



LMC *a fellowship of anabaptist churches*

# Shalom NEWS

JULY–SEPTEMBER 2023



## Celebration of Church Life 2023

*Leaning into Discovery*



# RADIX

MISSIONAL  
ANABAPTIST  
TRAINING

## Missional Anabaptist Resources Now Available

In the 16th century, the Radical Reformers — also known as the Anabaptists — looked to the “roots” of the church as their inspiration. The term “radical” comes from the Latin word “radix” which means “root.” The early Anabaptists wanted to see the kingdom of God restored to a kingdom that was not of this world — but a kingdom that transcended national, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.

Following in this stream, we are passionate about equipping and training the church around the world with missional Anabaptist resources. EMM and LMC designed Radix as an online learning platform to fulfill this vision.

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- ✓ Hero Maker
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- ✓ Discipleship Fundamentals
- ✓ What is APEST?

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**July–September 2023**

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 [facebook.com/LMCchurches](https://facebook.com/LMCchurches)

### ON THE COVER

Large photo: Conference members in worship during Celebration of Church Life at Petra Church. Photo by Jonathan Charles.

Small photo: Adalberto Santiago, LMC Conference Minister, ministering over Celebration of Church Life attendees during a prayer altar call. Photo by Sherri Martin.



# God's Creative Design

## An Interview with Artist Brenda Blank

### Where did you begin your journey into creativity and the arts?

My journey with creativity begins with God, the Creator of everything. Because God created us in His image, I believe it also means a seed of creativity is planted in our DNA. People are creators too, created to recreate beauty and reflect His glory here on earth.

As a young girl, I enjoyed drawing, and I remember entering art pieces in the local farm show competitions. Throughout my school days, art was one of my favorite classes. While attending Lancaster Mennonite High School, I was also interested in taking drafting and architectural design, but that was during an era when young men typically took those classes. Being a young woman, I remember walking past the tech classrooms wishing I could be one of those learning the skills of building and design.

Likewise, art education at the college level did not seem like an acceptable option. The cultural differences between my upbringing in the Mennonite church and the School of Arts seemed too wide to bridge. In my local context, it felt like the arts were approached with unspoken skepticism instead of celebration. After graduating high school, my leanings toward art were used at the local Christian bookstore, where I was head of the arts and crafts department. Then after a couple of years of overseas mission work, I married Keith Blank, and we raised a family together. I continued to believe that the works of our hands, whether drawing a picture, cooking a meal, building a bridge, or planting a garden, are all artistic expressions of God's creative work in us.



### What happened next that changed the course of your art ministry?

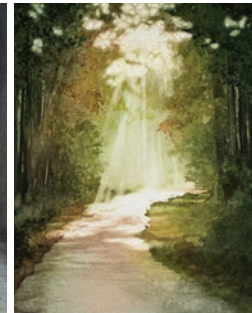
In 2014, while Keith was serving as pastor at Mountville Mennonite Church, we became friends with a local artist and his wife, who attended the weekly Saturday pancake breakfast. During a conversation, they gave me the contact information of another local artist who taught watercolor classes. I immediately inquired about the classes and was instantly hooked on watercolor painting. I continue to be a student in the class to this day. My surroundings inspire me; open fields, rural buildings, trees, streams, and gardens continue to capture attention in my art.

### How were you inspired to paint the pieces titled – *The Invitation*, *Just Follow*, and *Always More* in 2016?

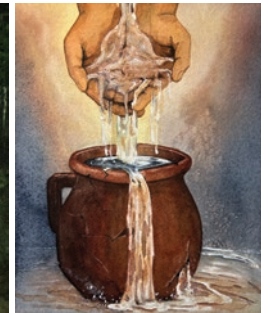
At times, during worship or prayer, I see images in my mind's



*The Invitation*



*Just Follow*



*Always More*

eye that I will later sketch with the intention to paint at some point. I eventually shared these particular ones with my art instructor, who recommended combining them into a triptych. The idea of displaying three spiritually significant pictures side by side in a triptych appealed to me.

### How do you feel about the LMC's interpretation of your triptych in the context of a Spirit-led movement?

I trust that God will fulfill His purposes for LMC in a creative and beautiful way that transcends personal stories and cultural boundaries. I sometimes call my paintings "my babies." It's as if they are born through me, but then I am happy to release them to others and God. My ultimate goal is to allow God to use this work of my hands to speak to others. I never want to censor or restrict how God might choose to speak through what I have painted.

