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From the PNMC Office

Together, we pray for our brothers and sisters in Filer, ID. Sarah Hooley reports: “*The [Filer Mennonite Church](#) family continues meeting in our little white church house where we listen, share, pray, sing, run foot races, sew, and eat. We are energized by the gathering of community kids for Summer Bible School’s week of Bible stories; by the International Gift Sale, a well-supported, fair trade event; and by other excuses to get together. You can pray with us as we discuss how to best use our nine-acre property, money, and energy to serve our community.*”

The 2017 Conference Communications Council meeting, held on Saturday, February 4, was a fruitful gathering of pastors and church leaders. Folks from across PNMC were warmly welcomed by Albany Mennonite Church who graciously hosted the event, providing snacks and lunch. A group of brothers and sisters from Idaho tuned in long-distance through electronic communication. In total, nearly 70 people participated.



Although the content of the morning session regarding the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict was heavy, it was inspiring to hear from Alex Awad, former Dean at Bethlehem Bible College. He and his wife, Brenda, currently live in Eugene, OR. It was a privilege to hear his passionate story and gain a deeper understanding of the conflict from a Palestinian Christian's perspective. Through stories, maps, and photographs, Dr. Awad was able to illustrate how government policies play out and affect communities in the region. It is a sobering situation with widespread consequences, leaving enormous questions, such as, “*To whom does the Holy Land belong?*”

Dr. Awad's message is pertinent to the upcoming Mennonite Church USA convention in Orlando. As a body of believers we are urged to take seriously the task of learning more about the issues facing the region in the Middle East. In 2015, a resolution, entitled “*A Statement of Support for our Palestinian and Israeli Partners in Peacemaking*” was passed in Kansas City. As our next national gathering draws near, congregations are encouraged to prepare for convention and to continue the conversation. The Mennonite Palestine Israel Network prepared a guide in response to the 2015 resolution. The resolution pledged to devote the next two years to learning about the situation and to discernment regarding the Mennonite Church response. The basis of the guide was written by Palestinian Christian leaders in 2009 as an appeal to the world, including their Christian brothers and sisters, to understand their situation and to respond with action. *Kairos Palestine* is deeply committed to Jesus’ way of love and non-violence, even in the face of entrenched injustice. The resource provides helpful background information about the reality on the ground in order to gain a more full understanding of the situation. It is available from [MennoMedia](#) for \$5 and as a free download at [Mennonite Church USA](#) and [MennoPIN](#). (A Spanish translation will be available soon.)

Following Dr. Awad's presentation, participants enjoyed a time of fellowship followed by sharing at table groups. Participants studied Matthew 12:15-21 to sift for kernels of wisdom in the passage:

“Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.

I will put my spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; and in his name the Gentiles will hope.”

The afternoon session was spent reflecting on visioning discussions from our Annual Meeting in June and continuing that conversation as we look ahead. Dimensions of PNMC that were identified as valuable in June included our sense of unity from worshipping together; our joy of community; our unity amid diversity; the safety net we provide for one another, and an open Christ-centered culture. In June, focus areas for the future were identified as being needed through peacemaking in our communities, justice in our communities; greater inclusiveness and diversity; and building stronger community through smaller gatherings among congregations. Table groups were asked to envision how conference might look five years from now and to think of specific ways that congregations can or could address the areas of opportunity. People were challenged to think about what's working and what isn't in their churches. How can we build and support healthy congregations? What are our dreams? **What hopes do we hold for our faith community?** These ideas were shared with the group.

After PNMC Treasurer, Brett Tieszen, reported on the conference finances and ideas regarding the Peace Property in Portland, each congregational representative shared areas in which they would appreciate prayer as well as areas in which they have found hope.

To see images from the gathering, visit the [Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference page](#) on Facebook.

PNMC CONGREGATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS & MINISTRIES

Listed chronologically, then alphabetically by organization

Drift Creek Camp

Online registration is now available for the [2017 Oregon Mennonite Women's Retreat, Springtime for the Soul, April 21-23](#), where Marlene Kropf will be guest speaker. For details, visit www.driftcreek.org.

*Check the DCC [website](#) for updates to summer camp programs affected by snow days.

Mennonite Disaster Service Oregon Unit

The MDS Oregon Unit will hold its **Annual Meeting** at [Albany Mennonite Church](#) on **Saturday, March 18, 2017** from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm. Guest speakers include Brett Troyer, MDS Project Logistics Coordinator from Lititz, PA and Karen Parmelee from the Oregon Office of Emergency Management in Salem. Lunch will be provided by the MDS Oregon Unit and an offering will be taken to support the Unit's mission. Please RSVP to [Clyde Hockman](#) (503.263.1210) by **March 12**.

Pacific Northwest Mennonite Historical Society

It may have been cool and rainy outside on January 21, but inside Zion Mennonite Church there was warm fellowship, a delicious lunch of homemade rolls, soup and pie and amazing stories! View images and enjoy video recording using these links: [Photos](#) | [Video](#).

MENNONITE CHURCH USA & OTHER CHURCHWIDE AGENCIES

listed alphabetically by organization

Mennonite Central Committee

Galen Hofer and Stephanie Phibbs from Denver, CO, are long-time admirers of MCC but in 2015 they decided to turn their admiration into collaboration. Originally Phibbs, a health care administrator in Denver, suggested volunteering abroad for a year or two. However, Hofer, a contractor who owns a small construction company with a business partner, couldn't imagine leaving his work or uprooting the family, including his and Phibbs' 3-year-old son, Micah. Still, the couple wanted to do something to contribute to MCC's relief, development and peace work. "My life is so ridiculously privileged compared to most people in the world," Hofer said. They decided to give one year of construction business income over two years. Hofer and Phibbs were especially moved to give because of the crises in Syria and Iraq and the desire to help build a better world for their son. "Peace and justice issues are central to my heart," Phibbs said, citing past trips to Palestine and Iraq which informed her understanding of conflicts and peacebuilding. "I think that's **one of the most important things we can do for our kids** – showing them viable means of making a difference and highlighting positive things happening in the world you can contribute to." Giving the year's income is something they're financially stable enough to do, according to the couple, because they have saved, invested, and both work. They hope their donation will spur others to give to MCC if serving abroad is not possible.

PNMC Congregations— Are your **young adults** looking for ways to get involved with MCC? There are multiple opportunities coming up this summer and fall. MCC is in the midst of recruitment and have plenty of room for any young adult who is interested in joining the work of MCC. Whether it be long-term learning/serving experiences, short-term learning/connecting opportunities, or a chance to serve their own community while making money for their college fund we have options. [Click here](#) for details.



Mennonite Church USA

Mennonite Church USA will try a fresh approach in regard to the role of delegates at this year's convention in Orlando. This year we will be trying something new — the **Future Church Summit** — in conjunction with the regular Delegate Assembly.

Learn more at [this link](#).

Read the latest edition of Equipping [here](#).

Upcoming e-Bulletins:

Mar 6 (submissions due by 2/27)
Mar 20 (submissions due by 3/13)
Apr 3 (submissions due by 3/27)
Apr 17 (submissions due by 4/10)

If you would like to contribute, please send a **brief announcement** in Spanish & English with website links to brenda@pnmc.org. Our goal is to provide a valuable resource, not an In-Box jammer. If space is tight, we may omit announcements that are not as pertinent to PNMC. Announcements will run ONE time only, unless specified otherwise. *We welcome your feedback!*

For more PNMC updates: <http://pnmc.org> e-Bulletin Archives: <http://pnmc.org/Resources/eBulletin>
