



# Mechanic Grove Church of the Brethren

Continuing the Work of Jesus ....Peacefully, Simply, Together

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May 4, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Mechanic Grove Church of the Brethren in the Diaspora.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

How blessed we were this past Sunday as the senior high youth of our church led our worship services and shared from their hearts about their faith, our church and the future based on the theme 'We Are the Church'. Thanks to all the youth who shared and to the advisors, teachers and parents who give of their time and resources to nurture our youth in their Christian walk. How thankful we can be to have a large and committed group of senior high youth.

This past week we launched the 'Youth of the Week'. Each week you will get to know one of our youth and you are encouraged to pray for them and possibly offer them other tangible ways to show your support. Each week a different youth will be featured with a photo and biographical summary for our whole church to get to know our youth.

212 people gathered in the sanctuary for our two worship services last week. It is a joy to see more people attending in-person as vaccines become more available. We rejoice with increased numbers in the sanctuary but we also need to be mindful that we are still in the midst of a pandemic. Please practice social distancing when choosing where to sit in the sanctuary observing the signs on the end of the pews indicating where to sit so as not to make others uncomfortable. As we care for one another be mindful of wearing masks when interacting with others who want to exercise caution according to CDC guidelines.

This coming Sunday is Mother's Day. Mary Etta will be preaching and we will celebrate with two couples the dedication of their children at the 10:30 worship service. At the conclusion of the services, carnations will be available in the gathering area for mothers or those wanting to share a carnation with a mother.

Be sure to put on your calendars the following Sunday, May 16, for our Spring Congregational Council meeting which will be held at 11:45 in the sanctuary. All members are encouraged to attend.

For this week's piece of personal trivia I will focus on July 1983 and the Billy Graham sponsored International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists which was held in Holland in the city of Amsterdam at the Rai Conference Center. 3,500 men and women from 133 countries gathered for the 10-day conference to hear the leading preachers and theologians from around the world, attend workshops, worship services and fellowship with one another.

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I had thought it would be great to attend but registration was limited and an effort was made to have attenders primarily from third world countries. And then several weeks before the conference I got a call from a good friend of mine, Nate Showalter, who was the coordinator of the 200 workshops saying he was overwhelmed with his duties and wondered if I could come and help him prepare for the conference as the assistant coordinator of workshops? It was a volunteer position but all expenses, and lodging would be provided. All I needed was to pay for my airfare which the Florin Church and the Atlantic Northeast District contributed.

What an opportunity the Lord had laid before me. I accepted and spent two weeks preparing for the conference and attending the events. I helped assemble the large workbooks printed in 10 languages and helped assign translators for the workshops and other logistical support. My personal responsibility was to help Cliff Barrows, Billy Graham's song leader, organize the opening procession for the opening worship service. I had to see that a representative from each country would carry their country's flag throughout the auditorium to the stage in alphabetical order and place them in holders as thousands sang 'All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name'. I led the procession with the conference banner.

What an honor and thrill to be part of that foretaste of heaven. It was a joy working with Cliff Barrows and the Billy Graham team and to personally meet Billy Graham. What a blessing and a memory of my three weeks in Amsterdam and the spiritual blessings I received from being part of that historic assembly with thousands of church leaders from around the world!

'Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.' II Peter 3:18

Bob Kettering, Interim Senior Pastor