



# e-Bulletin

*Providing bi-weekly communication for PNMC*

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## From the PNMC OFFICE

The annual PNMC Pastors' Retreat was held last month at Rockaway Beach, OR. Below is information about the presenters:

**Doug Kaufman** pastors at Benton Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN, and serves as director of pastoral ecology for the Center for Sustainable Climate Solutions and Mennonite Creation Care Network. Doug calls himself a river pastor, having baptized people in the Elkhart River for over 15 years and having led a Hoosier Riverwatch group monitoring the health of the river. Doug has also been a conference minister with the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. He is pursuing a Th.M. in theology and ecology at Toronto School of Theology.

**Ken Pitts** is an Environmental Science School Outreach Specialist for Oregon Metro: [more info here!](#)

**Brian Ettling** has worked as a seasonal park ranger at Crater Lake National Park, OR, for 25 years. He spent another 16 years in Everglades National Park, FL. Brian has been a climate change advocate with Citizens' Climate Lobby and Climate Reality Project since 2012. He's a Toastmasters International member and co-founder of the St. Louis Climate Reality Meet Up Group.

**Sarah Augustine** is the executive director of the Dispute Resolution Center of Yakima and Kittitas Counties. She is also adjunct professor of sociology at Heritage University. Sarah is the co-founder of Suriname Indigenous Health Fund (SIHF), where she has advocated for Indigenous Peoples whose health and communities are threatened by resource extraction since 2004. She co-wrote the statement repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery on behalf of the World Council of Churches (WCC), and further organized indigenous leaders globally to found the WCC Indigenous Peoples Program. Sarah is a founding member of the Anabaptist Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery, where she serves as the chair of the Structures Committee.

*Ken Pitts captured many images of the retreat that are accessible [here](#).*

## PNMC CONGREGATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS & MINISTRIES

*Listed chronologically, then alphabetically by organization*

### Camp Camrec

Register now for the [Fall Work Weekend](#) at Camp Camrec! This is a great time to pitch in, enjoy camp and fellowship together! Mark your calendar for the **October 25-27** weekend.

### Drift Creek Camp

It is time to mark your calendars and register for DCC's Annual Meeting & Family Camp, **November 8-10**. People of all ages are welcome to participate, even if you are a first-time visitor! The weekend festivities include indoor and outdoor activities, fellowship, delicious meals, taking a look at the new culvert and new cabin, and the benefit auction on Saturday afternoon. Galen Martin of Eugene Mennonite Church will share on Sunday morning. Register [here](#).

### Albany Mennonite Church

Join MCC and Everence for an evening workshop: "Making a World of Difference Now and in the Future through Charitable Giving".

**Thursday, November 7, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**, at Albany Mennonite Church, Albany, OR, with Colin Saxton and Dennis LeFevre of Everence, and Alan Claassen Thrush of MCC. Please contact Alan Claassen Thrush ([act@mcc.org](mailto:act@mcc.org)) for additional information.

### Mennonite Country Auction

Food stands, craft booths, fresh-pressed apple cider, apple butter cooked in a large copper kettle over an open fire, homemade ice-cream, fair-trade handcrafts from Ten Thousand Villages, quilts, comforters, afghans, furniture, and music from the Liberty Quartet... there was something for everyone at the 2019 Mennonite Country Auction in Ritzville. With generous community support, \$112,000 was raised for MCC!

### Oregon Mennonite Festival for World Relief

Thank you for another successful MCC Festival in Albany. Early calculations indicate that approximately \$90,000 was raised. Sales were down a bit from last year but, nevertheless, it was a successful sale. The sale would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of all the volunteers, donors, supporting churches and Board members throughout the year. All of your energy and countless hours made this event a success. Finally, we cannot have too many donations, too many volunteers or too much prayerful support as we look forward to Fall Festival, 2020. We value your ideas, suggestions and advice over the next 12 months. This truly is a yearlong project.

## Building Toward Climate Shalom: A Reflection on the PNMC Pastor's Retreat, by Andy Wade



A sunset view of Twin Rocks. Photo by Andy Wade

Overwhelmed, concerned, anxious, doubtful, angry, terrified. What do you feel when talking about climate change? We explored all of these emotions and more when a group of 24 Mennonite pastors and leaders gathered together for two days for the conference, “**Who cares about climate change? Pastoral response to denial and despair**” on the Oregon Coast this past September. I’ll admit, I’m not a fan of most conferences, but, as I read through the materials and completed the pre-conference questionnaire, I sensed this one would be different. I was not disappointed. Rather than just dumping a pile of climate change facts, of which there are an abundance, our facilitators helped us navigate the waters of climate science while not ignoring the gusts of fear and doubt that often catches us off guard.

