



ZING!

Calm, Slow, Productive November Moderator Report

By Ryan Koch

Calm, Slow & Productive: These three words are how I would describe the last two months for Mountain States Mennonite Conference. And these are the exact words I hoped for in this time of transition. A special thanks is warranted to Barry Bartel for staying on as transitional conference minister at ¼ time to bridge the gap and to help Amy get adjusted.

I cannot tell you how excited the Leadership Board is for Amy to begin her ministry as our next conference minister. I'm also thankful that the delegates unanimously and excitedly approved her for this role. I have complete confidence that Amy is going to flourish as our CM and that is going to enable her to explore different gifts and passions which God has blessed her with. I know her leadership will challenge our conference while also pulling us together, in new ways. I can't wait for November 12th when she officially begins. And I encourage everyone to send Amy a welcome email or card (AmyZ@MountainStatesMC.org). Please do continue to hold her in your prayers.

A few weeks ago, in mid October, Barry Bartel, Amy Zimbelman, Randy Spaulding and I attended the first virtual Constituency Leaders Council meeting of 2020. For those not familiar with the CLC, this body functions as the elders of the denomination. During a normal year, this body gathers twice. Unfortunately, the spring meeting was cancelled due to the pandemic, which meant we had a completely jammed agenda during our two days of meetings.

Most critical for the churches was the discussion on the retirement of the denomination's membership guidelines. The CLC is not a decision-making body. Ultimately the delegates in 2021 at the national convention will determine what changes might come. However, I found it interesting to hear the voices of each conference and constituency group about the potential changes. And yet, I heard a deep love and appreciation for our unique faith and our denomination. I also heard a deep desire for us to find ways to move forward, together. For those who have not read the CLC report, I encourage you to do so. You can find it [here](#).

Overall, I found the CLC meeting to be very encouraging. Apart from that conversation, we devoted a considerable amount of time and energy to doing anti-racism work together. Iris de León-Hartshorn led an

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insightful conversation on power and race and how the hidden forms of power have often been misused within the Mennonite Church. She really pushed our conferences to think about how we are responsible and accountable for the power that we have and what we do with it. This presentation reinforced, at least to me, the important work which the RACE taskforce is doing to help our conference recognize how white supremacy is supported and sustained through our organization.

Lastly, CLC reminded me that great things are happening all throughout the Mennonite churches. Amid this pandemic time which is full of uncertainty, churches and agencies are being creative in exploring new ways to proclaim the good news of Jesus and to bring peace to a world set on violence. I mentioned my thanksgiving for how adaptive we have been as a small conference, and how I believe this will be a springboard for helping us find new ways of being a conference together in the years ahead. I'm looking forward to 2021 and all that is in store for MSMC.



TiLT Suffers Fire, Seeks Support

In early October, the TiLT (Taos Initiative for Life Together, www.taostilt.org) community experienced a shocking trauma: first, a violent, mentally ill stalker shattered our window with a bullet blast, and then—later that same night as we gave statements at the local PD— he shattered our well-being with a raging arson blaze that burned a fifth of our house to a blackened nightmare. **The entire TiLT House is uninhabitable for at least six months due to the extensive fire and smoke damage. It will take a long time to rebuild.** Tilt dreams of multi-day

workshop time where volunteers from other places might come to gather, sing, pray, rebuild, and restore in Spring 2021. **In the meantime, TiLT could use a tiny home.** Can you help? Uninsured, Holly is without a safe home for the winter. **Holly needs a haven.** Can you help her?

- **Tiny home for TiLT:** [Go Fund Me](#)
- **Haven for Holly:** [Go Fund Me](#)



Don Schliering with grandsons Travis and Darren Harder. [Click here](#) to read full article on Don's Everence award.

Mini-Sermon for Delegates: A Hiking Club for Jesus

By Amy Zimbelman, Conference Minister

The following is a mini-sermon Amy shared during the delegate meeting called to affirm her as Conference Minister. She responded to five questions submitted by the delegates and then closed with this mini-sermon.



