I was recently struck by this quote, “The single greatest challenge the church faces in this age is to be clear about who we are and what we are going to do about it.” It’s from David Boshart, MC USA Moderator-Elect. He goes on to say that we are God’s people, who proclaim what God has done and walk in God’s marvellous light.

I think he’s right, though I tend to be skeptical about phrases that begin, “the single greatest challenge”. Congregations who are clear who they are and what they are going to do about it seem to thrive whether they are liberal, or conservative, or moderate on any given issue. They find the pastoral search process easier. They have a sense of direction for their future. They know what skills and resources they need and seek them out. Clarity is a good thing. And it looks different for different congregations as they explore more deeply whom they are and what they are going to do about it.

We are exploring who we are by talking to one another. Using variations of table group conversation many of our congregations are sitting down to talk to one another. Conversations that might have taken place in more casual settings in the past are becoming intentional. Everyone’s voices are being included. While this practice may have started as a way to approach questions of human sexuality, a wide range of topics are being addressed in these meetings and we are learning to know one another more deeply.

We are learning to listen and tell stories. We are discovering how our brothers and sisters experience being God’s people together. And this is something we can learn how to do from one another! Jeryl Hollinger, pastor at Mt View Mennonite Church, has put together a detailed description of the process they have used. (Contact Katherine Pitts if you would like a copy.)

We are responding to the calling to be God’s people with a commitment to faith formation in children and youth. In PNMC, few congregations have large youth groups, but we are deeply committed to the faith formation of the children and youth in our congregations and communities. This is lived out in programs like Vacation Bible School, but more importantly, in developing genuine relationships with children – listening to them, loving them, and enfolding them as members of our communities. Rachel Gerber, MC USA Denominational Minister for Youth and Young Adults, recently wrote an article that describes exactly what is happening in our congregations.

We believe God cares about human needs and we are responding by joining in that work. Many of our congregations are relating to those on the margins of our society – through building relationships with persons without homes, through coming alongside those who have been devastated by storms or fires to rebuild; through the piecing together of quilts both to sell to finance relief and development work, as well as to wrap around someone who needs warmth. We engage in interfaith conversations and we provide assistance with the needs of daily life. We proclaim what God is doing by sharing generously of our gifts, time, and money.

We are God’s people. We are joining in God’s work in the world. I am encouraged by the stories of our congregations, and I believe you would be too. I invite you to come to our Annual Meeting at Zion Mennonite Church, June 24-25, whether or not you are a delegate. Come to share your story and to hear others’ stories of being God’s people here in the Pacific Northwest. Come because we are God’s people and together we proclaim God’s great love for us and live out that love in our world.
# Reflections from the Heartland

*By Brent Kauffman, Lebanon Mennonite*

In February of this year, Mark Diller, Jeremy Gibson, Tom Leggate and I (all fellow worshippers at Lebanon Mennonite Church) traveled to Hesston College in beautiful downtown Hesston, KS, to attend the Anabaptist Vision and Discipleship Series Seminar entitled “Not Just On Sunday” which featured speakers Shane Claiborne and Nes Espinosa. Both Shane and Nes are from a part of The Simple Way...an intentional community in intercity Philadelphia, PA.

We enjoyed awesome times of worship, had stimulating conversations, heard inspiring presentations and enjoyed meeting local people from Kansas and 16 other states.

One of the most memorable/impactful statements I heard was “the best is meant to be given away and shared.” Shane was telling about his time in India with Mother Teresa and how every year before school started they would throw a big celebration for the street children of Calcutta. One day Shane met a boy who said it was his birthday...but since both his parents were deceased, he knew he would not be receiving any presents.

Shane shared that he felt terrible for the boy, but knew that the nuns had said that they were not to play favorites. The nuns had stressed to “never give anything to one child that you couldn’t give to every child”, but he felt so badly for the boy that he decided to sneak the boy an ice-cream cone for his birthday. He purchased the treat and smuggled it back into the group of street kids to give it to the birthday boy.

