



ZING!

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Pictured: (left) worship music team—Stephanie Nance on piano, Randy Spaulding, Susan Graber, Emily Martin, Sonia Graber and Vern Remple; (right) reader's theater: Annaken Toews, Steve Ramer, Toni Diaz Bachus and Jordan Penner

Assembly Videos

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A New Chapter for Zach Martinez



On July 24, Sojourn Mennonite gathered to say goodbye to their pastor Zach Martinez and his family: wife Megan and daughter Margot. Zach, who had been bi-vocationally serving this church based in Greeley and Fort Collins, will shift to working full-time as a hospital chaplain. Zach will continue to provide conference-level leadership on Ministerial Council and Leadership Board.

Zach has provided incredible leadership in his role at Sojourn. He has a deep concern for justice, a pastor's heart, and is willing to ask hard spiritual questions that challenge himself and others to grow. To learn more about who Zach Martinez is, here's an [article](#) from last year's Zing! about his life and ministry: [Zach Martinez: An unexpected journey to Mennonite leadership \(complete with kicking, screaming, and a hot fudge sundae\).](#)

Sojourn congregant and leader Pam Duncan wanted to share some thoughts on what Zach's ministry has meant to Sojourn Mennonite:

Zach came to us straight out of seminary and we were impressed with him from the start. Some of us on the search committee were a bit concerned about how young he was, but throughout the search process he had the most thoughtful responses and such an open and giving attitude. Theologically and in every other way, he was the perfect fit for Sojourn and it truly felt as if God had led us to each other. We were not disappointed, as his sermons provided much food for thought as well as spiritual sustenance.

We have been a happy and thriving congregation under Zach's leadership, despite several transitions that caught us all by surprise. Very shortly after he joined us, we suddenly lost our worship space to an institution that had offered substantially more rent money. This change was discovered with less than an hour to prepare for that day's worship. Zach led us in gamely and creatively adjusting, creating a workable worship space in the church lobby. A year or so later, we had to move again and Zach played a big part in finding our new place, where we once again settled in happily. At the same time, he was developing a church plant in Greeley under the "one congregation, two cities" model.

Then, of course, the pandemic happened and pastors everywhere had to make drastic changes. This was a major challenge, but our young pastor rose to it with creativity and remarkably good humor. Throughout his tenure, Zach's resilience has carried us through.

May God bless Zach and his wonderful family as they start this new phase.



Pictured: (left) Glenn Balzer, Zach Martinez and Jordan Farrell;
(right) Sojourn Celebration for Zach Martinez

Planting New Seeds

Delegate Assembly Report - 2022

By Ryan Koch, Conference Moderator

Excited and exhausted - that is what I'm feeling after the Delegate Assembly and the Hope for New Growth conversation. I'm exhausted because it takes a lot of work both getting ready for delegate assembly and running it. Robert's Rules of order are complicated, y'all! But I'm also really excited because it feels like our conference has a clear sense of direction for the future and because I heard so much passion and saw so much energy for the work of our conference in Denver.

I'm so thankful that all the initiatives passed this year with such affirmation. For those who were not able to attend assembly, Amy and I presented Amy and the Leadership Board's dreams for the conference. Besides continuing to expand the Future Anabaptist Leaders program, the two new initiatives were presented: prioritize church planting while also creating a social enterprise initiative which will provide a new revenue stream for the conference while also acting ethically in ways that share our Mennonite values with the world.

As we explained, the conference was unexpectedly blessed with a large estate gift that will help fund both initiatives. Part of that estate gift will enable Amy to move from 3/4th's time to full time, starting in July of 2023 for two years. Amy will be spending these hours supporting these new initiatives as they really begin their work.

The next step will be for the Leadership Board to form two task forces which will be in charge of providing the vision for these initiatives and overseeing the beginning of this work. If you know of people connected to our conference who you believe have gifts to help support our endeavors of church planting and starting a social enterprise to benefit the work of the conference, please let anyone on the Leadership Board or Amy know.

Also, during the Delegate session, the Delegates strongly affirmed a new ministerial ethics covenant. This covenant is for all credentialed leaders in the conference and is a way for us to continue to practice relational accountability while also further prioritizing the health and safety of our pastors, our churches, our passion ministries, and the entire conference. This document grew out of a task force which first convened last fall to look at our bylaws and to find ways to promote healthier congregations. The ministerial council and the leadership heard their ideas and created this document together.



