

# Atlantic Coast Conference Currents

Centered in Christ, Building Connections, Sharing God's Love



Above: Elizabethtown 1 Team quizzing Strasburg 3 Team.



Over 60 members contribute each season to operate nine to ten staff teams each night of quizzing. Pictured here is (left to right): Julissa Lehman, scorekeeper; Brook Musselman, timekeeper; Josh Lehman, quizmaster; Brittany Spangler, judge; and Jordan Martin, judge.

## ACC Youth Bible Quizzing



Strasburg 3 Quiz Team contemplating their next question!

**Another Bible Quizzing season** concluded on March 19 after the annual Invitational Tournament at Lancaster Bible College. Over the weekend, more than a dozen teams from three other quizzing leagues in Ohio and Virginia joined the 51 teams of the ACC Bible Quizzing League for a weekend of competition at Lancaster Bible College.

Over the eight-week regular quizzing season, 260 quizzers from 21 churches quizzed on Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, the first six chapters of Daniel, Ruth, Judges 6-7 (Gideon), and Judges 13-16 (Samson).

The photo below was taken the first night of Quizzing at Petra Church with the 51 teams of the ACC Bible Quizzing League!

Thank you, Fred and Chris Hertzler and Brook Musselman, for your continued leadership coordinating this valued program!



## Currents

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## ACC Moderator's Reflections

John Denlinger,  
ACC Moderator

### We are Family

... Together We are Blessed

I grew up on a dairy farm in Lancaster County as one of eight children, the second born, and oldest boy with a twin sister. I love each of my siblings dearly and would not trade them for anything (most of the time). Together we have experienced many joys, sorrows, and difficult times. As you can imagine, or if you know us, we are all very different which leads to many lively discussions. We are farmers, teachers, managers, nurses, truck drivers, carpenters, and pastors.

Although we are different, we share the same DNA that keeps us together. We enjoy being together and supporting and encouraging one another on a regular basis.

As the years go by, our family continues to grow through marriage and the birth of children. When we gather together at holidays throughout the year, we now number more than 120. As a result of our family enlarging, we must be more intentional in keeping up with family names, as well as in valuing and caring for the family. We are blessed!

As I reflect and become more familiar with our ACC family, I see many similarities with my own family. As sister churches in ACC, we are different and yet share a common DNA that connects us with God, our local church, conference, and community. We are rural, suburban, and urban. We are farmers, business owners, employees, as well as professionals in many areas including medicine, technology, law, and education. We are 34 churches, and will have opportunity to possibly add more churches to ACC in April.

As a member of ACC, I have had many opportunities to see our conference churches at work. I have also had the privilege to watch you share your gifts of hospitality, experience the uniqueness of each congregation, and observe your partnering together to follow Jesus.

I have discovered that you all love to get together regularly to worship and to fellowship. It is evident that you value Spiritual formation, Sunday School, Bible Studies, Small Groups, Men's and Women's groups, and the list continues. You also value mission and service as a way of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ that invites others to follow. And this looks different in each congregation.

Atlantic Coast Conference values deeply the way each congregation lives out the Great Commandment of love and the Great Commission of sharing Jesus with others. Together we acknowledge that we express and live this out differently and confess that we do not always get it right. We also deeply believe that this happens best within the context of our local community of faith and trust that each congregation is being faithful to God's call in helping to bring about the Kingdom of God here on earth as it is in heaven.

We are family. Together we are blessed!

### CENTERED IN CHRIST BUILDING CONNECTIONS SHARING GOD'S LOVE

- John Denlinger, ACC Moderator  
Ridgeview Mennonite Church

### \$\$\$ CURRENCY CORNER \$\$\$

It is hard to believe that ACC is in the last few months of the fiscal year already—June 30, 2017, marks the end of the year.

As of January 31, 2017, our income was \$17,804.00 less than our expenses, so we have had to dip into our cash reserves to pay the bills.

If you or your congregation plan to make a contribution to ACC this year, could you send it to us so that we receive it by June 30? The reserve funds are down to about \$10,698.00, and I feel a bit uncomfortable having such a small balance on hand.

The financial supporters of ACC have always come through in previous years, and I have total faith that we will have enough to cover expenses again this year.

Please pray for the Finance Committee as they prepare a budget for the coming year.

Thank you!

- Ken Martin, ACC Treasurer  
Forest Hills Mennonite

# Are we Mennonite, but not Christian?

At Goshen College where I am a student, we have a class called “Learning Community.” This class is for first-year students in their second semester of classes. In my opinion, “Learning Community” is a class that covers how to be a decent human being. Goshen College wants to create “global citizens,” and Learning Community is one way of doing that.

