



buzz

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference Report: Part I

Why was the thought of attending IN/MI conference on Zoom a dread to me? How would we vote online? What are the hot topics this year? I'm on my computer most of the day for work and now I'm going to be on for two more days! Unfortunately, this was my attitude before the conference.

I'm grateful to report conference was anything but boring or a repeat of last year's meeting. Last fall the planning committee gathered and came up with the theme, *Built Together*. Back then, no one expected a worldwide pandemic or the protests of Black Lives Matter, topics most of us have grappled with recently. Bob Yoder, moderator, reminded us how the Holy Spirit works in mysterious ways and prepares us for what we need to learn.

Much like last year, we heard highlights from congregations within the conference. This year representatives from Goshen churches reported.

Waterford – Cindy Voth explained how WMC has adjusted our connections through live streaming services, zoom Sunday school meetings along with children and youth activities, celebrating graduations and farewells.

North Goshen – Izaete Nafziger shared how their church is meeting the needs of Latino families associated with their church through food distribution, gift cards, sharing their parking lot with Maple City Healthcare for COVID testing.

Benton – Rachel Penner shared how the church supported them through the gestation of their daughter Margaret, diagnosed with a heart deformity before birth and through surgery at Riley afterward.

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Coronavirus Highs and Lows

Each week we, pastoral team, eagerly anticipate sharing some positive news as it relates to the impacts of the coronavirus for our faith community. And each week we feel heavy with grief and disappointment as it feels like the positive turn and news are still out of reach.

As you are aware, our numbers in Elkhart County have continued to rise. Some days we add a high number of new positive cases, the next day the new count might be a little lower, and yet the cumulative picture is that we continue to be a hot spot for the State of Indiana. This past week we learned that there is a growing concern for the rising number of positive cases in children, youth, and young adults in our county. COVID-19 is impacting us all, and all of us need to do what we can to help reduce the spread of the virus. We ask that everyone wear a mask when out in public to protect yourselves and your neighbors. (We liken it to Jesus' words "Love your neighbors as yourself.") It is a small and yet mighty act to help curb the virus as well as to stand in solidarity with our broader community.

While these continue to be challenging days of physical distancing, they need not be days of socially isolating. We encourage you to reach out to others in our congregation with a phone call, a text, an email, or even a front porch visit equipped with being six feet apart and wearing your masks. This is the time for us to come together and offer support and hope to one another! Don't know who to contact? I say open your church directory to a random page and contact the first person you see!

We, pastoral team, realized this week that we do have positive news as it relates to the impact of the coronavirus on our church community. Yes, we are

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The *Waterford Buzz* is normally published weekly for members of Waterford Mennonite Church. Items for inclusion should be given to the editor by 5 p.m. Monday preceding publication.

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Church Ice Cream Social

Adult Nurture Ministry Team warmly invites everyone to a virtual summer ice cream social! We will gather via Zoom on Wednesday, July 8 at 6:30 p.m. Make yourself your favorite ice cream sundae, log onto the Zoom meeting with your computer/smart phone/ tablet OR use your phone to call into the Zoom



meeting and join by audio only. Then, while enjoying a delicious treat, spend time connecting with others in our church community! Utilizing the capabilities of Zoom we hope to recreate the feeling of an ice cream social. So we will spend time in the large group before breaking down into smaller groups on the Zoom call (called break out rooms). We are hopeful that this will provide an opportunity to see more faces than just those in our nurture classes or small groups, as well as provide a space to connect and share with others in our broader congregation. We will send out the Zoom link and info in Life Beyond Waterford on July 3. Mark your calendars, stock up on your ice cream supply, and plan on joining the festivities!

— Cindy Voth, for
Adult Nurture Ministry Team

COVID (cont. from front)

not able to gather in person for worship, fellowship, and nurture, and yet we have witnessed firsthand how WMC'ers continue to shine the light of Jesus to each other and to our Goshen community! We know of stories of taking meals to those who are sick or grieving. We celebrate the creative ways of connecting and celebrating significant milestones with others. We rejoice in hearing testimonies of what doors God has been opening for new connections and relationships with others in our church and our neighbors. We see the ways individuals and households are

IMMC Report (cont. from front)

Bonneyville – One member shared how her daughter was killed in a car accident, leaving two young children for her and her husband to raise. The biological father of one child, who had been previously been absent, came and took his son from them. They petitioned the courts and regained custody. He has a lot of anxiety and fear of being taken again. However, he stated when he's at church, he feels safe, because he trusts the people there.

Berkey Avenue – Lowell Nafziger and Sherm Kauffman shared about the garden plot on the church property for community people to grow vegetables. Many of the gardeners give away the fruits of their labor and the garden has contributed to deepened relationships with others.

East Goshen and College Mennonite shared stories as well.

Our churches in Goshen are alive and vibrant, each meeting a variety of needs within their congregations, the neighborhood and community. Each group of people making up the body of the church; not competing for members, but offering themselves to all who enter the doors. — Joy Yoder, IMMC Delegate

extending beyond themselves to broaden their circle of care and compassion. We see and celebrate that God is at work among us!

We ask that you join us in praying for a stability and reduction of COVID cases in our county AND we invite you to join us in celebrating the hopes and joys that are present in these days. May we each take time every day to breathe deeply, to celebrate the greenness of the creation around us, and to declare with Spirit-inspired joy, "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."

— Cindy Voth, for Pastoral Team