



Looking back,
LIVING FORWARD



2025 ACC Annual Assembly



3.15.2025
Forest Hills
Mennonite Church





2025 Annual Assembly

At Forest Hills Mennonite Church

Assembly Agenda

Worship, Celebration & Storytelling, 9:00 am - 10:30 am

Opening song, welcome & table introductions
Gina Burkhart (Landisville, moderator), Ensemble

Congregational Singing
Ensemble

Congregational Singing
Ensemble: Angela Dietzel (Laurel St), Anna Ressler (Hebron), Dan Burkhart (Landisville), Matt Carlson (Akron)

Table Discussion
Joanne Dietzel

Dwelling in the Word: Ephesians 3:14-20
Joanne Dietzel (Ridgeview, Executive Conference Minister)

Storytelling: My Journey to Anabaptism
Steve Crane (Ridgeview, Interim Pastor/Chaplain at Norristown State Hospital)
Kate Andre (Pastor at Menn. Cong. of Boston)
Jason Storbakken (Manhattan Menn. Fellowship, Pastor)

Break, 10:30 am - 11:00 am Thanks to Birch Grove Mennonite Church for refreshments!

Delegate Session, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Anabaptist Trivia
Josh Carson (James St)

Nickels for Neighbors Project 2025 introduction
Keith & Ruth Douglas Miller (New Holland, Peace & Justice Committee co-chairs)

Mennonite Church USA update
Rachel Ringenburg-Miller (MC USA denominational minister for ministerial leadership)

2025 Leadership Slate presentation & vote
Michael Charles (Rossmere, Gifts Discernment Committee chair)

Finance update & 2025-2026 budget presentation
Rod Yoder, (East Chestnut St, Conference Treasurer)

Receive 2024 Assembly minutes
Gina Burkhart

Introduce new ministers
Dawn Ranck-Hower, (New Holland, Ministerial Leadership Committee chair)

Lunch, 12:00 pm

Workshops, 1:00 pm

Delegate voting will be available primarily online and accessible through QR code or at bit.ly/2025Delegate. Paper ballots will also be available.





Looking back,
LIVING FORWARD



Afternoon Workshops

1:00 Workshops

Understanding the Terms Anabaptist and Mennonite -- Contrast Terms? Synonyms?

Jonathan Sauder, presenter

Fellowship Hall

The quincentennial of the Anabaptist movement is an appropriate time to review how the words we use to identify ourselves. The term “Anabaptist” was used by Catholics and Protestants of the 16th Century as a term of condemnation and insult. The term Mennonite derives from the first name of an ex-priest from the Netherlands whose father’s first name was Simon. While most Mennonites today are not of Dutch ethnicity, many Mennonites along the Atlantic Coast of the U.S. do tend to closely identify their spiritual ancestry with their family ancestries. Is there anything less “anabaptist” than the idea of being a birthright member? Group discussion time will focus on what implications this topic has for ACC in our day.

Conversation: Responding collectively to our political landscape

Angie Chelton, moderator

Room 14/15

Recent political news has had a profound effect on many of our communities and those our congregations and related organizations serve. In what ways are our congregations responding? How can we respond collectively to support our communities as Jesus’ hands and feet? Join this facilitated conversation to share your own experiences and learn from that of others’.

Intergenerational Giant Dutch Blitz

Solar Lounge

2:00 Workshops

Panel on Tangible living

Josh Carson, moderator

Fellowship Hall

Join us for a panel conversation on tangibly living out peace & justice with courage in 2025. Panelists will represent local organizations that focus on teaching and mobilizing supporters to live out their faith. Panelists:

Melanie Yoder Salim – Mennonite Action

Josh Carson – Mennonite Disaster Service

Sara Peachey (Gurule) – Mennonite Mission Network

Laura Pauls-Thomas – Mennonite Central Committee

Conversation: Teaching children from Anabaptist perspective

Crystal Wenger, moderator

Room 14/15

This forum is a space for youth workers to bring questions, ideas, passion and confusion to share with each other. What resources, priorities, and strategies have been most effective in your setting and how can we share what we’ve learned and encourage each other in this exciting and challenging responsibility.