However, instead of discreetly eating the cone quietly, the boy busted Shane and shouted out, “Hey! We’ve got ice cream!” Then the boy lined up all the street kids and with a great smile announced “And a lick for you...and a lick for you...and a lick for you...until everyone had their lick...and then proudly said to Shane, “And I’ve saved a lick for you and I too!” Shane said, “I faked my lick and boy triumphantly finished off the cone...and in that instant I had a better understanding of what it meant to really be ‘in community’.”

Acts 4:32-37 tells the story of the early church living in community. Everyone contributed what they had... “and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them.” (Acts 33c-34a)

We (PNMC) are a community of followers of Jesus...and yet in my 60+ years as a part of the gathered church family, I have yet to witness or even hear of someone selling property just so they can make a donation to the church. We are a community of followers of Jesus. Yet we often hold other members of the faith community at arm’s length. Are we afraid to get “too close” or allow other disciples to know the depth of the angst we’re experiencing?

I think we can learn from Shane’s stories. We often have a strict code of conduct or cultural hurdles that people must cross before we allow them to enjoy the benefits, love and acceptance of community. God loves each of us unconditionally and “the best we have to offer” is God’s love! How can we do better at extending God’s love to all people? How can we be more efficient as conduits of mercy and grace as we allow God’s love to flow through us into a hurting community?

The story of the mass shooting at Excel Industries from Hesston is a vivid reminder that extending God’s love and mercy to all people....and Shane’s comments on our call to “beat our swords into plow shares and our spears into pruning hooks” (Isaiah 2:4) isn’t just reserved for the intercity forum but is extremely relevant everywhere...even in a pristine little town in the heartland. *Keep the faith!*

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## New Staff at Washington’s Camp Camrec

David and Saralyn Jantzi joined Camp Camrec staff in the summer of 2015. They share one fulltime position as Program Directors focusing mostly on summer camp development.

The couple moved from Harrisonburg, VA where they lived for one year after getting married in 2014. Saralyn attended Hesston College for Disaster Management with a focus in Psychology. She transferred to Eastern Mennonite University where she majored in Psychology and minored in Outdoor Ministry and Adventure Leadership. David graduated from Eastern Mennonite University’s four-year Nursing Program. Saralyn grew up in Lancaster, PA and David is the product of parents that work for MCC. He was born in Congo and spent his high school years in Indonesia.

The two enjoy any adventure sport there is! Much of their free time is spent outside hiking, running, rock climbing, mountain biking, or doing things of the sort. They’ve learned some new winter sports this snowy season! They enjoy a good road trip and any long adventurous journey! Their dream for Camrec is to intertwine some of these passions into camp programming for children and adults.

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Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference

Evaegel is the tri-annual newsletter of Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference. Newsletter submissions, feedback and subscription information can be sent to: Evangel/Editor brenda@pnmc.org or PO Box 301036, Portland, OR 97294

In an effort to be environmentally and fiscally responsible, this newsletter is issued electronically. If this creates difficulties, hard copies are available by request. The next deadline for submissions is June 30, 2016.

Grab a warm beverage and enjoy archived issues here: http://www.pnmc.org/Resources/Evangel

Visit the PNMC Facebook page for photos and upcoming events

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By Brent Kauffman, Lebanon Mennonite
Seeing Cuba

By Kathleen Aeschliman, PNMC Board Member

Our flight touched down at the Havana Airport on January 8. There we met all twenty-four persons on TourMagination’s “Churches, Culture & Beaches of Cuba”. Jack and Irene Suderman served as our very competent tour guides. They are fluent in Spanish and have visited Cuba many times since 1959. They worked to help us become informed. The majority of our traveling companions were Canadians; Mary Boshart and I were among nine Americans.

Cuba is on Eastern Time. We had been up early for flights to Chicago, Toronto, then to Havana. Our beds at the Nacional Hotel were very comfortable and most welcome. Two nights later found us at the Roc Presidents Hotel, and the last four nights we spent at the Iberostar Tainos in Varadero. Each place provided lovely rooms and ample breakfast buffets.

