

KC2015

CONVENTION NEWSLETTER
JULY 2015



It's a wrap!

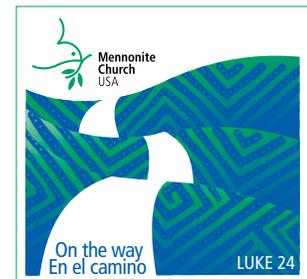
Convention week was jam-packed with a variety of experiences for all participants. You engaged in meaningful corporate worship together and were challenged by speakers like Michelle Armster, Hal Shrader, Cyneatha Millsaps, Shane Claiborne and more. You were challenged to look for God "On the Way" through compelling seminars and learning experiences on topics ranging from the Doctrine of Discovery to intercultural competency; dating relationships to making disciples; homeschooling and parenting to the art of filmmaking. You connected with friends, family, and friends who feel like family. You worked to create space for meaningful dialogue in the delegate sessions and made decisions on resolutions that will shape our life as a church body over the coming years. You enjoyed great music, food and adventures in Kansas City. What a week!

In this edition of the convention newsletter, you'll find highlights from #MennoCon15 where we traveled together on the way.

In addition, **please complete a survey** to let us know about your experience at convention this year. We want to hear from you! And once you complete the survey, you'll receive a link and password that will allow you to download all speaker and summary videos from the week.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KC2015Survey>

On the way
En el camino



Mennonite Church USA
CONVENTION
June 30 - July 5, 2015
Kansas City, Missouri



#WeAreMennon



KC2015

From the top, clockwise: Kim Litwiller, Ted Swartz, Alyssa Rodriguez, Zulema Rodriguez (baby) and Michele Hershberger spoke to youth as part of the Menno-Night Show; Calvin Bixler and his grandma light a candle during Wednesday adult worship; hundreds of convention attendees joined Leo Hartshorn for "A Joyful Noise," a seminar focusing on peacemaking through drumming; Ted & Company actors Philip Martin, Ted Swartz and Justin Yoder performed *Listening for Grace* twice at convention.



#WeAreMenno



KC2015

From the top, clockwise: Hundreds gathered for hymn sings led by Pink Menno outside the delegate hall; Michelle Armster speaks at opening worship Tuesday, June 30; the band Thoery Expats plays at the Goshen College booth in the Exhibit Hall; Children enjoyed jumping in bounce houses in the recreation hall; Lane Miller, Barbra Graber and Chuck Neufeld sing at the Service of Lament for Sexual Abuse on Friday, July 3.



#WeAreMennon



From the top, clockwise: Members of St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship carry #BlackLivesMatter signs in the opening prayer walk Tuesday, June 30; Shane Claiborne speaks during closing worship July 5; youth participate in servant projects throughout Kansas City; children visit the exhibit hall as part of their daily convention activities; Erica Littlewolf of Mennonite Central Committee Central States leads participants in "The Loss of Turtle Island" learning experience.

KC2015

Photos in this issue by Lowell Brown, Bluffton University members of KC2015 Currents staff, and Ken Gingerich.



#WeAreMenno

With reporting by Brianna Luginbihl

During this year’s convention, the Mennonite Church USA Communications Team snapped photos of Mennonite attendees, printed the 228 photos on 11 by 11 inch sheets, and configured them onto a 28-foot curved wall that stood at the south end of the exhibit hall. Crowds entering the exhibit hall after meals walked between the combined 48 feet of pictures designed by Ken Gingerich, creative director for Mennonite Church USA.

The #WeAreMenno campaign began in February of this year, seeking to feature as many diverse voices and contexts across the church as possible — to recognize and celebrate where God is moving in and among us across Mennonite Church USA. Jake Smucker, a #WeAreMenno photographer, videographer and recent graduate of Goshen (Indiana) College, created the project’s introductory video for the convention’s first worship session and photographed the majority of the wall’s snapshots.

“In a time like this where everyone is focusing on the differences between us and the conflicts we have, it is important to remember the things we have in common and the ways we can still come together and form the Mennonite Church,” said Smucker. Grant Bellar from Hope Mennonite Church in Wichita, Kansas, stopped at the installation and said the project impressed him. “It is pretty cool to see the different faces and realize how diverse we are,” he said. “I think it just symbolizes that we are together and support everybody and we are all one people no matter where we come from.”

The Communications Team hopes to continue the project through the end of the year — featuring news stories and blogs about the work of God within Mennonite Church USA through the lives of individuals and congregational across the country.

A time-lapse video of the #WeAreMenno wall was featured during Sunday morning’s worship service.

You can take part in the #WeAreMenno campaign in a variety of ways:

- Send a congregational selfie (a picture with a short statement about your congregation) to AlyssaBS@mennoniteusa.org
- Send a story idea to JanieBK@mennoniteusa.org
- Send a Menno Snapshots blog post to JenniferC@mennoniteusa.org

Visit the [#WeAreMenno](#) page on the Mennonite Church USA website to view both the time-lapse convention exhibit video and the #WeAreMenno video featured at opening and closing worship at convention.



