

North
Baltimore
Mennonite
Church



NBMC

ANNUAL REPORT OF COMMITTEES, MISSIONS &
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

2010

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PASTOR'S REPORT

It's been almost a year since I rolled into Baltimore with a carload of clothes and very little else, took up temporary residence with the Wengers, and started serving as NBMC's pastor. I'm going to attempt some impressions of my first year, some thoughts on the state of our church, and some personal reflections on my life and family.

I. First Year and Beyond

This year has been a time of building bonds, learning to know you, and getting a feel for this church and its personality. Every church, and every member in every church, wants to be pastored differently. A big challenge for a new pastor is learning people's perception of a good pastor. That's especially challenging because people aren't always consciously aware of their desires. Some folks in every church are high touch - they like personal attention, frequent visits, and a consistent feeling of being loved. They also tend to think others in the congregation want the same things they do. Some want primarily competence from the pastor - really good sermons and a high quality teaching diet, clear vision, and a sense that the pastor is efficient and on top of things administratively. Some want a pastor to be the prophet, leading the charge on social issues and the hot button topics before the denomination. And some want a shepherd, a spiritual director sort of like the abbot in a monastery. All of these desires are present at NBMC right now. But my sense is that the desires of the majority right now are for someone who feeds you spiritually, offers worship and teaching to equip you week by week, and is helping the church beyond its burnout of recent years. To that end I, with the help of the Spiritual Life Group and the worship team, have been focusing on deepening our worship and awareness of God's grace that is an inexhaustible source of life and strength.

In the interest of establishing my ministry among you I have done more preaching this year than I normally will. I think that the church needs to hear more voices than mine, for its own health. Next year I want to establish a pattern of having one speaker other than me each month. I've already asked some of you to preach next year, and I'm working on getting some outside speakers, too.

I like the idea of having a theme for each year. The theme I'm working on for 2011 is "Christian and Anabaptist." We use the term Anabaptist a lot. We are a Mennonite church. But what does that really mean? And how do we shape our lives as Christians and Anabaptists in this urban setting? What in our Anabaptist heritage is a gift from God to our city, and our time? And what are the weaknesses of Anabaptism - why do we still need the rest of Christ's body around us? I want to explore this subject biblically, practically, emotionally, and intellectually. Already I've had good conversations with some of you that are enriching my mind and stoking my imagination as I work.

II. State of the Church

Sundays at NBMC feel like they are growing in energy. We have growing numbers of guests and returning guests each week. Over the past couple of months worship has been averaging around 90 in attendance, up a little from the last couple of years. The adult Bible study that was meeting in the pastor's office has outgrown that space and moved over to the nursery. In its first two weeks there it is already pushing the space limits of that room. I'm not sure where we'll go from there. I think people who attend that class enjoy the open discussion and the opportunity of being a live voice in shaping the following Sunday's sermon.

PASTOR'S REPORT, continued

I'm hearing good things about our youth group. Daniel Miller has been a strong addition to our "staff", and he has been a fine intern. He communicates well to youth and to parents and is enthusiastic about all aspects of church life. I've been enjoying very much serving as his supervisor and mentor as he discerns his own next steps toward ministry as a calling.

Earlier this year I visited each of the small groups. Last fall, one of our groups, the young adult group led by the Eshlemans, phased out. Soon after, the group meeting at Lommers-Johnsons divided and also added some people. There is now a group at Lommers-Johnsons and a new group at Masts. Both are somewhat intergenerational. About 60-65% of adults at NBMC participate in a small group - a very high percentage and a sign of spiritual health. Some of the groups engage in very interactive Bible study; several groups have expressed a desire to move deeper into mutual accountability and support of one another.

A challenge for NBMC involves struggling to remain a missional congregation when two areas of church life seem to be highly consuming - our finances, and our building. Both budget and building are important to the life of our church. But to me as a relative newcomer, it feels as though both are becoming pre-occupations. I appreciate that tight economic times affect giving in a small church. I also know that the payment of back taxes and penalties in the past two years have made for a heightened sense of vigilance for church council. It feels like this has created some ongoing anxiety that manifests itself in council meetings in which the budget takes up most of the time. One of my goals, though I don't know how to work at this yet, is to help us to move from a mindset of scarcity to a sense of God's abundance, with the budget as a means to mission.