During my last “Learning Community” class before spring break, we discussed religion in the workplace which spurred a conversation about religion at Goshen College. My classmates range from Russian Orthodox to Mormon to Mennonite to Evangelical Christian. It is not an incredibly diverse group, but enough that opinions are fairly different.

Those of my classmates who were not Mennonite voiced their disappointments with Goshen College and its claim to be a “Christ-centered” college. These students said that besides the occasional chapel, there were not many resources provided by Goshen College for spiritual development.

To be honest, I have felt the same way. From what I have found, Goshen College has a strong Mennonite culture, but it sometimes lacks in the faith aspect. But this is something I have observed before. I have met a lot of people who identify as Mennonite, but not Christian.

I find that statement to be very contradictory, considering that the Mennonite church is a branch of the broader Christian church. But I understand what they mean—they have the same values as the Mennonite church or they have grown up in the church.

However, they may not focus largely on the spiritual aspect of the faith.

As a broader church, however, we must find the balance between faith and culture. The culture of the Mennonite church makes it an enjoyable denomination. Potlucks, social justice, and four-part harmony make our church different from others. These are three reasons why I have remained with the Mennonite church. But I am also a Mennonite because I am a Christian who is also a pacifist.

If we are just Mennonites, but not Christians, what purpose are we serving? As Mennonites, we are meant to spread God’s peace. I believe the only way to do this is with love. And in my book, love and God are synonymous. So I have tweaked I Corinthians 13:1-3: “If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have [God], I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.... If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have [God], I gain nothing.”

We need God in our church.

Without God, we are simply a group of people who like to sing and eat shoofly pie. But our calling is much more than that. It is to love God and share God’s peace with the world. We cannot just have the culture and we cannot just have the faith—we need both.

~Abigail King, Ridgeview Mennonite

## POINT OF YOUTH



Abigail King is a freshman at Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana, and is a member of Ridgeview Mennonite Church. She serves on the Youth Planning Committee for Mennonite Convention 2017.



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- 3" x 3" size = \$75.00
- 4" x 4" size = \$100.00

Camera-ready artwork should be sent to [currents@atlanticcoastconference.net](mailto:currents@atlanticcoastconference.net) along with your name and address so that an invoice can be mailed.

Welcome  
to  
these  
four  
new  
congregations  
who  
joined  
ACC  
at the  
2016  
Fall  
Assembly.

### East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church

432-434 East Chestnut Street, Lancaster, PA 17602



The first Mennonite congregation in downtown Lancaster, Pa., with a new meetinghouse built in 1879, East Chestnut Street combines a sense of history and tradition with a commitment to invite and engage members to live out their faith commitments. They have a strong sense of call to the neighborhood offering a thriving weekly community meal for 100-150 neighbors, and a growing Chestnut Housing Corporation ministry that provides affordable housing for those moving out of homelessness. They expressed a deep commitment to remain involved with a local conference connected with MC USA. (*Todd Friesen, Pastor; and Samantha Lioi, Assistant Pastor*)



### North Bronx Mennonite Church

3304 Steuben Ave., Bronx, NY 10467

As a church plant initially led by lay persons from the South Bronx and Harlem congregations of Lancaster Mennonite Conference, North Bronx continues to serve in the local neighborhood, building community among their neighbors from very diverse backgrounds. Strengths are expressed in their values: Hospitality, Harmony, Healing, and Hope. Their ethics are expressed simply enough for even their young children to embrace: Care, Share, and Be Fair. They see ACC as a conference that shares their strong commitment to Anabaptist Christianity centered on Jesus Christ and His teachings. Their desire is to maintain a relationship with MC USA. (*Ruth Yoder Wenger, Pastor*)



### New Holland Mennonite Church

18 Western Avenue, New Holland, PA 17557

Beginning in 1923 in the borough of New Holland, Pa., New Holland Mennonite continues to provide a setting to find God's Spirit at work in the midst of all the recent changes. The congregation is excited to be part of ACC where lay delegates lead alongside credentialed leaders. They also desire to relate with MC USA as ACC allows for diversity and provides the option to listen to each other even while disagreeing. Their 35-year-old Early Learning Center welcomes 80-100 children each work day. They recently participated in refugee resettlement (a new family from the Congo), and have hosted MCC young adults through IVEP. (*Dawn Ranck Hower, Pastor*)



### Pilgrims Mennonite Church

MCC Gathering Place, 21 S. 12<sup>th</sup> St., Akron, Pa. Mail: P. O. Box 217, Akron, PA 17501