2:00 Hymn Singing

Sanctuary



Dwelling in the Word

Ephesians 3:14-20

¹⁴This is why I kneel before the Father. ¹⁵Every ethnic group in heaven or on earth is recognized by him. ¹⁶I ask that he will strengthen you in your inner selves from the riches of his glory through the Spirit. ¹⁷I ask that Christ will live in your hearts through faith. As a result of having strong roots in love, ¹⁸I ask that you'll have the power to grasp love's width and length, height and depth, together with all believers. ¹⁹I ask that you'll know the love of Christ that is beyond knowledge so that you will be filled entirely with the fullness of God.

²⁰Glory to God, who is able to do far beyond all that we could ask or imagine by his power at work within us; ²¹glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus for all generations, forever and always. Amen.

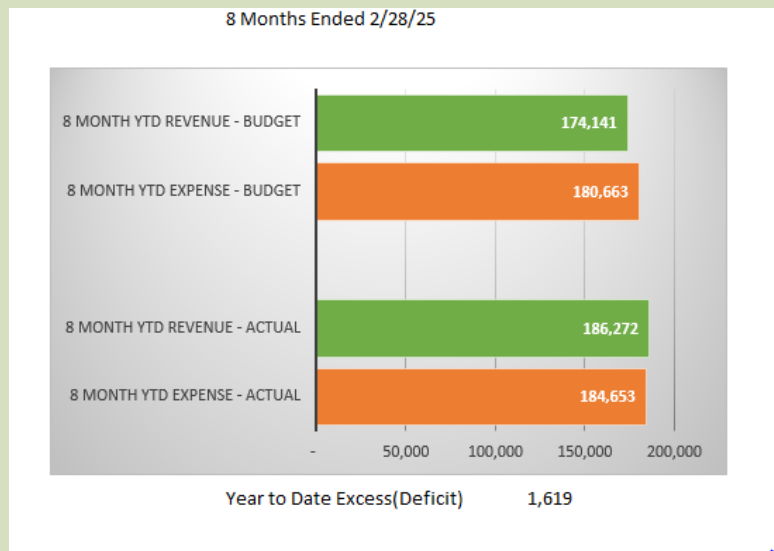
Finance & Congregational Leadership Fund Update

The purpose of the CLF is to strengthen leadership capacities in Atlantic Coast Conference Congregations by providing assistance for continuing education of pastors & leaders, assisting short term congregational leadership needs, and resourcing faith formation initiatives that strengthen leadership.

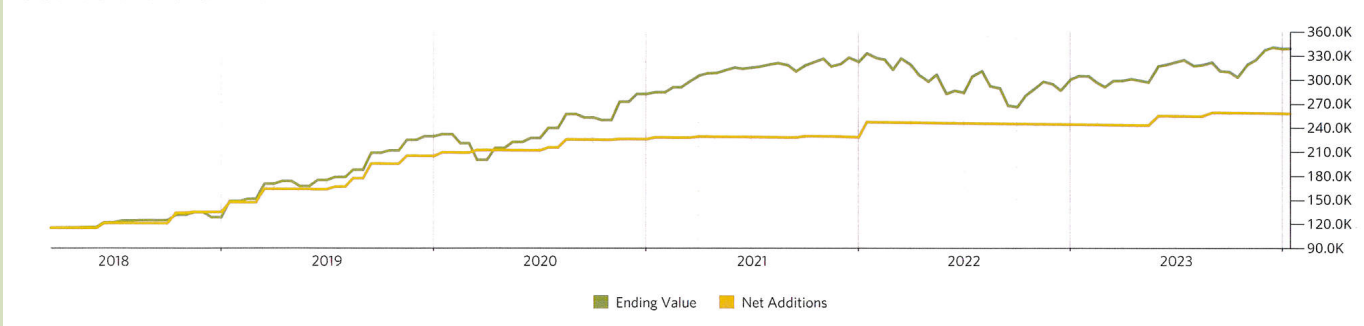
At times congregational leaders and pastors need financial resources beyond their capacity. Small and congregations with less financial capacity and bi-vocational pastors are prioritized as recipients of this fund.

