

Atlantic Coast Conference Currents

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

Above: Sam Walters leading the singing at ACC's 2010 Vision Dinner.

HIGHLIGHTS



3 ACC Fall Assembly



4 Later Life Transitions



12 New York City Mini Convention



ACC Singing A New Song!

Jeff Wright,
ACC's Church
Development
Coach

"The foundation never changes, but the people sing a new song." Jeff Wright, church development coach for Atlantic Coast Conference, made this opening statement as he addressed the attendees at the 12th annual Vision Dinner. The theme for the evening was "The Old Story and a New Song: Mennonite Church Planting for 2010 and Beyond."

Historically, many Mennonite churches were planted through conflict. Instead of resolving our differences when we disagreed with one another, we splintered and planted a new congregation. Later, churches were planted by young people who served in alternative service and were known as 1-Ws. Still later, Mennonite Church implemented "Vision 95" goals for church planting.

According to Wright, there are five realities to church planting in the 21st century. The first is organic churches that result when new leaders are recognized within a congregation and encouraged to begin a church plant. Secondly, churches must simplify and focus on essentials. We tend to become immersed in programs and policies that are non-essential and hinder reaching out to those beyond our boundaries.

Churches must be incarnational in mission. Wright told his own story of being

invited as a 13 year-old, to attend church with his neighbors. He accepted their offer and found love and acceptance that he did not find in his home. His neighbors were Jesus to him.

In a society rampant with violence, churches need to model the Anabaptist theology of peace and nonviolence. People are looking for peace in the midst of the chaos of life. And finally, we must become Jesus-centered congregations, reaching beyond ourselves to those many "happy, moral pagans" who are all around us but have no idea that they need Jesus in their lives. It is imperative that we share our lives and beliefs with them if they are to become God's redeemed children.

Wright's final challenge to us was a quote from one of God's giants, George Mueller: **"God's work done in God's way never lacks for God's provision."** - Lois Whisler, Bethel

Lois Whisler (left), Pastor Bob and Lois Murr (center), Bethel Mennonite, sharing at a table at the dinner.



Currents

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Lois Ann Mast
Editor

Jessica Shirk
Contributing Editor

Lois Whisler
Contributing Editor

Keith Wilson
Contributing Editor

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2257 Old
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17602; currents@
atlanticcoast
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Contributions of
stories from congre-
gations, organiza-
tions, and photos
can be sent to:
Editor Lois Ann
Mast, 219 Mill
Road, Morgantown,
PA 19543-9516;
currents@atlantic
coastconference.net

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Atlantic Coast Conference

2257 Old
Philadelphia Pike
Lancaster, PA
17602

1-717-394-8107
1-800-238-0126

office@atlantic
coastconference.net



John Weber
Conference Moderator
Akron Mennonite

ACC Moderator's Reflections

It was on one of those rather cold, windy days in mid-December that I volunteered to help monitor the kindergarten to grade two noon recess. What I observed completely amazed me as 30-40 energy-filled youngsters played their version of a soccer game. Picture the scene. There was no adult directing the play or enforcing the rules as they ran back and forth across the lawn play area. Play they did!

It was quite obvious the children were imitating professional soccer players in trying to practice their ball handling skills whether passing or scoring. Goals resulted in giving high fives. Of course, nobody knew the score. How the students knew who was on whose "team" or which direction was their goal is beyond me. At first glance it would appear totally confusing; however, they were competitive and respected each other to avoid causing injury. It was also clear to me that what seemed confusing to me made perfect sense to them. They were having fun. They were playing their version according to powerful models in their imagination.

Isn't it true that like children we live our lives from models that we have encountered along our life's journey, especially those models adopted during our formative teen years, new parenthood, or embarking upon a new career? Who and what models one selects is of critical importance in shaping behaviors.

Who and what models pastors and church leaders imitate in serving the congregations greatly impacts their life together in worship and service. Watching the children imitate professional soccer made me think about what models will guide the

ACC By-law Task Force, chaired by Forest Hill member Keith Stuckey, as they begin reviewing and updating the document that provides the structure and guidelines for the conference.

What models for revising the By-laws will best serve ACC congregations? The different model options to draw from can vary from corporate/business, to academic, government, charismatic personalities, etc.

Our prayers for the By-laws Task Force are that as they draw from personal experiences and various organizational models, they will also draw from the Biblical/spiritual resources that have shaped God's people along the journey.

We also pray their models will lead the Task Force to what God is calling the congregations and the conferences of MC USA to in the days ahead.

Just as the children played soccer from existing mental images, we too can help shape the conference through the spiritual models that exist in our collective imagination. Let that model be as Apostle Paul says, a foundation built upon Christ Jesus.

