



LMC *a fellowship of anabaptist churches*

Shalom NEWS

APRIL – JUNE 2019



Breaking New Ground

*Experimentation
and Innovation in
Congregations*



CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE: VILLAGE CHAPEL



LMC Prayer Opportunities

First Monday of the Month

Prayer Group at LMC office at 7:00 p.m.

First Friday of the Month

Women's Prayer Group at LMC office at 8:00 a.m.

Quarterly Third Thursday (January, April, July, October)

Prayer Group at Landis Homes

Harvest Room in Harvest View at 7:00 p.m.

See our scheduled events at www.lmcchurches.org/events



April – June 2019

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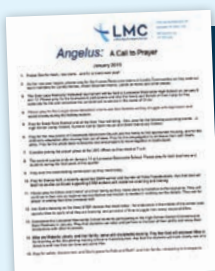
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Angelus – LMC's Monthly Prayer Guide

You can find a printable copy of Angelus at:

www.lmcchurches.org/resources/downloadable-resources

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ON THE COVER:

The Karen Choir from Habecker Mennonite Church performing at Celebration of Church Life. Photo by Jonathan Charles.

A Tale of Two Churches

Two rural/suburban congregations experiment with ways they can work together

BY ROBERT BRODY

How does leadership respond when an aging congregation experiences long-term numeric decline?

What are the options? Close, merge, and restart are common strategies. Two congregations in close proximity to one another, although in two different districts, tackled this problem last year. One congregation reversed a downward spiral. The other has been unable to do so. This is their unfolding and unfinished story.

New Danville was a rural/suburban congregation with a median age that was rising and an average Sunday attendance in the low 80's and in slow, extended decline. In January of 2019, the Sunday attendance at New Danville Mennonite Church was 181. During the course of 2018, we had as many as 200 during the Advent and Christmas season, and as few as 111 during a summer holiday weekend. Annual worship attendance averaged 149 people for 2018.

New Providence Mennonite Church, a village church roughly nine miles southeast of New Danville Mennonite Church, has seen the same aging and decline. Despite great efforts at reaching their community, attendance has been hovering around 25. They have wrestled with their ability to stay open as a congregation for a few years. Like many smaller churches they struggle with an aging congregation that invested many faithful years. More recently they struggle to attract young families and families with children.

What makes these statistics of two churches interesting is that six years ago, through the grace of God and a willingness on the part of the congregation to embrace change and engage the community, New Danville has seen the average weekly attendance increase five out of the last six years. This hasn't come without challenges and, frankly, numeric growth doesn't always equate to spiritual vitality in the church. It's not all about numbers.

Yet the reality is the statistics represent souls on a journey, meeting at a church building, hearing God's Word, and hopefully taking the opportunity to grow closer to, and more like Jesus.



Beaver Valley Brunch at New Providence Mennonite Church.

Below: New Danville Mennonite Church.



New Danville certainly hasn't "arrived" at its destination. They continue to seek the wisdom of God in knowing how to care for those who have joined their family and how to continue to grow and impact their community.

In the midst of this and with a little prodding from Church on the Other Side, the pastors of New Providence and New Danville came together and asked, "Can New Danville partner in some way with New Providence to find a way forward together?" After a number of meetings and discussion by leadership in both churches, the decision was made to explore new possibilities.

Several possibilities have been discussed. New Danville could simply come along-side New Providence and help in ministry areas where New Providence struggled. Other ideas were more radical, such as both congregations becoming a single, new congregation. The two churches would become one



Robert Brody (left), pastor at New Danville, and William Higgins, pastor at New Providence.

church with two physical locations.

As of February, all of the possibilities are still being weighed, however, it is clear that there is a desire for some form of mutual ministry. A team including people from New Danville and New Providence and also several families from the community jointly planned and hosted a test service on Sunday, February 17, advertised as the Beaver Valley Brunch, named after a local highway and creek near the church. The brunch began at 10:00 a.m. with a worship service immediately following.