With a balance of \$366,709.41, we have raised over 2/3 of our goal of \$500,000. Please consider contributing to this fund as you plan your annual giving.

Applications will be reviewed next in June, 2025.



Portfolio Growth Over Time



Preliminary 2025-2026 Budget

	24-25 Annual Budget	Preliminary 25-26 Annual Budget	Change
Income			
Regular Income			
1-Congregational Contributions			
African Community Church	600	600	-
Akron	15,000	15,000	-
Bethel	3,500	3,500	-
Birch Grove	2,200	3,600	1,400
Blossom Hill	12,000	13,000	1,000
Community Menn Lancaster	16,500	16,500	-
CrossWay (O.C.)	2,000	2,000	-
East Chestnut	16,000	18,000	2,000
Forest Hills	50,000	50,000	-
Frazer	11,000	11,000	-
Friendship	500	500	-
Hebron	3,600	4,000	400
James Street	18,000	18,000	-
Landisville	35,000	35,000	-
Laurel Street	4,000	5,000	1,000
Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship	1,000	1,000	-
Menn Cong of Boston	1,000	1,000	-
New Holland	5,000	5,000	-
North Baltimore	4,500	4,500	-
North Bronx	600	600	-
Pilgrims	4,250	4,250	-
Brooklyn Peace Center (Church)	500	500	-
Ridgeview	14,000	14,000	-
Rossmere	10,000	10,000	-
Total 1-Congregational Contributions	230,750	236,550	5,800
Total 2-Additional Income	15,850	15,700	(150)
Total Regular Income	246,600	252,250	5,650
Restricted Income Released	10,000	5,000	(5,000)
Total Income	256,600	257,250	650
Expense			
Total 10-Leadership Training & Support	126,368	127,980	1,612
Total 20-Administration	121,695	120,625	(1,070)
Total 40-Denominational Participation	12,500	15,000	2,500
Total 50-Fellowship & Communication	3,800	3,800	-
Total 60-Nurture Resources	3,800	2,400	(1,400)
Total Expense	268,863	269,805	942
Total Surplus/(Deficit)	(12,263)	(12,555)	(292)
North Baltimore Loan Repayment	10,800	10,800	
Cash Income Minus Expenses	(1,463)	(1,755)	

Recommendation: Delegates approve the 2025-2026 preliminary budget as presented and give the Executive and Finance Committee the authority to adjust income and expenses as needed after the close of the current fiscal year. Final 2025-2026 budget to be made available in August 2025

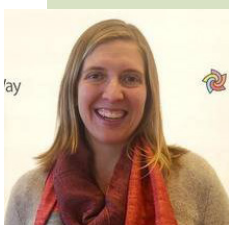
New credentialed ministers, 2024-2025



Jennifer Biemiller became the Associate Pastor at Blossom Hill in July 2024

– where she values the richness of community. She specializes in integrative spirituality, pastoral arts, and contemplative wellness and seeks to support healing and wholeness through a prayerful collage of pastoral modalities and spiritual practices.

Jen loves being a spouse, a stepmother/mother-in-law to three grown adults, mother to two young children, a friend, and an ally. She enjoys hiking and taking pictures of what catches her eye, singing, and tending to the growth of people and plants. Jen has a Bachelor of Science in Music Therapy, a Master of Divinity from Lancaster Theological Seminary and Clinical Pastoral Education through Lancaster General and Women and Babies Hospitals. Her professional experience spans the age spectrum and includes specialized work with people with brain injuries, developmental disabilities, mental health challenges, dementia and trauma, those who identify as LGBTQ+, and people in the final phase of their lives.



