services early in the week before the delegate sessions began. Nate and Stacy arrived later in the week in time for the delegate sessions. This year the planners tried several new things with the adults. One was that the delegate sessions were condensed into a 48-hour time-period, rather than spread out over the week. Another was the format of the adult sessions. We spent a small amount of time overall in delegate session (about 5 hours total). The rest of our time was spent on a process called the Future Church Summit (FCS) where the purpose was to “be a generative, open space for denomination-wide conversation-to dream together, reset priorities and engage one another in answering the question: How will we follow Jesus as Anabaptists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?” All delegates were involved in this process, but there were also others from within the Mennonite church that were included in this process to make sure various Mennonite organizations and people groups were represented in the dialogue. The process included various means of discussion/listening including table discussions, personal reflection, large group sharing, and mixed table sharing. Each table had an I-Pad with which we entered answers to various questions and immediately sent the responses off to a “Theme Team,” who from the 1000+ answers they may receive for a given question would look for themes to develop and would then report to the group the main themes that arose from each question.

On Thursday, July 6<sup>th</sup> the first delegate session was held. This delegate session was held from 12:00-4:00 and was the time where convention business was taken care of including the only resolution for this convention which was discussed and voted on. This vote was on the Israeli/Palestinian Resolution which had been tabled in Kansas City, and was rewritten for Orlando.

There was time for table discussion and time for speaking at the microphone in favor and in opposition to the resolution before a vote was taken. The vote received overwhelming support and passed with only a few in opposition to it.

After the first delegate session, we moved into the FCS for 4 hours Thursday evening. Our tables were assigned to us for both delegate sessions and FCS and Josh, Nate, and Stacy were all at different tables. The first part of the evening was spent “building community within table groups.” We shared with our whole table and one on one getting to know each other better. Questions surrounding the ideas of when we “felt most connected to the Mennonite Church” and what has been “most life-giving and essential for you in being an Anabaptist?” From these topics came themes surrounding “*What draws us to this faith?*” The later part of the evening was spent hearing about the past 100 years of the Mennonite Church and the roots of Anabaptist formation while looking at a visual timeline. We then discussed at our tables and themes were developed on “*significant learnings from our history*” and “*what might this mean for us going forward?*” Our evening was wrapped up at 9:30 PM.

The Friday focus was “acknowledging where we are; exploring how we want to be.” The 8:00 AM session began with table group discussions and input to the Theme Team on the topics of “*things we want to affirm and take forward?*” and “*things to lament, transform and/or let go of?*” Following the table discussion on these topics, people could share in front of the whole group if they wanted to. From here we discussed and sent input to the Theme Team in our table groups on “*what are the implications of having diverse identities within our church?*” and “*how can we be constructive in living with our differences?*”

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Friday afternoon we began with some personal reflection on the challenges the world is facing, and then our table discussed the theme of ***“what can we take action on in response to the world’s needs?”*** and sent our input by I-Pad. A discussion on stage then occurred with those who wanted to participate and with the rest listening and observing. The two questions being discussed up front were “what does it mean to be a peace church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?” and “what is our evangelism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?” Our table groups then spent some time visioning about ***“what does it mean for us to follow Jesus as Anabaptists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?”***

The Friday evening session began with 10 minutes of comic relief from a 3-person improv group with some quick-witted humor, including a few Mennonite appropriate one-liners. We were all tired by this point so the humor was much appreciated, though brief. The evening was spent in discussion using a format called “World Café” in which we moved around to various tables answering 3 different theme questions with people we had not yet spent any time with. The themes we submitted input on were... ***“what do we gain by being part of MCUSA?”*** ***“how do we want to be/relate to one another in our denomination?”*** and ***“important things we do together.”*** We wrapped up our night at 9:00. However, due to a tornado warning and a thunderstorm we didn’t leave the convention center until about 10:00 when we could walk back to the hotel.

Saturday morning was the wrap up of our time together including some singing and a blessing. We heard about the themes that were developed during the World Café, and then reviewed all the results that came from the themes (these are the items listed in bold & italics in this article). After review of the themes everyone at the table had the opportunity to input their opinion on a scale of 1-5 as to how accurate the themes seemed in relation to what we were hearing at our tables and from the group. We immediately heard the results of these polls and the results showed that a majority (between 85-89%) agreed that the themes were accurate to what was discussed in FCS. At this point those who were only participating in FCS could go, and we returned to our delegate table groups for our last delegate session. This final delegate session had two parts. The first was to vote on what had just happened at FCS. We affirmed the work of the FCS

participants and commended the report to the executive board. The intention is that this document will be used for further discernment as a guide for the future of our church. The second part of the delegate session was to install Dave Boshart as the new moderator for MCUSA and Tim Detweiler gave a blessing. Once this business was completed the delegate session was over.



Moving forward a report will be created by MCUSA regarding the FCS and will be sent to the delegates, conferences, and posted on the website so that everyone can have input. If you have questions or would like to see the theme data before that time feel free to ask Josh, Nate, or Stacy, and we can pass along the information we have been given at this point.

With so many people at convention (and spending almost all our time in the same room) it is easy to never see the people you think you will see, even though you know they are there somewhere. We (Stacy and Nate) were lucky enough to run into Nate Yoder (Carolyn and Atlee’s son) one time. We had lunch with Amy Gingerich (Firman and Susan Gingerich’s daughter) one day. It was also fun to run into a friend from the church we attended while living in St. Louis who was a delegate. It was interesting to experience convention in a different way than we had before. We (Nate and Stacy) had attended convention as youth, youth sponsors while in St. Louis, and now as delegates which was a new and different experience.

Convention 2019 will be held in Kansas City, MO.

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CHURCH**

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**Our Vision** is to be a life-giving church: Presenting the life-giving message of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to the people of the Kalona area and the world, challenging them to accept Christ, worship Him, and serve Him.

**Our Mission** is to fulfill the Great Commission: Leading people to Christ; discipling them in the faith; equipping them to witness; and sending them out to serve.



If you want to listen to the service from home or anywhere, you can do so by calling **656-2663**. When it asks for your participant code followed by the # key, dial **277467#**. When it asks for your name followed by the # key, say your name and push the # key.