Over 60 people attended the service including several families looking for a new church home. The congregation and team members are analyzing how it went and possible next steps.

These two congregations face many challenges. For New Danville, they are still growing and learning to be a church that is double the size they used to be, so they are still short on



The joint New Danville District youth group.

workers. For worship music they use pre-recorded songs with live singers some Sundays because of a lack of musicians. They also have a hard time keeping up with the number of children's workers needed since many of the classes are reaching maximum capacity. This partnership could become a distraction, and it could pull resources away. For New Providence, they risk the loss of some traditions in order to attract families with new ideas. They risk inviting new leadership to help shape their future. They are investing in a new way of doing church even though many have served for years and are feeling some fatigue.

Many questions remain to be answered; like, "Can resources be shared effectively?" and "Are there ways for attendees to support both sites?" Despite the challenge of bringing many voices together from different congregations and communities, God can make a way.

There is a bit of precedent for this experiment. Several years ago, the churches of the New Danville District decided to have a combined youth group. There was risk that kids might move from one church to another but that hasn't happened. In fact what started as a youth group that met at the Pastor's house and had just enough students to fit on one couch now consists of about 30 students and an active program throughout the year including mission trips, led by leaders from multiple congregations.

The journey to this point hasn't been perfect. It should be acknowledged that New Danville has seen its share of failures, but that has been part of the process. It may be that this partnership does not last, however, trying at least gives the opportunity for success. As many have learned, even failures handled well can provide new information and learning, and then that leads to new paths, clearer vision and another experiment.

Whether this is the simple renewal of a church or the start of something more has yet to be determined, but it is an opportunity for the church to come together and reach people for Jesus. There are many ways to expand the church and hopefully we will continue to

Despite the challenge of bringing many voices together from different congregations and communities, God can make a way.

start new churches, but we also have many existing congregations and facilities with great, sometimes untapped resources that just need a little help moving in the right direction. Isn't it worth the effort to come together and explore those possibilities? It may require looking at new ways of organizing and administering the church, but it can be done.

Church systems are put in place to support the mission. Systems are not the mission itself. If we cling to and idolize a particular way of being the church, we risk turning our churches into museums and our pastors into curators. This is not a call to re-

If we cling to and idolize a particular way of being the church, we risk turning our churches into museums and our pastors into curators.

move all sacred traditions and things we love, but it is a call to make space for new ways of working together in order to make us effective at reaching others.

2019 will be an interesting journey for these two congregations. All things are possible when partnering with the will of God.

Join us in prayer for New Danville Mennonite Church and New Providence Mennonite Church as they seek a way forward together. ■

Robert Brody is pastor of New Danville Mennonite Church and an LMC bishop.



MULTIPLY: *THE 5-5-5 PLAN*

BY DAVID K. KOCHSMEIER

When our boys were younger, we would play a little game called "I Spy" to help pass the long hours of all six of us trapped in a Honda Odyssey. We would take turns saying, "I spy with my little eye something (a characteristic of that thing, like color)." Then the others would attempt to discover what a little eye has spied.

Do you want to play? Well, I spy with my little eye something brand new. Knowing you are a sharp reader, "That's right. It is a new calendar year." How did you ever guess?

Days pass slowly and years fly by quickly. With another year upon us, it is a fresh opportunity to strengthen our resolve to share the message of salvation through Jesus Christ with those whom we have contact. Our CMC mandate is maturing and multiplying churches locally and globally. To fulfill our mandate, each one must be actively engaged in sharing Jesus.

While preaching through the book of Acts, I was reading Tony Merida's *Exalting Jesus in Acts*, (Christ-centered Exposition Series, B&H Publishing Group, 2017) and discovered a marvelous tool which has become helpful in my desire to share the message of salvation. It is called the 5-5-5 Plan. Allow me to explain it.

The 5-5-5 Plan starts by recognizing most people operate in 5 networks of people. The next step is to identify 5 individuals who are far from God in each of those five networks. The five networks are:

- ▶ **Familial** - This network includes immediate or extended family members.
- ▶ **Vocational** - In this network are the people we work alongside.

