

# FMC Newsletter

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Volume No. 1

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May 2008

*The mission of First Mennonite Church is to welcome all to know Christ's salvation through worship and works of love, peace and justice in service for God.*

## Rachel's Reflections

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*I had the pleasure*, last weekend, of listening to and speaking with Ron Sider at Central Christian School's "Believers in Conversation" conference. Ron Sider is president of Evangelicals for Social Action (ESA) ([www.esa-online.org](http://www.esa-online.org)) and is professor of Theology, Holistic Ministry & Public Policy at Palmer Seminary at Eastern University. It was Sider's speech at the 1984 Mennonite World Conference that prompted the formation of Christian Peacemaker Teams.

I will admit I knew very little about Ron before attending the conference. His book *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* is on my reading list, but not yet read. So I was curious to find out more about him and what he has to say.

The weekend started with a breakfast for area pastors during which Sider shared from *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience*. The scandal is that for many North American Christians their profession of faith is not consistent with their lifestyle. What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ? We spent a fair bit of time discussing how we, the church, can practice living as communities of mutual accountability when individualism has permeated the church.

The Friday evening session was titled "Living Like Jesus", where Sider shared with us seven of the eleven marks of genuine Christianity that are described in his book of the same name.

Saturday morning we looked at the question of "Is there a way to think biblically about politics?" Sider highlighted the need for individuals to develop a 'political philosophy' based on study of scripture and of the world and then to apply this philosophy in the voting booth, with the understanding that this philosophy is not set in stone, but evolves as understanding of scripture and studying the world evolves. He criticizes Christians for uncritically adopting the secular left or right. The starting point for

our outlook on politics is the Christian community. I find politics interesting and this was a very helpful and fruitful discussion. I am wondering if this might be an area we want to discuss as a congregation, or small group, as the presidential election comes nearer. If you are interested in something like this, please let me know and we'll see what format this could take.

The final session looked at a "new vision for overcoming poverty in America." It was a lot to take in for a weekend and a lot to ponder as we journey on our Christian walk. The ESA website says, "Evangelicals for Social Action (ESA) is a community of Christians committed to living out their walk with Christ holistically--that is, with the whole of their lives." Ron's time with us was a reflection of these words and an inspiration to do the same.

### Fellowship Fun!

Come out and enjoy Kenny's fried fish  
Saturday May 3 @ 5:30  
Sign-up sheet in the hall.

### In this issue...

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Rachel's Reflections .....	1
Birthdays & Anniversaries.....	2
May Worship .....	2
FMC & Community Announcements .....	2
The broader church.....	2
On the horizon .....	3
May calendar .....	4

## The Penny Power Jug is Back!!!

Save your change and bring it to church. This "Water for Life" project, sponsored by MCC, provides funds to create clean drinking water and new wells for communities all over the world.

The Penny Power change will be collected at the Relief Sale in Kidron, August 2, 2008.

### May Birthdays & Anniversaries

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- 4 - Lydia Hartzler
- 7 - Rhonda & Jay Landis (1988)
- 12 - Sarah Moss
- 13 - Jason Rohrer
- 14 - Janine & Jesse Rohrer (2005)
- 19 - Gary & Christy Beery Bush (1984)
- 22 - Lloyd Kilmer
- 28 - Blake Lower
- 30 - Butch & Donna Mumaw (1981)

### May Worship @ FMC

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Ushers: Jan A, Bob M, Matthew C, Denton C

Sunday	Greeters	Nursery
4	Laura M & Ruth S	Sharon G
11	Carl S & Lydia N	Nate H
18	Jack & Mona R	Rhonda L
25	Evelyn & Paul B	Adrienne G

Greeters should be at the front and back door by 10:20 and ushers should be ready to hand out bulletins and seat people by 10:30.

*Please remember to find someone to fill-in for you if you cannot make it.*

### FMC & Community Announcements

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**Name the Newsletter.** This is the fifth issue of the FMC Newsletter and as we head into our six issue, it is time for a name.

So let's name our newsletter. Submit your ideas to Rachel by May 9. Church Council will look them over

at our May meeting and the new name will be revealed with the next issue.

**Choir Music Files** - All of the choir anthems have been installed in the new file cabinets. The folders have been numbered, and a computer database has been compiled. This is a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, on which the music has been sorted by Title, composer, file number, and Use (season or type of service). Printouts of these are placed in the cabinet, along with the copy of a CD-ROM, which also contains pdf files of this information. It is incumbent upon each person who adds or subtracts music from this file to arrange to keep the data up to date. The older card file is also up to date, and should be maintained as needed.