Pastor Doug Kaufman started off by helping us find our moorings in a sea of conflicting and confusing emotions. How do we personally deal with climate change? Do we pretend not to know in order to find shelter (*psychic numbing*)? Do we push it away, distancing ourselves by imagining it’s way out in the future, or not something we have to worry about where we live? Or, do we outright deny climate change is happening in order to escape the emotions we fear to experience?

As we’re bombarded with waves of facts, figures, and headlines, we may employ all of these tactics. Getting in touch with our own emotions and how we deal with them is the first step in being able to walk with others through these times we must navigate together. Learning to hold the reality of Climate Change together with hope is one key to maintaining both our momentum and our sanity during these tumultuous times.

Worship is also key to maintaining an even spiritual keel. Following our first session, Doug led us outside, into the dark, to listen, wait, and sense God’s Spirit speaking to us in and through the darkness. Yes, even when all seems dark and full of despair, even here, we cannot escape the love and presence of God.

As we gathered the next morning, we turned our boat to head straight into the winds of climate change. Ken Pitts unpacked the science of climate change and its impact in Oregon, reminding us of the devastating fires of 2015 (which cut off my hometown of Hood River from the west for well over a week), decreasing salmon runs due to overheated rivers, and increasing water shortages. These issues, wherever you are on the political spectrum, affect us all. Even more, as those charged with caring for and nurturing God’s “very good creation”, we can experience this as a spiritual crisis of monumental proportions.

Brian Ettling helped us understand the importance of political advocacy, both locally and on a national level. While there are critical changes each of us can make to do our part to combat climate change (which is an act of worship), the biggest polluters are multinational corporations, industrial farms, and the United States military. Brian encouraged us to advocate for serious regulation of these industries, including a rapid transition away from our dependence on fossil fuels, if we hope to tackle this global emergency.

Throughout the conference we heard several times that the good news is that the rapid acceleration of climate change is primarily human caused. That means that we can do something about it; it is in our control! *This is good news, indeed!* Like a smoker who is told to quit smoking or they will die an early death, we have the choice to heed the call, ignore the call, or deny smoking has anything to do with our health issues. But even that analogy is too narrow.

Sarah Augustine, made it clear that we’re facing the collapse of the human species. Creation will continue on, but if we fail to address climate change, *we* most likely will not. We face this crisis, she said, because we live as if we are separate from creation rather than interdependent with it. Living closely with the very creation targeted for financial exploitation by the West, Indigenous people around the globe are most at risk, but what happens to them will happen to all of us, she cautions.

As Sarah expertly guided us up this tributary, what at first appeared a mere stream opened up before us as a river grander than the Amazon and filled with violence and death. As we looked at landscapes in Guiana, Suriname, and French Guiana, our hearts were broken. Forests and rivers and streams are so polluted by mining that none of the food in these three countries is safe to eat. She reminded us that global economic development is the engine of climate change, human rights abuses, and oppression. I wanted to argue, but there was nothing to say.

But pictures from far away can be easy to push to the side. I felt my phone vibrate and was immediately reminded that on the other side of the globe children were mining the metals and minerals needed to keep me connected. Their waters and lands, too, were being stripped for my convenience. And then Sarah brought it even closer to home, to a place that is personal for us Mennonites, Everence invests in mining operations in Suriname. In other words, my retirement fund invests in the destruction of the future for others.

Oh, this is not a river I wanted to travel up. But travel it I must. It is exactly this kind of excursion that can open our eyes to see just how interconnected and interdependent we are. If we are truly people of faith, of justice, of healing and hope, we can no longer close our eyes. We must act, and we must act with faithful courage. And here’s a bit of encouragement: we don’t have to act alone! In fact, as Sarah passionately spoke about climate violence and the growing number of climate refugees, she also invited us to reach out:

*First, reach out by exploring the cross-cultural relationships our congregation already has and how we might begin there to act together on climate change.*

*Next, explore new cross-cultural relationships we might be able to cultivate as we address climate change and serve climate refugees.*

“Finding hope in the midst of climate tragedy” was our closing session. We didn’t come here to hear facts and figures only to return to our congregations in despair. **We are a people of hope** and God has entrusted to us the gift and responsibility to steward the delicate web and beauty of creation. It is possible to engage the facts of climate change while holding onto a hope that has the power to transform the world.

