

*Pursuing God's dreams,
By the power of the Holy Spirit,
In the way of Jesus Christ.*

*Siguiendo el sueño de Dios,
Por el poder del Espíritu Santo,
A la manera de Jesu Cristo.*

ZING!

Farewell Pastor Betsy Headrick McCrae and Bruce McCrae

Betsy Headrick McCrae has been the pastor of Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, Colorado for the past ten years. She and her husband Bruce received and accepted a five year offer from Mennonite Central Committee as Area Directors for MCC programs in Central and West Africa. Bruce has been working in this capacity part-time since January 2018.

A special farewell concert featuring a wide variety of music was given by musicians from our church on April 14. Betsy's final Sunday was April 22. It included a ritual of blessing by Betsy for the congregation. She presented each person in the congregation with a special remembrance bracelet she crocheted, followed by a blessing as she left the pastorate. The farewell bracelets were based on a tradition Betsy observed in Laos. Merv Birky, Regional Conference Minister, completed the service with a special commissioning for service with MCC. The church had a final time of fellowship with a potluck lunch.

Bruce and Betsy will spend time in Pennsylvania with their family and on April 27 will fly to Kigali, Rwanda for a one-week meeting of the representatives of all the MCC programs in their area of responsibility. They will return to Lancaster/Akron for more meetings, orientation and time with family before completing their move to Kigali, Rwanda in early August.

Nathan Graber-McCrae will serve as interim pastor until a new pastor is identified.

In This Issue

Reflections from Faith & Life Forum

Pursuing God's Dreams, Annual Assembly in Taos

Bartel announced as EPIC's Executive Director

Weekend Choral Festival

And more...



(Above) Betsy presenting the remembrance bracelet to Brenda Bartel, (R) The commissioning and blessing of Betsy by Merv Birky and the congregation.

Reflections from Faith & Life Forum

God is working His Purpose out...

By Jeni Hielt Umble, Living Light of Peace Church, Arvada, CO

The 2018 Faith and Life Forum was a highlight for me. I have always been fascinated by the history and literature of the Bible. John Sharp, Professor of Bible and Ministry at Hesston College, sparked my interest with a comparison of *purpose* versus *plan*. Rather than think of God providing a specific *plan*, a more appropriate view is to think of God's *purpose*. John gave an example of someone driving from La Junta to Colorado Springs. John can give specific directions (a plan) but the driver may make a wrong turn and call for help. John can then give new directions based on where the driver is located. The *plan* has changed. The *purpose*—arriving in Colorado Springs from La Junta—has not.

Purpose is broader than plan. Focusing on purpose rather than plan accounts for the ways that human beings take turns that may not be part of God's original plan. Our gracious God continues to work with us so that God's purpose is fulfilled.

By Peggy Owen, Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, CO

The Faith and Life Forum was certainly worth attending. John Sharp is a good storyteller and time passed quickly. Saturday's sessions focused on a book authored by Marion Bontrager, Michele Hershberger and John Sharp, *The Bible As Story*. Not like a fiction story, but the story of God's faithfulness over centuries, a story that continues even today, a story of inclusion, of God's love for all humankind, of not giving up on people. Abraham and Sarah were "chosen" to bless all people on earth, not chosen as in, "You are my favorites," but chosen as in, "You're hired to do this job." When the Israelites left Egypt, it was a multi-ethnic group that left, not only the Hebrew people. God included all who wanted to join the exodus. Later, Jesus made a point of breaking stereotypes and eliminating the barriers that separate people from each other. God's story has always been one of inclusion because God has a heart for all peoples. Jews and Gentiles learned to worship together but had differences to iron out in the beginning.