Christie Dahlin serves as Associate Pastor Hope Gateway in Portland, Maine. She recently moved from the Pacific Northwest. She and her husband Samuel lived in Seattle for many years, where Christie attended Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry and graduated with her Masters of Divinity in 2020.

Christie then had the joy of pastoring a Mennonite church in Boise, Idaho for two years and was recently ordained in the Mennonite Church. In her free time Christie enjoys reading a good novel, playing with her two young children, connecting with friends, and going on outdoor adventures with her family like cross-country skiing, hiking, biking or just meandering through the woods.



Ashley Hoard serves as Associate Pastor at North Baltimore Mennonite Church.

She has an undergraduate degree from Columbia International University with a double major in Bible and Music. She is currently pursuing a Master of Divinity from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Ashley has a heart to see children and youth know the deep love of God and from the experience of that love to serve

and love others.

Katelyn Robbins serves as Pastor of Ridgeview Mennonite Church.

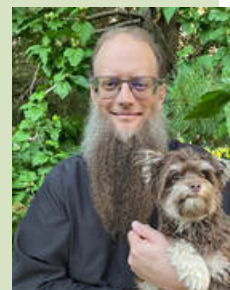
She received her MDiv from the Boston University School of Theology in 2024 and also holds a BA/MA in English and a BA in history from Penn State.

She was raised in, baptized at, and has continued to attend MCUSA churches throughout her life and is grateful to now be serving in this denomination as a pastor. She seeks to weave peace, hope, and, above all, love into Ridgeview and its surrounding communities. She believes deeply in the importance of traditions, both in carrying them on, which gives us insight into and connection with the wisdom of the past, and in creating new ones, which emerge as we discern God's vision for the present moment. Some things that bring Katelyn joy include sharing stories with family and friends around a fire, reading a book with a cup of tea on rainy days, and petting fluffy animals.



Jonathan Sauder serves as Pastor at Laurel Street Mennonite Church.

Jonathan holds a Master of Theological Studies degree from Brite Divinity School. As a biblical scholar he focuses his theological research on excavating and exposing the empire-friendly habits of theologies past and present. Jonathan, his wife Brenda, and their four children live in Lancaster.



Crystal Wenger became the director of children and youth

ministries at Blossom Hill in August of 2023. Crystal holds a B.S. in Social Work, with a minor in psychology (Hesston College and Eastern Mennonite University). She has worked with children, youth, and their families for the past 20 years in education and social services with a focus on inclusion, interventions, and best practices. Crystal is married to Jesse Wenger and has two teen boys, Jaime and Noah. Crystal enjoys gardening, reading, adventures with her family and her two dogs.



Nickels for Neighbors 2025

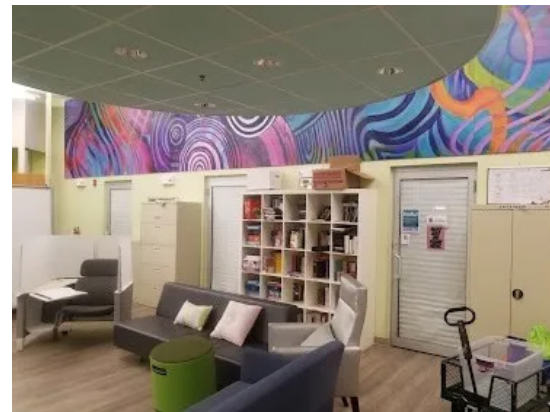
ACC congregations are encouraged to collect coins in their Sunday School classes, Bible Studies, or services, primarily as a way to encourage giving among our children. These donations will be collected by ACC's Peace & Justice Committee in October 2025.

The 2025 ACC Nickels For Neighbors grant will be given to Youth on Fire, a partner ministry of the Mennonite Congregation of Boston.