Sunday morning’s outdoor worship was a lively experience with a Brethren in Christ congregation in a village near Havana. Following music and scripture reading, there was beautiful liturgical dance by young women and singing performed by the many children present. Their hospitality included serving a roasted pig that was carved at the table as we were treated to a lovely meal. It was embarrassing to be given so much by people who have so little.

A visit to the Bay of Pigs interpretive center reminded us of the US-Cuban tensions of 1961, as did our walk through some of the tunnels that had been constructed as a means of escape during the period of the Cuban Missile crisis.

Raul Suarez founded the Martin Luther King Center, which is now led by his son Joel. Joel spoke of the childhood time of his 78-years old father, when people were starving, adding “No one is starving now”. Each person receives a small food allowance, including rice with a few black beans; it is certainly not a sumptuous diet. He also stated that the Cuban government is asking the churches for help in working with prisoners and the elderly, adding “Reality is stronger than our strengths”.

Traveler John Lapp, who headed MCC in the 1990’s, was recognized by the president of the Cuban Council of Churches for his work in helping Cubans during the 1990’s crisis, when many children were born with birth defects, primarily vision and hearing problems, because pregnant women had poor nutrition. MCC shipped high protein food supplements for these women. The CCC provides training for persons with disabilities; since the 1990’s, churches have developed a vision for acting in their communities.

Founded in 1941 with eight members, the Cuban Council of Churches now has 53 members (11 are associate members). Although the Roman Catholic Church is not a member, it works with CCC, a relationship which is at its best in 500 years.

We learned that people are eager to have Bibles (R.C.’s were forbidden to have Bibles prior to the 1959 Revolution) and that Cuba is able to get Bibles from Amity Press in China.

A lighthearted highlight of this day was driving to our hotel in some of Cuba’s old cars. Mary and I rode in a red 1946 Ford convertible.

We learned a lot at the Christian Center for Reflection and Dialogue. They work with senior citizens and run an award-winning organic farm. Many of us brought small gifts of soap, toothpaste, gardening gloves and small items of clothing which we donated through their organization. Although Cubans now have good education, salaries are low and with little discretionary income; many items simply may not be available.

We had been told that we would be safe in Cuba, and it did feel that way. There is theft and drunk driving, but there is no organized crime. Life for Cubans is not easy; the current Cuban urban family is multi-generational with just one bedroom. The divorce rate is high, and most families now have just 1-2 children. Abortion is free and legal. The population is aging.

We had two free days. We divided our time between taking a bus into town and walking the beautiful beaches. We saw few cars on the roads but there are many, many buses, bicycles, and some horses pulling carts. There are hectares of sugar cane as well as many uncultivated fields.

It was a wonderful experience. Please keep the people and churches of Cuba in your prayers.
The Pacific Northwest Mennonite Historical Society held its annual meeting on Jan. 15 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, OR. Marlene Kropf was the meeting’s guest speaker.

Kropf, who grew up in a Sheridan, OR, Mennonite congregation, titled her address “Full Circle: Leaving Home & Returning.” Her presentation reflected on her upbringing in Sheridan, her experiences as a Mennonite minister and spiritual leader, and her retirement to Port Townsend, WA, where she now lives with her husband, Stan.

In the Sheridan Mennonite church where Kropf was raised, she felt nurtured and encouraged in her faith, she said, despite the church’s patriarchal leanings. The Sheridan church produced a number of strong female leaders, Kropf said, including her and Shirley Yoder Brubaker, the first female moderator of the Virginia Mennonite Conference.

“We believed what we were told” about God’s calling in our lives, Kropf said, “and we acted on it.” When they heard conflicting messages about God’s calling and about the potential for women to serve as church leaders, they “picked the one that was life-giving.”

Kropf provided several examples to show the strict rules dictating what women could and could not do in that community. Women had to wear their hair long and their legs could not be uncovered; even female babies wore white tights, she said, though male infants could have bare legs.

