

2014 Annual Meeting Workshops

Kalispell, MT

Workshop Session 1: Friday 1:15 PM

1. Telling your congregation's story: Narrative Budgeting

Facilitator: Rhoda Blough, Everence

Every congregation has an exciting faith story to tell. As the church we have a responsibility to share the story of our mission and how we live our life together. A narrative budget can be one small piece of this process reshaping what seems to be simply an administrative task into an integrated story of congregational life. How you raise money and how you spend it are defining characteristics of who you truly are. By connecting your budget with the stories of how you worship, nurture your community, and reach out to the world beyond, you paint a picture of how you offer faithful mission to your members and your community.

2. Telling your congregation's story: Communities of Hope

Facilitator: Jenn Carreto, Washington

Communities of Hope is a process for assisting congregations in becoming more culturally competent. This workshop will present an overview of the the Communities of Hope curriculum, which includes constructing / reflecting on a congregational narrative, constructing a narrative vision and writing a church covenant. Participants will explore and discuss a sampling of questions and exercises to get a firsthand experience of how Communities of Hope may be helpful to their congregations.

3. Growing your congregation: One-to-one conversations

Facilitator: André Gingerich Stoner, Director of Holistic witness and Interchurch Relations with Mennonite Church USA

A practical and spiritual tool for nurturing shalom communities The gospel tells us that "the Word became flesh and moved into the neighborhood." And if the Bible has it right, Jesus spent more time eating meals with his neighbors than he did at Sunday church services. He knew how to connect deeply with the people he encountered. This workshop will introduce you to a simple but profound tool for strengthening relationships and building community and give you a chance to practice it.

4. Tending our common life; Talking about Healthy Sexuality

Facilitator: Gary Jewell and Jan Yoder, Washington

How well are we doing with discussing this topic in a healthy way in our churches? Should we? Where does this discussion belong? What is our responsibility to our youth in this regard? Jan and Gary would like to share some of their work and their experiences in teaching age appropriate comprehensive human sexuality within the

faith community. While many of us have a variety of views and values on this topic, part of this session time will also be to provide a chance for you to share your own thoughts and concerns, to share what churches are doing, and to start thinking what you might want to do, in developing sexuality education programs within the church. This workshop is a repeat from last year-returning by popular request.

5. Deepening our Faith: Bible Study in Spanish (with simultaneous translation into English)

Facilitator: Samuel Moran, Oregon

The Church focused on the Parables of the Kingdom of God. Jesus taught the truths of the Kingdom of God through parables. In chapter 13 of the Gospel of Matthew, there are seven of them. But what is the relationship or connection between the parables of the kingdom and the church? How many or which truths of God's Kingdom are applicable to the life of the church? And which is correct? The church in the Kingdom or the Kingdom in the Church?... To address the concerns listed above, the participant will be led in an interpretative reading in order to apply the truths of the Kingdom to the context of the Church today. Also, the participant will have the opportunity to interact in small groups and make new friends.

Requirement: Bring Bible and willingness to share their views.

6. Engaging the world – Middle East

Facilitator: Rod Stafford, Pastor, Oregon

'The Stones Cry Out' is a 2013 film by Yasmine Parni. Amidst all the media coverage of the conflict in Israel/Palestine, the voices of Palestinian Christians have often been drowned out. This 56-minute documentary tells their story from 1948 until today.

Discussion to follow.

Workshop Session 2: Friday 3:15 PM

1. Telling your congregation's story: An Appreciative Inquiry Journey How Cohesive Stories of Gratitude Shape Relational Identity

Facilitators: Samuel Mahaffey, Janet Szabo, Montana

The Centennial Celebration of Mountain View Mennonite Church is the setting for our faith community to reflect on its past and to engage in a discernment process asking: "What is God calling us to do and to be in the next one hundred years?" This presentation explicates the on-going Appreciative Inquiry process which begins with a shared sense of relational identity emerging from cohesive stories of gratitude. In an emerging AI process woven into worship services and Sunday meetings in the Fellowship Hall, the metaphor of a journey to the Promised Land finds congruence in the metaphor of a journey of an organization to its *positive life-giving core*. The process is affirming the historic peace testimony of the Mennonites while shaping a shared sense of leading to 'keep the door open' to the community the church is called to serve.