Portable file boxes next to the cabinets contain copies of public-domain music, as well as a number of cantatas which do not fit in the file drawers. Plastic storage boxes contain some of the older song collections, such as the "Sing and Rejoice" books and Christmas carol booklets.  
*Respectfully submitted. Ron Chamberlin, Choir Director (retired).*

**AMHC Spring Banquet** You are invited to the Spring Banquet of the Amish & Mennonite Heritage Center on Friday evening, May 2, 6:30 p.m., at the Carlisle Inn, Walnut Creek. The guest speaker is John Ruth, from Harleysville, Pa., who will talk on "Our Swiss Homeland in Scene, Story and Song," using story and photography.

All are welcome. There is no charge for the meal. An offering will be received for the dinner expenses and program support. Please call AMHC for reservations (330-893-3192).

**Camp Luz Senior Citizens' Day, May 5, 2008,** 9:30 AM. Michael Mast will share about his hike on the Appalachian Trail! Arloa Bontrager, Service Opportunities for Older Persons (SOOP) & Youth Venture Director, Mennonite Mission Network will also give a presentation. Please call 330-683-1246 for lunch reservations.

### The broader church

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#### A Letter to the Candidates: Calling for Respect and Tolerance

Faith communities from across the United States have grown increasingly concerned at the tenor of the immigration debate being conducted in the media

and by candidates running for elected offices. Although there are many policy specifics about which Christians can (and do) disagree, we should be able to agree that hate speech and violence have no place in our society. Unfortunately, the Southern Poverty Law Center estimates a 48% rise in hate groups in the United States since 2000, many of which target immigrants and possess unprecedented access to government officials and media outlets.

Please join Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Central Committee in signing a letter to the presidential candidates asking them to use their influence with their respective parties to encourage a respectful and tolerant debate.

You can access the letter online:  
<http://peace.mennolink.org/resources/immigration2008/index.html>

### **Commentary: A vision of faith and unity for the church's future**

Mennonite Church USA is founded on a God-inspired vision. Our vision guides, transforms and enables the church to fulfill the mission God has entrusted to us.

We are a new church that claims a 500-year history. This paradox of combining the new with the old is key to fulfilling the potential of God's call to us now.

Our foundations run deep, back to the Swiss and Dutch reformers of the church in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Today these foundations are buttressed by an influx of Racial/Ethnic people who want to both enrich and build on the vision and calling of Mennonite Church USA. Our younger generation yearns for new expressions of faith and witness.

Healing and hope is our vision. Establishing communities of faith, hope and love are fruits of the Spirit that our neighbors expect to experience in their relationships with us.

God nourishes our church, Mennonite Church USA, for the sake of the world. God is busy working in the world as well as in our church. The world awaits our engagement with God's activity in the world — through our relationships across the street and on the other side of the globe. We joyfully follow Jesus into the world, where Jesus has already gone.

Such a vision has guided and inspired Mennonite Church USA congregations, conferences, agencies and schools since our birth as a new church in 2001. The church — which is an organism, a body of believers that is entrusted with the mission of being God's transforming plan for the salvation of the world

— is much more than a human organization with a good purpose.

The Mennonite Church USA Executive Board, building on this vision, has started a process of proposed change to enhance the church's vision of healing and hope. The board's dream is to draw all members and congregations of Mennonite Church USA closer together, and to propel us forward around our vision.

Look around you. The world needs Mennonite Church USA now more than ever. We are hopeful that our vision of healing and hope, following Jesus and joining God's work in the world will do more than unify us and simplify our structures.

It's exciting to consider the church's future. The board aims to release the church's hidden potential — to enable all parts to act with courage, strengthened by a vision of community and a growing unity of purpose and witness.

Amidst the reports that we read in the news about our Executive Board's efforts to bring improvement in our relationships, behaviors and organization in Mennonite Church USA, keep in mind the aim is to strengthen our vision, to reach new people and to enhance our witness for the sake of the world.

Pray that God will be at the center of our efforts toward growth and faithfulness.

*This testimony comes from Mennonite Church USA moderator Sharon Waltner, moderator-elect Ed Diller, executive director Jim Schrag and associate executive director Ron Byler. Additional commentaries from Mennonite Church USA are planned to be released on a regular basis as the Executive Board continues moving toward its vision.*

### **On the horizon...**

June 15	Church Picnic @ River Styx Park Worship @ 10:45
June 26-28	Central District Conference meetings in Wheaton IL
July 8-10	People's Summit for Faithful Living in Winnipeg MB
Aug 1-2	Ohio Mennonite Relief Sale & Auction

**Deadline** for submissions (news items, reviews, poems, articles, events, etc.) for the **June 2008** newsletter is **May 20, 2008**. Please submit to Rachel via email or mailbox.