Centered in Christ • Transforming Lives • Changing our World
LANCASTER MENNONITE SCHOOL
OPEN HOUSE

All grades
All campuses
February 1
6-8:30 PM

PreK
January 27
9-11 AM

Kindergarten
January 26
9-11 AM

Prospective
Student Day at
Lancaster Campus
January 27

More information at
www.LancasterMennonite.org

Annual Fall ACC Assembly Report



Young Adults sharing at the Fall Assembly (left to right): Tom Rutt (Zion), Beverly Wilson (Grace Ubuntu), Fritz Herrick (Manhattan), Carrie Stoltzfus (Conestoga), Lisa White (Blossom Hill), Jessica Shirk (Ridgeview), Jeremy Yoder (North Baltimore), and Myron Kauffman (Cedar Grove). Credit: Lois Ann Mast.

This fall's assembly was hosted by Forest Hills Mennonite on October 23, 2010. Attendance was larger than usual this year with attendees representing most of the churches from Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC).

Each year, in addition to the normal activities of announcements, reports, and budget approval, attendees focus on a particular issue. This year's theme was "Celebrating the Edge" with an emphasis on young adults and how to keep this age group involved in the church. A panel of young adults who have chosen to remain involved in their home congregations shared their thoughts on various issues such as why they choose to be engaged in a Mennonite congregation, what they value most about their congregations, and whether they are perceived as equals by older adults in their congregations. It was clear that the main reason these young adults remain involved is because of the relationships that they developed with both peers and older adults in their earlier years.

One of the frustrations expressed was the inordinate amount of time spent on administration, organization, and structure. As I listened to the discussion it became evident that other churches are experiencing the same problems we are in retaining young adults. It would have been interesting to have some young people who chose not to stay in their congregation and have them share why they chose to leave.



New pastors (first row, left to right): Sandra Perez, NYC oversight minister and member at Manhattan Mennonite; Jim Ralph, pastor, Ark Bible Chapel; Dave Greiser, pastor, North Baltimore; Susan Gascho-Cooke, lead pastor at Community Mennonite, Lancaster; Samuel Wanjau, pastor, African Community Church of Lancaster; Michelle Armster, co-pastor, St Andrew UCC and member at Blossom Hill Mennonite; second row: Sonni Carrion, NYC oversight minister and member at Iglesia Primera Menonita; Dwight Rohrer, associate pastor of youth and young adult ministry, Neffsville Mennonite; Confesor Linares, pastor, Iglesia Primera Menonita; Jon Carlson, pastor, Oley Valley Mennonite; Mark Weidner, bridge pastor, Ridgeview Mennonite (Oct-Dec 2010). Credit: Lois Ann Mast.

A touching moment this year occurred when Grant Rissler of the Peace and Justice Committee presented the "Peace Mug" award. Each year this award celebrates someone in the conference who was involved in promoting peace and social justice issues. This year's mug was awarded to Glenn Lapp from Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster. Glenn was killed while working with MCC in Afghanistan. Accepting the award on his behalf were his parents. - Ken Martin, Forest Hills Mennonite

Left: Forest Hills Worship Team led us in an impressive time of worship. Credit: Lois Ann Mast.



Later Life Transitions

Marlene and Anne's humor and honesty helped attendees move into an important space of considering shared power, respect, control, and care of each other.



Marlene Kaufman and her daughter, Anne Kaufman Weaver, shared at the ACC Mennonite Women's fall meeting hosted by Forest Hills Mennonite Church on October 22, 2010.

"**Later** Life Transitions" was the theme of the Atlantic Coast Conference Mennonite Women's fall meeting where mother and daughter, Marlene Kaufman and Anne Kaufman Weaver spoke from their own experience of journeying together in preparation for life's transitions. They graciously shared from their own experiences with each other, parents and grandparents, some of which has been difficult, as they purposefully work at the challenges.

The candid sharing challenged more than 120 parents and daughters to begin the often difficult conversations. The topic is one that Marlene's family has given much thought as she is co-authoring a new book soon to be released with husband Gerald Kaufman. Both women speak from counseling professions and experiences with people of all generations.

"Transitions of long term illness, dementia, and dying are more difficult when we are not ready for them, when there has not been open

discussion of each persons' needs or desires." The "sandwich generation" was recognized noting it is stressful when mid-lifers are caring for their own often young children and also caring for parents while employed outside the home. All women present were challenged, whether parent or child, to listen to the other person and initiate the often difficult process, remembering the Golden Rule of treating parents as you would hope to be cared for.

Becky Degan from Forest Hills led the evening's worship. A generous offering was received for Homes of Hope, a local organization that partners with Love, Inc. Director Sue Orth presented the immediate need of local persons affected by homelessness.

Officers for the group reported a record attendance this year, and announced that a Sister Care event is being explored for next year for south-central Pennsylvania women.

~ Deborah Sprunger, Akron Mennonite

Women and Preschool Assembly

On October 18, 2010, the 33rd Women and Preschool Assembly was held at Strasburg Mennonite Church. Approximately 70 women and children attended.

The program opened with the keynote address given by Loice Robi Byler, co-pastor with her husband, of Mosaic International Fellowship. Her topic, continued in a workshop, covered the importance of mentoring, referencing the relationship between Ruth and Naomi. She encouraged women to use words to build each other up and to be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Healthy mentoring relationships call for a love and a desire to connect generations, being respectful and living an "open book"

lifestyle. She emphasized that, as in Romans 15 and Colossians 3, we are called to teach and instruct one another.

