

MENNONITE CHURCH USA STAFF REPORT TO DELEGATES



"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace." –1 Peter 4:10

Here are some highlights from MC USA staff as we have sought to seek Jesus, witness to God's peace and help our communities experience the transformation of the Holy Spirit over the past year:

The **Journey Forward** "Renewed Commitments" and *Pathways Study Guide* invited churchwide engagement in Scripture, storytelling and sharing how God is at work in the lives of people and congregations across MC USA. The two-year Journey Forward process culminates here in Kansas City with storytelling and reflection on where we're headed as a denomination.

Staff Transitions. Following Ervin Stutzman's retirement in April 2018, Glen Guyton was installed as MC USA's third executive director beginning May 1, 2018. Additional staffing changes have included saying farewell to Terry Shue, Nancy Kauffmann, Beth Hunsberger, Perry Krehbiel and Jennifer Castro, and welcoming incoming staff Michael Danner, Sue Park-Hur, Shana Peachey Boshart, Ron Tinsley, Kayla Berkey, Alex Woodring and Eva Lapp.

MC USA area conference ministers joined with regional ministers from MC Canada for their 4-day **Annual Conference Ministers Retreat** in Los Angeles, California. Ched Myers and Elaine Enns led the group in a biblical exploration of leading in polarized times. Conference ministers worked together on practical topics such as the Ministerial Leadership Information (MLI) process and credentialing in the context of the diverse practices between conferences.

A group of denominational leaders of color met to evaluate the previous seven **Hope for the Future** gatherings and chart a way forward. Proposed initiatives include: 1) A yearly gathering for leaders of color to worship, fellowship and resource each other; 2) A group for senior-level leaders of color to support one another in their work; and 3) A group to work for systemic change within the church.

In April 2019, MC USA provided advanced training to more than a dozen administrators of the **Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)** to increase intercultural competency in congregations and agencies.

The third biennial **Women Doing Theology conference** organized by Women in Leadership was held at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Nov. 8-10, 2018, inviting participants to critically evaluate the status quo and consider who is seen, whose stories get told and who we look to for wisdom and insight about God, with the theme "Talkin' Bout a Revolution."

In response to the *Churchwide Statement on Sexual Abuse* approved by delegates in 2017 in Kansas City, MC USA staff sponsored a **Healthy Boundaries Training I and II** for 20 area conference leaders, as well as an **investigators training** for 36 participants on *Responding to Clergy Misconduct Leadership Training*, both led by FaithTrust Institute.

MC USA's Leadership Development team distributed **Prevention and Response: Sexual Abuse and Non-Credentialed Individuals**, a resource of guidelines for response when non-credentialed individuals are accused of sexualized violence in the context of congregations, conferences and organizations. The materials, which were produced by MC USA's Panel on Sexual Abuse Prevention, can be found on the MC USA website.

Church of God Connections. On Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2018, six Mennonite leaders met with four representatives of the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) for worship and theological discussion on the intersections between the Church of God and peace traditions.