III. My Personal and Family Life

Returning to the pastorate after nearly four years in an academic setting has been a bit of an adjustment. The rhythm of a pastor's work week and work year is quite different from that of a college teacher. With people only available in the evenings, a good deal of my work is evening work. The days when a pastor could go around and visit in homes during the day are mostly gone, especially in a professional and urban church.

Our family has had some long talks recently about my tendency to blur the boundaries between church and home, and my long standing habit of giving my better energies to the congregation while leaving my family with the leftovers. This has been especially hard for them during the past year when they have wanted and deserved more of my emotional support. Specifically, I have fallen into the habit of spending parts of my free evenings or meal times on the phone doing "church," and interrupting my day off for meetings that could not be scheduled any other time. This past year, even though I have been technically employed at 80% time, I have still worked pretty much full time.

In the new year, I'm making several simple resolutions. First, unless there is a funeral or high-level emergency, I will not be attending church meetings scheduled on my Sabbath day. Second, phone calls that come during dinner will be returned after dinner. We usually eat between 5:30 and 6:15. I would ask you to keep me accountable by asking how it's going from time to time, and by not making noises that I'm slacking if I don't do a meeting on my Sabbath.

PASTOR'S REPORT, continued

For most of the past year my Sabbath day has been Fridays (chosen because the museums are open then, and closed Mondays). As I get older I'm discovering that Sundays take more out of me than they used to. So in 2011 I'm going to shift to Monday as my day off. I'll have it in the bulletin for a while as a reminder to me and to you. One of the very humbling realities of being a pastor is attempting to live the Christian life very publicly, before others. I continue to believe that God has had me be a pastor because I have needed the extra motivation and humility in order to actually become a Christian.

That said, I must add that NBMC has been a good place for our family to be in the past year. It's been fun to get to know you, to begin fitting into this congregation, and to experience the gift of being able to be ourselves in a congregation. It is really good to be back in a city, a city with so much to offer and to challenge us as Baltimore. This is quickly feeling like home. It truly feels like NBMC is a good fit for us, and we hope it is for you, too.

~Pastor David Greiser

CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council met on the second Sunday of each month, except for June and December when we held the 2nd and 4th quarter business meetings. We undertook several major initiatives in 2010 including:

- Transition to full time Pastor
- Revamp gifts discernment process
- Evaluate annual retreat
- Improve financial management and oversight

The most prominent item of note was the transition of Dave Greiser to the role of pastor. Due to budget constraints, his position was restricted to 80% for the initial year, 2009. The impact of a full-time, settled pastor was immediately apparent with renewed focus and energy around worship, welcoming guests and improving our building.

Early in the year, the Church Council spearheaded a revamp of the gifts discernment process. This has been a perpetual challenge at North Baltimore Mennonite Church, so we took a new approach. Instead of a questionnaire geared toward filling specific jobs at the Church, a survey was developed to spur reflection about an individual's specific gifts and talents. A small group reviewed responses and discerned which people could match the needs of the congregation. Ultimately a wide number of persons responded and we also received input on how to improve the process in the future.

The fall Church retreat has been a prominent part of community life at NBMC. With the financial constraints of the budget, the Church Council evaluated the appropriateness of spending money for a weekend retreat when the funds could be used for some other purpose. We developed a survey and tracked the finances carefully and determined that members generally give over and above their regular giving for the retreat and find it an invaluable time to connect with others in the Church in a way that time on a Sunday morning or small groups do not allow.

A major area of focus for Church Council in 2010 was related to the oversight and management of the church finances. In addition to having a very tight budget year, we also had to address some Internal Revenue Service issues related to taxes for NBMC employees in 2006, 2008 and 2009. Rick Thompson worked diligently along with Gwendolyn Clemens to update the records, re-file amended W-2s, and make the back payments for payroll tax and Social Security that had not been remitted in previous years. By the end of 2010, all of the issues were settled and closed thanks to their hard work.

We switched banks to Mennonite Federal Credit Union from Chevy Chase Bank. A desire for better service, lower fees and online bill and employee payment precipitated this decision.

The final major area of work related to Church finances was, for the first time in my memory, a request to submit financial pledges to help plan the 2011 budget. In prior years, budgeting was based largely off of the prior year's income with some modification based on opinion and conjecture. One of the primary goals stated during 2009's budget cut was a desire to move the pastor position to 100% FTE, restore mission giving and increase the amount of money for building improvements. Based on the results of the pledges, a budget

CHURCH COUNCIL, continued

was created that provided for a full time pastor position and restored mission giving to approximately 15% of the church budget. A minor increase was also given to the trustees for building improvements, however much more is needed in this area.