Marlene Kaufman and Julie Kobi were also featured speakers, presenting on "Conversations between Adult Children and Parents about Aging" and "Creating Memories in the Kitchen" respectively. Both workshops provided meaningful resources to the women in attendance.

An offering was taken to benefit No Longer Alone Ministries.

The next Women and Preschool Assembly will be held in October 2011 at Forest Hills Mennonite Church.

- Kori Jantzen, Forest Hills Mennonite

Permission to Speak Freely

Atlantic Coast Conference has formed a Young Adult Task Force to examine the involvement, or lack thereof, of younger adults in ACC congregations and ACC in general. I joined the group because I care deeply about our church and its future. Whenever I attend an ACC Assembly, I repeatedly hear, “It’s so good to have a young person here.” ACC defines a younger adult as someone between the ages of 20 and 39, which hints at the average age of Assembly attendees.

The Task Force is investigating the extent of young adults’ involvement in their congregations, circumstances that either promote or inhibit that involvement, and methods that increase participation.

I am hopeful that the Task Force will be effective in not only answering these questions but also bridging the gap between generations. The young adult panel at Assembly repeatedly noted the importance of cross-generational relationships. Young adults who are involved in their churches desire mentoring. Forming a partnership between an older, experienced committee member and a young adult benefits everyone—the young adult gains an understanding of the “business” side of

the church, and the committee gains a fresh perspective.

Contrary to some folks’ fears, young adults do not want to change the church completely. We worship in Mennonite congregations because we want to live our faith through an Anabaptist perspective. We are not ashamed of our beliefs, and we don’t expect our churches to be, either. A watered-down, politically-correct Gospel is not going to attract or retain true believers. On the other hand, we do want to cut through the dialect spoken by many church leaders, and I’m not talking about the Pennsylvania German language. Rhetoric is rampant in many official documents and even committee meetings. Let’s share our faith clearly and concisely, without the “church-speak” that is foreign to those not raised Mennonite.

There is a disconnect between the expectations, ideals, and behaviors of older and younger adults in the church. I believe that open, honest dialogue is necessary to encourage the two groups to grow toward each other. It is not simple or easy, but it must happen, because unity in Christ and in demonstrating His life in us is the only way to attract anyone to the church, regardless of their age.



Jessica Shirk

We
(young adults
and adults)
share faith
in Jesus,
but we
have different
concepts of
what it means
to
“be church.”

January 29th Women’s Sabbath Retreat

Arbutus Lichti Sider and her adopted daughter, Sonya Smith, will present “A Foot in Two Worlds: An Adoption Story” at the second retreat in the 2010-2011 series, Voice Lessons: Mother-Daughter Challenges, on January 29, 2011, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at the Forest Hills Mennonite Church.

A cross-cultural adoption can make one feel torn between two cultures. Sonya Smith, adopted from Nicaragua at the age of four months, and her adoptive mother, Arbutus Sider, describe the joys, struggles and triumphs of knowing and being a part of two very different families.

Learn from Sonya’s struggles with identity, alcohol abuse and her ability to endure great pain . . . which led to a realization that only through God’s help could she overcome personal tragedies. Arbutus remained a faithful, loving parent through her daughter’s many experiences.

Arbutus, a published educator and marriage and family therapist, parented three children in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with her husband, Ron Sider. She also volunteered with Jubilee Fellowship, Parents Union for Public Schools, and chaired the board that launched Philadelphia Mennonite High School.

Sonya lives in Germantown with her husband, Benjamin, and daughter, Trinity. She teaches K-8 art for the School District of Philadelphia, and enjoys being a mother, painting, and time with friends and family.

Envisioned by Anabaptist women in ministry, this retreat series welcomes women of all ages to rest, reflect, and remember Whose we are. The Saturday retreats offer input, silence (yes, three amazing hours!), personal nurture, and fellowship. A light lunch is provided. Registration and payment due by January 22 to Sharon Kraybill (717-293-9641; sjkraybill@paonline.com).



*Sonya with her
mother Arbutus*

Third Retreat
March 12, 2011
“Sudden Loss”
with
Jan Siemens
and Heidi
Siemens-Rhodes

News, notes, and announcements may be sent to *Currents* editor, Lois Ann Mast 219 Mill Road Morgantown, PA 19543; or e-mailed to: currents@atlanticcoastconference.net

Pittsburgh 2011, Mennonite Church USA Convention planners are making preparations as more and more people move forward in their plans to attend. Youth groups continue their fundraising efforts, families make plans to attend, and congregations think about the delegates they want to send. Registration forms and packets were sent to congregations mid-December in anticipation of the January 25, 2011, opening of online registration.

For more information, check out: www.facebook.com/Pittsburgh2011. Put the dates of July 4-9, 2011, on your calendar to attend this biennial conference at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center downtown Pittsburgh, Pa. The convention's theme, "Bridges to (the) Cross," is inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 and by the many bridges that span the City of Three Rivers. The theme is two-fold: First, as instruments of Christ's reconciliation, we have many "bridges to cross." Second, God calls us to be ambassadors for Christ and to serve as "bridges to the cross."



