As People of Christ’s peace, we experience new life!

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILES: BETHLEHEM COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP • GROFFDALE MENNONITE CHURCH
I

Israel is in trouble, but God pays no attention! As the enemy advances, Israel ramps up their religious activities and cries out to God for help. However, God takes no notice. Through the prophet Isaiah, God pronounces judgment on his blind and rebellious people. God wants none of their hypocritical religion. They claim a love for God and his righteous judgments, but refuse to attend to the needs of those around them. Relentless pursuit of self-interest leads to their demise.

This somber warning from Isaiah 58 seems relevant for the church today. It reminds us not to forget that God’s economy extends beyond the church. If we forget, we risk the kind of self-absorption that doomed Israel.

Nevertheless, there is also astonishingly good news in Isaiah 58. There is promise of healing and new life. God pours out blessings upon his people when they spend themselves for their poor, hungry, and hurting neighbors. This is the vision God offers Israel. God’s people will find new life by laying down their own lives in service to others. God invites the people of Lancaster Mennonite Conference (LMC) to embrace a similar vision and to live into it as we dwell together in Isaiah 58, the text chosen for this year. How will we respond?

How we respond and who we become as a people of God are important topics of discussion in LMC these days, especially in this season of denominational realignment. The Board of Bishops commissioned a task force to help LMC discern strategic direction going forward. Will we pull back and become inward-focused isolationists? Or, will we redouble our commitment to embody and proclaim the good news of the Kingdom in a world God loves?

As LMC faces a new season of growth and multiplication, it is important to maintain a healthy tension with two critical points: 1) being at the same time a culturally relevant and contrast community, and 2) emphasizing evangelism and social action with equal urgency.

God’s people will find new life by laying down their own lives in service to others.

From the tree of life in the garden of Eden until the tree of life in the eternal city of God, life has characterized God’s kingdom. “Life,” said Reggie, “bursts from the Godhead.”
Las tres palabras más importantes para la iglesia de hoy: tensión, tensión, tensión

POR L. KEITH WEAVER (traducido por Andrés Prins)

Israel está en problemas, pero Dios no ha caído. A medida que avanza el enemi-
go, Israel aumenta sus actividades religiosas y clama a Dios por ayuda. Pero Dios
no se siente coaccionado. A través del profeta Isaías, Dios promete juicio contra su pueblo y
rebelión. Dios denota la religiosidad hipócrita de ellos. Dios ama a Israel y a sus
enemigos, pero cada día que el pueblo no entregue sus vidas en servicio a los demás
Dios ofrece a Israel. El pueblo de Dios encontrará nueva vida a medida que entreguen
sus vidas en servicio a los demás. Dios nos invita como integrantes de la Conferencia
LMC a discurrir la dirección estratégica hacia el futuro. ¿Nos esforzamos para más
volviéndonos aislacionistas ensimismados? ¿Endebemos nuestro compromiso de
encarar y proclamar nuestras normas de conducta? ¿Conviene que las personas
vivamos como “los quietos de la tierra”.

Esta advertencia sobrina de las buenas noticias en Isaías 58 es relevante para la iglesia de hoy. Nos insta a no olvidar que la economía de Dios se extiende más allá de la iglesia. Al enfrentar LMC una nueva temporada de crecimiento y multiplicación, será
importante mantener una tensión saludable en dos puntos: 1) ser una co-
munidad culturalmente relevante y a la vez de contraste, y 2) enfatizar con igual
urgencia el evangelismo y la acción social.

1. CULTURALMENTE RELEVANTE – CONTRAST COMMUNITY
LMC ya aprecia esto. Es uno de nuestros valores fundamentales. Sin embargo,
él橱柜o en la tensión más estricta con nuestros vecinos, pronto nos veremos confron-
tados y cumpliendo con otro valor: el de pluralismo religioso. Este valor mantiene
que diferentes perspectivas religiosas son verdaderas aun si se contradizan. Por
mismo, la noción de que Jesús es el único camino para salvarnos del justo
juicio de Dios no es una aseveración aceptable para muchos integrantes de nuestra
sociedad pluralista. Al entregarnos a la misión de Dios, necesitamos promover nuestra
identidad como hijas e hijos de Dios, ¡confesando que solo Jesucristo es Señor!

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Como pueblo de Dios, vivimos como una comunidad de contraste que debe lealtad
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2. EVANGELISM – ACCION SOCIAL
LMC debe mantener el evangelismo y la acción social como dos puntos centrales: 1)
como inicio del reino de Dios. Para que LMC pueda aprovechar las oportunidades de
influencia, LMC debe cultivar una visión misional que nos coloque a la vanguardia de las
nuevas corrientes culturales que hagan avanzar nuestras iglesias.

1. L. Keith Weaver is moderator of Lancaster Mennonite Conference. He is a member of Iglesia Menonita de Blainsport en Reinholds, Pa.

