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## From the PNMC Office

It's that time of year again! We are collecting reports from church-affiliated organizations for the **Delegate Handbook** for our 2019 Annual Meeting at Albany Mennonite Church, **June 21-22**. If you have a report to share, please send to [Barb Buxman](mailto:Barb.Buxman).

## PNMC CONGREGATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS & MINISTRIES

Listed chronologically, then alphabetically by organization

### A Reflection on Anawim, by Pastor Steve Kimes, now serving at Eugene Mennonite Church, Eugene, OR



In 1994, my wife Diane and I met Edgar, a homeless man asking for cash. We were on our way to church, but we'd be happy to have him come to dinner tomorrow night. He took our information and we parted well. At two o'clock that morning, we received a phone call from a bar saying that a man named Edgar was passed out drunk and he had to leave, but had no address on his person but ours, and he was wondering if he could send him to us in a taxi? We agreed and that was how our work with people on the street began.

We quickly shared our evening meals not only with Edgar, but a number of other houseless folks in our neighborhood, six days a week. We spent two years sharing our meals, listening to stories, trying to help when we could. We didn't preach, we didn't try to start a huge ministry. We just wanted to learn what it meant to be homeless.

Eventually, we started a congregation: Anawim Christian Community. In coordination with people on the street, we felt that they needed a place they could call their church home, a community that they didn't feel shame in, but could receive and give in equal measure. "Anawim" is a Hebrew word that means "the poor who seek the Lord for deliverance." So we began in Gresham. After a couple years we had to move to another facility. After another year we moved again. And again. I was tired of having to start over again every year or so, so I determined that we would have four locations throughout the Portland area, each congregation would be no more than 30 people.

That was the ideal, but soon two locations--one near Portland Mennonite and one at the location of Peace Mennonite--grew larger than thirty people a week. We led worship for and fed 40-50 people a week. And we couldn't afford the rent in both facilities. As Peace Mennonite closed, the PNMC welcomed Bethel and Anawim to join in management of the 2 1/2 acre facility. So we redoubled our efforts at the one location in Gresham.

This meant more opportunities to minister. Because we had one location, other churches and individuals in the area found it easier to come and minister to the larger number of people, including some that became permanent partners of the work. Houseless folks were trained to be equal partners in the work we were doing. Social services were available to help people get housing. We organized, representing houseless folks to the city and county and media and the community as a whole.

But as we became more known, there was greater opposition. Some neighbors were making regular calls to the city, complaining about city codes we were breaking. Other neighbors came to the church property to threaten and attack folks we legally had staying on the church property. We began receiving death threats from a few people, telling us to shut down what we were doing. This also took a toll on the full-time ministers. Health problems increased. One pastor was having PTSD episodes. And I started to have suicidal thoughts.

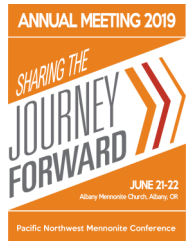
It wasn't that I seriously thought about committing suicide. But I was so overwhelmed on every side by demands that I woke up every morning, hoping and praying that this was the day that I would have a stroke or a heart attack and so wouldn't be responsible for hundreds of lives as well as all that was going wrong.

It was during that time that a woman named Eugenia came regularly. She was a disabled woman, waiting for her housing to come in. In the meantime, an officer told her to leave her approved spot in Gresham, and if he saw her again he would arrest her. Her anxiety skyrocketed and she struggled every day to go to Portland every night to sleep on the street and then to return to Gresham to obtain the meals and day shelter she needed. One night, she left our church, collapsed about a quarter mile away and then passed away in the night.

Over twenty years I heard the constant attacks and theft of people's survival property during sweeps. From that point on, we organized protests at Gresham City Hall, demanding human rights for the homeless. In one of these protests, eight of us were arrested, and later cleared of all charges.

In 2016, we were given evidence that someone was using our property to regularly distribute drugs to our community and others. So we shut down all of our ministry until we could clear the property of this destruction. Once this was done, the city successfully arranged for us to no longer be at the property. I was too exhausted to open up another facility and felt that God was telling me to rest for a time.