John spoke about ways to study the Bible, not IF we study, but HOW we study. He explained the difference between drawing meaning from the Bible and pouring our meaning into the Bible. He stressed the importance of reading chapters before and after the verse we focus on to understand the context. Cultural and historical contexts are also important. A Bible commentary is very helpful. He gave a couple of memorable quotes, such as, "Any text without a context is a pretext." "When scriptures disagree, Jesus referees." meaning that Jesus is the clearest example of the way God wants us to live. And, "If there's a conflict between theology and relationships, choose relationships." "When dealing with an enemy, you can always listen." There was so much more, so much to continue to think about. John said that the book he helped write contains most of what he talked about. I bought the book. (P.S. It's available on Amazon.com)

Objects in mirror may be closer than they appear: Faith & Life Reflections

By Brian Hanneken, East Holbrook Mennonite Church, La Junta, CO

As Faith and Life Forum 2018 recedes in our rear-view mirrors, several elements continue to resonate with us here in the Lower Valley. First, we're grateful to have had the opportunity to be host in our house, welcoming all who were able to travel to La Junta for the event. It was a joy to renew relationships, to catch up with old friends, and to make new friends – thanks to all in attendance, and especially to those whose efforts made F&L Forum the success it was.

Second, there is consensus out our way that having John Sharp as the F&L resource person/facilitator was brilliant. We appreciate John's willingness to share his heart – and stories. It was extremely moving to have him model such transparency and vulnerability so intensely. May God bless John as he continues to be MJ's voice.

And third (best and last?), our big take-away from F&L is the reprise of Bible as story. We at East Holbrook have been in relationship with Hesston College for generations. Our congregation includes alumni/ae, parents of alumni/ae, and prospective students. We are not strangers to Bib Lit: in the past, "our" then-students have presented their oral stories. We came home from F&L in continuing enthusiastic conversation about incorporating elements of *The Bible as Story* into our congregation's formation – for our young people of all ages. F&L Forum may be fading over the horizon behind us, but "Objects in mirror may be closer than they appear." We are excited about the possibilities as we find use for these tools.

By Marilyn Miller, Beth-el Mennonite Church, Colorado Springs, CO

The 2018 Faith and Life Forum was graciously hosted by the Valley churches. I sensed a spirit of vitality and genuine fellowship throughout our time together. John Sharp's input was filled with important learnings on how to view and interpret scripture. I received a new appreciation for the Old Testament where we can read stories of God's first will for humankind and God's remedial or second will when humans choose not to follow God's first will. Old Testament stories pave the way for the good news we receive in the New Testament. John reminded us that Jesus is "the true image of God" and that Anabaptists interpret scripture in the light of the life and teachings of Jesus. "Where scriptures disagree, Jesus is the referee". We were encouraged to interpret Bible verses through understanding what they meant in the culture and worldview of the time they were written. Was it descriptive or prescriptive?

John had us laughing with humorous stories that have come out of his historical work in the Mennonite church. He, also, had some of us tearing up as we heard stories of the life and death of his son, MJ, and how MJ worked to "change the world one life at a time." I believe our individual lives, our churches, and our conference can better "PURSUE GOD'S DREAMS BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE WAY OF JESUS CHRIST" as we study scripture in the way that John recommended to us and which is described in the book *The Bible as Story* by Marion Bontrager, Michele Hershberger, and John Sharp. This is a book I recommend having in our church libraries and studying and discussing with others.



PURSUING GOD'S DREAMS

How then shall we live?

Annual MSMC Assembly planned for Taos, N.M.

“Pursuing God’s Dreams: How then shall we live?” is the theme set for the annual conference gathering in Taos, New Mexico on August 3-5. We will explore specific ideas about what it really means to pursue God’s dreams—a reference to our MSMC vision statement. Worship themes and other formation activities will help sharpen the conversation.

The gathering location is the Kachina Lodge near central Taos. Some camping options will also be available at the TiLT (Taos Initiative for Life Together) compound about a mile and a half from the assembly venue.