- ▶ **Commercial** - The people you do business with are listed in this network. For example, the wait staff at the diner or the parts person at your John Deere dealership.
- ▶ **Geographical** - This network is composed of those who live in the same general area as you. They may be immediate neighbors, but they aren't necessarily.
- ▶ **Recreational** - The individuals in this network are fellow league members or the parents/coaches of your children's sports team.

The last 5 in the 5-5-5 Plan are the five activities you commit to do for each of those twenty-five (25) people. For those individuals on your list, you commit to:

- ▶ Pray for them on a daily basis.
- ▶ Serve them in little ways that make a big difference.
- ▶ Give gospel-centered material to them. Share a social media post with them or give them a book that spoke to you.
- ▶ Invite them to a gospel-centered event.
- ▶ Speak the gospel message to them as appropriate.

May this plan be helpful as you intentionally partner with the Holy Spirit to see people near and dear to your heart become followers of Jesus Christ. ■

David K. Kocksmeier serves as the Senior Pastor of Steel City Mennonite Church, Bethlehem, Pa. He is also the board chairperson of the Rosedale Mennonite Missions.

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Reprinted from CMC Beacon

Una historia de dos iglesias

POR ROBERT BRODY

¿Cómo responde la dirección cuando una congregación que envejece experimenta un declive cuantitativo a largo plazo? ¿Cuáles son las opciones? Cerrar, fusionar y reiniciar son estrategias comunes. Dos congregaciones muy próximas entre sí, aunque en dos distritos diferentes, abordaron este problema el año pasado. Una congregación invirtió una espiral descendente. La otra no ha podido hacerlo. Esta es su historia en desarrollo e inacabada.

New Danville era una congregación rural/suburbana con una edad media que iba en aumento y un promedio de asistencia los domingos de 80 y pocos y en un declive lento y prolongado. En enero de 2019, la asistencia dominical a la iglesia menonita New Danville era de 181 personas. Durante el año 2018, tuvimos 200 durante la temporada de Adviento y Navidad, y solo 111 durante un fin de semana de vacaciones de verano. El promedio anual de asistencia al culto fue de 149 personas en 2018.

La iglesia menonita de New Providence, una iglesia de pueblo a unas nueve millas al sur de New Danville Iglesia Menonita, ha experimentado el mismo envejecimiento y decadencia. A pesar de los grandes esfuerzos para acercarse a su comunidad, la asistencia ha sido de alrededor de 25 personas. Han luchado con su habilidad de permanecer abiertos como congregación por unos cuantos años. Como muchas iglesias más pequeñas, luchan con una congregación que envejece y que invirtió muchos años de fidelidad. Más recientemente, se esfuerzan por atraer a familias jóvenes y familias con niños.

Lo que hace interesantes estas estadísticas de dos iglesias es que hace seis años, a través de la gracia de Dios y una buena voluntad por parte de la congregación para abrazar el cambio e involucrar a la comunidad, New Danville ha visto cómo el promedio de asistencia semanal ha aumentado en cinco de los últimos seis años. Esto no ha sido fácil y, francamente, el crecimiento cuantitativo no siempre es equivalente a la vitalidad espiritual de la iglesia. No todo se trata de números.

Sin embargo, la realidad es que las estadísticas representan a las almas en un viaje, reuniéndose en un edificio de la iglesia, escuchando la Palabra de Dios, y con la esperanza de aprovechar la oportunidad de crecer más cerca y más como Jesús. New Danville ciertamente no ha "llegado" a su destino. Ellos continúan buscando la sabiduría de Dios a la hora de saber cómo cuidar de aquellos que se han unido a su familia y cómo continuar creciendo y teniendo un impacto en su comunidad.

En medio de todo esto y con un poco de presión de la Iglesia del Otro Lado, los pastores de New Providence y New Danville se reunieron y preguntaron: "¿Puede New Danville asociarse de alguna manera con New Providence para encontrar juntos un camino a seguir"? Después de varias reuniones y debates entre los líderes de ambas iglesias, se tomó la decisión de explorar nuevas posibilidades.