Lastly, I'm really looking forward to working with Kim Kauffman and Connie Rempel on the Leadership Board starting next year. I'm also thankful that Maytia Moua will be joining the Ministerial Council next year. A special thank you to Zach Martinez and Debbie Miller for serving on conference committees these last four years. We greatly appreciate your wisdom, your gifts and all the time you have given to help our conference.

I'm looking forward to serving as the conference moderator for another two years. I hope to see you all at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp for next year's assembly which will take place on July 21-23.

New Life at Living Light of Peace:

Congregation partners with Ukrainian and Russian neighbors, Denver Urban Gardens to transform environment

By Jeni Hiatt Umble, Pastor of Living Light of Peace, Arvada, Colorado

An idea germinated within our congregation when we received a newsletter from Mennonite Men highlighting their [JoinTrees](#) campaign with a goal of planting one million trees by 2030. That spring challenge came about the same time that our congregation began our annual search for someone to mow our 1.5 acres consisting of mostly weeds. And it came as the reality of climate change hit closer to home with increasing temperatures and wildfires consuming entire neighborhoods in nearby cities. We wondered if our congregation could use our small plot of land to benefit our community.

Our pastor reached out for more information from the US Coordinator of Mennonite Men, Steve Thomas. Steve encouraged us to be in contact with local experts to determine what trees would grow best in our Colorado climate. He suggested also planting a variety of climate-appropriate bushes and flowers. And he reminded us that volunteers from the community are often available to help with a new project.

We began to envision how our 1.5 acres could be an oasis in our Denver suburb of Arvada. We used our monthly potlucks as forums for brainstorming: planting trees, wildflowers and herbs, installing beehives, expanding our current community garden, creating walkways, maybe even developing a solar farm. Instead of an annual headache, our yard became a source of dreams.

Of course, there were voices of caution. We are a small, older congregation. Do we have the energy to take on an ambitious project? Who will do the initial work and who will provide continuing care? As it turned out, the experts and the volunteers we needed were already onsite!

For many years there has been a community garden managed by Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) on a portion of our land. We learned that they were eager to expand that garden with their [Food Forest Initiative](#). Staff members facilitated a neighborhood meeting, complete with a translator, for our mostly Russian and Ukrainian neighbors. Many of these families already have plots in our community garden. We learned that they especially wanted sour cherry trees. Last spring DUG volunteers planted twenty trees and assorted bushes adjacent to the garden. They are providing the initial care for the trees and have identified volunteers in the neighborhood for continuing care. In a few years, our orchard will provide our neighbors with apples, peaches, pears, and hazelnuts in addition to sour cherries. Any extra produce will be donated to the local food bank and a nearby day shelter.

We are happy to add our first twenty trees to the 80,000 that Mennonite Men will have planted by the end of this year, on their way to one million by 2030. And this is only the beginning of our land transformation! We still have room for wildflowers, herbs, beehives, and more trees. Hopefully, each year will bring an expansion of climate-friendly uses.

For more information: www.mennonitemen.org/jointrees and dug.org/giving-grove/



Pictured: (left) Tree Prep and Garden, (middle) Maurice Briggs digging, (right) New Tree with Community Garden

Conference Minister's Corner

Unapologetically cultivating hope: Delegates affirm new growth in our conference

By Rev. Amy S. Zimbelman



If you haven't heard the story yet (via [Ryan's report](#) or [at assembly](#)) of the bold initiatives our conference is taking and their inception, it goes something like this:

It was the fall of 2021. I'd been in my role as Conference Minister for a year, had spent time establishing relationships and listening to where folks are at, and felt like it was time to dream. I felt it, and Moderator Ryan Koch felt it too.

So we met at a coffee shop.

I brought a page or two of ideas for the future of our conference (Ryan thinks it was more like three or four pages, but who's to say?). We discussed them, threw some of them out entirely. And we honed in on a couple of them.

We left hopeful, but with no means of funding these initiatives. Good ideas, but will they ever come to fruition?

Did I mention that it was the first time we'd had a conversation like this?

Then, the *very next day*, I get a call from Ryan. "Amy, you are not going to believe this." I could tell that, whatever he was going to say, *he* barely believed it. A woman at First Mennonite Church had passed away and left a sizable endowment for both the church and for the conference. A windfall of funding. With no requirements as to how it is spent.

I never had the privilege of knowing the woman who gave this extravagant gift, but bless her for her generosity.

One of the best living theologians/Bible scholars that I know of, Renita Weems, says that a miracle is receiving something you need just when you need it. That's what this was. We not only needed money, we needed assurance that it's okay to dream, to unapologetically cultivate sheer hope for the future of this conference we love so much.