In summary, 2010 was a year where NBMC got back onto a firm foundation. The worship experience was vastly improved thanks to designated worship planners and a full-time pastor. Important traditions such as Winter Bible School and Annual Church Retreat were preserved. The structure and financial management of NBMC were strengthened and will provide a solid foundation on which to build.

Submitted by Matthew Eshleman

MISSION COMMITTEE

The NBMC Mission Committee coordinates and reports on outreach work at NBMC. This committee is accountable to NBMC Church Council. The various categories of outreach at NBMC are:

- Mennonite Church USA-related Ministries (eg. Mennonite Mission Network, Atlantic Coast Conference, Mennonite Central Committee, etc.)
- Local Outreach Ministries (local and regional programs receiving support from NBMC);
- International Outreach Ministries (individual missionaries and programs abroad supported by NBMC).

Local outreach ministries are further divided between those directly accountable to NBMC (Asylum Seekers Housing Network, Reservoir Hill House of Peace and Mennonite Voluntary Service) and those supported by but not accountable to NBMC (Ten Thousand Villages, Youth for Christ, and Mt. Clare Christian School.)

NBMC also supports international outreach ministries and individuals. Partners include Glenn and Jennifer Goss (ACTinternational), Bethsaba and Dale Nafziger (Mennonite Mission Network, Nepal), Breana Miller (Youth Evangelism Service) and Paul and Rebecca Mosley (Mennonite Central Committee in Burundi). The Zimbabwe Children's Fund (ZCF) was started in 2009 and supports an orphanage in Harare. This fund is coordinated by John Donahue and Jean Humphrey, former NBMC members who live in Harare. This year the proceeds from the 2010 Christmas project—more than \$3000 – went to support the ZCF.

The proposed Mission budget for 2011 is \$20,000, 12% of the total NBMC budget. This is the same percentage as 2010; however, due to an increase in the overall NBMC budget, it represents an actual dollar increase from \$16,000 in 2010.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Actual in 2010</u>	<u>Proposed for 2011</u>
Mennonite Church USA-related Ministries	40%	50% (\$8000)	48% (\$9550)
Local Outreach Ministries	40%	34% (\$5440)	32% (\$6400)
International Outreach Ministries	20%	16% (\$2560)	14% (\$2850)
Discretionary			6% (\$1200)

Once or twice monthly Mission Moments, coordinated by Karen Vundla, remain a regular part of Sunday morning worship. The programs and ministries linked with NBMC as well as other resources provide the inspiration for these short presentations. We are mindful that meaningful outreach programs of our church do not always equate with nor require budgetary support. We are also aware that our lives and work represent outreach in and around Baltimore city, which our church supports by nurturing us as disciples of Jesus. Mission moments presented in 2010 are listed below.

Other areas of discussion at our meetings have included website development, hospitality to visitors and guests, the Atlantic Coast Conference peace and justice committee, vacation Bible school, plans by Reuben Petersheim for a Christian school in Hampden, and monthly World Church Prayer Sunday.

We have begun to reflect as a committee on the question: "What does it mean to be a missional church?" At our last meeting we discussed "Being missional means a power shift from self to Jesus."

MISSION COMMITTEE, continued

Mission Committee members are Judy Bushong, Jonathan Clemens, Jeff Delcamp, Dave Greiser, Dee Ann Lommers-Johnson, Karen Vundla and Jeremy Yoder. We meet the fourth Sunday of each month. If you have any questions or input, please contact one of us. Please pray for our work as our committee seeks to express the heart and priorities of our church.

2010 Mission Moments

Date	Topic	Presenter(s)
January 10	Practicing Pediatrics in Baltimore City	Jonathan Clemens
February 14	Ministry to Deaf Students	Kathy Miller
February 28	Baltimore Housing	Ashley Lommers-Johnson
April 11	Project PLASE	Kristin Yoder (MVS)
May 2	Black and Decker	Jeff Delcamp
May 23	Youth for Christ	Mark Miller
June 20	Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service	Beth Azarow (MVS)
August 1	Radical Journey – South Africa	Connie McKinney
August 8	Mennonite Central Committee in Burundi	Paul and Rebecca Moseley
October 17	Home/family therapy in the Baltimore juvenile justice system North American Family Institute	Anita Zimmerman
October 31	Zimbabwe Children's Fund	Karen Vundla
November 14	Reservoir Hill House of Peace	Jonathan and Ruth Clemens
November 21	Reservoir Hill House of Peace	Chak Ng and Ellen Newell
November 28	Youth Evangelism Service	Breana Miller
December 5	Baltimore Rescue Mission	Robert Loizeaux

Submitted by Jonathan Clemens

SPIRITUAL LIFE GROUP

During 2010 the members of the Spiritual Life Group (SLG) were Jeannie Eshleman, Mark Miller, and Karen Vundla. Dave Greiser began meeting with the group in January, and Daniel Miller joined the meetings when he arrived for his Mennonite Voluntary Service term in September.