As a teen required to wear long brown tights, she said she would roll them down around her ankles when she was too hot; when asked by schoolmates why she had to wear the tights, she lied, saying “because I had rheumatism.”

Although she loved that community, she moved away as an adult, believing she had already “received the best gifts” from the Sheridan church. While a high school student at Western Mennonite, Kropf felt at home among other Mennonite young people, though she became more aware of gender injustices there; having won an award for the best biblical essay in her class, her teacher had to decide whether she and another girl could present their work in chapel—something that had not been questioned when their male peers won. She was allowed to read it.

During her young adulthood in Portland, Kropf believed she experienced a “reconfiguring of her faith,” one that would serve her well in subsequent years in Jamaica with Mennonite Central Committee, and then Elkhart and the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

At a contemplative retreat, Kropf—then experiencing a “dark night of the soul”—felt like the scales were removed from her eyes and that she could see: her upbringing hadn’t brought her “an adult relationship with God,” one that she would need to build during her time at AMBS as a student and then, later, as a professor of spiritual formation and worship.

Kropf’s spiritual journey has led her to consider the interaction of Celtic spirituality and the Anabaptist tradition, and she has, in recent years, led eight pilgrimages to the Celtic lands.

After Kropf’s presentation, Jerry Barkman, treasurer of PNMHS, provided a brief report, and then Don Bacher, president of PNMHS, highlighted the significant challenges facing the organization, including the need for more monetary and human resources, as well as the desire to have more people interested in the organization’s work. Bacher expressed a dream that PNMHS would continue to grow, and that the board and its work might expand beyond Oregon’s borders to become a group that truly represents Pacific Northwest Mennonites.

Society members also acknowledged board members & staff leaving, those continuing and affirmed new members. Departing members were Don Bacher, Goldie Heyerly and John Gingerich. New members are Michael Barber (Eugene Mennonite) and Lin Rush (Portland Mennonite) and librarian Carolyn Gingerich. Continuing members are Jerry Barkman, Pat Hershberger, Ray Kaufman, Melanie Springer Mock, Gloria Nussbaum and Margaret Shetler. The annual meeting ended with congregational singing. The next annual meeting is planned for January 2017.

The PNMHS serves the congregations and communities of the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference. It was created in 1988 with the intent of helping historians and genealogists; collect, preserve and organize records, writing, and artifacts of Mennonite groups; and to increase interest in Mennonite history and genealogy. Its headquarters are at the Ivan and Pearl Kropf Heritage Center, located in Hubbard, OR. www.pnmhs.org

PNMC Ministerial Updates

First Mennonite Church, in Aberdeen, ID, is seeking a full-time pastor.
Portland Mennonite, in Portland, OR, is seeking an associate pastor.
Prince of Peace, in Anchorage, AK, is seeking a part-time pastor.

Please contact PNMC Executive Conference Minister, Katherine Jameson Pitts, to inquire.
Long History of Giving

Contributed by Pastor Mathew Swora along with members of Zion Mennonite Church

On Sunday, February 14, 2016, Nate Yoder, Executive Director of West Coast MCC, presented Zion Mennonite Church with a beautiful plaque to celebrate Zion’s contributions of over half a million dollars to MCC, when tallied over the years. While a thing to marvel at and celebrate, it also makes sense, considering the history and the character of Zion over its 123 years of life. Started by Amish Mennonites who came from churches in Missouri, Arkansas and elsewhere beginning in the 1880’s, practical, hands-on expressions of Anabaptist faith have always been important to Zion’s members and attendees. These include farming, gardening, construction, quilting, mechanics, social services, health care and education, to support their families and each other, as well as Christ’s mission to the world.

Equally important to Zion Mennonite Church are Christian Education and worship, especially singing. It was while roofing the first sanctuary, as the laborers sang, “We’re marching to Zion,” that the name for the congregation was inspired. The words on the cornerstone, laid in 1955, capture that spirit of worship and service: “To the glory of God and the service of the community.” Visitors remark on the mix of musical styles in worship, some of the songs contemporary, some traditional in a cappella four-part harmony, and on the zest and quality with which we sing either style. From Zion’s members have come vocal quartets and ensembles, choral singers and conductors for schools and colleges.

