



Atlantic Coast Conference Currents

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

Above: New members joining ACC at the Spring Assembly at Bethel Mennonite Church.

Communities of Grace, Joy, and Peace

April 22 was a damp, dreary day outdoors; but inside Bethel Mennonite Church, it was warm (both literally and figuratively) and wonderful. Nearly 150 attendees filled the sanctuary for the annual ACC Spring Assembly Celebration. Candles, ivy, and beautiful blue hydrangea on the worship table drew the eye and set the focus for worshipful work with the theme of communities of grace, joy, and peace.

Following are responses of attendees who were asked to share a highlight of the day.

Lynne Beth and Deborah Sprunger (Akron) agreed that their highlight was "learning about four new churches and receiving them into the ACC family."

"The variety of presentations from the four churches requesting ACC membership." Daniel Kemper (Crossway).

"The camaraderie." Rosoemary Shenk (Bethel).

"The availability of a translator." Marcos Morales (Puerto Rico).

"The challenge to serve together despite our differences. Also the host church's attention to detail." Carol Sandt (East Chestnut Street)

"Welcoming four new congregations and receiving their deep appreciation to ACC for membership is very encouraging." Joanne Dietzel, Conference Minister.

"New faces added to the list of credential leaders to infuse ACC with bright minds and committed leadership." Pastor Mick Sommers (Ridgeview).

"Talking openly about sensitive subjects." Emily Herr (Neffsville).

"Welcoming pastors who were former colleagues in Lancaster Conference." Dawn Ranck Hower (New Holland).

"The afternoon speakers whose comments were well written, comprehensive and thoughtful." Lynn Brubaker (Frazer).

"The challenge to be agents of God's love in difficult situations." Lyn Carlson (Forest Hills).

Perhaps Edgar Stoetz (Akron) said it best: "The entire day was a highlight."

~ Lois Whisler, Bethel Mennonite

HIGHLIGHTS



1 In prayer before the Spring Assembly



7 New Holland Early Learning Center



12 ACC Annual Women's Banquet



Currents

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ACC Reflections

Jon Carlson

ACC Assistant Moderator

OK Google, What's on my Calendar for October 28?

If you have ever connected your digital calendar to a voice assistant, you've experienced the magic of a disembodied voice seeming to tell you your future: "On Saturday, October 28, you have 3 events: 7:28 am: Sunrise. 9 am: Atlantic Coast Conference Fall Assembly at Conestoga Mennonite Church in Morgantown. 6:03 pm: Sunset."

Whether we keep our calendars in the cloud or on paper, we have the power to map out our futures with remarkable accuracy. We schedule events weeks, months, even years ahead, and our culture rewards us for it, extolling the virtues of planning and equating status with busyness.

Yet our carefully crafted agendas seem to conflict with the wisdom of James: "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money.' Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring." (James 4:13-14a)

James and the other Biblical writers draw out the tension between planning and trusting, between exercising control and cultivating yieldedness.

Jesus even seems ambivalent about plans. "For which of you," he asked his disciples, "desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?" (Luke 14:28)

Elsewhere, however, Jesus tells a story of a rich man with a good plan: "I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample

goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'" (Luke 12:18-20)

In July, members of Mennonite Church USA are planning to gather together for a Future Church Summit as part of our biennial convention. What does it mean to imagine the future together when we "do not even know what tomorrow will bring?"

Perhaps the wise answer comes from asking the right question. Rather than ask "What will we do in the future?" we will consider, "Who will we be in the future?" We will focus on the things for which we are responsible: our own actions and attitudes. In the words of the convention planners, delegates and other stakeholders will "engage

one another in answering the question: How will we follow Jesus as Anabaptists in the 21st century?"

That's a wise question to build a plan around.

Our own recent experiences as a Conference, such as John Denlinger's (Moderator) emergency heart transplant, have reminded us that we truly don't

know what tomorrow will bring, no matter what Siri or Google say.

What we do know is that God is faithful, and God calls us to respond with trust and faithfulness, even when things don't go according to plan.

- Jon Carlson, ACC Assistant Moderator,
Forest Hills Mennonite

J. Richard "Dick" Thomas, chair of ACC's Ministerial Leadership Committee, is currently chairing a task-force working to update the relationship arrangement between Mennonite Church USA and six higher education institutions of the church. He also serves as a member of the Search Committee for a new Executive Director to replace Ervin Stutzman. Let's pray for Dick as he is involved in the broader Mennonite Church work.