The group met monthly either at Jeannie's home or Karen's. We spent time in prayer, and sometimes a short devotional, and devoted the main part of our meetings to pastoral care concerns for NBMC. Specific activities for the year included the following:

- Annual Winter Bible School planning. Our speaker for the weekend was Dawn Yoder Harms, associate pastor at Akron (Pennsylvania) Mennonite Church. Dawn's topic was "Quest for Jesus," in which she led us through the quests of several people in the Gospels to find healing and new life through an encounter with Jesus. The sessions were interactive and very well attended. On Friday night we began the weekend with a potluck meal, and on Saturday morning the SLG provided a continental breakfast. The youth provided childcare on Saturday. SLG also planned the 2011 Winter Bible School, with Michael Gorman of St. Mary's Seminary scheduled to lead the sessions on the weekend of March 4-6.
- Pastoral care. We arranged for financial assistance for several persons, including getting matching grants through Mennonite Mutual Aid/Everence, and arranged for meals to be brought in for families who had experienced hospitalization.
- Worship planning. SLG scheduled and carried out the installation service for Dave Greiser on January 17, 2010. Many guests from Dave and Anita's former churches attended the service. After some discussion, and following several weeks' "experiment" during the worship series in the fall, we decided to move toward more regular observance of the Lord's Supper. It is now observed monthly, on the first Sunday of the month. We advised on Dave's planning for sermon themes for 2011, which will explore our Anabaptist and urban identity.
- We empowered Matt Burkey and Kristy Fornwald to lead a summer young adult Sunday school, which often met at Starbucks during the Sunday school hour from June through August.

We agreed that in 2011 the SLG will take on a bit more of a vision-casting role. We plan to meet together for a day-long retreat early in the year for prayer and long-range dreaming.

Overall, it has been a year of settling into some new patterns after several years of transition!

Submitted by Dave Greiser

TRUSTEES

The trustees this year were Paul Sack, Andre Hackman, Sarah Leah Spence, and Dave Greiser. We have been trying to meet monthly although it has been about every other month.

Our main accomplishment this year was to organize a work week which took place at the end of March. Between this work week and subsequent work days, we were able to make some major progress in improving our basement. The projects included the following:

- Tearing down the temporary wall and replacing it with a permanent wall for the youth room (still some finishing work to be done);
- Tiling the small bathroom (still some work to be done) as well as painting that room;
- Painting the upstairs hallway, stairwell, and area at the bottom of the steps;
- Fixing and painting the kitchen walls and ceiling;
- Starting to paint the cabinets (almost done);
- Installation of new “butcher-block” counter and cabinet tops;
- Painting the window frames and replacing broken glass;
- Installing bead board along the kitchen walls and into the preschool room; and
- Starting the process of rehabbing the women’s bathroom (stalled because of water issues).

Other things accomplished this year were:

- Fixing the plaster in the sanctuary and Dave’s office; and
- Continuing to work on making sure the roof is leak proof

We are still working on several ongoing issues including trying to plan for a new entrance and handicapped ramp, finishing the bathroom, and plumbing issues with the furnace system. We are limited by our financial situation but do plan on another work week in June 2011 to do further work on the basement projects.

Submitted by Paul Sack

WORSHIP COORDINATOR

In 2010, many contributions enriched the worship experience at North Baltimore Mennonite Church. Dave has attempted to meet weekly with the people involved in the service. Communion was done monthly in the last quarter with plans to continue in 2011. Kathryn Harsha has shared her choral directing and accompanying skills. The Advent choir made a joyful noise during the Christmas season. Mennonite Voluntary Service Workers Daniel Miller and Aaron Greiser, have been integral parts of the praise team, which was led by Darrell and Lisa Mast. We are thankful for an improved sound system championed by Paul Sack, Tom Harsha, Kenton Bontrager and Mark Miller. We continue to work at including praise music in the morning service.