Did your congregation recently host an outreach event in your community? If you're interested in sharing, please submit photos with a 1-4 sentence story to Josilynna Santos (jansantos@lancasterconference.org), to be included in a future issue of Shalom News.
From Around the Conference

Appreciation Luncheon
On April 15, the Board of Bishops and Conference Executive Council held a catered luncheon in honor of Joanne Dietzel’s 21 years of service to Lancaster Mennonite Conference. Joanne’s last day was Friday, April 29. Joanne, we wish you all the best in your new role.

Blainsport 90th Anniversary
Blainsport Mennonite Church will take time to look upon the stories that past generations arranged as memorials and teaching aids. This is the 90th year that Blainsport has existed as a church in northern Lancaster County. Plans are taking shape to remember the amazing history of people committed to reaching people from God in this rural community. The first activity to celebrate this anniversary was on April 1 with the release of the book, A Calling in Cocalico: Blainsport Mennonite Church and Its Mission Roots, 1926–2016 by Philip Ruth. The schedule includes a bus tour, special activity to celebrate this anniversary was committed to reaching people far from member the amazing history of people.

Lancaster Conference Church Life in the Near Future
With a full agenda in this issue, plans to plant another file’s mother, Dora Kos, produced music before the service. The local Christian group “The Here and Now Effect” and local Christian singer Jaclyn Victor provided music before and after the service. This service was just one of several gatherings by churches in Nanticoke. Dave Pegarello and Michael Deckman lead Nanticoke Christian Fellowship and St. Luke’s United Church of Christ jointly led the service. The local Christian group “The Here and Now Effect” and local Christian singer Jaclyn Victor provided music before and after the service. This service was just one of several gatherings by churches in Nanticoke. Dave Pegarello and Michael Deckman lead Nanticoke Christian Fellowship and St. Luke’s United Church of Christ jointly led the service. The local Christian group “The Here and Now Effect” and local Christian singer Jaclyn Victor provided music before and after the service. This service was just one of several gatherings by churches in Nanticoke. Dave Pegarello and Michael Deckman lead Nanticoke Christian Fellowship and St. Luke’s United Church of Christ jointly led the service.

Bethlehem Community Fellowship
Bethlehem Community Fellowship, featured as one of the congregational profiles in this issue, plans to plant another church in the near future. With a full building, their thought is to plant rather than expand facilities. They have attended recent multiplication events like the Church on the Other Side “Dreaming” seminar in November and Celebration of Church Life in March. Pastor Jim Weick invited conversation in May with the new LMC-EMM partnership to discuss multiplication possibilities. Josh Rivera, at that meeting, indicated the congregation has caught a “multiplication virus.”

Two SafeChurch Cohorts Conclude Child Protection Work
The Harrisburg and Lancaster SafeChurch cohorts completed policy development, training, and compliance with the new Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law. This 11-month process included 25 hours of training for the child protection teams, two hours of congregational training, and three hours of training for volunteers and staff. A total of 15 congregations participated. Congratulations to teams and congregations who invested much to provide a safe environment for children.

Child Protection Policy Development
Twenty-two congregations have completed child protection policies through a new LMC process that brings them into compliance with the new Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law. This 4.5 hour, two-meeting process allows child protection teams to get training and write a policy. When approved by the congregation, they get the policy reviewed by legal counsel and then implement the policy in the congregation. If you have interest in developing a child protection policy, contact Joeslyn Santiago (jsantiago@lancasterconference.org).

New Holland Spanish MC
Last year NHSMC began a campaign to raise funds for a new roof, new doors, a new parking lot and an addition to the building. Currently the roof has been replaced and new doors installed.

Lancaster Conference Youtube Channel
The LMC Youtube channel contains six playlists with 67 videos. The mission church playlist tells some LMC stories of the missional church in action. The Explore the Core re-heated and Sowing Shalom playlists provide the video for both of these curriculum packages. The study guides for these packages are located on the resources page of the LMC website. (lancasterconference.org/resources/conference_developed_resources.php) Can you locate the video with the highest and second highest number of views?

Celebrate Who We Are
In a one-day seminar for leaders of conference-related ministries, conference leaders, and pastors, Lancaster Mennonite Conference and Atlantic Coast Conference celebrated ten years of gathering together. The all-day seminar on April 22 at Garden Spot Village hosted 16 ministers. Rick Stiffney was the resource speaker.