As for mission, many of Zion’s men have done alternative service during wartime, and others have spent years in service programs, like Mennonite Disaster Service, or in mission work, here and overseas, especially in India, Mexico and Bolivia. Some retirees serve in SOOP, in local service agencies, or at a Native American school in Arizona. In partnership with Calvary Mennonite Church, Zion’s members helped start Hope Village, an affordable retirement community in Canby, OR. Over the decades we have hosted asylum-seekers from Poland and Vietnam, and are exploring possibilities for doing the same with refugees today.

We have also developed relationships with the immigrant Hispanic community in the Willamette Valley through ESL classes hosted onsite and taught by Zion members and friends, and Bridging Cultures Canby, which gets Anglo and Hispanic neighbors together for food, fun and immigration-related advocacy. We are partners with The Canby Center for faith-based community service.

Some members host a food pantry in their home, while others serve as food scouts and transporters for other local food banks. Our annual summer Vacation Bible School draws over a hundred children and youth from the church and the community, plus many volunteers. Scholarships for attendees to Drift Creek Camp are an added draw to VBS, and have planted seeds of faith in many hearts beyond the membership. Drift Creek Camp is also very significant to Zion’s members who regularly go there, many of whom have served there in various capacities. The annual Quilting Workshop, draws people for support and inspiration in the art, as well as for the soups and bread. It is a witness to God through beauty, skill and hospitality. Western Mennonite School has always been important to us, with many members having attended there, taught there or serving on its Board of Directors. Zion’s missional energy has led to the formation of at least four other churches, two of which were planned, planted and supported long-term by Zion: Silverton Hills (near Silverton, OR) and Meadowbrook Church (near Molalla, OR).

Zion’s grounds host a summer garden for community food banks, a Pennsylvania-style barn for storing MCC supplies, and the offices and library of the Pacific NW Mennonite Historical Society in the Ivan and Pearl Kropf Heritage Center.

Zion’s membership is at or around 165 members; weekly attendance at worship is around 140. Zion has two pastors: Jana Gingerich, the Associate Pastor since 2003, with responsibilities in Christian Education and youth especially; and Mathew Swora, Lead Pastor since 2014. Our very capable and friendly Administrative Assistant, Jodi Hansen, has kept things running very well since 2009.

Our mission statement links the past with the future: “Zion Mennonite Church covenants to grow together as a Christ-centered community extending our Anabaptist branch into our world, bearing the lasting fruit of discipleship, and planting the seeds of God’s Reign through hospitality, service and reconciliation with God and others.” As we look to the future, we hope to build upon these God-given strengths to better share the love of God with the world, including the world that is coming to us in this day of massive worldwide refugee displacement, and to strengthen Christian discipleship through small groups and the support of families. We look forward to hosting our friends from the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference this summer.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST MENNONITE CONFERENCE

TELL ME THE STORY

Psalm 107: 1-3

2016 ANNUAL MEETING / ZION MENNONITE CHURCH / JUNE 23-25

Visit www.pnmc.org for registration and program details!

Spring 2016
By Brett Tieszen, PNMC Treasurer

Income Statement:
- Giving from congregations was below expectations, with some support being withheld because of disagreement in the recent conversations on sexuality.
- Giving from individuals far exceeded expectations due largely to a gift from the estate of Linda Bartel of Aberdeen, ID.
- Income from our annual meeting was below expectations but expenses were far lower so the gathering stayed in the black. The same was true for income and expenses related to the Peace Mennonite property.
- Other income was down due to investment accounts, which fell in value in 2015 along with the rest of the broader market.
- Staff expenses came in under budget because employees did not work as many hours as had been expected.
- Travel expenses came in $3800 below budget but were offset by translation expenses which were $2200 over budget.
- The pastoral leadership team line was over budget due to costs of the annual pastors’ retreat.