To-date plans include:

- A pre-assembly round-table guided conversation about faith and social action at 3:00 p.m. on Friday.
- Friday evening kick-off concert by “The Second Wind Endeavor,” a local Taos band with several members with ties to Mennonite service and education institutions.
- Delegate session on Saturday morning.
- Worship services on Saturday morning and evening, an optional Sunday morning sunrise service at the Taos Gorge and the final mid-morning worship celebration and communion at the assembly venue. Throughout, we’ll hear stories from people among us who may be getting into trouble for following God’s dreams.
- Saturday afternoon break-out sessions
- Online registration will provide links to housing options at Kachina Lodge and camping options at TiLT.
- Some meals will be catered and others may be purchased at a variety of Taos restaurants.
- “Camp Kachina” (supervised lawn and pool time and activities for children). Also, a possible Saturday Rio Grande rafting trip for middle and high school youth—depending on interest and water levels.

Pre- and post- assembly options include a young adult wilderness outing planned by TiLT, tours of local interest points and a post-assembly family camp on Lama Mountain.

The assembly planning team includes Marc Yoder, Melissa Roth, Todd Wynward, Eric King, Barry Bartel, Cole Chandler, Lily Mast, Jen Dudenhefer and Ken Gingerich. Merv Birky and Charlene Epp are part of the worship planning sub-committee.

Watch for a complete description of Annual Assembly events in the June issue of *Zing!*

Conference Minister Team

Keeping Your Pastor Long-term

By Merv Birky, Regional Conference Minister



Most churches would prefer to keep their pastor long-term rather than short-term. Research has shown that churches that experience long-term pastoral leadership tend to be healthier than those with serial short-term pastors. When a congregation and pastor are “a good fit”, both generally make fewer pastoral changes.

Last year I concluded over 37 years of pastoral ministry in just two congregations—16 years in the first, and over 21 years in the second. A question I am frequently asked is, “How did you manage that many years in just two churches?”

There are of course many contributing factors: a good fit; patient & gracious congregations; strong involvement of competent lay leaders; effective and open communication; much prayer, shared visioning...

This article will focus on another factor that was very significant for me: *congregational support for active involvement outside the congregation*. Without it, I would not have lasted 37 years, nor would my tenures have been so long.

That active involvement can take many forms. I served on Conference committees, participated in local ministerial groups, regularly attended the Mennonite pastors’ Retreat and cluster gatherings, attended Pastor’s Week and other continuing education opportunities, was nearly always at Annual Conference Assembly and often at denominational Assemblies. Where there were travel or registration costs involved, the congregations paid for them as part of the agreed upon Memo of Understanding. And, none of those involvements were considered to be “vacation time.”

Obviously, I was not engaged in all of those activities at once! There needs to be a reasonable balance between outside involvements and the clear priority of congregational commitments. But freedom to engage in those outside involvement should not be at issue.

Now, as Regional Conference Minister in our Conference, I strongly encourage pastors to participate in their pastors’ cluster group (SECOMP or DAMM, or a local ministers group where there is not a Mennonite cluster). Make every effort to participate in Annual Assembly, Pastor’s Retreat, Faith & Life Forum. And, I strongly encourage congregations to include the cost of these events in their annual Budget, without considering it to be “vacation time.”

There are of course the usual additional factors to take into consideration: full-time or part-time, bi-vocational commitments, family responsibilities, travel distances, etc. However, as I have heard from pastors in various contexts over the years, it is clear that freedom and commitment to being connected in these various ways plays an important part in both congregational and pastoral satisfaction.

Two other important benefits of the pastor’s outside involvements: One, it provides opportunity to hear from others, whether from within or outside the congregation. Two, it helps the pastor keep the church connected with other churches in our Conference and denomination as well as in the neighborhoods where we live.

So, pastors—as you are giving attention to your pastoral responsibilities, also give attention to meaningful involvement outside the congregation. And churches—as you articulate what you expect from your pastor in your job description and budget, be sure to include encouragement and freedom for them to be involved in meaningful experiences outside the congregation. In so doing you will all be much more likely to reap the benefits of a long-term relationship.

Bartel Confirmed as EPIC Executive Director

The Board of Directors of the Ecumenical Project for International Cooperation (EPIC) is excited to confirm that Barry Bartel of Golden, Colorado, begins as Executive Director on May 1, 2018. Barry brings to EPIC both his experience in administration and board leadership and his previous years of work in grassroots international development.