Se han planteado varias posibilidades. New Danville podría simplemente acompañar a New Providence y ayudarlo en las esferas del ministerio en las que esta tenía problemas. Otras ideas eran más radicales, como que ambas congregaciones se convirtieran en una sola y nueva congregación. Las dos iglesias se convertirían en una sola iglesia con dos lugares físicos.

A partir de febrero, todas las posibilidades se están sopesando, pero está claro que existe el deseo de algún tipo de ministerio mutuo. Un equipo que incluía gente de New Danville y New Providence y también varias familias de la comunidad planearon y organizaron conjuntamente un servicio de pruebas el domingo 17 de febrero, anunciado como el Beaver Valley Brunch, llamado así por una carretera local y un arroyo cerca de la iglesia. El almuerzo comenzó a las 10:00, con un servicio de adoración inmediatamente después.

Más de 60 personas asistieron al servicio, incluyendo varias familias en busca de una nueva iglesia. La congregación y los miembros del equipo están analizando

cómo les fue y posibles pasos a seguir.

Estas dos congregaciones se enfrentan a muchos desafíos. En cuanto a New Danville, todavía están creciendo y aprendiendo a ser una iglesia que tiene el doble del tamaño que antes, por lo que todavía les faltan colaboradores. Para la música de adoración utilizan canciones pregrabadas, con cantantes en vivo algunos domingos, debido a la falta de músicos. También tienen dificultades para mantenerse al día con el número de niños colaboradores necesarios, ya que muchas de las clases están alcanzando su capacidad máxima. Esta asociación podría convertirse en una distracción y podría atraer recursos. Para New Providence, se arriesgan a perder algunas tradiciones para atraer a las familias con nuevas ideas. Se arriesgan a invitar a nuevos líderes para que les ayuden a dar forma a su futuro. Están invirtiendo en una nueva forma de hacer iglesia, aunque muchos llevan años prestando servicio y sienten cierta fatiga.

Quedan muchas preguntas por responder, como "¿Se pueden compartir los recursos de manera efectiva?" y "¿Hay maneras para que los asistentes ayuden a ambos sitios?" A pesar del desafío de reunir muchas voces de diferentes congregaciones y comunidades, Dios puede encontrar una manera.

Hay algún precedente para este experimento. Hace varios años, las iglesias del Nuevo Distrito de Danville decidieron tener un grupo juvenil combinado. Había riesgo de que los niños se mudaran de una iglesia a otra, pero eso no ha sucedido. De hecho, lo que comenzó como un grupo de jóvenes que se reunía en la casa del pastor y tenía los estudiantes que cabían en un sofá, ahora consta de unos 30 estudiantes y un programa activo a lo largo del año que incluye viajes misioneros, dirigidos por líderes de varias congregaciones.

El viaje hasta aquí no ha sido perfecto. Debe reconocerse que New Danville ha sido testigo de sus fracasos, pero eso ha formado parte del proceso. Sin embargo, es posible que esta asociación no dure mucho tiempo, pero intentarlo al menos da la oportunidad de tener éxito. Como muchos han aprendido, incluso los fracasos bien gestionados pueden proporcionar nueva información y aprendizaje, y luego eso nos lleva a nuevos caminos, a una visión más clara y a otro experimento.

Tanto si se trata de la simple renovación de una iglesia como del comienzo de algo más, aún no se ha determinado, pero es una oportunidad para que la iglesia se reúna y llegue a la gente para Jesús. Hay muchas maneras de ampliar la iglesia y ojalá continuemos comenzando nuevas iglesias, pero también tenemos muchas congregaciones e instalaciones ya existentes con grandes recursos, a veces sin explotar, que solo necesitan un poco de ayuda para avanzar en la dirección correcta. ¿No vale la pena el esfuerzo de reunirse y explorar esas posibilidades? Puede que sea necesario buscar nuevas maneras de organizar y administrar la iglesia, pero se puede hacer.