So we took that as a sign. Not that our ideas are fully-formed or iron-clad, but that we should definitely move forward with them, sharing them first with the rest of the Leadership Board to see what they think. And then, after brainstorming some more and honing them, bringing them to the delegates at assembly, which we did on July 30th in an hour entitled *Hope for New Growth*.



Pictured: (left) Our conference's new postcards, available to share among our churches and our communities, (right) Hope for New Growth session at Assembly—video available [here](#).

So what are the ideas? And how were they received by delegates?

First of all, I'll say that these ideas are growing out of the good soil in our conference—our communities that get together to worship God and laugh, learn, pray, sing, grieve, march, eat, and grow together. Our many thriving churches and passion ministries are looking outward to work for peace and justice in this broken and beautiful world. Our conference is worth sustaining and growing.

With that as a foundation, the first idea is to prioritize **church planting (a.k.a. cultivating new communities)** as a conference. Our Anabaptist way of life and faith is worth sharing, so we'd like to empower new faith communities sprouting up, whether they call themselves a fellowship or a community or a church. It's vitally important that the model of these new communities is intentionally Anabaptist and intentionally anti-colonialist (which encompasses being anti-racist, anti-patriarchal, etc.), and not re-inscribing oppressive power dynamics.

The second major idea would help provide funding for the first and for our conference operations as a whole: a **social enterprise** that generates a revenue stream in an ethical manner while having a social impact. This would look like what other conferences have to help fund their work: Pacific Southwest Conference's thrift store, the international guest house in DC, Atlantic Coast Conference's bike shop, etc.

Helping to enable these initiatives is the Future Anabaptist Leaders program, which empowers young people to explore ministry in our conference, as well as moving my Conference Minister position from 3/4 time to full-time for two years starting next summer 2023. Funding was set aside for both of those.

****IMPORTANT NOTE**** Does this funding mean that churches no longer need to financially support our conference? No. In fact, these new initiatives are dependent on churches continuing to financially contribute to the conference at similar levels. If church funding were to decrease, these new initiatives may not be possible. We very much **NEED** and **APPRECIATE** your congregation's continued giving to make our day-to-day operations and our new initiatives possible. Thank you!

We intentionally presented these ideas very much in the ideas stage, so that after approval, task forces could be assembled to flesh out what the social enterprise might actually *be*, what/where/how many church plants we'd help support, etc. We didn't want fully-formed ideas rubber stamped by delegates—we actually want to discern together whether this is the best way forward or not.

During the meeting and before voting during the debate session, we allotted plenty of time to field questions and concerns. One concern was: is it possible to adjust the \$125,000 for church planting and \$125,000 for a social enterprise as we go, or are they set in stone? We clarified that the ideas themselves are a package deal and should be voted on for affirmation or rejection as a unit, but the funding is subject to change, and that any major changes in distribution of funds would be brought to delegates for approval. Transparency and trust are important to us.

After more discussion which can be listened to [here](#), the delegates voted. The initiatives passed!

From here, Ryan and I and the leadership board will be working on assembling task forces, with an eye towards ramping up in the summer of 2023 when I go full-time.

Let the miracle of new growth begin!

MDS Volunteers Support in Questa, NM



On August 5-6, MDS volunteers from New Mexico and Colorado converged for a second time at a trailer park we have come to call QUILT, the Questa Initiative for life together. Owned by the Herrera family, QUILT is being sponsored by TiLT, the Taos initiative for life together. Todd Wynward, Mountain States minister for environmental justice, founded TiLT eight years ago to be an multicultural incubator for spirit-led personal and systemic change. Mennonites from all across the mountain states have supported Wynward's work in Taos County, and this last MDS work party was the latest example.

Pictured: (left) One crew (Holly, Donna, and Matt pictured) worked at the chipper, taking care of a small mountain of wood debris. (right) The other teamed up to plaster almost all of 160 foot long wall we had made last time of repurposed plastic. It separates the trailer park from the main road, creating a safe courtyard for kids to play and families to picnic.



Save the Date

October 14 & 15, 2022

Rocky Mountain Mennonite Relief Sale!!!

Come and get inspired with great food, music, fellowship and many fun and interesting gifts from fair trade items made by international artisans or original gifts made by talented crafters. You may find an antique in the general auction, or an original, beautiful quilt at the Quilt Auction.