These last two questions that delegates asked me have an underlying theme that I want to address as you wonder what type of leader I'll be.

And that is the question of: do we make clear lines of insiders and outsiders, and do we abandon each other when we have honest disagreements?

Here's what I think: Jesus is at the center. That's the direction we Anabaptists are unapologetically walking towards. Each one of us is on different points of that journey, some closer, some farther, but we're doing our best to head in that direction.

We're not in the business of exclusion. We're not creating clear lines of insiders and outsiders as a church. That dogmatic way of thinking is not how we roll—we've seen in Anabaptist history how many Anabaptists were massacred because they wouldn't sign on to certain beliefs, like infant baptism. We're not an exclusionary people who use violent tactics of insiders and outsiders and then massacre those who don't agree with us.

BUT we are headed in a clear direction. Towards Jesus. We're walkers, sojourners, hikers (because of this part of the country) moving towards Jesus. That means that if you even desire to head towards Jesus, you will fit in in the culture of our churches and of our conference. If you even want to point that direction, that's enough to be part of our community.

How do we do this walking towards Jesus? Peace and nonviolence are our methods, the vehicle for this hard and beautiful journey—the shoes we're wearing on our feet as we walk towards Jesus. Ephesians 6:15 says, "Your feet are fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace." And the clothes we wear—the shirt on our back, is righteousness and justice. And the belt holding up our pants is truth because it's gonna be embarrassing if we have a belt of lies (your pants could easily fall down). The hat on our head hiding our bad hair day is salvation—or whatever other name you have for it: shalom, wholeness, liberation. The sunscreen that covers us and protects our whole body is our faith. And the tool that we hold in our hands to love others better (not to hit each other over the head with) is scripture.

That's what we look like as we're hiking on this journey. If someone comes into our communities with violence guiding their steps rather than peace, if they've had one of those Lie Belts marketed to them, if the tool they're wielding is Mine Kampf rather than the Bible, they too are welcome. However, they will find that they do not fit in in our culture. We are unapologetically wearing this outfit and moving towards Jesus, towards life together in the society of Heaven. Tactics of hate and lies and exclusion and violence—those tactics find they have no traction in our communities.

But the beautiful thing is that Heaven has a way of reaching in, infiltrating, changing people. So even the person wielding Mine Kampf is worthy of love and worthy of being invited to point towards Jesus.

We are on this journey together, in Anabaptist community. We are a hiking club. This means that we don't abandon each other; we wait up for the slowest person.

I choose intentionally to stay in relationship as much as I can with people who don't think women should be in ministry, or my Catholic friends who are part of systems that don't think women should be in ministry. I choose intentionally to stay in relationship with people who disagree with me politically as well. Because how are we going to learn from each other without relationship, if they don't know any women in ministry?

Will I be criticized for this way of looking at our spiritual journey? Of course. Some will say I'm not enough of an activist, that I'm too pastoral—why don't I have clearer insiders and outsiders? Others will say I'm too challenging to the church, that I should avoid talking about controversial topics entirely. I figure if I get critiques on both sides then I'm probably in the right place.

That's my vision of where we're headed, what clothes we're putting on each day, and what we do when we disagree on how to get there.

But I want to close my time with one question for you: if you give me this job, will you pray for me? At the end of that Ephesians passage it says: "Be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." I'm asking you very seriously: please will you pray for me in this work, because while it is joyful work, there are days then it will be very hard work, and I will need your prayer. And in exchange, you can know that I will be praying for you. [Click here](#) to watch and/or read the full article online.

Stay tuned for details on Conference Minister Amy Zimbelman's Virtual Installation service. It is tentatively scheduled for early December. Watch for details on FB and in bulletin announcements.

VOICES *Together*

The new Mennonite hymnal and worship resource, *Voices Together*, has responded to the decision to remove the songs of David Haas from the book. A helpful new resource, "Show Strength: How to Respond when Worship Materials are Implicated in Abuse," addressing these concerns and others has been released on the *Voices Together* website: voicestogetherhymnal.org/resources/downloads/, click on Discussion Guides.