Se ponen en marcha sistemas eclesiásticos para apoyar la misión. Los sistemas no son la misión misma. Si nos aferramos e idolatramos una manera particular de formar parte de la iglesia, corremos el riesgo de convertir a nuestras iglesias en museos y a nuestros pastores en conservadores. Esto no es un llamado a eliminar todas las tradiciones sagradas y cosas que nos gustan, sino que es un llamado a hacer hueco a nuevas formas de trabajar juntos para que podamos llegar a los demás de manera efectiva.

El año 2019 será un camino interesante para estas dos congregaciones. Todas las cosas son posibles cuando nos asociamos con la voluntad de Dios. Únase a nosotros en nuestras oraciones por la iglesia menonita New Danville y la iglesia menonita New Providence en su búsqueda conjunta de un camino a seguir. ■

Robert Brody es pastor de la Iglesia Menonita New Danville y obispo de LMC.





Making Harbor

BY MONICA NEUFELD

All ages
worshipping
at Harbor.



Chadwick, my husband, and I nurtured the call to start a new church community for about four years. This nurture took place at West End Mennonite Fellowship, our church home since 2005. The leadership at West End Mennonite Fellowship works hard to foster the start of new church communities. Sending people is part of the multiplication DNA there.

For Chadwick and me, leading a small group and leading monthly worship nights were instrumental in our leadership development. A passion for continually encountering the presence of God and a passion for seeing the church function as family grew within us. When we moved to the east side of Lancaster, God began to birth a vision in us for reaching those who haven't encountered God on this side of the city.

So in January of 2018, a group of twelve gathered with us to begin dreaming about what God might be calling this new church to become. We were amazed as God began to align this group and clarify this vision to become a safe place for those who know Jesus and for those who don't know him yet. As the vision grew, so did the group. Then on October 14, 2018, West End sent about twenty adults and as many children to the Bridgeport area of Lancaster. We started by meeting in homes, but, due to growth, we currently meet in the large meeting room at the LMC office on Sunday mornings.

As vision and activity and numbers grew, we started to think about a name to identify our group. It seems unlikely that a little verse tucked into the middle of one of Paul's missionary stories could be the inspiration for the name of a new church community. Acts 27:12a, however, kept sticking in our hearts.

Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there.

What does it mean to be a harbor? What does it mean to be a winter harbor? How could a church community function like a harbor? These and many more questions emerged.

The dictionary literally defines a harbor as *a protected area of water next to land where boats can be safely kept*. A more figurative definition is *a place of refuge, safety, retreat and shelter*.

We considered what happens in a harbor. Sailing vessels of all kinds come and find a place to be repaired, to refuel, and to restock. The crews find rest and refreshment. They connect with those from other ships. And most of all, we recognized that the facilities of a harbor that make it a safe place need to be intentionally created and maintained with effort.

But ships are not meant to remain in harbors. They are designed for the open seas.

In the same way, followers of Jesus are not designed to remain sequestered inside church buildings. We are made to sail the oceans of our communities and to visit places of influence. We make disciples, spread hope, and speak life everywhere we go. The harbor is the place to which we continually return. It is in the harbor that we are inspired as we hear the adventures of the other followers of Jesus. In this place we share the stories of our shipwrecks. We find refuge. We allow our souls to rest, be refreshed and repaired.

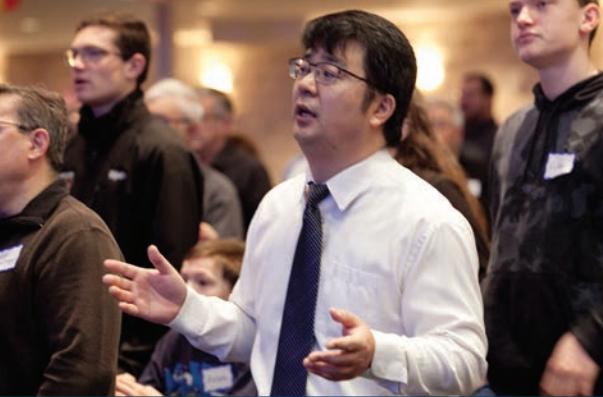
So with the metaphor of harbor stirring in our hearts, Harbor Fellowship was born. Our vision at Harbor Fellowship is to become a family that encounters God's love, responds to his voice, grows to be more like Jesus, and brings His kingdom to every circumstance and relationship. We are excited to see what God will do on the east side of Lancaster as we invite his Kingdom to come. ■

Monica Neufeld leads Harbor Fellowship with her husband Chadwick.