Hungry? Come to The Gobin Center in Rocky Ford Friday evening for a BBQ Pork Sandwich, then join us as the Heston College Bel Canto Singers will provide the evening's entertainment.

Come back again on Saturday morning for pancakes and sausage or enjoy a lunch of barbecued chicken. We have lots of other yummy food options at the fairgrounds too including bierocks, pie and ice cream, kettle corn, apple cider and baked items in the pantry. Outdoor seating will be available.

Fun for the kids as they have their own auction on Saturday, kids corner with crafts and a ride in the barrel train. If you aren't able to attend the sale this year, please join us at the online auction.

The online auction will open on Saturday, October 15th at 1:00 pm for the sale of the tractor. Stay on for some wonderful general auction items followed by the quilt auction at 1:30 pm. Please go to the website and register before the start of the online auction so everything is set and you are ready to go.

<http://rmmcsale.org/index.html>. The pantry is asking for donations; please no custard pies per health department regulations. Thank you for your support in this year's Rocky Mountain Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale.

We can't do all of this without you. We are still looking for volunteers. If you have an hour or two to help on Friday or Saturday, please check out our signup genius. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c094eaeaf2aaaf58-rocky1>. The pantry is asking for donations; please no custard pies per health department regulations. Thank you for your support in this year's Rocky Mountain Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale.

OCT
27-30

THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY

Two years after an arson fire rocked our world and disrupted our lives, TiLT is reborn and rebuilt, ready to open its doors again to the community. Come on in!



FROM THE ASHES: FOUR DAYS OF CONSCIOUS COMMUNITY, CELEBRATING THE COMEBACK OF TILT

Engaging Activities Passionate Projects
Provocative Presentations Soulful Sharing
Community Conversations Fabulous Feasts
Multi-Cultural Music Delicious Dancing
10am-10pm daily bring your whole self

DAY 1: HEY, NEWCOMERS TO TAOS—AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE

DAY 2: HOW MIGHT WE WEAVE A COMMUNITY OF KINSHIP?

DAY 3: GUIDANCE FOR TiLT EMERGING FROM THE FIRE

DAY 4: LOOKING FORWARD: OUR NEXT 30 YEARS TOGETHER IN TAOS

TO PARTICIPATE IN SOME OR ALL, CONTACT

TODDWYNWARD@GMAIL.COM

SCHEDULE TBD

News from:

ROCKY MOUNTAIN MENNONITE CAMP



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719-687-9506
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Pictured: Camp was blessed again this summer with a great group of new and returning summer staff to serve the Rocky Mountain ministry



Pictured: Grade 6/7 Wilderness I campers enjoy their trip to Great Sand Dunes National Park in southwestern Colorado

Click [here](#) to read the full RMMC July-August 2022 Newsletter.

More Assembly Photos...



Pictured: (top) Hannah Martin and Assembly children; (left) Rockies outing; (below left to right) Youth Session, MCC Session, Hmong Lunch; (bottom left to right) RAWTools booth and auctioned quilt, Marshall Fire Session, Hymn Sing



MSMC Communication Updates

Zing! 2022 deadlines and schedule	
• Jan —Release Date: Jan 10; <i>submission deadline: Dec 31</i>	• July/Assembly Edition – Release Date: July 10; <i>submission deadline: Jun 30</i>
• Feb —Release Date: Feb 10; <i>submission deadline: Jan 31</i>	• Aug/Sept – Release Date: Aug 31; <i>submission deadline: Aug 15</i>
• Mar —Release Date: Mar 10; <i>submission deadline: Feb 28</i>	• Oct – Release Date: Oct 10; <i>submission deadline: Sept 30</i>
• Apr – Release Date: Apr 10; <i>submission deadline: Mar 31</i>	• Nov – Release Date: Nov 10; <i>submission deadline: Oct 31</i>
• May - Release Date: May 10; <i>submission deadline: Apr 30</i>	• Dec – Release Date: Dec 10; <i>submission deadline: Nov 30</i>
• Jun – Release Date: Jun 10; <i>submission deadline: May 31</i>	

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.

Conference Calendar

Oct 14-15	Rocky Mtn MCC Relief Sale
Oct 27-30	TiLT from the Ashes
Nov 11-13	Pastor Retreat
July 21-23, 2023	Annual Assembly, RMMC

Zing! Is published for the congregations of Mountain States Mennonite Conference and can be viewed on the website.

Conference Website: www.mountainstatesmc.org

Email contributions as Word files to Jen Dudenhefer at administrator@mountainstatesmc.org.

Articles should be 300 words or less in length.

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