Pilgrims began in 1977 with a core group from Akron Mennonite Church. One person commented at a congregational meeting when they discussed joining ACC, "This would be in a sense, coming home." They are blessed with members who have artistic and musical gifts with a high participation of lay leadership as they encourage everyone to explore and use their gifts. A significant percentage of their members are not from Mennonite background but have been drawn to Anabaptist beliefs and values. They understand that a healthy congregation cannot stand alone, but needs relationships with conference and the broader denomination. (*Barry Kreider, Pastor*)



## Bethel Mennonite Church

2335 Biglerville Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325

The mission of Bethel Mennonite Church is to love, disciple, and GO in Jesus' Name. Bethel, like many churches, is facing declining attendance and giving. We have invited ACC to help us get going in better directions. Recently we began "Dwelling in the Word" on Wednesday evenings as a way to study the Word of God together and learn from each other. We are also looking at developing better unity in our congregation, while still doing outreach into our community through picnics, Easter Egg hunts, Fall Festivals, and a big community yard sale. *(Robert Murr, Pastor)*



## First Mennonite Church of Brooklyn

23 Marcus Garvey Blvd.  
Brooklyn, NY 11206

On January 7, a new stage began in our church when Lilia became pastor. She writes, "To travel on a journey like this involves tests and challenges that are sometimes not easy as the pastor builds connections to a new family in Christ. Traveling together involves differences of thought, form and style. The first obstacle to overcome is called changing from the "I" to a "we or ours," with the understanding that any decision inevitably falls on the entire community. Thus, both the pastor and the congregation must be in tune to validate each other and increase the potential that God gives. We do not know how Joshua felt as he became a leader, but we do notice that God advises him to "strive, be brave, and fear not," advice that applies to both the shepherd and all members of the community. God, the pilot, is in control, and we are a team." *(Liliana Potes, Pastor)*

## Neffsville Mennonite Church

2371 Lititz Pike, Lancaster, PA 17601

Neffsville Mennonite Church grew out of the revival spirit of the Brunk Revival Campaign which swept the Lancaster Conference Mennonite churches in the summer of 1951. The new church grew rapidly with a current membership of about 600. Ministries included Created 2 Praise (a one-week day camp to develop children's gifts); Wednesday Night Out (meal with children and youth clubs plus options for adults); children's ministries on Sunday mornings and Vacation Bible School; youth programs; and more including Bible Studies. *(Hunter Hess, Lead Pastor, and Dwight Rohrer, Associate Pastor of Youth Ministries)*



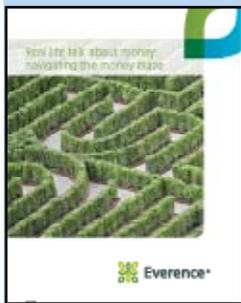
## Ark Bible Chapel

88 Woodchoppertown Road, Boyertown, PA 19512

The truth that Jesus is alive, His words are life, and His story can be the path to a loving relationship with God continues to be the bedrock of the Ark's experience as a church. We appreciate our small groups—whether it is a group of seekers who gather for coffee or a group of mature believers trying to identify their life mission, meeting together can result in practical and long-lasting change. As the first step in implementing our new constitution, we have installed a new leadership team to oversee our life development process. We hope to make it possible for all of our participants to grow as disciples of Jesus in the midst of our faith. *(Jim Ralph, Pastor)*

Who  
are  
we  
in  
ACC?

News, notes, and announcements may be sent to  
 Currents editor:  
 currents@atlanticcoastconference.net



Mennonite Church USA Convention in Florida July 4-8, 2017



**Young Adults** are invited to grapple with practical peacebuilding at this June's Global Anabaptist Peacebuilders (GAP) Institute sponsored by West Coast Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). What does it mean to be an Anabaptist peacebuilder in the midst of global conflicts, climate change, poverty, crime and divisions made by walls and borders? For more information, check: <https://mcc.org/stories/young-adults-invited-grapple-practical-peacebuilding>



**African American Sister Care Seminar** will be held on April 21-21, 2017, in Elkhart, Ind., for a time of worship, story-telling, and Scripture reflection for women of all ethnicities. Register online at [MennoniteMission.net/SisterCare](http://MennoniteMission.net/SisterCare) or contact Ann Jacobs at 574-523-3007. A \$25 registration fee includes meals and events.

**Real life talk about money: navigating the money maze** is a new Everence three-session curriculum designed to help youth dig deeper into the subject. The goal of these lessons is to introduce youth to real life

**How** will we follow Jesus as Anabaptists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? This is the question drawing ACC members and other MC USA members to Orlando, Florida, this summer. This biennial gathering will be held in the Orange County Convention Center, in Orlando, Florida.