Thank Jesus for the work that Anawim was able to do, the lives saved and the actions we began and others have been able to continue! *We give thanks to the PNMC for the support and care during the time we were active.*



## MENNONITE CHURCH USA & OTHER CHURCHWIDE AGENCIES

listed alphabetically by organization

### Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Did you miss Pastors and Leaders 2019? You're in luck; it was recorded! More than 145 people came together on the AMBS campus Feb. 25–28 to explore the theme of “Loving Our Neighbors in Tense Times.” Attendees were encouraged to imagine and proclaim new narratives that embrace marginalized communities and counter oppression in today's society. For a full recap of the conference, you can [read more here](#). To listen to presentations by keynote speakers, [follow this link](#).

**Gain peacebuilding skills for today and tomorrow.** Prepare for work and scholarship at the cross-section of theology and transformative peacebuilding through Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary's **Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies** program. Concentrations include Conflict Transformation, Environmental Sustainability Leadership, and International Development Administration. For more information, visit: [ambs.edu/matps](http://ambs.edu/matps).

### Mennonite Church USA



Mennonite Church USA convention planning staff is excited to announce the worship speakers for **MennoCon19** in Kansas City, MO, **July 2-6**. Worship will be intergenerational, bringing together youth, junior youth and adults. “This amazing group of speakers is passionate and skilled, inviting everyone to join God's ongoing story,” said Scott Hartman, director of event planning for MC USA. “We sought speakers whose message will appeal to young and old.” The Scripture for convention is John 20:19-23 where Jesus appears to the frightened disciples after he has risen from the dead. Each worship service will focus on a small part of this Scripture, beginning with “**God invites us**” and moving through to the final service with “**God Sends Us**.” Speakers include: Dustin Galyon, Sue Park-Hur, Leonard Dow, Glen Guyton and former Albany Mennonite Church pastor, Meghan Good! Meghan is currently a teaching pastor at Trinity Mennonite Church in Glendale, AZ, and author of *The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today*. Meghan recently completed a D. Min at Portland Seminary. She enjoys writing, travel and helping people rediscover the dazzling story of God. More details [here](#).

### Mennonite Disaster Service

Recent flooding in the Midwest has created a surge of MDS volunteer opportunities. Follow [this link](#) for details.

### Mennonite Education Agency



Carlos Romero has announced his intention to transition from his role as executive director of Mennonite Education Agency (MEA), effective in July 2019. The MEA Board of Directors accepted his announcement at a March 8-9 meeting with regret and deep appreciation for his passionate commitment to Mennonite education and decades of faithful service to the church and its schools. Romero has served as executive director since the formation of MEA in 2002, guiding the new agency's mission to strengthen the life, witness and identity of Mennonite Church USA through education. In recent years, he led the board and schools to enlarge their vision from "schools for Mennonites" to "Mennonite schools for all" in response to the increasing need for a distinctively Anabaptist witness in education.

After the board provided a positive review of Romero's work, Romero discerned that this is the right time to transition to a new person to lead MEA into the future. Read the full story [here](#).

### Mennonite Men

[Love Crosses Borders](#) is an upcoming immersion experience with immigrants through Mennonite Men. Love is the greatest of all virtues. But what does love look like in times of cynicism and polarization? For the week of **July 28-August 3**, Mennonite Men will journey to Georgia and connect with Casa Alterna, a hospitality house devoted to faithful acts of mercy and justice alongside its first-wave immigrant neighbors, mostly from Guatemala. *What can unwelcomed immigrants teach the Church about love? How can the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement inform and inspire us to a love that crosses borders?* Highlights of the immersion experience may include: receive hospitality from immigrants; hear testimonies from immigrants; serve at El Refugio; visit the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, AL, the nation's first memorial dedicated to people terrorized by lynching, and mass incarceration. To find out more about this opportunity, contact Steve Thomas at [stevet@mennonitemen.org](mailto:stevet@mennonitemen.org). There is a registration fee of \$345 in addition to personal transportation costs. A registration form is available [here](#). *The mission of Mennonite Men is to engage men to grow, give, and serve as followers of Jesus.*

#### Upcoming e-Bulletins:

Apr 15 (submissions due by 4/8)  
 May 6 (submissions due by 3/29)  
 May 20 (submissions due by 5/13)  
 June 3 (submissions due by 5/27)

If you would like to contribute, please send a brief announcement in Spanish & English with website links to [brenda@pnmc.org](mailto: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>