Investing in people at church, again!

During my freshman year of college, a video of me failing to jump a hurdle aired on America's Funniest Home Videos. I wrote more articles for Goshen College's newspaper, *The Record* than I could handle, and I became increasingly more confused about my faith.

Let's just say it was a toiling year.

If you have kept up with my "Point of Youth" column, you have read my article about attempting to find a church in Goshen, and another one that focused on finding the line between faith and culture. Well, sorry to say, but I've been attending "Bedside Baptist" since the end of the first semester and, at this point in my life, feel like I identify more with the culture of being a Mennonite than the faith.

Like every other college student (sorry for the generalization, but it is probably true), I am struggling to figure out what I really believe. Or maybe I am struggling to figure out how I choose to implement what I believe. Basically, I am kind of confused about being confused right now.

But I am a college student, so this existential crisis is expected of me, right?

I wish I could firmly state my beliefs, especially because I've held leadership positions in not only ACC, but MC USA. Right now, I am writing an article for my own column in ACC's quarterly *Currents*. People actually care enough about what I believe to read this article, but I struggle to understand

what I believe. So, I am sorry if you are reading this. But this is a part of my growing up and I am sure you know that.

Despite my doubts, however, I plan to stick with the Mennonite Church. I sit and imagine my future and know that in ten years, you will be able to find me in a Mennonite church on a Sunday morning.

The Church has become my home—my community. I am not sure if I'd go to church if I didn't feel so dedicated to my congregation, as well as my denomination. And I know I have written about this before, but I hold my congregation very near to my heart.

Recently, my pastor, Mick Sommers, spoke about how God is found in community. I truly agree with that. I feel closest to God when

I am spending time with people in my congregation, or when I am working within the church.

I am writing about this to hopefully inspire more congregations to invest in their youth—to create a community they want to be a part of—because that is where God is. I can confidently say I have people at Ridgeview Mennonite Church who care about me and love me. And that is what makes me want to go to church, despite my confusion about faith and spirituality. The church should be a home for all—whether they know what they believe or not. ~Abigail King, Ridgeview Mennonite

What makes me want to go to church are the people at church who care about me and love me.

POINT OF YOUTH



Abigail King is a sophomore 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.

From Feb. 18-27, 2018, Tel Hai Retirement Community is hosting a tour of Israel in conjunction with The Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies. Trip highlights include visiting Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, the Dead Sea, Jericho, Bethlehem, Mount of Olives, Mt. Zion, Temple Mount, and the Garden Tomb. For more information, visit www.telhai.org/israel2018 or contact Tel Hai Chaplain David Hicks at dhicks@telhai.org or 610-273-9333 ext. 2443.

10-Day Biblical Study & Adventure Tour



Welcome
to
these
four
new
congregations
who
joined
ACC
at the
2017
Spring
Assembly.



James Street Mennonite

323 West James Street
Lancaster, PA 17602

Lead Pastor Stan Shantz and Pastor Carmen Horst

James Street Mennonite began as a Sunday School in downtown Lancaster in 1897. First located on North Street, it moved to East Vine Street in 1908, and became the "Vine Street Mission." From 1974 to 2000, the congregation met on North Charlotte Street, and now occupies a converted brick warehouse in northwest Lancaster. Over the years it has met people's needs through social service, evangelism, education, and fellowship. Many present church workers have gained valuable experience in this congregation before relocating to other places to serve God and humanity.



Landisville Mennonite

3320 Bowman Road, Landisville, PA 17538

Pastor Howard Garver and Assoc. Pastor Gina Burkhart

Landisville Mennonite Church began worshipping in the Landisville area in 1721, about 11 years after the earliest Mennonites arrived here. The first official meetinghouse, built between 1740 and 1756, was a log structure that still stands today. The congregation of 175 now gathers from many surrounding communities and seeks to be salt and light in the church neighborhood as well as the scattered places they call home. Locally they support projects like community meals and a clothing bank and eagerly help with material resources for MCC and with other church agencies. They demonstrate Anabaptist values of community, simplicity, and peace, while being overt followers of Jesus who are engaged in the world and God's mission.