### Do you have final words to leave with our readers?

Introducing others to Jesus through our lives and what we do is our great calling. We must trust Him to do that through our skills and interests. He will be faithful as he leads us and provides us with everything we need. ■

*Brenda is a self-taught watercolor artist from Lancaster, PA who gets her inspiration from the everyday scenes surrounding her. She likes to capture light and shadow using earthy colors in much of her work. Always experimenting with various techniques, she enjoys the challenge in finding balance between control and allowing the picture to paint itself. See more of her work at [facebook.com/BJBlank](https://facebook.com/BJBlank) or [instagram.com/bjblankart/](https://instagram.com/bjblankart/).*





## FROM THE EDITOR: About this Issue of *Shalom News*

LMC gathered at Petra Church on March 31 and April 1, 2023, for the Spring Leadership Assembly and Celebration of Church Life. The missional conference included worship, equipping, and fellowship focusing on becoming “A Holy Spirit-led movement to make disciples of Jesus.” The plenary sessions celebrated LMC’s mission to make disciples of Jesus. They were inspired and framed by the paintings titled: *The Invitation*, *Just Follow*, and *Always More*.

On the previous page is a behind-the-scenes interview with Artist Brenda Blank. The following pages are filled with photos and words that capture the heart of the celebration. May we all be inspired to follow Jesus more deeply and faithfully in the Holy Spirit-led movement.



### MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS

LMC Spring Leadership Assembly  
& Celebration of Church Life



Photos by Jonathan Charles





# The Invitation

God invites us into communion with Him. Jesus spoke these words, "Come to Me all who are weary and heavily burdened [by religious rituals that provide no peace], and I will give you rest [refreshing your souls with salvation]." (Matthew 11:28 AMP)

When we accept this invitation and get to know Him, we experience His love, grace, and goodness. Our lives are transformed into His image. (II Corinthians 3:12-18)

As we are washed with this great Love, fully expressed in Jesus the Son, we cry out, "My Saviour and My Lord." Our aspiration to live in the declaration that Jesus is Lord cannot be realized unless we encounter and know the Holy Trinity. So, the invitation is before us. Hear the Lord saying, "Come to Me!"

## For Reflection

- ▶ Ponder the painting of the door: What is seen and unseen in this invitation?
- ▶ How will you come into His divine presence for transformation?

## FROM THE ARTIST

*"The Invitation suggests that everyone is invited into God's presence. God wanted me to know that in Him love and acceptance are abundant beyond what I can ask or imagine."*

**Spring Leadership Assembly & Celebration of Church Life 2023**

Videos at LMC  
YouTube page

**LMC**  
a fellowship of anabaptist churches

### Missed the Event? Videos Are Available Online!

CCL videos are posted via the LMC Youtube channels. In addition to ASL interpretation, closed captions are available.



To view the Spring Leadership and CCL videos, go to: [www.youtube.com/@2160LMC](https://www.youtube.com/@2160LMC)





## CCL Seminars Included:

*Discovering the Discovery Bible Study* – Dave Houser.

*Dinner Church, and Other Fresh Expressions of Community* – Felixa Kunkle and Robert Brody.

*Leading the Discovery Series: A Practical, Discipleship Course (LMC)* – Daryl Weaver.

*How to share the story of the Old and New Testament* – William Higgins.

*Having Fun Living Our Faith: Our experience hosting a community outreach event* – Joy Fasick, Roger Myers, and Rod Petersheim.

*Evangelism and Discipleship: How We Can Do Both* – Nate Thorne.

*Questions Jesus Asked* – Marcia Mylin.

*How do I handle conflict between me and people of other cultures?* – Karl McKinney.

*Guiados por el Espíritu Santo* – Adalberto Santiago.

*APEST Culture* – Marvin Lorenzana.

*Passionate Incarnational Witness* – Jonathan Bornman.

*Ways to share your faith and make disciples* – Al Motley.

*Fruitful Discipleship* – Jim Weick.

*The Art of Spiritual Care – “Process of Becoming”* – Sandra Granthon-Roman.

*GROWING SMALL: Creative ideas and stories for missional projects in your community* – Lynn Shertzer.

*Become a Spirit-Led Missionary in Your Own Backyard ... Say What?!* – Jackie Hibshman and Kevin Dodge.

... and many more!



Photos by Jonathan Charles





# Just Follow

Jesus's first words to His disciples were, "Come follow me!" He later told them to go and make disciples of all nations. If we have not first encountered Jesus and fallen in love with the "Word who became flesh," we cannot partner with Him in making disciples. We must learn to hear His voice, trust Him to guide us, and follow wherever He may lead us. He modeled the importance of an intimate relationship with the Father so that we, like Jesus, might "do only the things we see the Father doing." (*John 5:19-20*)

Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you and from Me [following Me as My disciple], for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (*Matthew 11:20 AMP*)

## For Reflection

Hear the Lord saying, "Come follow Me!"