Experiences at Convention:

Kelly Bates Oglesby



As I traveled along the way spiritually, I followed the Holy Spirit to Mennonite Church USA. It's been quite a journey, and I remain open to the adventures of fellowship and witness. Nonetheless, preparing to participate as a credentialed delegate at KC2015 presented opportunities afresh to go deeper, further on the way.

The motif of followers of Jesus is used throughout the convention experience. Yet, as I began this unknown way of Mennonite Church convention, I felt more like the Ethiopian eunuch, hoping someone could help me understand what I was reading. The Holy Spirit provided Wilma Bailey, professor at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana, a sage with exceptional grace. Just as she introduced me to Mennonite Church USA in her quiet way, she now guided me towards fuller understanding of what is now our church.

Wilma counseled me to take time to engage and explore the exhibition hall. In this area, I found resources. Moreover, I found relationships! I chatted with Yvonne Diaz, Executive Board member; Iris de León-Hartshorn, Mennonite Church USA director for transformative peacemaking; Michelle Armster, director of Mennonite Central Committee Central States; Rhoda Miller Blough, Church Relations representative for Everence; and Pastor Sue Park Hur of Mountain View Mennonite Church in Upland, California. These beautiful ladies shared lessons they had learned along the way and invited me to share laughter and love as we went along this week.

The People of Color Dinner provided sanctuary to those of us willingly living out our faith where we are few. The fellowship celebrated the fact that while we are few, we are neither faint nor fragile. Bishop Leslie Francisco of Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Virginia, encouraged and inspired. Ewuare X. Osayande of Mennonite Central Committee reaffirmed the brilliance and beauty we bring to Mennonite Church USA.

The task of being a delegate was made easier by the beautiful people of table 47. Jennifer Delanty from Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference was an excellent and empowering table leader. Our perspectives varied, but our purpose was singular: we discerned and dialogued with facts, faith and fervency. Yet we held our fellowship prayerfully and lovingly.

As I leave KC2015, I thank God I have seen face-to-face God in my virtual Mennonite Church: Tyler Tully, Melissa Florer-Bixler, Barbara Funnell, Luke Yoder, Cyneatha Millsaps.

I am hoping as I go along the way that Mennonite Church USA will be able see me and those like me. Join us as we seek to breathe as we are choked by systemic injustice and the smoke of our sacred space burning. Work with us to help all to understand that Black Lives Matter and that the right to life includes the right to live in peace. Welcome us and receive the gifts we bring as we journey along the way.

KC2015 Currents

Produced for Mennonite Church USA convention by
Bluffton University students, faculty and alumni

Delegate summary

Delegates worked hard in Kansas City. Throughout the week, we've released articles on the Delegate Assembly sessions from Mennonite Church USA staff and the [KC Currents](#) — the daily convention newsheet produced by Bluffton University students and staff.

See <http://mennoniteusa.org/tag/delegate-assembly/> for links to articles about individual delegate sessions.



Delegate decisions on proposed resolutions

■ [Faithful Witness Amid Endless War Resolution](#)

The resolution, and an amendment to it, passed with broad but not unanimous support, shown by standing votes on July 1.

■ [Nominees for Churchwide Boards](#)

The nominees were affirmed July 1 by 728 delegates; 49 did not affirm; two abstained.

■ [Israel-Palestine Resolution](#)

The July 1 vote to table the resolution until 2017 passed by 55 percent — 418 in favor, 336 opposed, 28 abstaining.

■ [Resolution proposed and approved on July 1, 2015](#)

The resolution passed with broad but not unanimous support, as shown by a standing vote July 1.

■ [Resolution on Forbearance in the Midst of Difference](#)

The resolution passed July 2 by 71 percent — 581 in favor, 228 opposed.

■ [Resolution on the Status of the Membership Guidelines](#)

The resolution passed July 2 by 60 percent — 473 in favor, 310 opposed, 28 abstaining.

■ [Churchwide Statement on Sexual Abuse](#)

The resolution passed July 3 with nearly unanimous support; three opposed and four abstained.

■ [Statement of Support for Palestinian and Israeli Partners in Peacemaking](#)

The resolution passed unanimously July 4 by a standing vote; zero opposed and two abstained.

■ [Resolution: Expressions of Lament and Hope](#)

The resolution passed unanimously July 4 by a standing vote.

Delegate survey results

Results from this spring's survey of KC2015 delegates were posted online on June 29 and shared with delegates; see Conrad Kanagy's reports at <http://mennoniteusa.org/resource/2015-survey-of-appointed-delegates/>.

By the numbers

Attendees

Adult – 1853
Junior Youth – 114
Youth and youth sponsors – 2371
Children – 143
Volunteers – 186
Total – 4,667

Community Blood Center of Kansas City

98 units of blood collected

Offerings

Care and Prevention Fund - \$6,789.81
Racial/Ethnic Leadership Education Fund - \$10,436.96

Servant Projects

Over 1800 participants at 35 locations throughout the city.

Download summary and speaker videos

The link to the password protected page is: <http://convention.mennoniteusa.org/summary-and-speaker-videos/>
Password: StellaRocks



See you in Orlando!

It's official. The Mennonite Church USA convention is going to Orlando. Join us July 4-8, 2017 (dates still tentative).



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