Laurel Street Mennonite

301 Laurel Street, Lancaster, PA 17603

Pastors Judy and Ron Zook

This is a diverse urban congregation wanting to be salt and light in Cabbage Hill, the southwest neighborhood of Lancaster Pa. They strive to foster healthy friendships, embrace diversity, and grow together with joyful laughter and fun for everyone. Children and all ages are active in the life, ministry and mission of Laurel Street. Various age groups meet to learn how to follow Jesus in the midst of their daily, sometimes difficult, lives. They are active in the neighborhood in such ways as a Day Camp for children, a Strawberry Fest, back-to-school nights, service projects, and collaborating with neighbors to bring hope, healing and peace to Cabbage Hill.



Rossmere Mennonite

741 Janet Avenue, Lancaster, PA 17601

Pastor Todd Gusler

Two-week tent meetings held in June, 1935, followed by Sunday School being held in a home on Frances Avenue, marked the beginning of the new "mission" at Rossmere. In March 2008, the congregation moved into their newly-renovated building where they worship now. Their mission interest has been most important in sending missionaries to other countries; having young adults live at Mary's House beside the church as an intentional community; a women's group that meets during the school year; and working with the community in garden plots on the church property. Many at Rossmere note that the sense of "family" has been special to them.



Birch Grove Mennonite

12 Knapp Road. Port Allegany, PA 16743
Pastor Dale Detweiler

The Birch Grove Mennonite Church is located just outside of Port Allegany in the northwestern mountains of Pennsylvania. The church grew from a Summer Bible School that was started in the 1950s by members of the Maple Grove Mennonite congregation. They strive to be the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus to neighbors both near and far. Recently, with others in the community, they opened a food pantry to meet the needs of residents in McKean County. They seek to let their light shine as well as to be the light on the hill that Jesus has called all of us to be!



Blossom Hill Mennonite

333 Delp Rd. Lancaster, PA 17601
Pastor Michelle Dula and Pastor Mindy Nolt

Blossom Hill Mennonite began in 1934 as an outreach from East Chestnut Street Mennonite. Named the Dillerville Mennonite Mission, it was primarily a mission for children in the neighborhood. After several moves and name changes, Blossom Hill Mennonite now resides in a suburban neighborhood just north of Lancaster City. The importance of children is still a significant piece of who we are, with nearly 100 children ages 0-17 in our care. This makes for lively Sunday mornings. We are a welcoming bunch that strives to be a community that lives out our faith in both personal and public ways, whether it is finding life in contemplative prayer practices or working on solutions for the injustices in our community and world.



Conestoga Mennonite

2779 Main Street, Morgantown, PA 19543
Pastor Robert Petersheim; Youth Pastor Rachel Mast

Conestoga has reached out since 1760 planting multiple churches, two schools, a camp, and a retirement community. Many leaders were commissioned for mission and ministry elsewhere. The current generation formed a ReUzit Shop contributing over a million dollars to MCC; a Food Pantry that monthly reaches 140+ households; no-cost "Still Waters" counseling; and this month settled a refugee family. Our worship body of about 115 includes all ages and reflects new members of diverse backgrounds growing our mission of joyfully living HiStory to benefit others.



North Baltimore Mennonite

4615 Roland Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21210
Pastor David Greiser

North Baltimore started as a Bible study in 1986, and within a year, a decision was made to plant a church with Frank and Evelyn Nice as church planters. With the generous help of ACC, a building was purchased in the Roland Park neighborhood in North Baltimore. The congregation attracted an array of students, professionals, and locals. Today nearly 70% of the congregation comes from other-than-Mennonite or unchurched backgrounds. NBMC coordinates Reservoir Hill House of Peace, a communal household in the former YES house. Several residents are part of the Asylum Seekers Housing Network.

Who
are
we
in
ACC?

NEWS & NOTES

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

EMM Global Fair is returning to the 1719 Hans Herr House and Museum in Willow Street, Pa., on July 15, 2017, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. This open-air missions and international cultural festival celebrates people from around the world through exhibits, food, animals, and more. Come talk to mission workers and hear their stories about God's work in different countries around the world. Some of the countries represented include Albania, Belize, Cambodia, Guatemala, Kenya, and Vietnam, as well as countries across the South, Southeast, and Central regions of Asia. Attendees will also be able to purchase food prepared by local immigrants and refugees. Children's activities are free and include crafts and games.