Balance Sheet:
When Peace Mennonite Church in metro Portland closed in 2010 its property was given to the conference. At that time the conference board did not envision administering property long-term so it was not added to PNMC’s balance sheet. Five years later PNMC continues to own the land and should therefore see it included on the balance sheet. The amount listed on the balance sheet is the value of the land at the time of its acquisition in 2010. (Adding only the value of the land simplifies the accounting by avoiding the need to calculate a value on and then depreciate the structures.) Recording the property in PNMC’s financials significantly impacted the balance sheet by increasing equity and assets by $434,470 but had no effect on net income or cash flows. As of January 31, 2016, net assets available totaled $209,535.

Statement of Cash Flows:
For the fiscal year which ended in January 2016 net cash increased by $1133.
PNMC Board of Directors
Jennifer Delanty
Moderator, 2016
Jack Swaim
Mod-Elect, 2016
Tom Brenneman
Secretary, 2018
Brett Tieszen
Treasurer, 2017
Nelly Ascencio
CIHAN, 2016
Kathleen Aeschliman
At-Large, 2019
Sarah Hooley
At-Large, 2016
Todd Lehman
At-Large, 2018
Matthew Yoder
At-Large, 2017

PNMC District Pastors
Wendell Amstutz: Western Mennonite Church
Wendell Amstutz & Samuel Moran: Jerusalén Iglesia Mennonita, Ministerios Restauración, Centro Cristiano Pentecostés, First Mennonite of McMinnville, Centro Cristiano Pentecostés, Warden Mennonite
Bob Buxman: Salem Mennonite, Lebanon Mennonite, Pacific Covenant, Zion Mennonite
Tim Gascho: First Mennonite of Aberdeen
Gary Jewell: Evergreen Mennonite, Hyde Park Mennonite, Menno Mennonite, Prince of Peace Mennonite, Seattle Mennonite
Renee Johns: Emmaus Christian Fellowship, Evergreen Heights Mennonite, Filer Mennonite
Brent Kauffman: Albany Mennonite, Bend Mennonite, River of Life Fellowship
Cecil Miller: Mt. View Mennonite, Shalom Church, Spring Valley Mennonite
Rose Marie Zook Barber: Anawim Christian Community, Corvallis Mennonite Fellowship
Katherine Jameson Pitts: International Bethel City Church, Calvary Mennonite, Eugene Mennonite, Portland Mennonite, Logsdon Neighborhood Church, Menno Meeting (SLC)

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Our Mission Statement is to:
P  Promote personal spiritual development,
N  Nurture healthy congregations,
M  Make strong connections, and
C  Call each other to fulfill God’s purpose for the world.

PNMC Calendar of Events*
April 29-30, PNMC Board Meeting, DCC, Lincoln City, OR
May 7, Western Mennonite School’s Annual Benefit Auction, Salem, OR
May 12, Evening Meeting to discuss the future of Mennonite Education with Jim Brenneman, Jim Caskey from Goshen College, Mercer Island, WA
May 14, Breakfast Meeting with Jim Brenneman and Lee Snyder to discuss the future of Mennonite Education, 8:00am at the Country Cottage, Woodburn, OR

May 22, Multi-congregational Hymn Sing, Hosted by Salem Mennonite, 6:00pm, Salem Mennonite Church, Keizer, OR
June 23, Pastoral Ethics Training, 1:00pm to 5:00pm, Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, OR
June 23-25, PNMC Annual Assembly, Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, OR
July 31-August 5, Bike the San Juans MCC Fundraiser, Friday Harbor, WA

* Details for the events above can be found on the PNMC Calendar (pnmc.org/Calendar) or in archived e-Bulletins (pnmc.org/Resources/eBulletin).

The PNMC e-Bulletin is distributed bi-monthly and includes information about PNMC and church wide agencies. To subscribe, send an email to brenda@pnmc.org with “Subscribe e-Bulletin” in the subject line.

Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference

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