Established in 2000, Youth on Fire (YOF) is a daytime drop-in center dedicated to supporting unhoused and unaccompanied youth in Greater Boston. Located in Cambridge, Massachusetts, this welcoming program provides a judgment-free environment where members can find safety, enjoy a homemade meal, access showers or a place to nap, receive referrals, and work on their personal goals.

YOF provides young people with a place to land, ensuring they are treated with dignity and respect. Members benefit from a comprehensive range of services delivered under one roof, supported by a trusted staff that prioritizes their physical and mental well-being. Utilizing a Harm Reduction approach, their professionals provide prevention strategies to help reduce the risks that often accompany being unhoused.

At YOF, young people ages 14 to 24 can come as they are; there are no requirements for care. We are dedicated to empowering all members to work toward independence, find stability, and receive personalized support that aligns with their unique journeys.



The Need:

On any given night, there are roughly 400 unaccompanied youth in the city of Boston. These young people face significant threats to their emotional, physical and psychological well-being.

Our Impact:

We provide over 200 youth per year with a safe and welcoming environment where members can access basic needs, receive support from staff they trust and work on personal goals.

Subscribe to receive Currents by email

Future issues of ACC's Currents newsletter will no longer be printed but will be available electronically. Sign up to receive notifications of newly-released issues at bit.ly/CurrentsSignUp or by scanning the QR code.



2025 ACC Leadership Slate Bios



Todd Gusler, Executive Committee Assistant Moderator (3rd term)

Todd Gusler has served as the pastor of Rossmere Mennonite Church in Lancaster, PA since 2014. Before that he served as a pastor in Indiana and as a house leader of a Service Adventure unit in Raleigh, North Carolina. He is a graduate of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Todd has been serving on the ACC Executive Committee as the Assistant Moderator. He lives in the city of Lancaster with his wife Leah and their 3 children.

Anita Castle, Executive Committee Member-at-Large (1st term)

Anita resides in Harlem, New York City with her husband Peter. They are blessed to have three adult daughters and a grandson. Anita is the Pastor of Grace & Peace Mennonite church, which is a primarily virtual church that is based in New York City with members in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Upstate New York as well as the five boroughs of New York City.



Josh Carson, Executive Committee Member-at-Large (1st term)

Josh Carson is the Coordinator for Leadership Volunteers, Regions 1 & 4 for Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) since 2017, working with volunteers who serve with MDS for a month or longer, preparing them for, supporting them during, and debriefing them after their volunteer service. He previously served as a youth pastor, and has served as a board member of Chestnut Housing since 2022. He grew up in a Southern Baptist congregation & military family and is an enthusiastic adult convert to Anabaptism. Josh has degrees from Eastern University (BA in Youth Ministry & Biblical Studies) and Palmer Theological Seminary (MDiv), and is currently a student at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, earning a Doctor of Ministry in Leadership. Josh has been married to Lindsay Carson since 2015, they

live in southwest Lancaster City with their daughter Harriet and their neighbor's feral cats, and are actively involved in James Street Mennonite Church.

Randy Keener, Executive Committee Member-at-Large (1st term)

Randy Keener is the Director of Chaplaincy Care and Education at Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health. Previously, he was a pastor for 6 years at Witmer Heights Mennonite Church. He is ordained in the Atlantic Coast Conference and is a part of the Laurel Street Mennonite Church community. He's a graduate of Hesston College, Goshen College and Eastern Mennonite Seminary where he completed his MDiv. He did four units of clinical pastoral education and is a board certified chaplain through the Association of Professional Chaplains. His interests include Spirituality and healthcare, biking to work, being in the outdoors, and reading books about the Appalachian Trail and travel. He lives in Lancaster City with his wife Emily and son Aiden.