Michelle Armster, co-director of MCC Conciliation Services and co-pastor at St. Andrew United Church of Christ, Lancaster, is ordained (left) at Blossom Hill Mennonite Church. She lives in Lancaster, Pa.

!Explore is a program that works with high school youth, but the whole congregation also participates. Encourage the youth in your congregation to consider joining in this theological exploration. A component of the program is an internship in the congregation mentored by the pastor. For more information, check: www.ambs.edu/explore

Bible Quizzing planning on the stories of Joseph and Esther found in the books of Genesis and Esther is well under way with the schedule finalized by mid-January. Check out the web site at www.accquizzing.org for updated news and information.

MCCers Titus and Linda Peachey will share about their recent trip to Laos on Sunday, January 30, 2011, from 3:00-4:30 p.m. The Peachey's served in Laos with Mennonite Central Committee some 40 years ago. Some 30-40% of the 250 million cluster

bombs showered on Laos from 1964 until 1973 haven't blown up yet and continue to maim and kill! Because those bombs are made using U.S. tax dollars, Titus and Linda will tell how they are compelled not to pay that portion of their federal income taxes which support warfare and underwrite the production of those "bombies." Sponsored by 1040 for Peace (www.1040forPeace.org), this event will be held at the Lancaster Church of the Brethren (Room 163), 1601 Sunset Avenue in Lancaster.

Beyond Ourselves, four Lancaster County, Pa., professional musicians are teaming up with an all-male a cappella



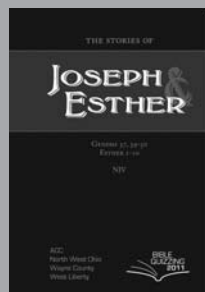
singing group from Harrisonburg, Virginia, to present their fourth benefit concert Sunday, February 6, 3:00 p.m. at Neffsville Mennonite Church. The concert will help Mennonite Central Committee rebuild communities in Southern Sudan as families return to their homes after the country's 22-year civil war.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is a relief, development and peace organization of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches. In more than 50 countries around the world, MCC meets basic needs for those suffering in times of war and disaster, finds solutions for people struggling to provide for their families, and encourages peacemakers who work to bring justice and understanding to conflicts in their communities.



Christi Hoover Seidel from Community Mennonite Church, Lancaster, continued to sell her book *Bethlehem's Star* over the holidays to support MCC partner, "Open

Bethlehem." This colorful children's book is available at \$10.00 from www.openbethlehem.org. Christi lived in Bethlehem from 2004-2007 as a volunteer with MCC where she worked with her husband Timothy. Their son, Kai Emanuel, was born in Bethlehem.



Meeting People in **Pain** with a Broken Heart

To be like Jesus, to be the “little Christs” we call ourselves as Christians, we must go beyond His teaching to touch and know Him. We must know His heart for our hearts to take on His shape. What evidence is there in the way Jesus interacted with people in scripture for what His heart is shaped like? When we look at the instances where Jesus heals the broken, what motivates Him to do this?

I flipped through the gospels and looked for any evidence of motivation to heal when Jesus meets people in pain. Chapter four in Matthew’s gospel recounts a litany of healings, but we are not given any details; He simply healed again and again.

While Jesus frequently refers to faith in the context of healing, his personal attitude whenever we are given a glimpse of it is defined by his compassion. Compassion is defined as “deep awareness of the suffering of another, coupled with the wish to relieve it.”

Take this clue from Luke 7:13, “When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her.” What a fantastic physical description of the way compassion motivates. An awareness of pain causes our heart to feel pulled outside of ourselves until it touches another—a healing touch. Jesus raised Lazarus in an action of pure compassion at the suffering of His friends and family. John 17:33-35 tells us, “He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled...Jesus wept.”

There is pain everywhere. We inflict it out of our own pain. We take it from others. The natural forces of the world bring it upon us. How do we respond to our own pain and to the pain of others? Jesus spent much of His ministry responding to pain. Here is where we can learn of His heart.

Jesus sees hurt and allows Himself to feel the pain of those He meets. He allows His heart to be broken again and again. As His own death approaches, Jesus cries out to God for it to be taken away, and then He cries out in the hearing of everyone, in the greatest pain He has ever known, feeling abandoned by the God of the universe.

So through His words, Jesus teaches us to have faith in God, to speak up and seek justice,

to be self-sacrificing, to be kind, to take care of one another, to share the good news. What He quietly models is a life of compassion—relationships whose signature is compassion. So at every place where pain is found, we are called not only to dutifully show up, but to allow ourselves to be busted up by their pain. Through our compassion will flow God’s healing. When my heart is broken by someone’s pain, I am in touch with Jesus. The spirit is alive and moving in me. I am part—albeit a small part—of the great healing of Creation which God longs to bring about. I am part of the healing of every pain and ill that is to come.

We are healers, but we cannot heal until we let our hearts break. That’s a hard thing to do because . . . it hurts! We learn from our culture to flee any emotional pain at all costs, to numb it with substances and media and noise.