Worship would not be possible without the volunteer time of the worship leaders, song leaders, accompanists, musicians, visual artists, story tellers and scripture readers who meditate and pray over scripture, and prepare for services. You have been tireless in answering emails, rehearsing, and sharing your gifts to make worship meaningful at North Baltimore. May God continue to bless our worship.

Submitted by Amy Clemens and Phyllis Bontrager

Guest Speakers

March 7	Dawn Yoder Harms	“Salvation in the Treetops”
May 9	Jeremy Yoder	“Sinners & Hospitality”
January 3	Ruth Keidel Clemens	“Beyond the Manger”
January 17	James M. Lapp	“The Making of a Minister”, Installation Service for Dave Greiser
July 18	Jeremy Yoder	“Sheep Go to Heaven, Goats Go to Hell”
August 8	Paul & Rebecca Mosley	“I Will Rejoice Over Bujumbura”
October 10	Jeremy Yoder	“Where is God When the World Doesn’t Make Sense?”

Special Services

January 17	Pastoral Installation
January 24	World Fellowship Sunday
March 7	Winter Bible School
March 28	Palm Sunday
April 1	Maundy Thursday Service
April 4	Easter Sunday
June 6	Part of God's Song: a Worship Service of Music
June 20	Welcoming the Stranger: A Service Celebrating the Work of Asylum Seekers Housing Network
June 27	Vacation Bible School Celebration: Meet God on the Mountain
July 4	Peace Sunday
December 24	Christmas Eve Service

Sermon Series

February 21 - March 28: Lent: Our Lives Are in Your Hands.
 April 18 - May 30 & July 11-25: Parables of Jesus
 August 1 - September 5: You Asked For It
 September 12 - October 3: 30 Days of Worship Discovery
 October 17- November 22: A Lifestyle of Grace: Studies in 1 John
 November 29 - December 19: Advent: An Unexpected Hour

WORSHIP COORDINATOR, continued

Worship Enrichment Activities

March 12: Brian McLaren's presentation on Spiritual Formation, Mission and Worship, St. Mary's Theological Seminary

May 1: Worship Meeting to discuss leadership and direction

September 24-26: Retreat theme of worship, scripture reading workshop Lynn Chalfoun

ASYLUM SEEKERS HOUSING NETWORK

Asylum Seekers Housing Network (ASHN) is a program of North Baltimore Mennonite Church that provides housing and social support to asylum seekers in Baltimore. In 2010 ASHN was managed by the ASHN Steering Committee, comprised of Kristy Fornwald, Dave Greiser, Dee Ann Lommers-Johnson, Erin Roth, Kira Stoltenberg, Hannah Stutzman, Anita Zimmerman, and Becky Stutzman (chair). Steering Committee members provided client support, connected clients to social services, developed outreach and presentation materials, and raised and managed the funds necessary to carry out the program.

ASHN worked with three clients in 2010, all of whom were carried over from the previous year, and all of whom have had very long wait times to hear the results of their cases. Two of the clients were denied asylum in May, but will appeal their cases (a standard part of the process). In September, both were granted work permits, found good employment, and were scheduled to transition off of ASHN assistance at the end of January. However, due to a severe eye injury suffered during his training program, one of the clients is unable to work and his ASHN support has been extended until he can recover. The third client was granted asylum on January 13, 2011. The government has a month to decide whether it will appeal the case, so asylum is unofficial as of yet. If all goes well, ASHN expects to begin working with three new clients in 2011.

With grant resources diminished by the recession, the steering committee decided to focus on expanding its base of individual donors by making presentations at churches and organizations rather than applying to foundations for funding. Although it took some time to get off the ground, we have had wonderful responses. In 2010 ASHN presented at NBMC, Wilkins Avenue Mennonite Church, Hyattsville Mennonite Church, and DC house church. More presentations are scheduled for 2011, and the committee will continue to make the connections we need to tap new resources.

Individual donors accounted for 73% of ASHN's financial support in 2010 and 13.5% came from the NBMC missions budget. We are thankful for the continued support of the congregation and the dispersed family and friends of NBMC who so faithfully support ASHN's work.