Chadwick teaching on a Sunday morning.





Celebration of Church Life 2019

Celebration of Church Life brings together an amazing group of people each year to worship, pray, teach, learn, discuss, talk, and just have fun together. This group also does a lot of eating together.

Photographs courtesy of Jonathon Charles and Brinton Rutherford.



Village Chapel at play and at worship.



CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE: Village Chapel

In the past year, Village Chapel, along with the Groffdale district, has supported the construction of a new church building in Catel, Guinea Bissau. One of our members, Beryl Forrester, serves there as a missionary. In his nearly 20 years in West Africa, he was instrumental in the formation of the Catel congregation. A little less than a year and a half ago, the Catel congregation met some local persecution. They were forced out of their meeting house. After a long period of meeting in the tiny lobby of the mission clinic; the congregation finally built their own meetinghouse. Through this time of difficulty, the congregation doubled in size, and they are ready to credential their first pastor. Though this story has played out 4,000 miles from our front door, our little church managed to raise thousands of dollars to help our brothers and sisters have a front door of their own.

Village Chapel actively engages the local community. We collect food for the local food bank. We sing Christmas carols through the village, and we invite town residents to join us. Caroling ends at the meetinghouse sharing cookies and fellowship. We take yearly Mennonite Disaster Service trips, which include six to ten people. Groups travel to Honduras and beyond to serve in short-term ministry. From a group of 40 members, a large percentage of people engage in service. When we volunteer at an event, organizers tend to think that we're a much larger congregation because of the number of volunteers who come to help.

In recent years, our congregation has started serving with local addiction ministries. From the passion of a few, a corporate sense of love has blossomed for these brothers who have a difficult battle in front of them. The Spirit has been using these relationships to open our hearts to those that others might ostracize.

We're glad to be a part of LMC, and we very much appreciate the oversight of our bishop, Lloyd Hoover. He exemplifies Christ's love to us and what it means to walk in the Spirit. Together we journey closer to Jesus, trusting, living and inviting others to join us on the way. ■



Youth at Village Chapel.



LEADERSHIP: Tom Philpot (associate pastor), Jeff Horst (lead pastor), and Ellwood Martin (Elder)

FROM AROUND LMC

Congregations who would like to report briefly on events in their congregation should send a descriptive paragraph and a high resolution picture to smartin@LMCchurches.org.

REVISITING THE TRIQUIS OF MEXICO

Lester A. Blank traveled to Mexico, October 15–21, 2018 with a small group



including his sons, Nelson and Paul. They visited the site of the Blank family ministry in the 1960s. The Triquis are an indigenous group with villages

located in the high ranges of the Sierra Madre Mountains in southern Mexico. The ministry, including others besides the Blanks, involved medical aid, teaching the Bible, and translation work. The Triqui churches in three villages have developed into self-governing, self-sustaining and self-propagating churches. We missionaries saw ourselves as facilitators, not leaders. This return trip in 2018 was to renew relationships and to give and receive some encouragement from these dear people. Those goals were truly realized during this visit.

MISSION FESTIVAL

First Mennonite Church, Berne, IN held their annual Mission Festival during the week of Nov. 4–11. This is a much anticipated week in the life of the church. With intentional focus, we enjoy watching the funds roll in until we meet or exceed our financial goal, which helps to support thirteen missionary families and other mission efforts. We exceeded our goal again this year. Input from various speakers inspire the spirit of giving and encourage personal engagement in international missions and local ministries. We heard from Jean Paul Tiendrebeogo from Kingdom Investment International,

Sherie Kizer from our local Agape Re-spite, Bruce Chadwick from the Gideons International, and Troy Landis from Eastern Mennonite Missions.

