

**30th Annual
Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference
June 20-23, 2024
Seven Peaks School, Bend, Oregon
“Called in the One Body, and Thankful!
Colossians 3:1-4, 12-17**

A pre-meeting Anabaptist Theology symposium opened the conference time on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning facilitated by Sam Adams and Craig Morton. The conversation focused on our Anabaptist tradition and how what we are doing and teaching is uniquely Anabaptist and what that actually means in light of the approaching 500th anniversary of the Anabaptist faith.

Friday afternoon was time for community service opportunities including helping to clean a service van from Project S.H.A.R.E. (Shepherd’s House Aide and Relief Effort). Four comforters were tied during the weekend thanks to Beth Landis and the Knotty Quilters for supplying the quilt tops. Thanks to Janet Szabo and Elaine Kauffman for their supplies and time organizing as well.

Pastors/Chaplains and credentialed leaders met for a contemplative half-day retreat led by Eric Massanari, PNMC Executive Conference Minister. The Pastor’s appreciation dinner followed the retreat. Phil Rempel (Albany Mennonite) led a hymn sing Friday evening with each congregation selecting a hymn of significance for their church. Harold Nussbaum, Kristen Swartley (Portland Mennonite) Steve Bomar (Zion Mennonite) and Dave Hockman-Wert (Corvallis Mennonite Fellowship) accompanied the singing with instruments.

Saturday, June 22, 2024 opened with a new delegate orientation breakfast led by moderator Chris Nord.

Opening worship was led by Emily Toews, (Menno Mennonite, WA) and Eric Massanari, (Executive Conference Minister). Sam Adams, Pastor of Bend Mennonite Church shared from Colossians 3:1-4, 12-17 based on the theme ‘Called in One Body, and Thankful’. The Bend Mennonite Church meets in the 1st Presbyterian Church on Saturday afternoons and they welcome visitors. The Seven Peaks School is Sam’s workplace where he spends a majority of his time as Head of School.

Delegate Session 1

Delegates were asked to report on what is happening in their local congregation and what is giving each one strength in their inner being and allowing them to remain rooted and grounded in Christ’s love. The order of reporting was done by states reverse proximity from Bend, starting with Alaska, Montana, Idaho, Washington then Oregon. Written reports were also submitted in the delegate handbook.

Roll Call

First Mennonite Church Aberdeen (ID) – Brian Leisher reported they have an excitement from reaching out to the community with 50 children in attendance for VBS this year. They also worked at Camp Palisade helping with clean up in preparation for camp.

Meridian Mennonite Church – (ID) Craig and Karla Morton (co-pastors) submitted a written report. The church continues to seek ways to engage with their community and find people of peace. They are working to host a VBS next summer in a local park.

Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship – (Boise, ID) Bob Parrish reported that they have been in Pastoral transition. Weldon Nisly is currently serving as interim for the church. The congregation has found purpose in social activism. The group has been working with Braver Angels, a non-partisan organization that works to reduce political division through the transformation of difficult conversations into rich restorative experiences.

Community of Hope Mennonite Church (affiliated church plant) – (Bellingham, WA) Duncan Smith reported Pastor Rachael Weasley is on sabbatical with her new born infant and family. This group is primarily an online service but has experienced growth in the outdoor church meetings as well. They have been blessed by the use of a Healthy Congregational grant from PNMC to increase the pastoral role.

Shalom Church – (Spokane, WA) - Gary Jewell states their group is having regular Sunday morning services. The church has partnered with Everence to amplify their giving to the community around them.

Evergreen Mennonite – (Kirkland, WA) Amy Epp, pastor reported receiving a quilted rainbow stole as a welcome to the congregation. The church has been working to build a presence in Kirkland, participating in the Pride events and July 4th parade – offering an alternative to nationalism. They host a quilt retreat and gather to make quilts for the MCC auction. Amy has experienced great generosity in the congregation as they rallied around a member in need.

Seattle Mennonite Church- (WA) Charlene Epp, interim pastor – reported the group is in a liminal space at this time. The campus redevelopment has been put on hold due to funding approval. They host a tent city of 100 houseless people on campus currently. Megan Ramer is on sabbatical this summer and they are working with one open pastoral position. Charlene describes the church as having a big heart.