Voices Together App Now Available

If you heard a collective cheer echoing through the Mennoverse this week, it's because the *Voices Together* app is now available. Dig into the new collection today and see all the extra features the app offers. Some 100 songs in the pew edition app also come with short audio clips! [Download instructions](#). NOTE: The pew edition, accompaniment edition, and worship leader edition will be available to purchase separately in the Hymnals app offered for iPad and Android devices by GIA Music, at the same price as their respective print editions.

MSMC Group Hymnal Order Set to Ship This Month

Pre-ordered hymnal shipping has been delayed. The conference hymnal order is estimated for delivery sometime in November. I will be in touch with those churches when I receive more information. This includes: Anabaptist Fellowship of Alamosa, Albuquerque MC, Boulder MC, Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship, Mountain Community MC and Sojourn MC. To view the various editions available and to order, [click here](#).
Jen Dudenhefer, MSMC Administrator

Supporting Our Pastors

By Barry Bartel, Transition Conference Minister

It has been a pleasure to extend my term to serve MSMC in a transition role to provide overlap as Amy begins as our Conference Minister. In this final column, I would like to give a shout out to the pastors and other leaders of our conference churches. In this challenging time, they have demonstrated extreme flexibility and creativity in continuing to provide meaningful worship experiences in virtual or sometimes hybrid forms that most of them had never experienced before. The need for physical separation also highlights how high a value we place on community in our congregational life.



The flexibility and creativity demonstrated by our pastors takes a new level of energy, and our congregations would do well to understand the need to care for and advocate for our pastors, so that the new pressure on our pastors does not come at a cost. Clergy and congregational coach Laura Stephens-Reed wrote about “the coming tidal wave of pastoral departures” at www.laurastephensreed.com/blog/the-coming-tidal-wave-of-pastoral-departures. I encourage congregational leaders to review her thoughts on how dramatically this time of pandemic has changed the pastoral role, and to consider some of her recommendations on supporting pastors:

- **Check on your pastor.** Many clergy don’t have anyone outside of their family to ask how they are and to listen to the answer.
- **If you have the bandwidth, ask how you can help.** As mentioned above, ministers took an unsustainable amount of work on themselves early in the pandemic because it was easier in the short term, they didn’t want to bother others who were struggling, and they didn’t know they’d be doing all the extra tasks six months later.
- **Speak well about your pastor to others.** If other church members talk disparagingly about what they think the minister is or isn’t doing, reply with your belief that she is working hard and, like all of us, doing the best she can.
- **If someone mentions a specific pastoral care need to you, urge that person to contact the pastor.** She wants to know so that she can respond!
- **Engage bigger questions with fellow church members.** What are we learning about our church or our community during this time? What do we need to keep or stop doing as a result? If you can think beyond the moment and help others do so, your pastor will be so grateful.
- **Send your minister an encouraging card, text, or email.** Name specific things you see her doing that you appreciate. This noticing goes a long way in helping a pastor feel valued.

As the virus surges in many parts of the country, the anticipated return to something close to the old normal gets further away. My prayer is that the church can emerge from this challenging time with a renewed sense of what we value and of our mission. Allow me to conclude this column the way I concluded my last, by encouraging that we not simply long for things to return to “normal.” My prayer is that these uncertain times may transform us and our church in ways we could not imagine and did not plan. [Click here](#) to read this article online.

2020 National Journey Award Winner Celebrated

Don Schliering of Denver

By Rhoda M. Blough, Everence Stewardship Consultant

“Don’s life has been dedicated to social and economic justice, advocating for peace and modeling humility. He chooses to share his faith through his actions and the stories of his life’s journeys. When he shares his life stories they are always filled with passion for others and emphasizing the good in people. His career path represents his commitment to doing good in the world. Through his work and life choices, he has touched many people.”

These words written by Dawn Schliering-Harder aptly describe the life of her father, Don Schliering, 2020 National Journey Award winner. Don was recognized on Saturday, Sept. 26 in an outside socially distanced ceremony at Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, Colorado.

