

# 2023 Annual Assembly

African Community Church of Lancaster || April 22, 2023

## Minutes

*Present: 105 participants (both in-person and by video), including 56 delegates representing 23 member congregations*

### 9:00 am Session:

1. **Welcome:** Gina Burkhart (Landisville, moderator) shared an opening welcome and thank you to the day's sponsors: Eastern Mennonite Missions and Landis Communities. She thanked Assembly cohosts African Community Church of Lancaster and Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster, after which she invited the worship team from ACCL to lead us in singing.
2. **Nickels for Neighbors presentation:** Bruce Campbell-Janz (East Chestnut Street, Missions Committee chair) announced Roots Anabaptist Kids as the 2023 Nickels for Neighbors grant recipient. Nathan Grieser presented on behalf of those who led the program and shared photos from the 2023 program that took place in February. The program nurtures faith formation for kids from different Lancaster-area congregations. The grant will expand the reach of Roots and make it replicable in other congregations.
3. **Receive 2023 Assembly Minutes:** Gina Burkhart presented the minutes from the 2023 Spring Assembly, including action items. **These were approved as presented (Keith Miller (New Holland), Dave Bruce (Neffsville), unanimous).**
4. **Introduction of new ministers:** Dawn Ranck-Hower (New Holland, Ministerial Leadership Committee chair) introduced and prayed for the new ACC ministers interviewed and approved for credential this past year:
  - a. Kate Andre, Mennonite Congregation of Boston, pastor
  - b. Eszter Bjorkman, Neffsville Mennonite Church, associate pastor
  - c. Arthur Stewart, North Baltimore Mennonite Church, lead pastor
  - d. Pam Brubaker, Lancaster General, chaplain
  - e. Randy Keener, Lancaster General, head of chaplaincy
  - f. Karen Nancarvis, Garden Spot Village, chaplain
5. **Finance Updates & Budget Presentation:** Rod Yoder (Finance Committee chair, East Chestnut Street) shared a financial update.
  - a. Year-to-date Budget Update:

- i. Referencing the balance sheet, Rod reported on the conference’s strong financial condition. The year-to-date indicates a \$21,000 deficit for the current fiscal year which was budgeted so not unexpected.
    - b. 2023-2024 Budget Presentation:
      - i. The preliminary budget is due to the unreleased MCUSA guidelines for conference minister salaries. A final budget will be made available by August.
      - ii. This budget includes a deficit of \$24,000. The finance committee is comfortable with this because of the conference’s strong cash position. Rod noted that the committee will be asking congregations for continued or even increased support to help work towards a more balanced budget as expenses continue to climb.
    - c. **Received the YTD budget report and approved the 2023-2024 Preliminary Budget (Ron Adams (Landisville), Carmen Horst-Okanya (James Street), unanimous).**
6. **Release of congregations:** Joanne Dietzel (Executive Conference Minister, Ridgeview) reported on recently received letters requesting release from ACC membership.
  - a. Oley Valley Mennonite Church and Hope Community Church both informed ACC by letter. Both expressed gratitude for conference connection and opportunities for past shared ministry.
  - b. In its letter, Hope noted the difficulty in relating to MC USA after the May passage of the Resolution for Repentance.
  - c. Joanne shared a blessing and an ivy plant for both congregations in the hope that they will grow and thrive in ministry.
  - d. **Released with regret and blessing, Oley Valley Mennonite Church and Hope (Nate Campbell (Neffsville), Dawn Ranck-Hower (New Holland), unanimous).**
7. **2023 Leadership Slate Presentation:** Lyndell Theissen (Gifts Discernment Committee Chair, Blossom Hill) introduced those being recommended by the Gifts Discernment Committee for two-year terms in conference leadership roles.
  - a. **The full slate was approved by majority vote, taken by paper (in person) and via digital form (virtual):**
    - i. Todd Gusler, Rossmere, Assistant Moderator (2<sup>nd</sup> term)
    - ii. Lynn Brubaker, Frazer, Secretary (2<sup>nd</sup> term)
    - iii. Steve Crane, Ridgeview, Member-at-Large (2<sup>nd</sup> term)
    - iv. Addie Banks, Manhattan, Member-at-Large (2<sup>nd</sup> term)
    - v. Keith and Ruth Douglas Miller, New Holland, Peace & Justice Committee co-chairs (2<sup>nd</sup> term)
    - vi. Dawn Ranck-Hower, New Holland, Ministerial Leadership Committee chair, 2<sup>nd</sup> chair
    - vii. Elisa Parmer, East Chestnut Street, Youth Committee chair, 1<sup>st</sup> term
    - viii. Michael Charles, Rossmere, Gifts Discernment Committee chair, 1<sup>st</sup> term
    - ix. Phyllis Pellman Good, East Chestnut Street, Gifts Discernment Committee member
    - x. Dwight Rohrer, Forest Hills, Gifts Discernment Committee member
8. While dismissing for break time, Gina invited delegates to record their thoughts on what “mission” means on hanging paper around the room. The ACCL worship team led singing *Kwake Yesu Nasimama* from Voices Together, #159.

**11:25 a.m. Session:**

9. **Recognition of Merv Stoltzfus.** John Denlinger led a time of remembering and celebrating the ministry of Merv Stoltzfus. Merv served in various roles with Atlantic Coast Conference over nearly 35 years. Attendees were given the opportunity to share appreciation and stories from Merv's ministry.

**1:00 p.m. Session**

10. **Installation of Joanne Dietzel.** Gina Burkhart led a time of commissioning and prayer for Joanne who began her role as Executive Conference Minister on April 1.
11. **Speakers Eric Frey Martin, Nelson Okanya (James Street), and Emily Ralph Servant** each shared about aspects of pursuing God's mission in the world. Presentations included how missions has been viewed historically and how we can practically pursue God's kingdom in our neighborhoods today. Conversation groups were invited to discuss how their congregations view "missions" and how this view may have shifted over time.
12. **Closing** – Joanne Dietzel led a closing prayer, followed by dismissal at 3:37 p.m.

*Recorder, Brook Musselman*