WE ARE HEALERS,
BUT WE CANNOT HEAL
UNTIL WE LET OUR HEARTS BREAK.

I remember years ago, people who are dear to me visited our church a few times. At that time a member was dying and there were many tears and a lot of pain in our services. This friend said a few years later, as a roundabout way of explaining why they did not come back, “Oh it was just so sad!” In other words, I think she began to feel the pain of compassion and didn’t like the sensation of pain, and pulled away. This is probably natural in some sense, but Jesus did not draw back. Jesus wept, and then Jesus raised Lazarus.

So the implication is that we are to be prepared to have hearts broken by the pain of others just like Jesus. How? How can we go on and live with that much pain?

The body of Christ is how. All the gifts needed to sustain that heartbreaking work are in our congregations. We lay ourselves down, confess our weaknesses, and together we find God’s strength. We are transformed into a people prepared to act out of radical compassion. Like Jesus has done, we will be given strength to descend into the hell and pain that is the life of those who suffer.

When we do this, we *touch* Jesus!



ACC’s
Conference
Coordinator
Keith Wilson
with his wife
and two
children.

When my
heart is
broken by
someone’s
pain,
I am in
touch
with Jesus.

CONNECTIONS

Forward births, marriages, and deaths to:

Lois Ann Mast
219 Mill Road
Morgantown, PA
19543
currents@atlantic
coastconference.net

Births

Melissa Rose Bender born December 16, 2010, dau. of Reuben and Rachel Bender (Maple Grove Mennonite).

Landon Robert Davis born October 30, 2010, son of Dayne and Heidi Davis (Blossom Mennonite).

Nicolas Richard Groff born September 26, 2010, son of Randy and Krista Groff (Maple Grove Mennonite).

David Smith Noel born November 10, 2010, son of Smith and Rhonda Noel (Ridgeview Mennonite).

Priscilla Noelle Sauder born December 12, 2010, dau. of Brenda and Jonathan Sauder (Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster).

Brooke Anne Siegrist born November 1, 2010, daughter of Jeff and Melissa Siegrist (Ridgeview Mennonite).

Selena Rose Stratman born November 9, 2010, dau. of Sean and Rose Stratman (Sandy Hill Community).

Aslan Ross Umble born December 10, 2010, son of Ryan and Bethany Umble (Maple Grove Mennonite).

Marriages

Roger Mast (Conestoga Mennonite) married **Linda Huyett** (Conestoga Mennonite) on November 13, 2010.

Dale Stoltzfus (Maple Grove Mennonite) married **Alisha Goss** (Maple Grove Mennonite) on October 2, 2010.

Michael Umble (Maple Grove Mennonite) married **Shayna Mykulyk** (Maple Grove Mennonite) on November 20, 2010.

EVENTS & MORE

Items may be sent to:

Currents Editor:
Lois Ann Mast
219 Mill Road
Morgantown,
PA 19543
or e-mailed to:
currents@
atlanticcoast
conference.net

January 22, 2011

Sing for Hope Winter Opera Gala

Madeline Bender
8:00 p.m.

Fulton Theatre, Lancaster
eastcoast.mcc.org/
winteroperagala

January 26-27, 2011

Pre-K & Kindergarten Open House

Kraybill, Locust Grove,
New Danville campuses
9:00-11:00 a.m.
717-653-5236 (K.)
717-394-7017 (L.G.)
717-872-2506 (N.D.)

January 27, 2011

March 28, 2011

Prospective Student Day

Lancaster Mennonite
School
8:05 a.m. - 3:05 p.m.
717-299-0436, #312

January 27-29, 2011

"The Secret Garden" High School Drama

Lancaster Mennonite
High School
7:00 p.m.
717-299-0436, #340

January 28-29, 2011

Silent Sanctuary Retreat

Black Rock Retreat

1-800-858-9299
www.blackrockretreat.
com

January 30, 2011

Laos Trip shared by MCCers Titus & Linda Peachey

3:00-4:30 p.m.
Lancaster Church
of the Brethren

February 11-13 2011

Sr. High Winter Retreat

Black Rock Retreat
1-800-858-9299
www.blackrockretreat.
com

February 25, 2011

MSC High School Band/Orchestra Festival

Lancaster Mennonite
High School
7:00 p.m.
717-299-0436

March 15, 2011

Open House

Black Rock Retreat
for prospective summer
campers and parents
1-800-858-9299
www.blackrockretreat.
com

CURRENCY CORNER

We have just celebrated the coming to this world of the Christ child who came to show us what God is like and to demonstrate how to live out divine values in everyday life. As we stand at the beginning of 2011, we hope and pray for peace and financial stability with improving employment and decreasing poverty.

As we close the ACC fiscal year, it appears that we will have a \$50,000 shortfall of income over actual expenses; figures yet need to be confirmed at press time. ACC churches have faithfully supported and funded conference ministries in years past. We are grateful for any additional contribution that individuals or congregations may be able to provide toward the deficit of 2010 and beginning 2011 in a stronger financial position. Thank you for your faithful partnership in ACC conference ministries.