Submitted by Rebekah Stutzman

MENNONITE VOLUNTARY SERVICE COMMITTEE

In 2010 we celebrated the eighth year of the Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) unit in Baltimore. Laura Helmuth Church transitioned out of the role of Local Program Coordinator (LPC) for the Baltimore unit in the middle of 2010. Laura handled the placement of all new volunteers that arrived in August. Dee Ann Lommers-Johnson took on the LPC role in July and attended the annual LPC meeting in the fall. The support committee is a small group consisting of Matthew and Jeannie Eshleman, Dee Ann Lommers-Johnson and Kristy Fornwald.

The unit continues to attract and retain very gifted and talented volunteers. The four members who started in 2009 – Aaron Greiser, Beth Azarow, Kristin Yoder and Melissa Neiderhiser – each finished out their terms and moved out of RHHP in August. Aaron stayed in Baltimore, Beth moved Seattle, Kristin moved back to Goshen and Melissa back to Kansas.

The unit and the support committee had a retreat at Quiet Hills in Palmerton Pennsylvania. The original date was postponed due to the major snow storm, so we had an early spring retreat. The weather was beautiful and we were able to take advantage of the warmer weather and longer days.

We welcomed four new volunteers in August: Sara Jadrach, Kendra Alison, Daniel Nussbaum-Miller and Melissa Gingerich. Sara and Kendra have placements with Project PLASE, Daniel has a split position between Acts 4 Youth and NBMC, and Melissa was at Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Services. Melissa ended her term in December, so the year finished up with a small group of three volunteers.

The support committee organized a welcome picnic for the new volunteers. The usual Ft. McHenry location was rained out, so we made due with lunch after church. All of the volunteers have been assigned to host families and meet with them on a monthly basis.

Submitted by Matthew Eshleman

RESERVOIR HILL HOUSE OF PEACE

The end of 2010 marks the eighth full year of existence of the Reservoir Hill House of Peace (RHHP), a beautiful mansion situated in the transitional neighborhood of Reservoir Hill in West Baltimore and owned by the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) of Mennonite Church USA. The Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) unit, currently composed of three MVSers, occupies the third floor. Two rooms on the second floor are reserved for the Asylum Seekers Housing Network (ASHN) and are occupied by three asylum seekers, two from the Congo and one from Cameroon. The other RHHP rooms are rented by community participants committed to supporting the MVS and ASHN programs, and to living together as a household. Two of these renters are former ASHN clients. There are presently 13 persons living at RHHP, with an additional resident on leave in Guatemala to learn Spanish. Office space in the basement is donated by RHHP to be used as offices for Mennonite Central Committee East Coast and for ASHN. The majority of the basement is rented by New Lens, an arts non-profit program geared towards at-risk youth in the Reservoir Hill neighborhood.

The RHHP Committee continues to meet bimonthly and includes: Jeannie Eshleman (MVS committee rep), Anita Zimmerman (ASHN rep), Kent Clemens (Treasurer), Merv Stoltzfus (ACC rep), Kenton Bontrager, Dave Greiser, Sarah Delcamp (Community resident rep), Sara Jadrich (MVSer rep), Chak Ng and Ellen Newell (RHHP Co-House Coordinators) and Jonathan Clemens (chair).

A visioning meeting was held in November 2010, looking at the big picture of RHHP, assets, lessons learned, hopes for the future, sustainability of roles, etc. This had last been done in early 2008. In addition to most of the RHHP Committee, MVS was represented by Matt Eshleman and Dee Ann Lommers-Johnson and the NBMC Mission Committee was represented by Jeff Delcamp. The discussion was facilitated by Ruth Keidel Clemens. Highlights included recognition of the need for improved communication among the different groups represented at RHHP, the need to intentionally look at sustainability of roles, and the importance of a neighborhood presence. A specific area of focus is to begin a process of integration of the MVS unit into the RHHP household. At this visioning meeting, some key strengths of RHHP were noted: A place where mutual sharing of food and hospitality takes place in a nurturing community, a place through which NBMC can connect with the needs of Baltimore City, and a household where residents experience personal growth. Key action steps were agreed upon to ensure better communication and the ongoing sustainability of RHHP as a household of ministry.

A number of structural improvements were completed during 2010, including extensive renovation of the first floor bathroom, replacement of the furnace, installation of ceiling fans, various electrical upgrades and fixture replacements, ongoing plumbing work, and repair of the fence. Chak and Ellen have maintained a thriving vegetable garden on the RHHP grounds, have worked in the immediate neighborhood to keep the surrounding area clear of trash, have maintained a vacant lot down the street, and have participated in a worship community in the neighborhood.