**Our hope is in Jesus** who is the “pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:1-3). Jesus faced head on the injustices of his day and took direct action to address them. Jesus did not shrink back in despair or live in denial of the present reality with his head stuck in the clouds but brought hope and healing through spittle and mud, a tender touch, prophetic truth-telling, and overturned tables. Jesus did not rest in the privilege of his maleness, his Jewishness, or his ability to remain ceremonially clean but stepped out of his bubble to walk alongside those shoved to the margins by politics and policy. Jesus blazed a trail for us to walk in today as we face head on the crisis of climate change.

And even today we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses working together for a better tomorrow. This, above all, gives me hope. We are not in this alone, it is not outside our ability to address, and **together we can both discover and cultivate a new season of climate shalom.**



## Mennonite Church USA

MC USA has a new weekly electronic subscription called PeaceMail. There you will find the latest church-wide news, blogs, announcements, reflections, etc. Subscribe [here](#).

And be sure to check [#BringThePeace](#), [Mennonite Church USA](#)'s call to action for individuals and congregations to extend peace in our communities. As Executive Director Glen Guyton said, "It's not enough to say we are a historic peace church, we must BE a peace church for the present day."

## Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship

MHF is deeply rooted in the history of Mennonite response to the world's healthcare needs. It is a successor to Mennonite Medical Association (MMA), Mennonite Nurses Association (MNA) and Mennonite Chaplains Association (MCA) and is now open to all persons in healthcare.

**Join the conversation on faith and health!** MHF is an interdisciplinary community of Anabaptist health professionals which seeks to nurture the integration of faith and practice, to provide opportunities for dialogue on health related issues, and to address specific needs through education, advocacy, and service. Students, practitioners, chaplains, and retirees are all welcome! Write to [info@mennohealth.org](mailto:info@mennohealth.org), call 888-406-3643 or go to [www.mennohealth.org/JoinTheConversation](http://www.mennohealth.org/JoinTheConversation).

## West Coast MCC ~ A Reflection on the recent WCMCC Board Meeting, by Eva Flores Estrada

*"Again he said, 'What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.'" Mark 4:30-32*

I recently had the privilege of participating on the West Coast Board of Mennonite Central Committee. If you didn't know, MCC's tagline is: *Relief. Development. Peace*. I know many of you are aware of what MCC does and the variety of programs and services there are within the Committee but coming into this role, I didn't. There are so many programs and initiatives that have recently taken place and that arise as we find ourselves in an ever-changing social climate.

I learned about MCC's **Detainee Kits** for those who are released from, or are still being held, in detention centers at the border. When someone is released from a detention center, their belongings are given to them in a clear plastic bag. Then they are dropped off on the street. MCC, along with many church partnerships and volunteers, took initiative and together were able to distribute **630 Detainee Kits** to men, women, and children. MCC works hard to provide relief, development, and peace in the Name of Christ. These kits not only provide tangible items, but they also restore dignity to those who felt they have been stripped of it.

I know our congregation supports the efforts of the Mennonite Central Committee, but I just wanted to share with you what your support means for others. Not only the recipients, but also those who are directly involved in the process and become aware of the reality that others are living in.

As we were in Sunday school a couple of weeks ago we learned this parable and I found the lesson to be very fitting to my report this morning. I chose this passage because it mentions that **the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed** and then it proceeds to say "with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade." Now, I think we all know that the primary purpose for a mustard tree is pretty obvious... it's to make mustard, not to provide shade for the birds. The beautiful thing about God's kingdom is that we may have a reason we give to MCC, whether it be because of personal ties or because you believe in the mission, but God takes what you give (no matter what the purpose of giving may be) and uses it for its intended purpose *and then some*. Your time, your financial support, your prayers all facilitate a mission in which volunteers, staff, recipients, donors, and partners are able to witness God's provision of relief, development, and peace through MCC.

Your contribution, in the Name and hands of Christ, goes so much farther than where you may expect it to go, so I just want to encourage you to continue to support MCC. That does not necessarily mean financially, although if that is how you want to support please feel free to support in that manner, but also through volunteering or through prayers for the spiritual and emotional health of recipients and volunteers who are witnessing and experiencing these challenges first-hand.

Thank you for all you do and the many ways you bless Mennonite Central Committee and for this opportunity to share a small piece of what I learned at the Board Meeting. Blessings, *Eva Flores Estrada*

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### Upcoming e-Bulletins:

November 4 (*submissions due by 10/28*)  
November 18 (*submissions due by 11/11*)  
December 2 (*submissions due by 11/25*)  
December 16 (*submissions due by 12/9*)

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!*

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

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