A new and exciting "Future Church Summit" designed to serve as a generative, open space for denomination-wide conversation will help participants to dream together, reset priorities, and engage one another to imagine an Anabaptist future for the Mennonite Church.

The second exciting new item are the "MennoTalks." Not quite TED, not exactly Pecha Kucha, MennoTalks will explore a different topic each day, featuring seven speakers from diverse perspectives. The 20x20 format—20 slides for 20 seconds each—facilitates presentations that are dynamic,

applications of biblical principles about money. Download a leaders guide at [everence.com/resources-for-youth](http://everence.com/resources-for-youth).

**Theatre of the Beat**, based in Stouffville, Ontario, is a traveling Theatre troupe that was founded by Johnny Wideman in 2011. The Troupe has played across Canada, and will debut in the U.S. with a performance of a play called *This Will Lead To Dancing* at Akron Mennonite Church on Thursday, April 27, and Friday, April 28, at 7:00 p.m. This show, hosted by Welcoming Dialogue Group of Lancaster, is free and open to the public. Reservations not required. An offering will be taken each evening. For more information go to <http://theatreofthebeat.ca/#index>

**Understanding Today's Prodigals** is a conference on healing and hope for estranged adult children to be held at Conestoga Mennonite Church, Morgantown, Pa., on May 6, 2017, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Sponsored by Still Waters Counseling Ministries, lunch and refreshments will be provided. Cost is \$12 per person at the door. Registration is required by calling 610-286-9124. Many families today experience the profound hurt and shame when a grown child walks away from their faith and values. This conference will offer better understandings, better boundaries, and better tools to build bridges that bring hope for the future.

fast-paced, informative, and concise on topics like: Celebrating Women; Race, Religion and Justice; and Global and Local Peacemaking.

Of course, the appreciated worship, fellowship, and service opportunities will also be available. All registrants will receive an I-Ride Trolley pass that is good for the whole week. Thousands of Mennonite youth from all over the U.S. will gather—a great time to learn more about the broader church. Children's activities are also offered so that parents can attend sessions. A day-long pastor appreciation gathering will take place on July 4 to celebrate our pastors.

For registration and convention news and updates, follow online at: [Convention.MennoniteUSA.org@MCUSAConvention](http://Convention.MennoniteUSA.org@MCUSAConvention). A late registration fee will be added for persons registering after May 1, 2017.

# The Virtue of *Forgetting*

**Sometimes** I am impressed by what I remember. Other times I am embarrassed by what I forget. Losing our memory is one of the greatest fears, and with reason. Our lives consist of memories. When they disappear the quality of life is gone.

At the same time, forgetting is as necessary as remembering. The value of memory is illustrated by a poem by Sara Teasdale that I memorized in a high school speech class 70 years ago:

*Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,  
Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold.  
Let it be forgotten for ever and ever,  
Time is a wise friend, he will make us old.*

*If anyone asks, say it was forgotten  
Long and long ago.  
As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall  
In a long forgotten snow.*

Ah yes, “Let it be forgotten...”, easier said than done. To recall what we want to forget is in fact an oxymoron. Memories do not erase. At least not those we want to forget. We need a word that the English language does not appear to have. It would more nearly say, “Yes I still remember, but it does not matter anymore. I have let go of it.”

The need to let go is well summarized in the letter to the Hebrews (12:01): “Wherefore seeing that we are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that besets us and run the race that is set before us.”

Bad memories can be a heavy weight to carry around. We need to deliberately depress them. They hinder our ability to run the race that is set before us. They must not be allowed to overshadow the good memories that are such an essential part of joyful living.

~ Edgar Stoesz, Akron Mennonite



## ACC Leadership Beginnings

**Klaudia Smucker** (Robert) was approved in February for a transfer of credentials from Franconia Mennonite Conference for future assignments. She recently completed her role as interim pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Souderton. Klaudia is a member of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church.

**John Bauman** (Susan Ebersole) was approved in February for a transfer of credentials from Lancaster Mennonite Conference for his continuing chaplaincy role at St. John the Divine Cathedral Church in New York City. John is a member of North Bronx Mennonite Church.

## ACC Leadership Ending

**Chad Martin** (Jessica King) ended his role as associate passtor of Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster. In September, he began a new role as Director of the National Fund for Sacred Places in Philadelphia.