- ▶ Ponder the painting of the path: Have you heard His call to follow?
- ▶ Do you trust Him to guide you even when you don't know where it will lead you?

## FROM THE ARTIST

*"Just Follow recognizes that I am on a journey. Navigating the path can often be difficult because I do not always see the next step or know where it leads. But God knows all things and I must learn to trust that he will light the next step as I take one in obedience."*

## How would you lean into prayer for LMC in the next year?

"For congregations to have and bless young families." – Dan Sauder

"For LMC to continue to hear God's call and completely follow Jesus." – Jedd Cassel

"Pray for our leaders." – Paola Sanchez

"Ask God for more workers to go." – Joe Hollinger

"To understand the cultures and experience more of life together. Please pray for CIES as part of LMC."  
– Daniel Sanchez

"For LMC to grow together in love and unity."  
– Joseph & Susan Allen

"To continue to embrace the future without fear of letting go of the things that we know."  
– Jeremy Tuel

"Pray for courage." – Jim Weick

"Pray for revival among our children and teens. Acts 2:28" – Jonathan Piña

"Pray for faith and courage to take the next step in obedience when it doesn't look doable."  
– Margie Peters

"Pray for God's eyes to see and ears to hear."  
– Dale Rintelman

"Pray for us to be faithful to follow Jesus as Lord and not go off track." – Allen Hunsberger





## Quotes from CCL Participants

"There was a pregnant sense of the presence of the Lord."

"I attended with two people who haven't attended an LMC event in many years. To hear them reflecting on and celebrating the huge shift was a highlight. There were many different ages, races, and languages present. They could see that LMC is changing."

"The parents seemed happy with the children's registration and activity schedule. It would be good to get more youth involved."

"The opportunity to connect and celebrate is quite valuable and precious and is being missed by a lot of our leaders and congregations."

"Relationships were key. People interacted well with each other."

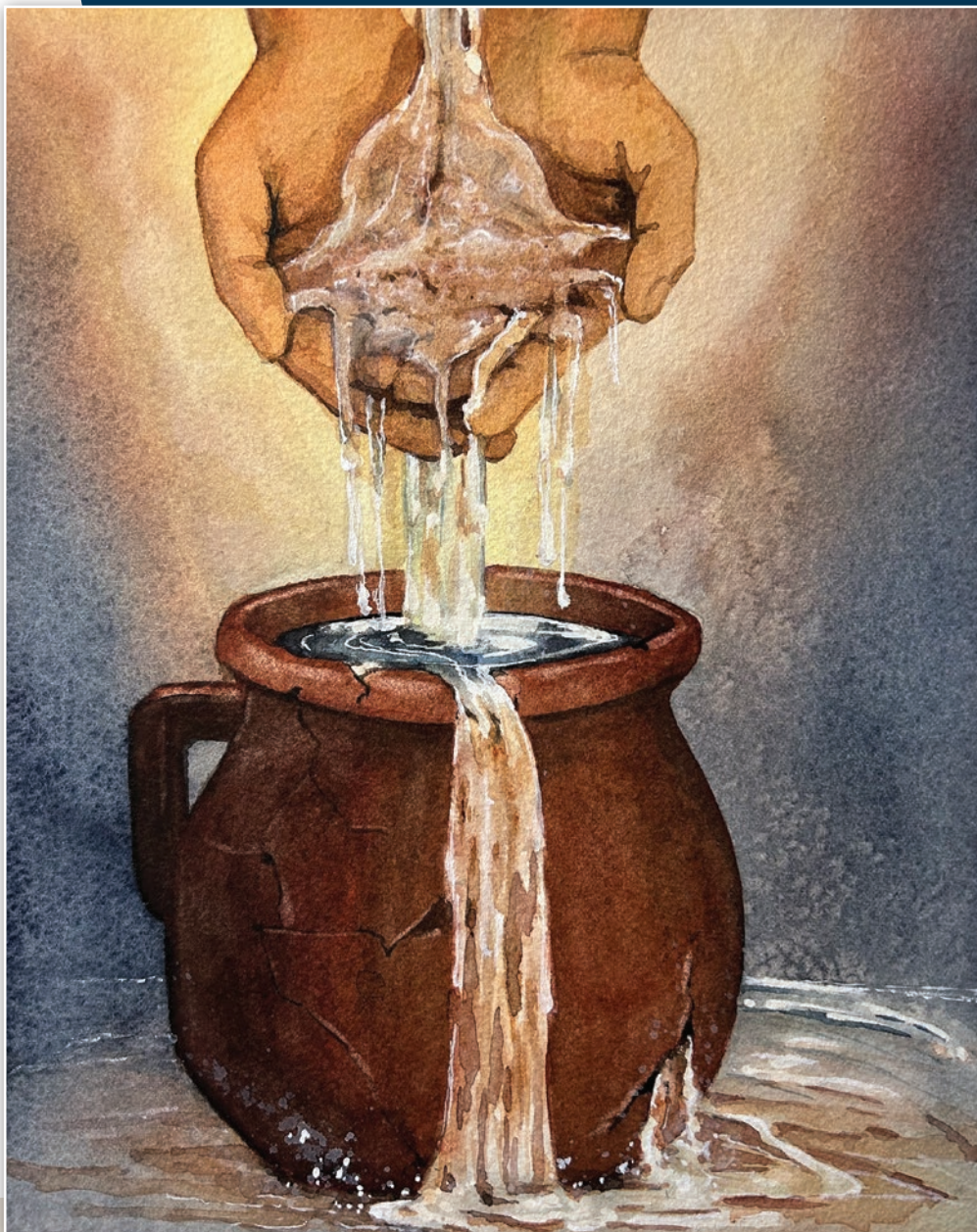
"Appreciated the food. Thankful for the gluten-free options."

