

Report: Annual Gathering 2019

"Well-being for All: Developing Resilience in Healthcare" was the theme for the Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship **Annual Gathering 2019**, June 21-23, 2019 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania. About 75 healthcare professionals and their family members attended, including recent students, young professionals, retirees, and a half dozen children in the Children's Program. Participants came from at least a dozen states from Washington to Florida as well as the District of Columbia and Zimbabwe.



Four plenary presentations highlighted the time together. Friday evening, **Dr. Sibonokuhle Ncube**, national coordinator of Compassionate Development Service, the relief and development agency of the Brethren in Christ Church of Zimbabwe, challenged those gathered to think together about "**Who is under your carbon footprint?**" She shared about the impact of climate change from A to Z -- America to Zimbabwe.

Saturday morning featured **James Nelson Gingerich, MD**, sharing from his experience in establishing and developing Maple City Health Care Center on the culturally diverse north side of Goshen, Indiana. Picking up on the Annual Gathering theme, his topic was "**Resilient Healthcare: A Matter of Trust.**" Following his presentation, he led one of eight workshops on Saturday morning and afternoon to help participants explore a culture of abundance in their own settings.



Saturday evening featured an integration of a Christian faith perspective with one of the most intense issues of contemporary North American society in a presentation entitled, "**Well-being for All: Responding to the Opioid Epidemic.**" **Dr. John Boll**, family physician and Associate Director of the Williamsport, Pennsylvania Family Medicine Residency program, explored the issues of both addiction and chronic pain in challenging the audience to reframe the conversation toward healing and hope.

Sunday morning's final session addressed more fully a topic touched on by previous speakers: "**Addressing Moral Injury With Spiritual Strength.**" Chaplains **Clair Hochstetler**, **Charlene Epp**, and **Susan Lanford** guided the gathered congregation to get in touch with the healing needed in their



personal lives, so they could continue be channels of God's healing in their professional lives. The service concluded with those present placing their own healing leaves onto a tree of life and partaking of the Lord's Supper together.



Each plenary session began with a time of worship featuring lively singing. **Angie and Jim Clemens**, musicians from Dayton, Virginia, led the worship which also featured some of the new music which will be incorporated into the new "Voices Together" hymnal to be published in 2020.

Joining the Clemens couple with some additional music was performer and songwriter **Lucas Schrock-Hurst** from Harrisonburg, Virginia.

"Lightning Lucas" also gave a special Saturday afternoon presentation, sharing stories and songs from his personal journey with bipolar disorder.



Other Saturday workshop sessions featured topics as diverse as "An Introduction to Art Psychotherapy," "Serving the Old Order Amish and Mennonite Communities," "Training Community Leaders on Maternal and Child Health Services" in Ethiopia, "Naturopathic Medicine," and "Personal Resilience and Spiritual Care."



Through a strategic partnership with the **Center for Sustainable Climate Solutions (CSCS)** based in Harrisonburg, Virginia, the Annual Gathering featured not only Dr. Ncube, but also three CSCS fellows who developed a two-year podcast series on the effects of climate change on ordinary people and shared their learnings in a workshop entitled, "**Shifting Climates: Rehumanizing the Conversation About Faith, Hope, and Climate Change.**"

Those present enjoyed a delightfully pleasant early summer weekend in Laurelville's beautiful scenic setting. Resources from the weekend presentations as well as pictures are available online at MHF's website, www.mennohealth.org.

Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship is an interdisciplinary community of Anabaptist health professionals which seeks to nurture the integration of faith and practice, to provide opportunities for dialogue on health-related issues, and to address specific needs through education, advocacy, and service. Healthcare professionals from the full spectrum of training and academia, health care services, and ministry are welcome to join Mennonite Health Fellowship (MHF). MHF is a member organization of MHS Alliance as well as Christian Connections for International Health (CCIH). For more information, contact Paul Leichty, Executive Director at info@mennohealth.org or 1-888-406-3643.