EMM YES Program Ends
On May 21 at Lancaster Mennonite School, Eastern Mennonite Missions eulogized its YES short-term sending program, which is ending after 35 years. Staff and participants gathered to celebrate, lament, and remember EMM’s YES program served as a place where people encountered God and God’s people in fresh ways. Learn more at emm.org/35years. Now EMM is transitioning into new ways of catalyzing missional discipleship, including a renewed mission internship program. Mission internships offer opportunities to learn cross-cultural disciple-making skills that will launch you into a lifetime of ministry. Learn more at emm.org/internship

LifeTree Video
In April, Roger Waumon hosted a showing of the LifeTree Café documentary film When God Left the Building at the Lancaster Mennonite Conference office. The documentary claims the majority of churches in USA are in decline. Weekly church attendance has dropped to 20% of the population. The film prominently featured the unconventional work of churches and organizations that are working to change this trend. Discussion followed the film. The LifeTree café ministry provides some of the organizational framework for the LifeTree Café ministry at Mellingen Mennonite Church. For more information contact Roger at theraza@comcast.net.

Feed My Starving Children
In April, Willow Street Mennonite Church hosted a Feed My Starving Children Mobile Pack Event. The final totals exceeded the goals set for the event. $45,000 was raised to cover the cost of the meal! 1,181 volunteers packed 217,728 meals. This will feed 596 children a nutritious meal a day for an entire year!
CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE:
Bethlehem Community Fellowship

DISTRICT: Weaverland NE-PA
LOCATION: 1417 Marvine St, Bethlehem, PA 18017
DATE OF FOUNDING: 1988
AVERAGE SUNDAY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE: 70
SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE: 10:15 a.m.

PASTOR: James W. Weick

Howard Rice founded Bethlehem Community Fellowship in Bethlehem around 1988. Rice led the congregation until the mid-1990s when he left for missionary work in China. The congregation installed Jim Weick in August 2011. Weick serves with his wife, Alison, and son, Joshua. A core group of about 12 people has grown to more than 70 since that time with a concentration of single “millenials” comprising a large portion of the growth. Bethlehem Community Fellowship prepares young people for vital roles in ministry, and we have already sent out one young couple as “intern pastors” to a nearby congregation. Some former and “becoming former” addicts attend, and the honesty and commitment to Christ and to one another brings freedom and purpose to many.

Recently, one single mom from the community committed her life to Jesus and overcame drug addiction. She found freedom from several prescription drugs and now holds a job. With the help of the Lord and the community, she is an important presence in her children’s lives again! We baptized seven new believers in April, and we are excited to see what is next.

BCF plans to collaborate with a local school this coming academic year in order to help families find Christ and wholeness. In addition, the congregation plans to plant another church in the near future. With a full building, our thought is to plant rather than expand facilities.

Several years ago, our congregation sponsored a refugee family from Iraq. Over the years, this family established itself and settled in the community, and we see them less often. It was a wonderful surprise to see this family at our recent Christmas Eve service and to have them joyfully participate with us in celebrating Christ’s birth.

We believe God is calling our congregation to be a blessing especially to those living within a square mile of our building. Several of us prayer-walk and meet people in our neighborhoods. We experience a warm reception. God calls us to pray for and bless our neighbors whether or not they ever set foot in our building. We view our neighborhood as the parish in which God placed us. God calls us to pray and act as God’s shalom for these people. Some are Old Order Mennonite and Amish. Others come from very different backgrounds, or recently moved to local neighborhoods from urban areas or other countries.

When Andres Prins and Tom Eshleman walked the neighborhood meeting people, a Muslim woman came to the door. We learned that she had moved to the U.S. recently from Morocco. Andres began speaking to her in Moroccan Arabic, a language he speaks after living there for twenty years. A look of amazed delight spread across her face as she heard a greeting in her mother tongue. In this event, Tom glimpsed the surprising encounter of a God who comes near to us through Jesus. When we least expect it, God comes to us and calls out to us in the language of our hearts.

A year ago, we faced a significant need for youth leadership in our congregation. We prayed about this need for an extended time and were blessed to see God’s provision of our youth pastor Austin Horning and for junior youth leaders Brian and Krista Snader. We are experiencing renewed vitality among our youth ministry. We continue to be greatly blessed through a youth ministry partnership with New Holland Spanish Mennonite Church and New Holland Mennonite Church.

Over the past several years, we increased our connections to missionaries serving around the world by hosting families on home-leave in our missionary house. This opened up the world to us in new and energizing ways.

Several years ago, we entered into a partnership with several local counselors who sought to establish a clientele among our Amish and Old Order Mennonite neighbors. Tom Horst and Carol Gingrich meet clients in our building throughout the week. It is not uncommon to see horse and buggies and scooters parked at our building as persons come to receive counseling.

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A small group of leaders gathered to continue the process of teasing out a new partnership between Lancaster Mennonite Conference and Eastern Mennonite Missions at the Spring Leadership Resourcing Day on May 12, 2016. The group gathered in the gym at Alva Church Ephrata. Gerry Keener and Brinton Rutherford reviewed the “Pathways” concept that was introduced at the Celebration of Church Life in March. (“Pathways” is only a temporary marker to describe this concept.) Then the assembled groups rotated through a “World Café” in order to provide responses to the following questions and statements.