MODERATOR TRAVELS

Keith Weaver, LMC Moderator, traveled extensively in recent months with several visits to Indiana and Ohio, one to western New York state, and several visits to New York City, one to Philadelphia, and one to Florida. His level of travel has greatly increased in the last two years. As LMC continues to expand, travel is expected to remain high. Technology additions at the LMC office has provided a larger number of options for communications at a distance. ZOOM meetings to include people at a distance are beginning to feel more normal.



FRANKLIN DISTRICT SCHOOL FOR DISCIPLES

From January 26 through February 23, more than sixty people took advantage of a series of Saturday morning learning opportunities in the School for Disciples. Courses ranged from Lessons From Proverbs led by Darrell Baer to Elijah House Prayer Counseling Training taught by Wayne Kuhns. School for Disciples also offered eight hours of Mental Health First Aid training taught by Billy Brick from Brooklane Mental Health Services. Everence personnel Cedric Roth and Beryl Jantzi taught session on End of Life Planning and Financial Counseling. One course from last year was repeated by popular demand; Social Media and the Adolescent Brain taught by Susan Carley from Brooklane Mental Health Services.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNER DELEGATES RETREAT

International Partner Delegates gathered on February 15 and 16 at the MCC Welcoming Place. These delegates foster and nurture relationships between LMC and global church groups connected with EMM. Tom Eshelman, Steve Shank, Gerry Keener and Glenn Kauffman from our Global Delegate steering team facilitated the event. A major goal of the event was to encourage one another as people of hope through Jesus. The group sought to look back and see the redemptive ways of God in situations that were overwhelming as we experienced them.

EVERENCE STEWARDSHIP UNIVERSITY

Stewardship University took place on March 2 at Calvary Church, Lancaster, Pa. Participants learned ways to use their time, talents, money, health and relationships in a God-honoring life of holistic stewardship.

CONFERENCE-RELATED MINISTRIES

Conference Related Ministries met on March 29 at Garden Spot Village, New Holland, Pa. With Conrad Kanagy as the primary resource speaker, this seminar brought together local congregations and church related ministries to continue a process of learning from data collected last year. Last year's data showed that very few pastors were sufficiently aware of organizations that resource congregations. The data also suggested pastor interest in learning more might increase if they saw the organization help them fulfill God's mission in their local communities. So this year, focus groups were conducted prior to the seminar. The assembled group then grappled with the focus group data.

CELEBRATION OF CHURCH LIFE REPORT

LMC received 6 congregations at the annual Celebration of Church Life on March 16 at Petra Church, New Holland, Pa. Participants were offered a selection of 32 seminars from which to choose. Marvin Lorenzana, plenary speaker, provided a salient challenge to LMC in this time of geographic expansion with churches joining and new church multiplication.

CHILD PROTECTION REMINDER

Child Protection Teams are encouraged to keep their policies up to date and in force. Keep all personnel checks within the five-year window. Execute any training regimen your policy requires. If your congregation does not have a Child Protection policy, contact the LMC office to learn how you can put a policy in place.

WORLD FELLOWSHIP SUNDAY

As a participating group with Mennonite World Conference, LMC congregations have the opportunity to celebrate with congregations around the world. The date for MWC Sunday was set to commemorate the first known Anabaptist rebaptisms in Zurich, Switzerland, January 21, 1525. Commemoration typically takes place on January 20 or 27, the two Sundays closest to January 21 this year. However, LMC staff suggests churches commemorate the day as a fellowship on July 14 for 2019. Part of our participation in MWC requires a Fair Share Commitment to MWC in 2019 of \$60,000. LMC staff encourage congregations to take an offering for MWC as part of the global celebration and forward it on to MWC as an LMC contribution. Bishop and pastors received a packet of material from MWC to aid in the planning of World Fellowship Sunday. Pastors are asked to facilitate this commemoration in order to build the relational connection between LMC congregations and the global Anabaptist community.