Barry and his wife Brenda served with Mennonite Central Committee in rural Haiti for three years and as Country Representatives in Bolivia for five years, where Bartel also related to mission groups throughout Latin America. Barry also served as President of Bethel College, and between these service experiences he practiced law in Denver, Colorado, for over a dozen years.



Bartel now brings his passions, leadership experience, and advocacy skills to this role with EPIC. “We are thrilled to have Barry’s unique skill set in our new EPIC Executive Director,” said Cathy Egan, Chair of the Board. The Board is pleased that Barry will continue to combine his international service through EPIC with his passion for local ministry through his part-time role with the Mountain States Mennonite Conference.

EPIC began in New York in 1977 on the initiative of Father Thomas Cowley. Over the past twenty-five years Paul and Mary McKay have greatly broadened EPIC’s work by partnering with local organizations in Latin America and Asia. These partnerships include effective and innovative work in regenerative organic agriculture, human rights, health and nutrition, peacemaking, and environmental protection. There is an emphasis in working with woman, youth and indigenous people. See www.epicprojects.org/.

“I am pleased that the McKays will continue to serve an integral role with EPIC, relating with program partners in Central America,” said Bartel. “Their compassionate energy and enduring commitment to transforming lives is incredible and is a wonderful model.” Paul and Mary are members of Boulder (Colorado) Mennonite Church.

Bartel and the McKays became acquainted when Barry and Brenda participated in a transcultural seminar the McKays helped organize before the Bartels served in Haiti in the mid - 1980s. Then in 2017, just as the McKays and the EPIC board embarked on a plan to identify new leadership for EPIC, Barry began searching for a new opportunity. “I felt that the ideal position would involve executive leadership, yet hands-on involvement; meaningful work in Latin America, yet not moving from our home in Colorado. But I knew that job didn’t exist.” Barry reflected.

“And yet it does exist!” Paul told Barry after learning of his availability. Paul reflected that “the EPIC board was looking for someone with exactly those skills and passions, who could help transform EPIC for its next chapter. The way this all came together felt like what Presbyterians call providential!”

Barry began as Associate Executive Director in August to ensure a smooth transition, and now will lead EPIC, working from his home west of Denver and traveling to link supporters with program partners. Bartel can be reached at barrybartel@EPICProjects.org.

“With Care...”

Mary is a member of the conference Dialogue Resource Team and a member at Mountain Community Mennonite Church in Palmer Lake, Colorado

Hi, my name is Mary Gardner. I want to introduce myself to you as the newest member of the Dialogue Resource Team (DRT). I am happy and excited to be part of this group of people who share my passion in mediation. I have been volunteering as a mediator in small claims and other civil cases with Jefferson County for the last four years. I am certified in mediation, conflict coaching and facilitation with community/police relations. Although I haven't met everyone on the DRT team personally I intuitively know that we will enjoy working together because we believe in the “art” of people talking with each other.

Several years ago, I contacted Alice Price to let her know I was interested in becoming a member of the team. At that time DRT was in transition; very much like the Conference itself. Time passed. I retired from my long-time career as a wastewater and water quality regulatory professional. I had moved effortlessly into the retirement life.

Quite unexpectedly a few months ago Alice contacted me to find out if I was still interested in joining the team. It only took me a short minute to determine that it would be good to have the conversation to find out if this was truly something I was still interested in exploring. After having a wonderful conversation, I was processed and accepted on the spot. It was a mutual acceptance.

I am very excited to soon be meeting my team members and exploring the possibilities of our roles in the DRT. I hope to see and meet a lot of folks out there in the Conference.



Weekend Choral Festival Reminders!