~Brook Musselman, Conference Coordinator

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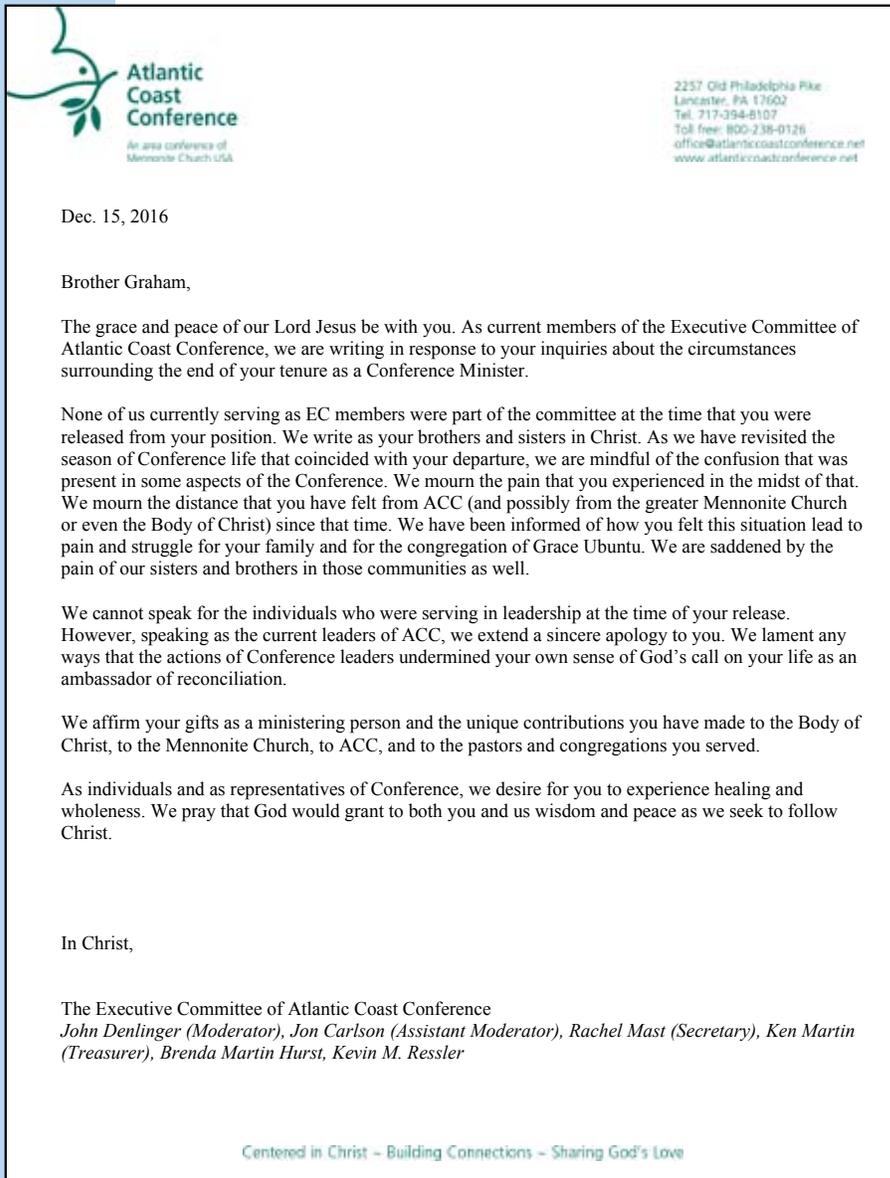
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# ACC Letter to Graham Cyster



As one reflects back in the life of one's family, congregation, and in our case, Atlantic Coast Conference, there are decisions made in real life time that guide and impact our future.

Several years ago, ACC made a very difficult decision to release Graham Cyster as one of our ACC Conference Ministers. Graham was a part-time ACC Conference Minister from May 2006 to December 2011. At that time, Conference leadership determined that Graham be released from his responsibilities as Conference Minister. Graham continued to serve as pastor for Grace Ubuntu, an ACC congregation in Lancaster city.

Since that time, Graham and ACC Conference leadership have had continued dialogue, and we recently shared this letter with him. At Graham's request, and with Graham's encouragement, we are also sharing this letter with the broader ACC family in an effort to foster ongoing reconciliation, grace, and restoration.

- John Denlinger, ACC Moderator

## EVENTS

Save  
these  
dates.



Saturday, April 22, 2017

### ACC Spring Assembly

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., at Bethel Mennonite Church  
2335 Biglerville Road, Gettysburg, Pa.

Theme: Communities of Grace, Joy, & Peace

Saturday, May 6, 2017

### Chatter, Chow, & Cheerful Service

9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., for ladies, ages 9-99

MCC's Material Resource Center, Ephrata, Pa.