2017 Fall Youth Retreat: All high school-age ACC youth are invited to the annual Fall Retreat at Refreshing Mountain, September 15-17, where our speakers will be Andrew Mashas and Nelson Okanya of Eastern Mennonite Missions. Youth leaders can look for more information about the retreat in the coming weeks and details will be posted online at atlanticcoastconference.net/retreat.

ACC Youth Committee Fundraisers: Come support the programming of the ACC Youth Committee at the upcoming August events. All funds raised will allow us to continue offering meaningful, high quality events like the Fall Youth Retreat at a reasonable cost.

August 4: Church Night Out at the Lancaster Barnstormers: Join us for a night of baseball on Friday, August 4, at Clipper Magazine Stadium. This is part of the Kids Fest promotion weekend so there will be giveaways, activities, and fireworks. We are selling tickets for \$12 and will earn \$5 for

every ticket sold to the game. For more information and ticket sales, visit atlanticcoastconference.net/baseball.

August 15: Dinner at Outback Steakhouse: Enjoy a meal at Outback Steakhouse (100 North Point Boulevard, Lancaster) on Tuesday, August 15, from 5 to 8 p.m. and 15% of your order will be donated to the ACC Youth Committee. Please mention ACC Youth or look for a bulletin insert to bring along for us to benefit from your meal. Let us know you are coming at www.groupraise.com/events/29786.

What does it mean to be a conference together when we don't have unity on some matters of faith and practice? This is the important question that we will explore together on Saturday, August 26, 2017 from 8:00-11:00 a.m. at Neffsville Mennonite Church. The ACC Executive Committee encourages pastors and delegates from every ACC congregation to take this opportunity for honest and constructive conversation about how we relate to one another and how we practice our fellowship with one another while holding some diverging convictions. This is what it means to BE the church—the living, growing, changing body of Christ.

Delegates to MC USA Convention will consider the resolution "Seeking Peace in Israel / Palestine." Part of the development of this resolution included MC USA sponsoring several MCC Learning Tours in the region, which introduced participants to the realities of conflict and occupation in the region. If you would like to hear more about these experiences, consider talking with someone from ACC who participated: Dave Greiser, Julie Dunst, Chad Martin, Brook Musselman, Carmen Horst, and Jon Carlson.



ACC's New York City Cluster

Each month for the past ten years plus, Pastor Kenneth Thompson and members of Friendship Community Church in Bronx, N.Y., have led an evening chapel service at The Bowery Mission in New York, N.Y. Pastor Liliana Flores of First Mennonite Church of Brooklyn and Pastor Sylvia Shirk of the NYC ACC Pastors Cluster also participate in this chapel ministry to bless “the lost, the least, the lonely, and the oppressed.”

In recent months, Pastor Kenn has invited members of the N.Y.C. pastor cluster of ACC to join him in that ministry. Each one contributes a song, a prayer, a reading or a reflection to the service. Following the chapel service, the Cluster gathers for sharing and prayer. They enjoy a meal prepared by the Mission staff and served by volunteers. Pastor Jason Storbakken, Bowery Mission chaplain, coordinates hospitality for these Cluster meetings. ~ Sylvia Shirk and Kenneth Thompson



Left to right: Tarcisio Fava and Katrina Ray-Goodson (Friendship Community members), Ruth Yoder Wenger (North Bronx Mennonite pastor), and Kenneth Thompson (Friendship Community pastor).



Nickels For Neighbors

New Holland
Early
Learning
Center

18 Western Ave.
New Holland, PA

A ministry to the
community by the
New Holland
Mennonite Church

The 2017 ACC Nickels For Neighbors Grant will be given to the New Holland Early Learning Center for a new fence and playground equipment for their smallest children. The total cost of the project is \$10,000: fence: \$6,200; equipment \$3,800.

ACC congregations are encouraged to collect coins in their Sunday School classes, Bible Studies, or services, primarily as a way to encourage giving among our children. These donations will be collected at ACC's Annual Assembly on October 28 at Conestoga Mennonite Church, Morgantown, Pa.

Wanda Coleman, director, or one of the board members are available to visit your congregation for a Moment in Mission about

the work of the Early Learning Center. Contact Wanda at 717-354-4440 or wcoleman@nhelc.org to schedule a visit.

