

NEWS & NOTES

February 1 2009

HERE AT BENTON

This Week

Monday to Wednesday, Doug will be at a seminar.
Thursday, 7 pm, Pastoral Leadership Team
Saturday, 7 am, Men's prayer breakfast at Old Mill Inn

Staff Hours

Brenda Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9-3
Doug Thursday 11:30 - 2, Friday 9-12
Steve Friday, 8-12

Happy Birthday! ☺

Phil Kilmer February 1
Orv Yoder February 5

Announcements

Mennonite World Conference Assembly is in Asuncion, Paraguay July 14 – 19, 2009. The theme is "Come Together in the Way of Christ," based on Philippians 2:1-11. Benton sponsors a member to attend, and this year \$750 is available for someone to attend. The costs will be at least \$1700, with \$1100 for travel. Possible add-on activities include a Global Youth Summit for those 18-27 year old July 10-12 and Assembly Scattered in other South American locations before or after the Assembly. So far one person has expressed interested in attending. If you are interested please say something to Brenda or Doug **today**.

Offering

January 25 2009 Regular Offering	\$2,064.00
Year to Date Needed	\$56,175.00
Year to Date Received	\$58,995.00
Difference	\$2,820.00

Membership Discussion

Today we resume our discussions on baptism, communion, and membership, focusing on membership. Unlike the previous two Sundays on baptism and communion, the sermon today is not specifically on the same topic as the Sunday School discussion. However, we recognize that "discernment" is related to membership, so hopefully there will be some connections. Here are the four questions we are asking each Sunday School class to discuss:

1. What is or is not meaningful to you about congregational membership?
2. What, in your experience and observation, are the understandings and practices for membership here at Benton Mennonite?
3. Based on what you understand from your own study and experience, what understandings and practices of membership are most important?
4. How does Benton's current practice line up with your understandings? What would you like to confirm about how we understand membership? Are there things you would like us to consider changing?

These Sunday School discussion sessions will conclude next Sunday with a congregational discussion together looking at summaries of our discussions and seeing what direction we are discerning on these congregational practices.

I had a wonderful time last weekend as we hosted "Amish and Mennonites: Common Origins, Divergent Paths." The attendance far exceeded my expectations. I was gratified both that so many of you came but also that we had so many outside guests, many of them Amish. It was a great weekend with our spiritual cousins and I want to thank all of you who made this possible, and to again thank you for providing me with the three month sabbatical that allowed me to experientially explore our heritage this past summer.

—Doug Kaufman

Several Mennonite pastors have written an open letter to Mennonite Church USA and have invited other pastors to join them in signing it, with the goal of having it published in the *Mennonite Weekly Review* in March. The letter invites the church to confession and healing around our reluctance

to offer full hospitality to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people who want to follow Jesus. A copy of the letter, with a paragraph each from Doug and Brenda about their thinking on this, is on the foyer table. Brenda is leaning towards signing the letter; Doug is leaning away from signing. Please talk to them about your feelings and hopes and concerns on this.

The IN-MI Conference Executive Committee is pleased to announce **Daniel Z. Miller's** appointment to the position of lead conference minister. Conference delegates affirmed Dan by 98.8 percent.

"Affirmation for Dan came from all quarters of the conference, including congregations with whom he had experience as an interim pastor, as well as congregations who have known him through other channels," noted Michael Nolt, assistant moderator. "Prayers of thanksgiving for Dan's willingness to serve, and prayers of blessing on his upcoming work as our leader, were common sentiments on the ballots." (To read more, see online:

im.mennonite.net)

Dan began in his new role on Monday, Jan. 26. He can be reached at the conference office at 800 288-8486 or 574 534-4006 or at dan@im.mennonite.net.

Tim Burkholder, the outgoing lead conference minister, is now serving Mennonite Education Agency as associate director with a focus on church relations and development.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Bethany Christian Schools' **Fun Fest** will be held March 27. You can help by donating items for the benefit auction or helping quilt. Please contact Bethany at 534-2567 or kjshenk@bethanycs.net by February 9 of contributions you intend to donate. Quilters: The quilt is set up in the school lobby for quilting anytime 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please call ahead to reserve a complimentary lunch.

Students in grades 5-11 interested in exploring **Bethany Christian Schools** can shadow a student for a day on Monday, Feb. 16. Interested students must register ahead by calling Sarah Yoder at 574 534-2567 or emailing admissions@bethanycs.net.

"What Does Freedom Have to Do with Peace?" Dr. Laura Brenneman, Professor of Religious Studies at

Bluffton University, compares New Testament and contemporary perspectives on freedom and peace in the annual C. Henry Smith Peace Lecture at Goshen College, on Monday, February 2. Her first presentation is an extended convocation in the church-chapel at 10:00 a.m., and the second is in room 28 of the Administration Building at 7:30 p.m. The evening session is in Bible study format, so bring your Bibles.

During the Feb. 10 **Goshen College Afternoon Sabbatical** at 1 pm in the Music Center's Sauder Concert Hall, Professor of History Steve Nolt, author of *Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy*, which explores the aftermath of the 2006 Nickel Mines school shooting, will highlight recent developments in Amish society, including population growth, occupational change and schooling. The event is free and open to the public.

Mennonite Women Sister-Care seminar: "Effective lay caring in the congregation." How am I called to care? What resources can the church provide; when do we seek care outside the church? How can women more effectively minister to needs of other women? How do we set boundaries? Mennonite Women of Central District and IN-MI conferences are hosting this event, to be held **May 15-16** at Belmont Mennonite, Elkhart, Ind. (7-9 p.m. Fri. and 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Sat.). Leaders: Rhoda Keener, Mennonite Women (MW) USA executive director; and Ruth Lapp Guengerich, MW USA president-elect. Rebecca Sommers, MW USA president, will share about her experience with depression.

The seminar will include worship, Bible study, skills training and interactive activities. Participants will receive a resource manual. Cost: \$30 before April 10; \$35 after April 10. Contact Rickey Schrag: mrschrag@gmail.com or 574 533-8366 Sister-Care is a ministry of Mennonite Women USA.

Mennonite news every Monday: *TMail* is a free, weekly electronic magazine distributed by staff from *The Mennonite* magazine. *TMail* includes the very latest Mennonite Church USA news, web exclusive article and photos, updates from blogger Tim Nafziger, and a summary of the Young Anabaptist Radicals blog. When there is breaking news, special editions of *TMail* are sent immediately. To subscribe, go to www.themennonite.org or e-mail annag@themennonite.org. All you need to provide is an email address, and you can unsubscribe at any time.