



August 2019

HIVELY AVENUE MENNONITE CHURCH

Happenings

Worship far and near—fresh and familiar

Mary Klassen, administrative secretary

Light streaming through stained glass windows, creating a halo on the preacher. A bride and groom starting a chain of anointing that reached everyone in the congregation. Adding my voice to “You are holy” as Hively’s worship space filled with praise. This summer has given me more varied experiences of worship than I usually get.

Central District Conference’s Annual Meeting worship is always rich and meaningful. This summer, though, we had the extra benefit of the worship space of Milwaukee Mennonite Church with three windows representing God, Jesus Christ (shown at left) and the Holy Spirit. Words and music are at the center of public worship, but how much more meaningful it felt to be called by the light to worship the One who is Light.

Our daughter’s wedding had much different moments of being touched by the Spirit. Sara and Chris enacted a parable of their relationship—a girl and boy discovering that by working together they could lighten the load of building a house. Later in the service we passed a blessing throughout the congregation—bridging all the connections of family and friends with the joy of the day.

Before and after the wedding were Joining Worship experiences with Fellowship of Hope, Southside Fellowship and Prairie Street. Each service was different, yet each wove common threads of learning from the Gospel of Luke, singing that filled the spaces, and meeting friends or making new ones. We were learning to worship as our nearby brothers and sisters in the Mennonite family do.

I’m eager to hear about worship high points for others this summer. On August 11, I look forward to hearing from the youth who were at the Mennonite Church USA convention and those who experienced worship in Guatemala. These out-of-the ordinary times can help us step into God’s presence in fresh ways, discover a voice of praise that we didn’t know we had, or feel a blessing that inspires us or settles on us in comfort.

While the echoes of summer worship experiences are still with me, I am glad to return to familiar Hively worship. That’s because here I can contribute more of the gifts that God has given me. Here I am challenged by dear friends whose faith and service inspire me. Here something more is asked of me—of all of us—as we to listen to the Spirit to set goals for hospitality, for learning in intercultural relationships and for attentiveness to creation care. Here I can see, in the ordinariness of weekly worship, what God is doing and where I can join in.

Here is where each week I am loved into the heart of God.



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Central District Conference Annual Meeting, June 20-22

Highlights of gathering with our regional church group

Seven people from Hively attended the Annual Meeting of our regional church group—Central District Conference. Delegates were Tyler Klassen, Leroy Saner, Margaret Sawatsky and Walter Sawatsky. Also attending were Jamie Pitts, Winifred Saner and Mary Klassen. Here are reflections from their experiences.

Jamie Pitts

In June I attended the CDC annual meeting where I was confirmed as a new Conference board member. Significant memories from the meeting include table discussions on diversity and intercultural community, rousing worship times, and warm fellowship with old and new friends. The meeting certainly felt like “home,” a respite from some of the battles dividing our denomination and a fruitful place for inter-congregational engagement. It is clear that Hively has something to contribute out of our recent steps to embrace intercultural community. Although we as a congregation are only beginning this work, we seem to have relatively more experience with it than many other congregations in the Conference. We might humbly, prayerfully discern how to embrace this work more fully and, as we do so, see what we can share with the Conference.

Below: After the slate of CDC officers was affirmed, they were commissioned with a prayer. Here Jamie Pitts (second from right), as the new secretary for CDC, is joined by J. Denny Weaver, Janeen Bertsche Johnson and Jewel Gingerich Longenecker.

Tyler Klassen

The 2019 Central District Conference in Milwaukee was a wonderful gathering of folks from CDC churches from Florida to Minnesota. Over three days at Milwaukee Mennonite Church we shared meals, did church business, offered our dreams and hope for the churches in CDC and explored Milwaukee’s attractions and restaurants.

Discussion of business matters and issues was conducted with the normal CDC civility and lack of conflict. The spending plan was accepted and we voted to extend Doug Luginbill’s term as conference minister, to accept a slate of officers and to accept three new congregations into the conference. Acceptance of new churches in Georgia, Florida, and Ohio stretched our geographic edges. Table discussions included stories shared, new relationships planted and old ones watered and weeded.

We were inspired in our Thursday worship by Anton Flores-Maisonet—a message of radical hospitality and personal struggles. Friday our soaring voices followed our eyes and hearts into the lights and space of Milwaukee Mennonite’s worship space as we sang, and sang, and sang in worship. The communion service stirred our hearts and helped focus our minds on God. Alison Brookins offered us hope for the road with her mix of inspiration and personal honesty with her message Saturday morning.



Photo by J. Tyler Klassen

Central District Conference Annual Meeting (cont.)