The Mennonite Society for Musical Heritage is excited about our 12th Weekend Choral Festival, coming up June 22 – 24 at First Mennonite Church in Denver! For more information, including our brochure and to register, go to: <https://www.mennomusic.org/events/2018-weekend-choral-festival-kickoff/>

- ✓ **Singers**, last reminder to register as soon as possible, no later than June 1! We want you to join us if you are a soprano, alto, tenor, or bass who enjoys singing choral music!
- ✓ **Volunteer!** If you are not a singer, but would like to help with our event, we could use help in the kitchen during the weekend, thanks!
- ✓ **Give!** If you can't attend, consider making a financial donation to support a singer or help us purchase music. You can mail a check to First Mennonite Church, 430 West 9th Avenue, Denver, CO 80204 (memo line: MSMH). Thank you for your support!
- ✓ **Plan to attend worship** on Sunday, June 24, 10:00 am. No yoga in the park this Sunday (yea!), so parking will be easier! Dr. Mark Bartel will lead our choir in worship on the theme of *Transformation*. Hope to see you there!

If you have questions, want to volunteer, or know a singer we should invite, please contact Susan Graber, susan_g_16@yahoo.com, 303-926-0393.

News from:

ROCKY MOUNTAIN MENNONITE CAMP



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SPRING QUILTERS RETREAT

The Spring Mennonite Quilters Retreat was held in mid-April. For four days, quilters worked on their own projects and shared tips, demonstrations, and ideas with each other. During show and tell, quilters shared creations, both completed and in-progress. The quilt stories told showed how much love and thought goes into each quilt. Quilts were made for loved ones going through a difficult time, designed to remind someone of a great vacation spot, for special events in life, and others just for fun and enjoyment. Each one was more than just fabric and thread; it held the heart of the quilter who made it. The weekend theme was focusing on friendship, which is very evident in the friendships (new and old) that were kindled/re-kindled that weekend.



Pictured: Quilters from First Mennonite Church in Denver show the quilt they worked on together. Left to right – Katrina Schrock, Angie Nofziger, Ruth Friesen, and Linda Wyse.

VIXEN RETURNS AS CAMP RESIDENT

It is exciting to welcome back a vixen (mother fox) who has raised previous litters of kits (young fox) right here at Rocky Mountain. The den is under a group of boulders in a swale just above Speicher (camp maintenance shop) and just below the Director's Residence. The previous time she used this den, there were 3 kits. This year she has doubled the count with 6 kits. Typically born between March and May, red foxes can have between 1 to 10 kits in a litter.



Pictured: This photo was taken in 2014 of two kits playing in the same den as the one they are in this year.

REGISTER TODAY FOR COLORADO ROOTS MUSIC CAMP



Colorado Roots Music Camp is a week-long music camp held twice a summer at RMMC, featuring a broad variety of styles including folk, bluegrass, swing, Celtic and Old-Time music. It began in 2006, inspired and created by Charlie Hall and Marianne Danehy. Participants from around the country (and overseas) come for inspiration and to hone their musical skills. Internationally-known artists serve as instructors and performers for the evening concerts. Due to a sudden illness of Charlie, RMMC will help facilitate the camp (vs. being a guest group) along with Roots Music alumni to ensure the continued success of the camp. The 2018 camps will be June 3-9 and Aug. 5-11. Visit coloradorootsmusic.com for more information and register to come join in this amazing week of music!

Pictured: Roots Music campers jam on the porch of RMMC.



WHO'S BEEN HELPING

Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped at camp in the month of April.

Brian Ellington	Jodi Miller	Ardell
Sam Hershberger	Les Miller	Swartzendruber
Kim Hiebert	Stan Miller	Anna Unruh
Bob King	Brad Shelly	Marie Voth
Chelsey Miller	Marylou Shelly	Ron Weaver
Dave Miller	Sophie Snyder	Jill White

Pictured: Anna Unruh was one of eight volunteers who helped to staple beetle repellent to Spruce trees, sending a signal to the beetles to find a home elsewhere. Doing this in the spring for the last three years has reduced the number of trees infested by the Spruce Beetle. THANKS volunteers for your help in saving some of the trees.

COME VOLUNTEER

RMMC is a busy place, and we rely a lot on the help of volunteers. If you have interest in volunteering at camp, give us a call (719-687-9506), send an email (info@rmmc.org), or go to rmmc.org and click "Volunteer" to see available slots online. Here are a few areas where we need your help!