Menno Mennonite Church - (Ritzville, WA) Emily Toews/Bryce Miller (co-pastors), Bryce reported they have been sharing their space with neighbors. In November they hosted the Voices of Conscience exhibit, curated by the Kauffman Museum. Invitations were sent to their Hutterite and local Seventh-Day Adventist communities. Approximately 120 visitors came to view the exhibit. They have experienced loss of several of their church members as they passed.

Eugene Mennonite Church – (OR) Tace Martin reported their group has been providing resources for the homeless partnering with Everence in the endeavor. The group continues to increase the number of school kits completed each year for MCC. They have also helped with the resettlement of refugee families. The group continues to miss the leadership of Randy Friesen as their long-time financial manager.

Portland Mennonite Church – (Portland OR) – Curt Weaver reports the congregation has been in major pastoral transition with the retirement of Rod Stafford. One practice they find meaningful is to wrap the high school graduates with a quilt as they transition into adulthood. Families come for this event to celebrate with them.

Salem Mennonite Church – (OR) – John Beechy, delegate reported they continue with the Friday night community events. It is a place where everyone feels safe and loved. The practice was started by Carl Newswanger, former pastor who recently passed away. The leadership role has been filled by a number of younger leaders which is helping them with becoming an inclusive body. They are in pastoral transition and Marlene Kropf is providing interim services.

Pacific Covenant Mennonite Church- (Canby, OR) Wilbur Kauffman, delegate states their group is aging and experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit among them.

Zion Mennonite Church – (Hubbard, OR) Steve Bomar, pastor, reports their congregation is practicing creation care as they complete the solar structure on their property to bring them to a carbon neutral state.

Ministerios Restauración – (Portland, OR) Nelly Moran Ascensio reported their group is praying for a young woman and providing assistance for her.

Corvallis Mennonite Fellowship –(OR) Cathleen Hockman-Wert, delegate, reports they have started involvement in the Good Neighbor Team process. This entails a one- year commitment to helping a family in transition. This has outfitted their group with a new look of more energy and commitment.

Albany Mennonite- (OR) Mark Nord, delegate, is also the Outreach Chairperson for AMC. Special projects have helped to support several community organizations. The congregation has sponsored a young woman from Honduras and she is at the 2-year point of obtaining a work permit. The church has been involved with a small house project of 20 homes. The church has funded one house. The church participated in the Albany Pride march, co-sponsoring a booth.

Comunidad Cristiana Vida Nueva (Salem, OR) – Misael Araujo, delegate, reports that God has been doing great things at their church. Attendance is between 45-60 members. Misael's daughter is traveling in Panama as an outreach. Their church is a church for the refugees. Many come from Colombia and their congregation helps refugees to resettle, helping them get drivers license and comforting those who have family members detained in prison. Misael asked for prayer for all the Hispanic churches in Oregon.

Iglesia Anabautista Ebenezer – (PNMC Affiliated church plant, Keizer, OR) Pastor Jesús Fuentes asked for many prayers for his congregation. They gather on Sundays and have communion once per month.

Bend Mennonite Church (OR) – Sam Adams, pastor, reports they have formed an Elders group. The church meets on Saturdays in the Bend Presbyterian church. They have communion once per month and hold a potluck meal once per month.

Evergreen Heights Mennonite Church – (Caldwell, ID) Kathy Bilderback, pastor, submitted a written report. Along with regular meetings they hold an evening meal and Gather at the Table service. They explore scripture, sometimes do a service project or play games and always share a meal. Food boxes are supplied for local families as well as supporting the community garden. The group continues to support the MCC relief sale. The church building has a hospitality suite in one portion of the building and host friends and travelers. All are invited to be their guests!

Filer Mennonite Church – No report

Mountain View Mennonite Church - (Kalispell MT) – Janet Szabo, delegate, gave greetings to conference as well as a written report. The congregation has welcomed a new Leadership Team and all have been discerning changes to their constitutional structure.

The local chapter of MDS remains busy building wheel chair ramps for newly wheel chair bound individuals. Their congregation supports local houseless people with meals and provide support for new immigrants.