Margaret Sawatsky

What speaks the most to me at a church gathering? Always the songs and music, and so it was at this conference. “Will you come and follow me?” was the theme song that called us back from each workshop and break. The challenge and encouragement was to each one of us as we looked at what it means to respond to Christ’s question personally and as a church body.

The highlights that stand out were the songs from the new hymnbook that we were privileged to sing. The simple yet most moving song, “What is your dream,” was my favorite, and I hope we get to sing it soon at Hively.

The closing service with Alison Brookins’ meditation “To tell about joy,” (Luke 19:1-10) was all about focusing on joy and hope. The story was of Zaccheus who “just wanted to be close to Jesus,” and how “joy needs pain—sell everything you have that does not bring joy.” That hit home for me. I am not ready to sell everything, but I can agree that “pursuing joy is an act of resistance,” another quote from the meditation.

One more highlight was the workshop on “Biblical Storytelling” by Karla Minter and Deron Brill Bergstresser. It made me realize how much we could learn by memorizing the Bible stories and re-telling them in a way that makes them come alive, even on a Sunday worship service.

I felt privileged to be a delegate of our Hively church, and to be a member of the larger body of Christ which is the CDC.



Margaret Sawatsky talks with another Annual Meeting participant.

Leroy Saner

Having been on the Anabaptist Church Tour to SEMILLA and Guatemala last fall with Charlie Geiser, I was interested in the table discussion at Central District Conference regarding the possibility of building a relationship with or even a partnership between CDC and SEMILLA. SEMILLA is the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary in Guatemala City that serves more than 800 students from Mexico to Panama. SEMILLA also provides language study, service opportunities and cultural immersion programs for more than 250 North Americans each year. Casa Emaus, the guesthouse, hosts thousands of international visitors and service groups annually. Their mission includes many of the things CDC values: Christian hospitality, Anabaptist leadership, missional partnerships, Biblical Theological and Pastoral Training programs, online theological education. A friendship with them could benefit both us and them. How do our churches, especially white rural churches, engage the immigration issues? SEMILLA could be a resource to help us relate to immigrants. They would welcome us as learners. The conference is sharing the SEMILLA story and gathering feedback and conferring with SEMILLA to see what a relationship might mean for each of us. No action was taken at this time.



Winifred and Leroy Saner used a break in the sessions to browse a new book for sale on the book table.

Photos by J. Tyler Klassen

Central District Conference Annual Meeting (cont.)

Walter Sawatsky

I have chosen to comment on a few events the Milwaukee meeting without much rhyme or reason. At the closing, Tyler Klassen as member of the listening committee provided a poetic summary. The new hymns we sang were of high quality—content, enthusiasm—because at such gatherings, larger than our local congregations (many smaller than Hively), we were more profoundly enriched. That included a communion service, led by Doug Luginbill and by a young man, newly baptized in the Milwaukee fellowship.

I caught several seminars, above all listening to Tim Lind and Christine Nofsinger from Florence Church of the Brethren Mennonite recount how the fact of a congregant going to prison and several former prisoners starting to worship with them—both events bringing a series of issues and years of interaction with persons getting reintegrated to society, so that their congregation kept being changed, and miraculously stayed together nevertheless.

Michael Danner, newly appointed associate director of MC USA, led a seminar on what to expect at MennoCon19 (jargon for the Kansas City Mennonite Church USA convention). The

final minutes of Danner's seminar concerned the future of the Membership Guidelines of Mennonite Church USA, which Danner acknowledged many were unhappy with, but action would be delayed till 2021, because of the leadership transitions. A half dozen participants offered commentary, the general gist of which was that revising them modestly would not do, dropping them entirely would make unity within the denomination easier. That sounds more like Hively's hospitality theme, or CDC's "come walk with us ...theme." 



Tyler Klassen (center) summed up the worship experiences as part of the CDC Listening Committee report. Other members were Brenda North Martin and Lori Nester.

Congregational goals highlight

Our congregational goals ask us to consider how we carry forward the themes of hospitality and cultural diversity—both in congregational life and the community.

Support for the Center for Community Justice is one way we are involved in our community. We recently received a letter from CCJ, announcing that they received a grant of \$50,000 from the Community Foundation of Elkhart County to support their victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP). Gifts from individuals and groups in the community (including regular contributions from Hively's budget) provided the matching

\$50,000 to make the grant possible.

The funds will be used to expand VORP and to use

VORP in youth programs and community mediation interventions. Irwin Larrier, executive director, writes in the letter, "We believe this work has the potential to reduce violence and crime ... as well as to alleviate conflict before it becomes violent. We know this will make our community a safer and healthier place in which to live."