More information, along with collection can labels, a promotional flyer, and promotional video are available at <http://atlanticcoastconference.net/n4n/>



NICKELS for NEIGHBORS

A New Fence!

Your nickles, dimes, quarters, & dollars will help to create a safe place for children to play.



The youngest children (ages 1 & 2) enjoy playing outdoors on the playground, however, it isn't always safe for them to be in the same area as the older children, since the little ones "toddle" around and are easily knocked over by the older children playing



Welcome
to these
ACC
leaders!

ACC Leadership Beginnings

Addie Banks was approved for a transfer of her Ordination from Lancaster Mennonite Conference to ACC. Addie served as pastor at King of Glory Tabernacle in New York City until 2011 and continues to be involved in numerous community projects.

Gina Burkhart (Dan) was approved for a License Toward Ordination for her role as Associate Pastor of Landisville Mennonite Church. She held the same credential with Lancaster Mennonite Conference since 2015.

Howard Garver (Becky) was approved for a transfer of his Ordination from Southeast Mennonite Conference to ACC. Howard is serving as Interim Pastor at Landisville Mennonite Church.

Todd Gussler (Leah) was approved for a transfer of his Ordination from Lancaster Mennonite Conference to ACC for his role as Pastor of Rossmere Mennonite Church.

Virginia “Ginny” Hartman was approved for Ordination for her role as chaplain with Pleasant View Retirement Community in Manheim. She is a member of Akron Mennonite Church.

Carmen Horst was approved for a transfer of her Ordination from Lancaster Mennonite Conference to ACC for her role as Associate Pastor of James Street Mennonite Church.

Sherill Hostetter (Darrel) was approved for a transfer of her Ordination from Lancaster Mennonite Conference to ACC. Sherill provides spiritual direction and currently does consulting work with Samaritan Counseling Center.

Darrel Hostetter (Sherill) was approved for a transfer of his Ordination from Lancaster Mennonite Conference to ACC. Darrel currently does prison ministry work and serves as chaplain for the New Danville location of New Person Ministries.

Rebecca Mosley (Paul) was approved for Ordination for her role as Associate Pastor of North Baltimore Mennonite Church.

Stan Shantz (Kathy) was approved for a transfer of his Ordination from Lancaster Mennonite Conference to ACC.

Anne Kaufman Weaver (Todd) was approved for Ordination for her role as chaplain at Landis Homes Retirement Community. Anne and Todd attend James Street Mennonite Church.

~ Reported by Brook Musselman, Conference Coordinator

EVENTS

Save
these
dates.

Tuesday-Saturday, July 4-8, 2017 -
MC USA Convention in Orlando, Florida.

Tuesday, August 4 - **Church Night Out at the Lancaster Barnstormers**. For more information and ticket sales, visit atlanticcoastconference.net/baseball.

Tuesday, August 15 - **ACC Youth Fundraiser** at Outback Steakhouse, Lancaster, Pa.

Friday-Sunday, September 15-17 - **ACC Fall Youth Retreat** at Refreshing Mountain Camp.

Friday, October 27 - **ACC Leadership Resource Day**, “Church Relevance & Revitalization” led by Nathan Stuckey and Jon Heinly at Conestoga Mennonite Church.

Friday, October 27 - **Annual ACC Women’s Banquet**, “Embracing Diversity” with Karen Sensenig at Conestoga Mennonite Church.

October 28 - **Annual Fall Assembly Celebration** on “Church Relevance and Revitalization” at Conestoga Mennonite Church, Morgantown, Pa.

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

Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1.

I’m not sure the writer of this verse was referring to finances when he wrote this verse, but I think it applies to the way I feel about our current financial situation.

By the time you read this report, we will be in the month of July and already starting our new fiscal year. I am writing this report in June so I don’t know for sure how we will end up the current year. As of the end of May we were running a deficit of \$11,967.00 for the year. You may recall we budgeted a smaller deficit of \$4,100.00.

So, will we make up the shortfall during the month of June? I have faith that we will. I know we have generous congregations and individuals who have supported our work in the past, and I believe they will do it again.

Thank you for your ongoing, generous, support of the work of ACC.

- Ken Martin, ACC Treasurer, Forest Hills