Prince of Peace Mennonite Church – (Anchorage AK) – No report. Pastor Eric Massanari is planning a visit with this church this fall.

Western Mennonite Church – (Salem, OR) No report

Chris Nord – Moderator - opened the meeting with a time of recognizing the supporting broader church organization with introductions including:

Iris de Leon-Hartshorn - MCUSA

Nancy Kauffmann – MCUSA, Safe Church Consultant

Rhoda Blough – Everence Stewardship Consultant

Colin Saxton – Everence Stewardship Theologian

Rachel Swartzendruber Miller - Everence

AMBS – Randy Detweiler

Jason Ault – Mennonite Mission Network

Marcus Mahling – Mennonite Insurance Plan

Duncan Smith – Corinthian Plan

Gloria Nussbaum – Pacific Northwest Mennonite Historical Society

Timothy Weible – Mennonite Village

Brisa Peacock – Camp CAMREC

Translators – Franco Gonzalo, Carmen Barajas and Roberto Navarro

The minutes from the 2023 Annual conference of PNMC were noted. The motion was made to accept the minutes as recorded by Lazaro Martinez, seconded by Brent Kauffman. Motion carried.

The ballot for leadership roles was presented. The Gift Discernment Team (GDT) uses input from churches which are matched with the gifts, skills and willingness to serve in positions. Consideration is made for geographic location, experience, gender identity, and cultural background. The PNMC board approves the ballot. The delegate role is to mark the ballot including suggestions for future candidates. Ballots were collected and tallied by Karla Morton.

Executive Conference Minister's Report – Eric Massanari reported that he has enjoyed the learning he has experienced over the past one and a half years. He has traveled to meet the church communities and will have met them all by this fall. Eric and wife, Yolanda, will travel to Alaska to meet with the Prince of Peace Mennonite church in Anchorage, AK.

Eric thanked the administrative team of Barbara Buxman, Administrator, and Brenda Kauffman, Communications Coordinator. Barb was not able to attend due to recovery from surgery. All were asked to pray for a smooth recovery. Brenda was not able to attend as she is a host at Drift Creek Camp and this is an extremely busy time of year at camp.

Eric reported on attending Mennonite Church USA conference. This was a time for connection with other conference ministers and discussions of broader denomination issues.

A welcome was extended to the District Pastors and the volunteer service they provide. Six of the conference churches are in pastoral transition and he thanked those pastors serving in interim service. We were asked to pray for the search teams as they await possible candidates.

Looking forward to the 500-year anniversary of the Anabaptist faith next year we anticipate a celebration at next years' annual meeting.

Finance Team Report – Deren Kellogg presented a narrative budget for review. The finance team consisted of Jack Swaim, Kathy Bilderback, Dave Hockman-Wert and himself. The budget is based on the PNMC mission with funds allocated as follows:

Promote personal spiritual development	10%
Nurture healthy congregations	42%
Make strong connections throughout conference	30%
Call each other to fulfill God's purpose for the world	18%

Income is primarily member church contributions (64%) and the Investment funds contributed 26%. The majority of expenses were to nurture healthy congregations at 43%.

Treasurer's Report

Dave Hockman-Wert reviewed the financial statements which were included in the delegate handbook. The giving was at an all-time low total level in 2024. The cash flow was small enough to need a drawdown on the investment funds. Actual income for 2024 was <\$-47,825> and the budgeted net operating income was <\$-28,217>. The budgeted 2025 Net operating income is estimated at -\$51,426. We can't continue depleting the Investment fund and a course correction is being determined. It was noted that the draw downs on the Investment fund have not made a significant change in the fund balance due to the interest reinvested in the fund.