The program included remarks by Brent Miller, Everence® Financial Consultant, who said he was honored to call Don a “lifelong client and good friend and grateful for the impact that he’s had on me and my life.” Brent shared memories of long conversations with Don on more than just his finances. Brent shared how most people retire and stop working but Don instead chose to teach for Regis University Business School in Denver, Colorado. He taught ethics and help create a new adult learning program for working adults.

A major accomplishment for Don, along with two Hispanic community activist and a Catholic priest, was to start a nonprofit, Brother’s Redevelopment Inc. Their mission was, and continues to be, to provide affordable, safe, and accessible housing for Colorado’s low-income, elderly, and disabled residents. Don continues to be involved as a board member for the past 49 years, BRI will be celebrating their 50-year anniversary in 2021. Don chose to give the Everence Journey award \$5,000 check to Brothers Redevelopment, Inc.



Rhoda M. Blough, Don Schliering and Brent Miller

Don’s grandsons, Travis and Darren Harder, both shared about their grandfather and the special relationship they have with him.

“My grandpa encourages stewardship among others,” Darren said. “He has encouraged me to engage in stewardship by talking to me about causes that I care about. Within those conversations, Grandpa has asked me why I care about the particular issue and asks what I can do to help with the issue.”

Travis shared that he “grew up on stories my grandpa would tell – about his experience with PAX and his work with various nonprofits, including some he had helped start. These stories and works certainly inspired me. I try to live my life through my grandpa’s example, helping people wherever I can and choosing to see the good in people.”

The program also included sharing from others who know and love him. Don is very fond of ice cream so at the end of the program, individual ice cream treats were provided and enjoyed by all.

It was my honor and privilege to share my thoughts about Don at the event honoring Don. Reading his application, I realized what an impact Don had on so many people through his life’s work by his dedication to social and economic justice and modeling humility. In the words of his grandson, Travis, “I believe his actions and presence simply inspires other people to perform acts of stewardship. His extraordinary life, full of good deeds and helping others, encourages other people to act in his stead.” Don truly has lived an extraordinary life and I am so glad we were able to honor Don and his life’s work! [Click here to read more online.](#)

News from:

ROCKY MOUNTAIN MENNONITE CAMP



709 County Road 62
Divide, CO 80814

719-687-9506
info@rmmc.org
www.rmmc.org

QUILTING RETREATS

What better way to spend a month than quilting? “October was filled with quilt retreats and I thoroughly enjoyed every one of them. The camaraderie of fellow quilters, the creativity, the stories, all bring us together in a special way. With the smaller groups, I have a chance to try new and fun recipes as well,” said camp’s own staff quilter, Mary Yoder.

Other quotes from quilters from all the retreats included:

- “Thank you for providing the opportunity for respite in a stressful time.”
- “I always feel welcome here.”
- “Thank you for making us feel like family.”



Pictured: Fall Mennonite Quilters Retreat participants wrapped up the “Quiltober” month here at RMMC as UFO (Unfinished Objects) Quilt Retreats I, II & III were also held.

In response to coronavirus guidelines, retreats were limited to 18 participants spread out over both dining halls.

MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE (MDS) HELPS AVOID DISASTER WITH TREE CUTTING

With the help of MDS volunteers, staff and an 85’ lift, a total of 15 large trees were removed that died as a result of the Spruce Beetle infestation or posed risks to camp facilities. Trees close to facilities and ranging from 95 to 105 feet tall made it challenging for them to be felled from the ground. The lift allowed for cutting smaller, manageable lengths that could be safely dropped or lowered to the ground without damage to facilities or surrounding trees.

Although the rental of a lift is an expensive undertaking (\$3,000 for the week including delivery), hiring out the job for the same work accomplished was quoted at \$1,200 to \$1,500 per tree. These are big trees. While cutting down a big tree is a significant job, other big jobs include:

- cutting off branches, gathering them and processing them through the chipper
- cutting, removing and loading the logs for sale to the local lumber mill
- cutting up smaller chunks for firewood and the log splitter



Pictured: The Monday morning work crew helped get the week started with the first tree in the campground.