Janet Szabo is an elder in Mountain View Mennonite Church and has actively participated in shaping the Appreciative Inquiry process including co-facilitating meetings. Samuel Mahaffy, Ph.D. is an AI facilitator who has journeyed with MVMC in AI since 2012. He is the author of the forthcoming book Relational Presence: Discovering Sacred Space in Decision Making

2. Growing your congregation: Congregational Revitalization

Facilitator: Craig Morton, Idaho

Hope or Fear: Really, why do you want to revitalize your congregation?

"The stories of faltering church programs, declining attendance, the rise of the 'nones', and the pressure to do more, bigger, faster, better programs continue to hijack our congregational motivations. The call of the Gospel propels us into mission but often our motivations are not based on who God has created us uniquely to as churches.

Sometimes our attempts are driven by fear, sometimes by hope; and sometimes, it is hard to tell the difference. In this session, we will look at the process of missional appraisal, define processes and outcomes of appraisal discernment, and develop a plan for each congregation to develop a discernment process."

3. Tending our common life: Creating cultures of safety

Facilitator: Katherine Jameson Pitts, Executive Conference Minister, PNMC

In 2013, the Delegate Assembly of MC USA passed a resolution that we "will work proactively to promote the protection of children and youth from all forms of abuse and neglect and to advocate for their safety." This workshop will explore practical ways congregations can build a culture of protection for children and other vulnerable persons. We will look at policies for child safety and reporting abuse as well as practices to encourage all in the congregation (including pastors and leaders) to identify and maintain appropriate boundaries.

4. Deepening our faith: Resisting Violence through the Image of the Devil -- what is Pope Francis up to?

Facilitator: Michael Trice, School of Theology and Ministry, Seattle University, Washington

This current Pope has stolen headlines for his charismatic style and servant manner as a leader. Some have even commented that he acts like a Mennonite! What does this world religious leader think about violence? Lately his response to understanding structural and systemic violence is being addressed through the image of the devil, which is a feeding frenzy for popular media. From Francis' Palm Sunday address to daily reports, he often refers to the devil as a way of thinking about violence and our responsibility to resist structural evil. Why is he using the image of the devil? What are the references to the way of peace in resisting evil, which are core to Francis' graphic imagery? What happens if we do not resist the devil and his powers? And finally, what

must agents of peace become in a world that sees violence as normative in the world? Our presenter, Dr. Michael Trice, will present on these themes based on his professional and scholarly experience in the field of conflict studies and theological Christian ethics. (Dr. Trice serves as a member of the Faculty and Assistant Dean for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue at Seattle University).

5. Engaging the world - Addressing Immigration in the congregation

Facilitator: Iris de León-Hartshorn, Director of Transformative Peacemaking with Mennonite Church USA – with simultaneous translation into Spanish.

Radical Hospitality--This session will introduce the new "Immigration Statement" that was requested by the delegate body at Phoenix 2013. The new six to thirteen week Bible Study, "Radical Hospitality" will also be shared and how it can be used in congregations and small groups. This is an important issue that touches many parts of our church across the United States. I hope you will join us as we explore this new material together and join in God's mission of love and reconciliation.

6. Engaging the world: Partners in NW Mexico

Facilitators: Otoniel Soto, NW Mexico, NW Mexico Team: Curt Dorsing, Samuel Moran, Rick Troyer

WHAT GOD IS DOING IN NORTHWEST MEXICO

God is moving in NW Mexico. Churches are growing, new congregations are being planted, teaching seminars are being held, and new church buildings are being constructed. Have you got gifts or talents that God can use there? Come to our workshop to hear what Otoniel Soto, youth pastor at Cohuibampo Mennonite Church, has to share about what is happening now in our sister conference. See you there!