Kate Andre, Ministerial Leadership Committee Chairperson (1st term)

After studying Music and Drama as an undergrad at UNC-Chapel Hill and pursuing performance in NYC, Kate earned an MDiv and STM at Yale Divinity School. Since then, Kate has served as a college chaplain, high school theology teacher and campus minister, hospital chaplain, and retreat leader. She studied Mediation with the New York Peace Institution and MWI, completed her 200-hour Yoga Teacher Training at Kripalu, and is pursuing spiritual direction training at Boston College. Kate also coordinates the Jesuits' Contemplative Leaders in Action cohort in Boston and volunteers as Harvard's Mennonite Chaplain. However, Kate's primary ministerial role is pastor of the Mennonite Congregation of Boston. When not serving her congregation (or Zooming with fellow members of the ACC!), Kate enjoys game nights, impromptu dance parties, and long walks in nature with her husband and son.

Michael Charles, Gift Discernment Committee Chairperson (2nd term)

Michael Charles attends Rossmere Mennonite Church and lives in Lancaster with his wife and three children. He is employed as a Solar Energy Consultant and Grant Writer at Bright Eye Solar. At Rossmere, Michael has served as a Sunday School teacher and youth advisor. He enjoys spending time with family and friends and riding bicycles.



Judy Zook, Gifts Discernment Committee (1st term)

Judy Zook along with her husband, Ron, are interim administrative copastors at Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster. They live in Lancaster city and host a community of two to three young adults. Judy finds joy in supporting and encouraging others as they embrace opportunities that ignite their passion and use their gifts. She likes reading, traveling, creating with yarn, and playing with her four grandchildren.

Dot Hartman, Gifts Discernment Committee (1st term)

Dot Hartman works at Landis Communities in Litiz, PA as the Director of Operations for New Initiatives. Prior to working for Landis Communities she worked in aging services in Berks County, but started her professional career working in logistics. She has a bachelors degree in Engineering from Penn State University and a MS degree in Operations Research from Columbia University. Dot was raised in a Mennonite home and has attended churches that are part of the ACC for twenty-five years. She and her husband, Bill, live in Lancaster City and currently attend James Street Mennonite Church. They have two adult daughters, Abbey and Stephanie, and a son-in-law, Phil. Dot enjoys reading, running, knitting and golfing in her spare time.



Elisa Parmer, Youth Committee Chairperson (2nd term)

Elisa Parmer is the Associate Pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church. While beginning her vocational work in July of 2022, Elisa has been an active member of ECSMC since 2015. Prior to her ministerial work, Elisa worked alongside people with intellectual impairments in direct service. She served the Keystone Institute as an education specialist providing values-based training. Her work in human services has been a powerful influence in her desire to ally herself with people who can often be overlooked in faith settings including youth and children, the queer community, and people who are differently abled. Elisa lives with her wife Hannah in Ephrata with their dog Rudy. She is currently working on her Masters of Divinity at Lancaster Theological Seminary.



2024 Annual Assembly

Ridgeview Mennonite Church || March 16, 2024

Minutes

Present: 108 participants (both in-person and by video), including 60 delegates representing 20 member congregations

9:00 am Session:

1. **Welcome:** Moderator Gina Burkhart (Landisville) opened with a welcome and introduction to the online delegate voting. She led a time of silence and prayer for those affected by the death of Ashton Clatterbuck from Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster. She invited table group members to introduce themselves and share hopeful reflections with one another.
2. **Worship:** Nathan Horst and company (Ridgeview) led a time of worship
 - a. Mountain of God
 - b. Build Your Kingdom Here
 - c. My Soul Cries Out
3. **MC USA & ACC Updates:** Rachel Ringenberg Miller (MC USA denominational minister for ministerial leadership) and Gina Burkhart shared updates:
 - a. Rachel shared about a variety of new programs and events provided by various MC USA departments and affiliates. She also shared a message about God always creating new life and ways to flourish, even when we can't see it happening. MC USA is in a stage of discerning what new thing is springing forth.
 - b. Gina shared several updates from Atlantic Coast Conference. She shared about the departure of six congregations over the past year. Last Assembly it was announced that Hope Community and Oley Valley departed the conference. Since then we saw the departure of Conestoga, Ark Bible, Neffsville, and Zion. Gina shared about the changes to the conference, both in identity and in size/budget.
 - c. A time of Q&A was offered with Rachel and Joanne Dietzel (Executive Conference Minister, Ridgeview). No questions were asked.
4. **Budget Presentation:** Rod Yoder (Finance Committee chair) shared a financial update.
 - a. **YTD budget update:** Rod shared that expenses and income are comparable to last year at this time. Cash reserves are high to absorb some of the decrease in giving.
 - b. **2024-2025 Budget Presentation:** Rod shared that we expect \$68,000 less in contributions which will be offset by a reduction in budgeted spending, particularly in staff time. The proposed budget has a \$4,000 deficit.

