

2025 Annual Assembly

Forest Hills Mennonite Church || March 15, 2025

Minutes

Present: 94 participants, including 74 delegates representing 23 member congregations

1. **Opening Song:** Ensemble including Matt Carlson (Akron), Angela Dietzel (Laurel St.), Dan Burkhart (Landisville), and Anna Ressler (Hebron): *O Sing to the Lord (VT 113)*
2. **Welcome:** Moderator Gina Burkhart (Landisville) opened with a welcome
 - a. Participants were welcomed and oriented to the purpose of the annual assembly: strengthening relationships and recognizing the conference as a community of congregations.
 - b. A roll call of congregations was conducted, inviting representatives to stand and be acknowledged.
 - c. Both in-person and livestream participants were welcomed.
3. **Worship:** Ensemble
 - Mountain of God (VT 11)*
 - God Welcome All/Amen (VT 32)*
 - Will You Come and Follow Me (VT 540)*
 - God of the Bible (VT 420)*
 - My Soul Cries Out (VT 412)*
4. **Dwelling in the Word:** Ruth Yoder Wenger (North Bronx, ACC Conference Minister) led a scripture reflection on Ephesians 3:14-21.
5. **Table discussion & theme focus:** Joanne Dietzel (Ridgeview, ACC Conference Minister) shared a reflection on the year's emphasis on Anabaptism at 500: Looking back, assessing present realities, and imagining the future. Table discussions addressed engaging younger generations, modeling Anabaptist faith practices, and how congregations can "live forward" into the future.
6. **Storytelling:** Steve Crane (Ridgeview), Kate Andre (Boston), and Jason Storbakken (Manhattan) each shared their story of finding their way to Anabaptism from other faith communities. They shared what drew them to the Anabaptist tradition and what they continue to find compelling.
7. **Trivia:** After a break, Josh Carson (James St.) introduced the Anabaptist trivia that would be interspersed among the agenda items in the next session.
8. **Mennonite Church USA Update:** Rachel Ringenberg Miller shared an update from Mennonite Church USA, including an invitation to the upcoming Convention in Greensboro, North Carolina.

9. **Finance Update:** Rod Yoder (East Chestnut St, treasurer) shared an update on the current financial outlook and presented the 2025-26 preliminary budget for delegate review and approval. He noted that a final budget would be available by August, once Mennonite Church USA Pastor Salary Guidelines are released and figures are updated. The 2025-26 Preliminary Budget was approved as presented.
10. **LMS Announcement:** Lindsey Carson (James Street) shared briefly about the kids program taking place alongside the delegate session today and invited children to the Lancaster Mennonite School kids' camps taking place over the summer.
11. **New Minister Introductions:** Dawn Ranck-Hower (New Holland, Ministerial Leadership Committee chair) introduced ministers who joined ACC congregations this year:
 - a. Jennifer Biemiller, Blossom Hill Mennonite Church associate pastor
 - b. Christie Dahlin, Hope Gateway (Portland, ME) associate pastor
 - c. Ashley Hoard, North Baltimore Mennonite Church associate pastor
 - d. Katelyn Robbins, Ridgeview Mennonite Church pastor
 - e. Jonathan Sauder, Laurel St. Mennonite Church pastor
 - f. Crystal Wenger, Blossom Hill Mennonite Church director of children & youth
12. **Gifts Discernment Committee Slate Presentation:** Michael Charles (Rossmere, Gifts Discernment Committee chair) presented the 2025 leadership slate for delegate approval. These roles will begin July 1, 2025:
 - a. Todd Gusler, Executive Committee assistant moderator
 - b. Anita Castle, Executive Committee member-at-large
 - c. Josh Carson, Executive Committee member-at-large
 - d. Randy Keener, Executive Committee member-at-large
 - e. Kate Andre, Ministerial Leadership Committee chair
 - f. Michael Charles, Gifts Discernment Committee chair
 - g. Judy Zook, Gifts Discernment Committee member-at-large
 - h. Dot Hartman, Gifts Discernment Committee member-at-large
 - i. Elisa Parmer, Youth Committee chair
13. **2024 Minutes Presentation:** Gina Burkhart led a review of the 2024 Assembly minutes. Minutes were received as presented.
14. **Closing:** Gina Burkhart led a closing reflection and prayer for the noon meal.
15. **Afternoon Workshops**
 - a. Understanding Terms: Mennonite & Anabaptist (Jonathan Sauder, Laurel St.)
 - b. Conversation: Political Landscape (Angie Chelton, Pilgrims)
 - c. Dutch Blitz (part of the kids program)
 - d. Tangible Living (Josh Carson, James St)
 - e. Conversation: Teaching Youth (Crystal Wenger, Blossom Hill)
 - f. Hymn Singing (Cheryl Eshleman, Forest Hills)

Recorder, Brook Musselman