KITCHEN HELP NEEDED:

- *Colorado Roots Music Camp*: June 3-9 and August 5-11
- Family Camps: July 22-August 4



CAMP PROJECT HELP NEEDED:

- *Playground equipment construction* (mostly wood frames): date to be determined on available help
 - Construction of a young children's play frame is underway. We need hands to help begin construction on the site as well as the structure.

Pictured: Dave Miller helps to guide cement down into the Pleiades crawl space.



YOU'VE BEEN SPOTTED!

We spotted Margaret Wiebe (Hesston, KS) wearing her RMMC sweatshirt. Margaret is pictured here at the 2018 annual MCC Comforter Blitz in Yoder, Kansas this past March. She is working on one of the 326 comforters completed in three days. Thanks, Margaret, for sharing RMMC with everyone at the blitz in Kansas!

Share your "spotted" photo with us. Email it to jenelle@rmmc.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

May 25-28: Memorial Day Work & Play Retreat
June 3-9: Colorado Roots Music Camp
June 10-16: Senior High Resident / 6th & 7th Wilderness I
June 17-23: 8th & 9th Resident / 6th & 7th Wilderness II
June 24-30: 6th & 7th Resident / 8th & 9th Wilderness I
July 1-7: 4th & 5th Resident / 8th & 9th Wilderness II

July 20-22: 3rd Grade Resident Camp
July 22-27: Family Camp I
July 22-28: Senior High Wilderness I
July 29-Aug 3: Family Camp II
July 29-Aug 4: Senior High Wilderness II
August 5-11: Colorado Roots Music Camp

MAKE A RESERVATION

Dates listed represent available nights for ridge cabin accommodations. Please call to verify availability. To see photos of the cabins visit our Ridge Cabin Facilities page.

MAY	JUNE	JULY
Eagle's Nest: 4-15, 20-23, 28-31	Eagle's Nest: 1-2, 9-15, 19-23, 25-30	Eagle's Nest: 16-17
Sky-Hi-View: 6-12, 17-23	Sky-Hi-View: 1-2, 18-19, 25-28	Sky-Hi-View: 3-5, 17-18, 23-26
Rocky Ridge: Closed for winter	Rocky Ridge: 1-2, 11-14, 18-21, 27-29	Rocky Ridge: 5-7, 12-17
Solitude Center: 6-20	Solitude Center: 9-14, 17-23	Solitude Center: 1-17, 20-26, 29-31
Emmental: 1-16, 18-31	Emmental: 9-14, 17-21, 27-28	Emmental: 4-7

Celebrating 50+ Years of Service in the San Luis Valley



Former MVSers being introduced here were part of a group of about 40 people who gathered in Alamosa on April 28 and 29 to celebrate 50 years of Mennonite presence and work in the San Luis Valley. Watch for a story about some of the history of Mennonite activity in the region and the anniversary celebration in the June issue of Zing!

Conference Calendar

May 4-6	Sent Conference, Chicago
May 11	Healthy Boundary Training Albuquerque, N.M. 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
May 15	Healthy Boundary Training SECOMP meeting Pueblo, Colo. 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
May 17	Healthy Boundary Training DAMM meeting Denver, Colo. 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
May 18-20	Mountain Community Mennonite Church 35 Year Anniversary
June 22-24	"Transformation," Weekend Choral Festival
August 3-5	MSMC Assembly; Taos, N.M.
Sept. 8-15	Mennonite Men wilderness retreat; Taos, N.M.
Sept 28-30	MSMC Immigration Round Table; Ft. Collins, CO
Nov 9-11	Pastor's Retreat, RMMC



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ZING! can be viewed on the website.

You can receive ZING directly in your email inbox by subscribing through the MSMC website. It is quick and easy to subscribe with this link.
<https://www.mountainstatesmc.org/conference-life/newsletter/>.

Next Deadline: May 31, 2018
E-mail contributions to Jen Dudenhefer at administrator@MountainStatesMC.org
Articles should be 400-500 words in length.

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