Get ready for the Michiana Mennonite Relief Sale

What do you have to donate to the Relief Sale? Various auctions and sections of the event need donations:

- plants and dried arrangements
- crafts
- quilts and comforters
- antiques and gently used items
- fabrics, yarn, unfinished projects, quilting and sewing supplies
- food items: pies, rolls, breads, noodles, and more

The online auction is accepting handmade art pieces, collectibles, antiques, tools—items with a minimum value of \$50.



My Coins Count

Continue collecting your coins (especially quarters for the tube banks). We will have several more collection times before the sale. If you can match any of this collection (e.g. match one Sunday's collection), please see Leroy or Winifred Saner.

The focus is on providing water resources to vulnerable people around the world. This work involves building steam wells, drilling wells, sand dams, cisterns, and providing pumps, piping and/or filters—all to provide better access for those who don't have clean water. This helps keep families together and means healthier children, less hunger, better education and fewer conflicts over scarce resources. It is a vital work of MCC.

Hively's yearly average over the last five years is \$1,313. Can we bring that up this year by giving more than that amount?

Announcements

Center for Healing & Hope

Evergreen Singers, a choir of 35 people age 50 and older, will present a concert to benefit the Center for Healing & Hope on Sunday, August 18, at 3 pm, at Plymouth United Church of Christ, 902 S. Main Street in Goshen. The performance will include hymns and a performance of Mozart's "Ave Verum." This year's concert will also feature the Jennings Orchestra, a 12-member senior group. A free-will offering will be taken to support the Center's medical care for uninsured people and advocacy programs for our immigrant neighbors.



Mennonite Church USA

Read MC USA's response to the federal government reinstating the death penalty: mennoniteusa.org/menno-snapshots/death-penalty-reinstatement-response.

Find out how churches across MC USA are offering solidarity with immigrant communities in their contexts: mennoniteusa.org/news/mennonite-church-usa-follow-up-to-churchwide-statement-on-the-abuse-of-child-migrants.

Salem-Zion Mennonite Church youth plan to #BRINGTHEPEACE to the county fair and are selling t-shirts in support of Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) asylum and immigrant detainment kit efforts. Read more: mennoniteusa.org/news/salem-zion-mennonite-county-fair.

Find post-convention resources, including worship speaker videos and worship songs: convention.mennoniteusa.org/post-convention-resources.



Hively calendar

August 21

6 pm
Prayer Choir

August 4 and 18

5:30 pm
Spaghetti and Scripture

August 18

11 am
Worship at Church
Without Walls

August 25

Picnic at OxBow Park
following worship

September 8

Congregational retreat at
Camp Friedenswald

Church-wide events

August 29

3 pm
Mennonite Central
Committee Open House
1013 Division St
Goshen, Ind.

September 27, 28

Michiana Mennonite
Relief Sale

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Buzzing at the Hive

It's hard to believe that in a little over a month, the building will be filled with the buzzing of excited preschool children. It has been a busy summer. God has led so many wonderful new families to the preschool this year. It has been such a joy to share our program with them. I love seeing the big smiles on the children's faces when they see their new school.

I am so grateful for all of the work that has been done to help get the office and the building ready for a new year. The new carpeting in the "Quiet Center" downstairs looks great. I appreciate the repairs to the wall in the preschool office. Most importantly, I am thankful for the many church members who have been so friendly. I am excited for this new position as director. I look forward to helping continue the good work of the preschool in our community.

Our Back-to-School Open House is August 29. The teachers will be back in the building as of August 26. We welcome Sue Cooper to our staff. She will be teaching our morning and afternoon 3s classes. Sue comes to us with over twenty years of early childhood experience. Ms. Val and Ms. Sheryl are excited to work with Ms. Sue. The preschool is so blessed to have such a veteran teaching staff. We have more than 100 years of combined teaching experience in our building.

I know that God has amazing things in store for the preschool this year. Thank you for your prayers and support as we kick off the 2019-2020 school year.

Blessings,
Amy Redar 

Announcements

CROP Walk

The annual CROP Walk is Sunday, Oct. 6, beginning at 2 pm. This effort raises funds to help stop hunger; some of the proceeds go to a local food bank and some to national and international efforts. This year is the 50th anniversary of CROP hunger walks. Mark the date and let's see if we can get a Hively team of walkers.

[facebook.com/
elkhartcrophungerwalk](https://www.facebook.com/elkhartcrophungerwalk)

Fund-raising meal

Matthew and Rachel Cordella-Bontrager are planning a mission assignment in Kosovo. Matt is a 2018 graduate of AMBS and their assignment will be with Virginia Mennonite Missions. Yellow Creek Mennonite Church is hosting a fund-raising meal of pork burgers, baked beans, cole slaw and homemade desserts for them on Sat., Aug. 24, from 4-7 pm. All are welcome to come; the address is 64901 County Road 11, 