- c. **By electronic ballot, delegates received the YTD budget report and approved the 2024-2025 Preliminary Budget, which will be finalized once the 2025 MC USA salary guidelines are released.**

5. **Missions Committee Updates:**

- a. **Nickels for Neighbors 2023 thank you video:** a video from Roots: Anabaptist kids was shown as a thank you to the conference for the 2023 grant. The grant helped with curriculum development for the kids program and to purchase supplies. Bruce Campbell Janz (Missions Committee Chair, East Chestnut Street) shared nearly \$3,400 was raised for Roots.
- b. **2024 Nickels for Neighbors presentation:** Bruce Campbell Janz (Missions Committee chair, East Chestnut Street) shared that Bridge of Hope – National has been selected to receive the 2024 grant.
- c. Bruce presented a proposal that would merge the work of the Missions and Peace & Justice Committee under the umbrella of the latter, primarily due to the overlap in the current work of each. **The merger of these committees was approved by electronic vote.**

6. **New Minister Introductions:** Dawn Ranck-Hower presented the newly credentialed ministers of the past year: Elisa Parmer (Associate Pastor, East Chestnut Street), Angie Chelton (Pastor, Pilgrims), Jonathan Landis (Minister of Music & Worship, James Street), Anna Ressler (Pastor, Hebron). Dawn also introduced Arthur Steward (Pastor, North Baltimore) who was not introduced last year. Dawn led a prayer for the new ministries of these individuals.

7. **2024 Leadership Slate Presentation:** Michael Charles (Gifts Discernment Committee Chair, Rossmore) introduced those being recommended by the Gifts Discernment Committee for conference leadership roles.

- a. The full slate was approved by majority vote:
 - i. Gina Burkhart, moderator
 - ii. Leslie Homer-Cattell, Executive Committee member-at-large
 - iii. Miriam Cruz, Executive Committee member-at-large
 - iv. Rod Yoder, Executive Committee Treasurer
 - v. Jessica Buckwalter, Gifts Discernment Committee member
 - vi. Jeremiah Denlinger, Gifts Discernment Committee member
- b. Terms for new committee members will begin with the fiscal year on July 1. All nominees were affirmed by electronic ballot.

8. **Receive 2023 Assembly Minutes:** Gina presented the minutes from the 2023 Assembly, including action items. **These were approved by electronic ballot.**

11:00 a.m. Session:

9. **Drama that Honors Our Stories & Relations/Callings:** River Crossing Playback Theater led a time of improvisational theater on the theme, Living the Change. With input from the audience, they acted and led discussion on how individuals and churches feel and navigate change, both internally and as a community. During a time of table group sharing, tables named a theme that they heard emerge through the theater presentation and these were discussed as a large group in



closing. Themes noted on managing change, or, *Going forward we will keep in mind*: active presence, intentional belonging, honor stories, sit with discomfort, listen to understand, listen without judgement.

10. **Closing:** Ruth Yoder Wenger (Associate Conference Minister, North Bronx) and Mick Sommers (Associate Conference Minister, Ridgeview) shared a closing blessing to end the session, which was followed by brunch and dismissal.

Recorder, Brook Musselman

Thanks to the weekend's sponsors!



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Hill House
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Thanks for joining us for the 2025 ACC Annual Assembly. Please take a moment to share your feedback on the day at <https://bit.ly/AssemblyFeedback2025>