The week of October 5-10, Paul Unruh (Newton KS), Marcus Yoder (Cotapaxi, CO) and Ray Beggs (Colorado Springs, CO) represented MDS leadership. MDS volunteers, Dave Miller (Greeley CO), Dave Miller (Wichita,

KS), Moses Troyer (Cotapaxi, CO) Matt Zimbelman (Colorado Springs, CO), Ken & Matthew McDowell (Colorado Springs, CO) joined the effort. Camp's own Tom Unruh served as lead sawyer and Corbin Graber as lift operator. Weather conditions were ideal with pleasant temperatures (60's), gentle breezes and beautiful fall colors. We were also grateful for the safety of people and property experienced throughout the week.

The time working in our forest was bittersweet as we said goodbye to some old camp "friends." While they needed to come down, these mature trees were certainly the grandfathers and grandmothers of our forest here at Rocky Mountain and a reminder of the life cycle as part of God's marvelous creation in this special place.

For additional information, read the article [At RMMC, MDS volunteers are saving the forest - one tree at a time](#), by Susan Kim. [Click here](#) for additional images and time-lapse videos.



WHO'S BEEN HELPING

Thank you to the volunteers for the month of October:

- Ray Beggs
- Dave Miller
- Dave Miller
- Marc Yoder
- Moses Troyer
- Matt Zimbelman
- Ken McDowell
- Matthew McDowell
- Matt Lehman Wiens
- Ruth Lehman Wiens
- Anna Unruh

COME VOLUNTEER

RMMC relies a lot on the help of volunteers to keep the ministry going. Your help with any camp tasks would be greatly appreciated! If you have interest in volunteering, call (719-687-9506) or email (info@rmmc.org) RMMC.

Pictured: Two large trees next to Speicher (camp shop) were infested by the Spruce Beetle last summer.



YOU'VE BEEN SPOTTED

We spotted Anna Unruh, (Lakewood, CO) volunteering here in the camp kitchen joining our SOOP volunteers Matt & Ruth Lehman Wiens in preparing brunch for Quilters Retreat. In yet another "friends meeting friends" while here at Rock Mountain, Anna and Ruth were classmates growing up back-in-the-day in Newton, KS.

Share your "spotted" photo with an RMMC labeled item (i.e. clothing, water bottle, etc.) from camp or anywhere in the world and email it to info@rmmc.org.

COMING UP:

- Pastors Retreat, November 13-15
- Scrapbook Retreat: January 29-31, 2021

➤ [Click here](#) to read the full RMMC November newsletter.

MSMC Communication Updates

Zinglet! will continue, produced between Zing! Publications. Zinglet! is intended to be a one-page, quick read of happenings in our congregations. This could be simple 3-4 sentence pieces about events you are doing, bulletin announcements, or just a calendar note. Photos are always a wonderful addition!

Bulletin Announcements – We email MSMC congregations every Wednesday with bulletin announcements. If you have something to share out to our community, please email Jen, [MSMC Administrator](#), by 9am Wednesday morning.

ZING! is published for the congregations of Mountain States Mennonite Conference and can be [viewed on the website](#).

Conference Website: MountainStatesMC.org

Email contributions as Word files to Jen Dudenhefer at administrator@MountainStatesMC.org. Articles should be 300 words or less in length.

Conference Calendar

Nov 13-15	Pastors' Retreat
TBD	Amy Zimbelman Installation
June 25-27, 2021	Gun Violence Round Table, Denver, CO

MSMC Staff

Conference Minister, Amy Zimbelman
AmyZ@MountainStatesMC.org

Transition Conference Minister, Barry Bartel
BarryB@MountainStatesMC.org

Moderator, Ryan Koch
RyanK@MountainStatesMC.org

Editor/Conference Administrator, Jen Dudenhefer
Administrator@MountainStatesMC.org

Bookkeeper, Rita Balzer
Treasurer@MountainStatesMC.org