The RHHP blog is linked with the NBMC website and was further developed during 2010. A seminar on bike safety was held, as well as the annual personal safety session conducted by Mary Langelan. It has been a blessing to be a part of a program as rich as RHHP.

Submitted by Jonathan Clemens

TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES BALTIMORE - INC

In 2010 Ten Thousand Villages continued to support world relief and development programs of non-profit Alternative Trade Organizations through the sale of handcrafted merchandise at the Ten Thousand Villages store in Fells Point.

Ten Thousand Villages is driven by volunteers. The store has a growing number of core volunteers who serve on a continual basis, but we are looking for more. Jean Sack (Paul Sack's mother) is the volunteer coordinator for Ten Thousand Villages and continues to do an excellent job with scheduling and recruitment. We greatly appreciate the number of hours that the members of NBMC have volunteered this year and look forward to seeing you often throughout 2010.

The fiscal year for Ten Thousand Villages runs from February 1 through January 31. Our 2010 goal for the Fells Point store was \$385,000 in gross sales. The store saw a rebound in sales this year and exceeded the sales goal by approximately \$50,000. We still need to focus on increasing sales at the store due to rental increases. The store continues to focus on doing more benefit days and nights versus off-site sales. The benefit days have been very successful and managers continue to schedule additional events. Our Fells Point Store is managed by Leslie Dungee along with several assistant managers.

Ten Thousand Villages is sponsored by several local congregations in addition to NBMC, including Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Stoney Run and Homewood, and Ascension Lutheran Church. NBMC-affiliated board members are Anita Zimmerman, Gwendolyn Clemens, Kent Clemens, Darrell Mast and Rebekah Stutzman.

Submitted by Anita Zimmerman

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE ASSEMBLY

On April 30, Daniel Miller and I traveled to New York City for the spring Atlantic Coast Conference assembly. This year's meeting was in Flushing, Queens, at the meeting place of Immanuel Community Church. Like many city churches, Immanuel shares space with another church, First Presbyterian Church of Flushing.

Spring Assembly is usually a time of inspiration more than group decision making. In the morning, we heard reports from several newly planted congregations. These reports were surrounded by periods of intercession, and bookended by a time of fervent singing led by the multi-cultural worship team of Immanuel Church. We ate lunch together in the church basement, a wonderful chicken and rice dish with a combination of Asian spices.

In the afternoon, we heard some words of encouragement from our new staff person for church planting, Jeff Wright. Jeff talked to us about prayer walking, and then sent us in small groups into the Immanuel neighborhood to do a prayer walk. When we returned there was a time of reporting: What had we heard and seen? How did we sense God at work in the community? Where is God drawing the church to minister in this setting?

We concluded the day by accepting the Puerto Rico Mennonite Conference as an associate member of the Atlantic Coast Conference. Pastor Ray Pacheco, a former New Yorker now serving in Puerto Rico, introduced the churches and brought the formal request to become partners in ministry.

Submitted by Dave Greiser

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christian Education continues to thrive at North Baltimore. We currently have two children's and one youth Sunday school class. Attendance for the preschool and elementary classes each average five students per week. The Junior and Senior Youth have combined for classes and average 10 youth each Sunday. They have moved from their year-long study of world religions to a study of the Gospel of John.

Vacation Bible School (VBS) was small but successful this year. We had 15-20 children participate, and many adults and youth volunteered their time. We have been having conversations on ways to restructure VBS to make it less time intensive and encourage participation.

NBMC had a very enjoyable Christmas program with participation by all three children's Sunday school classes, as well as individual and duet participation. The program was focused on teaching the youngest in our church the Christmas story through music and literature.

Submitted by Rebecca Pobe

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

Small Groups give us a chance to step aside from our busy lives and take time for each other. They continue to be a vital part of NBMC. Two new groups were formed but we also lost two because of family needs. Presently, we have seven groups but more will hopefully be forming in the coming year. Everyone enjoys the 'at least once monthly' potluck. Topics of discussion have been varied. Some groups did Bible study, others chose a book study, another has done discussions of articles from *The Mennonite*, and another discusses the challenges of parenting in the 21st Century. A number of groups have spent time in the last year with each member sharing their spiritual journey.

Sunday Evening:

Rotating homes, contact Gwendolyn Clemens (410) 252-4056.

Miller home, contact Kathy Miller (410) 549-7393.