LMC staff suggest the following options for participation:

1. Congregational pulpit announcement, bulletin notice, and special offering to MWC.
2. Portion of service—10-15 minutes—to highlight the Global Anabaptist Church. The focus for 2019 is Latin America and the Caribbean. LMC has churches in both areas, and special offering to MWC.
3. Special service using the worship resources provided by MWC and developed by leaders in Latin America and the Caribbean. LMC has churches in both areas. Special offering to MWC.

RESOURCING ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations wanting an LMC connection as a resource partner should contact the LMC office. Organizations are asked to select a category of participation based on the level of connection they want to LMC. This new process for discerning and selecting a level of connection can be entered into at any time and is renewed annually in February of each year. To gain full benefit of the partnership at Celebration of Church Life in the first year of the agreement, the process needs to be in place by November of the previous year.

LMC MISSION

The Conference Executive Council instituted a six-month process to revisit and possibly refresh the statement of LMC mission. The current mission and vision statements are twenty years old. Pastors will respond to a brief questionnaire to gather some current data on how leaders are seeing and understanding the direction of LMC into the future. A small team will then work with that data and bring materials to the Leadership Assembly in September for further processing. Effort will be taken during 2020 to diffuse the work across LMC districts.

EVERENCE EXPANDS PROGRAM

Beginning in 2019, Everence expanded its Pastoral Financial Assistance Program to credentialed and active pastors from other Anabaptist and like-minded denominations and church networks. Similar to the pilot, the expanded program will include:

- ▶ Direct financial assistance grants to help alleviate debt burdens such as educational, medical and credit card debt. Grants are available to pastors who have not previously received direct financial assistance grants as part of the program.
- ▶ Financial education events focused on topics such as retirement planning readiness, debt reduction, financial planning, and clergy taxes.
- ▶ Financial planning subsidies toward the cost of a first-year Everence comprehensive financial plan.

LMC END OF YEAR FINANCES

LMC finished the February-January fiscal year with a positive balance. This provided the necessary encouragement to expand staff slightly in 2019 with one, new, part-time position.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Complete calendar and more details available at LMCchurches.org.

Monday Night Prayer Gathering Every first Monday of each month 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

LMC office, Lancaster, Pa.
717-293-5246

Thursday Night Quarterly Prayer Meeting

April 18, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Harvest Room, Landis Homes, Lititz, Pa.
717-293-5246

LMC Youth Worker Monthly Breakfast Every fourth Tuesday of each month 8:00 – 9:30 a.m.

Lyndon City Diner, Lancaster, Pa.
facebook.com/groups/LMCYouthWorkers

Orientation for Newly Credentialed Leaders

April 17, 7:00 p.m.

LMC office, Lancaster, Pa.
lmchurches.org/newly-recently-credentialed-leaders-orientation

Children's Ministry Resourcing

April 27, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m.

LMC office, Lancaster, Pa.
eventbrite.com/e/the-sacred-commission-childrens-ministry-leader-event-tickets-56657208235

STEP Graduation

May 11, ceremony starts at 1:30 p.m.

Elizabethtown MC
300 S. Spruce Street, Elizabethtown, Pa.

Global Fair

July 13, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

1719 Hans Herr House, Willow Street, Pa.

STEP Orientation

August 24, 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

LMC office, Lancaster, Pa.

Fall Leadership Assembly

September 28, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Details TBA
Save the Date

Help us make Global Fair happen!

July 13

Hans Herr House, Willow Street, Pa.

Celebrate summer with international culture and flavor at EMM's biggest event of the year. Join in the fun and excitement by volunteering for the big day!

SIGN UP

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STEP
a ministry of LMC

STEP is a 3-year leadership training program that has been enriching the ministries of LMC leaders for 14 years. Earn transferrable undergraduate credit, meeting one Saturday a month September – May.

To learn more, visit:
LMCchurches.org/ministries/step