Gift Discernment Team

The members of the Gift Discernment Team (GDT) consisted of Chris Nord, Karla Morton, Rick Bollman and Gloria Nussbaum. The ballot was unanimously approved electing:

Board appointments:

- Jack Swaim – Finance Team
- Bryce Miller – Pastoral Leadership team (2) year term
- Libbie Lapp - Board member (2) year term
- Open- Gift Discernment team

Elected by the delegates results:

- Dan Smith-Derksen Secretary (3) year term
- Megan Ramer – Board member at large (4) year term

Continuing board members and appointees:

Chris Nord – Moderator
Karla Morton – Moderator elect
Dave Hockman-Wert – Treasurer
Gary Jewell – Member at large
Emily Toews – Member at large
Deren Kellogg -Finance Director
Nelly Moran-Ascencio – CIHAN rep

Jennifer Gingerich - Pastoral Leadership Team (PLT)
Kathy Bilderback – Finance Team (FT)
Gifts Discernment Team (GDT) – Gloria Nussbaum and Rick Bollman

Moderators Report

Chris Nord thanked the outgoing board members Julia Todd, Secretary (3 years) and Kiara Yoder, member at large (4 years). The delegate session was closed with prayer.

Break for lunch

Workshop Period 1

Nancy Kauffmann, Interim Director MCUSA – Safe Church

PNMC has built accountability with the requirement that every member church has a Safe Sanctuary Policy. The Mennonite church has had a policy in place since 2000 which addresses building policies to keep church members safe from power abuse, ministerial misconduct, and address ethical situations.

Nancy addressed thirteen common mistakes that may affect health boundaries within a congregation.

- Waiting until a congregation has an actual case of abuse or harm before addressing a policy.
- Failing to review policies on a regular basis and educating the congregations regarding the policy (especially new members)
- Not following your churches policy
- Trying as a congregation to go it alone in addressing issues. Congregations have resources in the ECM and MCUSA.
- Confusing secrecy with confidentiality. Secrecy protects the abuser; confidentiality protects the one abused
- Failing to communicate with the congregation and or victim through the process
- Allowing the offender or family members to derail the process
- Retraumatizing the victim or church survivors in the process
- Too quickly believing the accused's version
- Neglecting to challenge bad or hurtful behavior during the process
- Misusing scripture – cheap grace offered
- Not talking about sexual abuse or healthy boundaries in church life

Workshop Period 2

Three electives were offered for choice.

- 1) **Gratitude in Action: Practicing Generosity and Faithful Stewardship as the Body of Christ.** Led by Rhoda Blough (Everence Stewardship Consultant) and Colin Saxton (Everence Stewardship Theologian and Director of Church Relations) exploring some best practices for generosity and an approach to faithful stewardship aimed at helping congregations flourish.
- 2) **Braver Conversations: Learning to Depolarize Ourselves and Remain Curious About Others.** Led by Robert Hanson, member Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship and member of the PNMC Pastoral Leadership Team. Looking at The Braver Angels organization a non-partisan organization and it's works to reduce political divisions among groups.
- 3) **Diverse Ways of Being the Church-** Gary Jewell, PNMC District Pastor facilitated a panel of PNMC Congregational leaders in discussion of looking at struggles and opportunities as we seek to fulfill our mission as congregations.

Evening events – optional

Palestine – Weldon Nisly and Amy Epp

Table games

Sunday Morning Delegate Session

Board members served as discussion leaders and delegates moved to a new table for discussion on three sets of questions. Questions focused on the context of PNMC, the purpose and how our congregations relate to conference. A summary of the discussion time will be used to lead PNMC into the future and will be presented at a later date.

Announcements

- ECM Eric Massanari, reported that the Filer church has been working with him in a good and thoughtful process and has chosen to disaffiliate with PNMC. They are choosing to affiliate with Rosedale conference and want to be recognized in mutual respect as siblings in Christ. Members were asked to hold the Filer Church in prayer as they move through this process.

Closing worship

Eric Massanari and Emily Toews led this second worship time with Nancy Kauffmann sharing from Colossians 3:12-17 noting that we are God's chosen, wholly and beloved. Being part of a new community, we clothe ourselves in the virtues of Christ: *compassion, kindness, humility, meekness (strength under control), patience being slow to anger and open to new possibilities.* And, having gratitude, being thankful. We are to be full of Christ, not ourselves.

Invitation to the 2025 PNMC Annual Meeting

Moderator Chris Nord invited everyone to attend the next annual meeting to be held June 20-22, 2025 possibly at Drift Creek Camp.

The worship service was closed with a benediction led by Chris Nord.
Submitted, Julia Todd, PNMC Secretary