Monday Evening:

Mast home, contact Ruth Keidel Clemens (410) 466-6315

Tuesday Evening:

Lommers-Johnson home, contact Dee Ann Lommers-Johnson (410) 235-8258.

Wednesday Evening:

Lantz home, contact Elaine Lantz (410) 235-9178.

Thompson home, contact Amy Thompson (410) 366-7835

Thursday Evening:

Vundla home, contact Karen Vundla (410) 602-0284.

Submitted by Lucy Yoder

LIBRARY

This fall we worked at adding resources to the church library to use for children's church and the youngest Sunday School classes, as well as for everyone's use at home. A survey was made of the existing books located all around the church. Some old books were given away and other resources were added. All of the books for young children are now catalogued on Library Thing (<http://www.librarything.com/>). Use this resource to find out what's here. You can log in to NBMC's library list with the username NBMChurch and the password NBMC. If you have books you would like to donate to the collection, pass them to Becky Stutzman for cataloguing on the website.

Submitted by Rebekah Stutzman and Twila Taylor

ANNUAL CHURCH RETREAT

NBMC's annual church retreat was held September 24-26, 2010 at Camp Hebron in Halifax, Pennsylvania. A total of 71 people participated at some point in the weekend.

The theme of the weekend was Worship. The sessions were led by Dave Greiser with help from Amy Clemens and Phyllis Bontrager.

Our next retreat is scheduled for September 23-25, 2011. We will need people to help plan the retreat as Amy and Phyllis will not be continuing as retreat planners. A big THANK YOU to them for their hard work over the past few years.

Submitted by Gwendolyn Clemens

WOMEN'S RETREAT

Women's Retreat was held April 23 - 25, 2010 at Charter Hall in Perryville, Maryland. The house was rented for two nights with 14 women staying both nights and an additional six in attendance for just one night. The weekend was led by Karen Vundla and Jeannie Eshleman on Sister Care, which was taught to them through a seminar sponsored by the Atlantic Coast and Lancaster Conferences of Mennonite Women USA. They led four sessions ranging in time from 30 minutes to 2 hours. Women in attendance were able to share their experiences with caring for and being cared for by the women in their lives. We also had an optional yoga session led by Jeannie on Saturday morning and a sunset vespers on Saturday night. We had a wonderful weekend - a weekend that was fun, inspirational, and relaxing.

Submitted by Andrea Stremmel

YOUTH GROUP

For most of 2010, the youth group was led by Mark and Kathy Miller. Jonathan Clemens helped Mark teach Sunday school. In August, Daniel Miller came to Baltimore with Mennonite Voluntary Service and began leading the youth with the assistance of Mark and Kathy. Aaron Greiser also joined the youth leadership team in the fall with the intent of continuing leadership after Daniel's term was completed.

The youth attended several retreats over the course of the year. In early January, the junior high youth attended the annual junior youth retreat at Camp Hebron. In September the senior high youth attended the Atlantic Coast Conference Senior Youth Retreat at Refreshing Mountain Camp. The following weekend, all of the youth joined the rest of NBMC for the church's annual retreat at Camp Hebron.

Though there was not a Mennonite convention this summer, the youth group had several fundraisers for the 2011 convention in Pittsburgh. Snow storms delayed the first date for the annual Valentine's Dinner, but it was eventually held with a great turnout. David Chalfoun created a delicious menu and the church showed great support of their youth. The youth donated money to Haiti to aid in the recovery efforts after the earthquake in January. Some money was also set aside to help NBMC purchase a dishwasher.

Upon recommendation from the youth, Mark led a series during the Sunday school hour on world religions for the first part of the year. He had already taught about the primary monotheistic religions (Judaism, Islam) as well as the distinct branches of the Christian church. In 2010 he continued with other world religions. This series lasted into the fall when Daniel wrapped up the series after teaching about eastern religions (Hinduism, Buddhism). Following that, a series began on the Gospel of John (also chosen by the youth). That series was still ongoing at the end of 2010.

A graduation party was held for the group's two high school graduates: Breana Miller and Andy Clemens. In the fall, Breana joined Eastern Mennonite Missions' Youth Evangelism Service (YES). She participated in a time of training and then was sent to her location for her term. Andy began attending Goshen College in the fall.

Some additional youth events included: A skiing trip to Whitetail Resort, a party to welcome Daniel to the youth group, a Road Rally created by Mark, and a Christmas party hosted by Amy and Kent Clemens.

Submitted by Daniel Miller