We as an Executive Committee pray for wisdom to discern ways to assist the churches in being relevant to their communities and to facilitate the planting of new churches. May we all as churches and individuals work together in 2011 to bring new life provided by Jesus to people around us.

- Delbert Seitz, ACC Treasurer
Community Mennonite Church
of Lancaster

Camp Deerpark

“I see the faces of children when they board the bus to go to camp and I see them when they return. They do not appear to be the same children.” These were the words of Monroe Yoder, long-time New York City Mennonite pastor and Lancaster Conference Bishop.

In truth, one week at Camp Deerpark has been a life-changing experience for many. My grandson Ben and I witnessed this while doing our third annual mini-work camp in early August 2010. Here is a partial list of activities that occupied the some 200 campers from morning until night vespers last summer:

Hiking miles of scenic nature trails	Hay rides
GaGa ball	Volley ball
Swimming	Waterslide
Fire building	Scavenger hunt
Capture the flag	Water mayhem
	Basketball
	Bull run
	Bible skit
	Rafting

Organized bedlam is the best way I know to describe it. Three hearty meals were served family style with a counselor at each table. The ceiling in the 100 year-old converted farmhouse dining room is low and the noise level high, but there is order. A prayer is said, the table conversation is lively, and when the meal is finished, and the dining room “redd up”, the day can begin. It ends customarily with a campfire service ten or twelve hours later.

The Bible verse for the week was posted throughout the camp: “The Lord will fulfill his purposes for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not abandon the works of your hands.”

Camp Deerpark, located three hours from Lancaster and two hours from New York City, is where these two very different cultures meet. New York children, many of whom have their first experience of running barefoot in green grass, can also hear their first rooster crow or see a live deer in this natural paradise.

Ken Bontrager, about to begin his 15th year as Deerpark Director, shakes his almost baldhead in disbelief. Ken went to the Bronx after graduating from Iowa Mennonite School. “I was scared.” He said it twice. “Scared!” A young farm boy, he stayed 13 years, serving as a VSer and also as a youth pastor for the 15 Mennonite churches in the city.

While in New York, he married Deborah who shared his calling to ministry. After the city, they felt drawn to pursue another form of ministry to youth at Camp Deerpark. Now 28 years later having home-schooled six children, the Bontragers are beginning to ask how much longer? Not that they are tired—the fire still burns—just asking if perhaps a change would be good for Camp Deerpark.

Ken would be the first to tell you that what makes all this possible is the excellent staff of 12 year-round that swells to 30 in the summer season. There is Rick, a professional chef to manage the food service; Paul with a turkey feather in his felt cap, a professional musician helping with music and nature hikes, and his wife Sodelina, a former schoolteacher, helping with art. There is Nate and Ben and Joyce who were campers and now are counselors. And Barbara, in her 21st year looking after the finances. On and on.

Talking about finances—balancing an almost one-half million dollar annual budget is not an easy task. About half of the funds comes from camper fees, while the other half must be raised.

I look Ken straight in the eye and ask, “It is a good experience, but are lives being changed?” His naturally happy face turns serious. “We have as many tragic stories as successes.” He recalls one cabin of boys who were model campers. Within five years, three had gone to premature graves, the victims of drugs and street violence.

On the other side, there is Isaac who was rehabilitated through the ministry of Camp Deerpark and now works as the offset print operator at Mennonite Central Committee in Akron, Pa. Ken named many more who are now pastors, schoolteachers, and laborers.

Aye yes. Sow the seed faithfully. Allow God’s spirit to prosper it in the lives of people more needy than most readers of this article.

As Ben and I concluded our work camp, our muscles hurt, but our spirits were renewed. We had seen God at work in sincere and dedicated people. We felt moved to share our experience, thinking that the work at Camp Deerpark deserves our support and more visibility in our congregations.

- Edgar Stoez after his volunteer experience in August 2010



Camp Deerpark

200 Brandt Rd.
P. O. Box 394
Westbrookville,
NY 12785

845-754-8669

www.campdeerpark.org

*A ministry of
the New York
City Mennonite
churches,
founded in
1969.*

Lancaster ROOTS

Continues into 2011



Lancaster
Mennonite
Historical
Society

2215
Millstream
Road
Lancaster, PA
17602

717-393-9745

www.
lmhs.org

www.
lancaster
roots.org

In 2010, Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society and the 1719 Hans Herr House & Museum hosted Lancaster Roots 300, celebrating the tri-centennial of Lancaster County's first European settlement.

Anniversary events enjoyed enthusiastic crowds and robust news coverage of more than 20 concerts, festivals, classes, and field trips celebrating Lancaster County's diversity, and its European American and Native American history.



New York City soprano Sherrie Strange-Pratt, along with Reunion Vocal Band and the Men's Ensemble from the Mennonite Heritage Chorale, will perform at Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society's annual Music Night, to be held Saturday, January 29 at Neffsville Mennonite Church. Tickets are \$15 and benefit the Society. Call 717-393-9745.

In 2011, three dozen events, including concerts, festivals, lectures, classes, and field trips, will continue to celebrate Lancaster County's European American and Native American history, and its modern-day diversity. "The tri-centennial year is over, but our dreams for that year continue," said Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society director, Rolando Santiago.