1. What other qualifications and skills do the facilitators need to have?
2. Suggest names of potential facilitators.
3. What parameters need to be put around “Pathways” for it to function well?
4. What other questions might you have and how would you answer them?
5. What would people need to know to be attracted to use “Pathways”?
6. Who do you know that would be a good candidate for using “Pathways” and how might this help them?

In reviewing the feedback, the group gave overwhelmingly support for the “Pathways” concept. The responses to the first two items provided a large list of facilitator skills and people to consider. Question 3 generated a lot of counsel for how to make “Pathways” function well. The question about “other questions,” item 4, did not generate as much of a response as expected. But Question 5 provided an immense amount of information to consider. The potential users, item 6, identified by the group was very broad.

Here are some summaries of the feedback.

- facilitators need to be good listeners, have strong discernment skills, have ministry experience, and be passionate about mission.
- keep this a process and prevent it from becoming a program or institution.
- suggested users of the process could be high school seniors, college students, young adults, small churches, families who want to be missional, family ministries, empty nesters, retirees, congregations trying to start new ministries, those wanting to start new communities of faith.

A few questions raised that underscored core issues appear below.

- How are the facilitators vetted? By whom?
- Is there a confessional framework?
- What will be social media’s role or opportunity?
- What is the role of the EMM Board and the Board of Bishops?
- How do you qualify each request to determine if its missional or internal nurturing?
- How are the facilitators vetted? By whom?
- What will be resource database be accessed and who can access it?

LEBANON-MANHEIM DISTRICT BISHOP SEARCH

The Bishop Search Committee of the Lebanon and Manheim districts is now receiving applications for the role of bishop-overseer. We are looking for two or more part-time bishops, possibly working together as a team, to serve the two districts. Responsibilities will include an emphasis on being a pastor to pastors and on empowering congregations for missional engagement. Persons interested in applying can please contact Keith Weaver at kweaver@lancasterconference.org or 717-293-5246 ext. 101.

FACEBOOK PAGES

Did you know that LMC has several Facebook pages? Conference congregations may post events, notices, and other useful information on the pages. Browse by and like the pages.

- facebook.com/LancasterMC
- facebook.com/ChurchOnTheOtherSide
- facebook.com/groups/LMCYouthWorkers/
- facebook.com/ExploreTheCoreReheated/

LMS SEEKS SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOL

Lancaster Mennonite School is seeking an energetic and dynamic leader for the Superintendent position. Founded in 1942, Lancaster Mennonite School is a comprehensive preschool-12 school system rooted in the Anabaptist Mennonite tradition. The school system currently enrolls about 1,500 students on five campuses in Central Pennsylvania. The ideal candidate will demonstrate clear commitment to Anabaptist faith and practice, show excellence in leadership; be oriented to effective listening, communication and collaboration; foster healthy diversity in community; show evidence of personal and emotional maturity; and act as a bridge builder. The Superintendent is expected to assume office sometime in 2016.

Persons of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups are encouraged to apply.

To view application process, position profile and job description visit www.lancastermennonite.org/superintendent.
## Upcoming Events

Complete calendar and more details available at lancasterconference.org.

### Monday Night Prayer Gathering
**Every first Monday of each month**
7–9 p.m.
Conference office, Lancaster, Pa.
717-293-5246

### Worker Commissioning
**Jul 10, 6:30 p.m.**
Willow Street Mennonite Church, Willow Street, Pa.
www.emm.org/events

### Bookworm Frolic
**August 10–13**
www.lmhs.org

### New York City Learning Tour
**October 8–9**
Bronx and Flushing NYC
www.emm.org/events

### Church Violence: Thinking Ahead
**July 20, 7–9:30 p.m.**
Conference office, Lancaster, Pa.
717-293-5246

### Worker Commissioning
**July 10, 2016, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.**
Willow Street Mennonite Church, Willow Street, Pa.
emm.org/summercommissioning

### Bookworm Frolic
**August 10–13**
www.lmhs.org

### New York City Learning Tour
**October 8–9**
Bronx and Flushing NYC
www.emm.org/events

### Church Violence: Thinking Ahead
**July 20, 7–9:30 p.m.**
Conference office, Lancaster, Pa.
717-293-5246

### Friendship Community 44th Anniversary Celebration Dinner
**October 21, 6:30 p.m.**
Shady Maple Banquets, East Earl, Pa.
www.friendshipcommunity.net

### Association of Retired Ministers and Spouses (ARMS) Retreat
**October 25–26**
Black Rock Retreat, Quarryville, Pa.
717-355-0454

### Women’s Regional Assembly
**November 12, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon**
Stumptown Mennonite Church
stumptownmc.org/get-connected/wra/

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**Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?**

— Isaiah 58:6-7 (NIV)