"In addition to celebrating the county's first European settlers, we want to honor the contributions of the Native Peoples who lived here before and after that 1710 settlement, and the rich diversity of Lancaster County today," Santiago said.

"Lancaster Roots 2011" will include some familiar events—like the popular Heritage Trail Bike Ride & Walk in August—as well as new happenings, like an annual storytelling night in September, and "Music in the Orchard" at the 1719 Herr House in June and July.

Other 2011 events will include a January 29 "Music Night" with soprano Sherrie Strange-Pratt and the Reunion Vocal Band; a May 16 lecture on "DNA: Opportunities and Dilemmas" with scientist Darvin Martin; and an October 29 harvest party and square dance at the 1719 Herr House.

The year's complete calendar can be found at www.lancasterroots.org. A brochure will also be available in January. For more information, contact Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society at 717-393-9745 or lmhs@lmhs.org.

- Lowell Brown, Director of Advancement

ACC Conference Related Ministries . . .

Black Rock Retreat

1345 Kirkwood Pike
Quarryville, PA 17566
Phone: 800-858-9299
Fax: 717-786-6022
E-mail: info@blackrockretreat.com

Web site: www.blackrockretreat.com

Retreat Facilities for use by churches and other Christian organizations, a Summer Camp program for youth, an Outdoor Education program for Public & Christian schools, a Challenge Ropes Course, Road Scholar programs for seniors.

Camp Deerpark, Inc.

200 Brandt Road, P.O. Box 394
Westbrookville, NY 12785
Phone: 845-754-8669
Fax: 845-754-8217
E-mail: info@campdeerpark.org
Web site: www.campdeerpark.org

A ministry of the New York City Mennonite churches, founded in 1969. Mission is to empower youth to serve Christ in the city. Summer children's camps.

Camp Hebron

957 Camp Hebron Road
Halifax, PA 17032
Phone: 800-864-7747;
Fax: 717-896-3391
E-mail: hebron@camphebron.org

Web site: www.camphebron.org
Changing lives since 1957, this camping and retreat ministry offers a variety of overnight camps and year-round events for all ages where people connect with God, nature, and each other.

Choice Books PA

121 S. Main Street
Manheim, PA 17545
Phone: 717-665-3933
Fax: 717-665-3059
E-mail: info@pa.choicebooks.org
Web site: www.choicebooks.org

Eastern Mennonite Missions

53 West Brandt Blvd.
P.O. Box 458
Salunga, PA 17538-0458
Phone: 717-898-2251
Fax: 717-898-8092
E-mail: info@emm.org
Web site: www.emm.org
Equips, sends and supports more than 200 workers in 40 countries, focusing particularly where the church is weak or nonexistent.

Friendship Community

1149 East Oregon Road
Lititz, PA 17543
Phone: 717-656-2466
Fax: 717-656-0459
E-mail: office@friendshipcommunity.net

Web site: www.friendshipcommunity.net

A non-profit, Christian ministry serving people with developmental disabilities. Since 1972, Friendship offers residential services, training in daily living skills, and social services.

Garden Spot Village

433 S. Kinzer Ave.,
New Holland, PA 17557
Phone: 717-355-6000
Fax: 717-355-6006
E-mail: info@gardenspotvillage.org

Web site: www.gardenspotvillage.org

Carriage Homes, Cottages, Apartments, Assisted Living, Memory Support, Skilled Nursing Households, Adult Day Services, Garden Spot Village At Home, Center for Health.

Germantown Mennonite Historical Trust

6133 Germantown Ave.
Germantown, PA 19144
E-mail: gmht@meetinghouse.info
Web site: www.meetinghouse.info
Site of the first permanent settlement of Mennonites in America, it has been called "The Gateway of American Mennonitism," through which most North American Mennonites have symbolically passed.

Kairos School of Spiritual Formation

2160 Lincoln Highway East #13
Lancaster, PA 17602
Phone: 717-669-2957
E-mail: Kairos@on-the-journey.org
Web site: www.on-the-journey.org

As a Christian organization with Anabaptist roots, Kairos provides programs in spiritual formation and spiritual direction from September to May in weekend retreats. Other opportunities include day retreats and experiential prayer sessions in congregational settings.

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society

2215 Millstream Road

Lancaster, PA 17602

Phone: 717-393-9745

Fax: 717-393-8751

E-mail: lmhs@lmhs.org

Web site: www.lmhs.org

Mission is to educate, inspire, and promote the history, beliefs, and lifestyle of the Mennonite expression of the Anabaptist tradition. Offers educational programs and a library/archives, bookstore, and museum.

Lancaster Area Council of Mennonite Schools (LACMS)

2176 Lincoln Highway East
Lancaster, PA 17602
Phone: (717) 299-0436

LACMS is a geographical organization of elementary and secondary schools whose administrators work collectively to strengthen the Mennonite expression of Christian faith in the schools and who meet regularly to inspire and resource one another.

Lancaster Mennonite School (LMS)

2176 Lincoln Highway East
Lancaster, PA 17602
Phone: (717) 299-0436

Fax: (717) 299-0823

E-mail: thomasjr@lancastermennonite.org

Web site: www.lancastermennonite.org

Serves over 1,500 students at:

- Kraybill Campus, PreK-8
- Lancaster Campus, 6-12
- Locust Grove Campus, PreK-8
- New Danville Campus, PreK-6

Landis Homes

1001 E. Oregon Road
Lititz, PA 17543
Phones: 717-569-3271
717-581-3935

Fax: 717-569-5203

E-mail: info@landishomes.org

Web site: www.landishomes.org

Serving aging adults and their families by honoring and enriching their lives in a Christ-like community. Services include residential living, assisted living, healthcare, rehab, adult day care services, special care for persons with memory loss, at-home care, and child day care.

Laurelville Mennonite Church Center

941 Laurelville Lane
Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666
Phone: 800-839-1021
E-mail: John@laurelville.org
Laurelville.org

Web site: www.laurelville.org

Find the growth and renewal your spirit needs at Laurelville, a conference center specializing in retreat services and innovative programming.

Mennonite Home Communities

1520 Harrisburg Pike
Lancaster, PA 17601
Phone: 717-393-1301
Fax: 717-509-2823

E-mail: mhash@mennonitehome.org

Web site: www.mennonitehome.org

A continuing care retirement community (CCRC) providing care to senior adults with a tradition of care spanning 100 years. Services include cottage and apartment residences, assisted living, health care, and rehabilitative therapies.

No Longer Alone Ministries

630 Janet Ave.
Lancaster, PA 17601
Phone: 717-390-4891
Fax: 717-390-4894

E-mail: blong@nlam.org

Website: www.nlam.org

No Longer Alone Ministries, as an expression of Christ's love, provides supportive caring services to individuals experiencing significant mental illness and their families.

Reservoir Hill House of Peace (RHHP)

2401 Eutaw Place
Baltimore, MD 21217
An outreach ministry of the North Baltimore Mennonite Church that includes a Mennonite Voluntary Service unit, Asylum Seekers Housing Network, Kids on the Hill, as well as housing for residents committed to the mission of RHHP.

Tel Hai Retirement Community

1200 Tel Hai Circle, P.O. Box 190
Honey Brook, PA 19344
Phone: 610-273-9333
Fax: 610-273-4141
E-mail: jswartz@telhai.org
Web site: www.telhai.org
Tel Hai is a nationally accredited, nonprofit provider of services for senior adults. For over 50 years, they have provided health care, housing, and services to enhance residents' quality of life in cottage and apartment residences, personal care, Adult Day Services, health care, and rehabilitative therapies.

The New York City Mini-Convention



New York City Mennonites gathered in worship at First Mennonite Church of Brooklyn.



Pastor Nicolas Angustia, team leader of the Oversight Ministry Team.

All photos on this page were taken by Merv Horst of Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship.



Left to right: Moises Angustia, Ken Bontrager, and Celso Jaime.



Left to right: Sonni Carrion, Sandra Perez, and Andrew Nuñez.

The New York City Oversight Ministry Team hosted a Mini-Convention on October 15, 2010, to restore the spirit of fellowship in the Mennonite Churches in New York City. The meeting was held at Primera Iglesia Menonita (First Mennonite Church) in Brooklyn. Leaders and pastors from fifteen New York Mennonite Churches were present:

Believers Mennonite Church -

Pastor Andrew Nuñez

Evangelical Garifuna Church, Bronx -

Pastor Celso Jaime

Friendship Community Church -

Pastor Kenneth Thompson

Iglesia Evangelica Menonita Ebenezer -

Lay Leader Jorge Nin

Iglesia Menonita Valle de Jesus -

Pastor Linda Rodriguez

Iglesia Menonita Unida de Avivamiento -

Pastor Nicolas Angustia and
Pastor Junior Moises Angustia

Infinity Mennonite Church -

Pastor Al Taylor

Immanuel Community Church -

Pastor Mark Perri

King of Glory Tabernacle -

Pastors Ben and Hyacinth Stevens

Manhattan Garifuna Church -

Pastor Omar Guzman

Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship -

Pastor Sylvia Shirk

North Bronx Mennonite Church -

Pastor Ruth Yoder Wenger

Primera Iglesia Menonita de Brooklyn -

Pastor Confesor Linares

Pro-Milenio Christian Mennonite Church -

Pastor Solomon Arias

Tabernaculo Evangelistico Menonita -

Pastor Nestali DeLeon

The Oversight Ministry Team in New York City exists to resource our congregations in the areas of Mennonite theology and identity, vision-casting for church growth and development, pastoral care for pastors, education and training of congregational leaders, support for conflict transformation within congregations, and related administration and management.

Oversight Ministry Team Members include:

Pastor Nicolas Angustia, nangustia@yahoo.com

Sonni Carrion, shcarrion@gmail.com

Pastor Celso Jaime, garifunabronx@gmail.com

Sandra Perez, sandra_perezus@yahoo.com

- Sonni Carrion,

Primera Iglesia Menonita en Brooklyn