"Excellent worship!"

"Feel free to charge. It's easy to neglect something you don't charge for."

"Good fellowship and energy. High level of engagement. People coming together from different places."

"Worship was a highlight - new languages, new songs. Those who were leading were drawing everyone in."



Photos by Jonathan Charles





# Always More

Walking with Jesus, we discover that God pours abundant grace into our lives. The flow of grace never ends. We are leaky vessels like clay jars that are cracked and broken. (II Corinthians 4:6-12 AMP)

But there is always more of His grace. Even in our brokenness, He uses and fills us. (II Corinthians 12:9-11)

## For Reflection

Filled with His love and grace, we are joined with others in the Body of Christ to fulfill the work of the Kingdom. Hear the Lord saying, "Come live in My grace!"

- ▶ Ponder the painting of the clay jar. What do you notice?
- ▶ How is the Lord's grace flowing through your brokenness? Individually? In community?

## FROM THE ARTIST

*"Always More helps me visualize an ocean filled with the grace of God which flows to me with an unending supply. Being human, I am broken and cracked but I am continually being filled with God's grace so there is no need to worry if I will have enough grace for the future. There is always more."*



## ASL at CCL 2023

LMC Celebration of Church Life's (CCL) Plenary Sessions included American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation by Jim Schneck from Weaverland Anabaptist Faith Community. A previously written article by Debra Hoffer from



First Deaf Mennonite Church can be found at [lmcchurches.org/2022/02/lmcs-mission-for-many-languages-american-sign-languages/](https://lmcchurches.org/2022/02/lmcs-mission-for-many-languages-american-sign-languages/) or by scanning the QR code.





## Discovery Bible Study

### *The People of God, with the Word of God, Hearing the Spirit of God*

BY KEITH BLANK, BISHOP ELDERS TEAM

In this next season, let's grow as a Spirit-led movement and embark together on a journey of discovery. Let's deepen our times of "Dwelling in the Word" to not only notice but also discern and respond to the Spirit of God inviting us into the next step with Him. Let's join a movement practice used in vast and various ways worldwide called "Discovery Bible Study."

**Discovery** – What is it that we want to discover? We long to be with God and sense His communicating presence in our personal times of connecting and in our corporate times of sharing and worship. We want to discover and cultivate an ever-deepening relationship with the fullness of God in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We also want to discover more and more of what it means to walk in communion with God each step along the way, be empowered by the Holy Spirit that dwells within us, and then live out what we hear from the Word in the community of God's people.

**Bible** – In a focused way, we want to connect with God and one another around the Scriptures, allowing the Holy Spirit to empower us in our reception of God's great love for us and God's call for each of us to walk in the power of the Spirit so our lives are transformed bit by bit to reflect more of Jesus.

**Study** – Is not about preparing for a test, like a school, where the knowledge is crammed into our minds. Instead, it is about diligence and priority to being formed as a People of God around the Word of God who hear and respond to the Spirit of God. Priority to profound encounters with the fullness of God in Father, Son, and Spirit so that we can truly be transformed.

As a way of embarking on this journey together, we are inviting the people of LMC, in faith, to begin meeting in clusters (preferably less than ten persons) to participate in Discovery Bible Study. The goal is to hear the Holy Spirit speak to us as we gather around God's Word. How that is done can



Bishop Hyacinth Stevens leaning in and sharing personal reflections with the Scriptures during Discovery Bible Study small group discussions. Photo by Sherri Martin.

vary. One way to proceed through a Discovery Bible Study is proposed below:

- ▶ **Connect** – What are you thankful for? What is a challenge you are facing? How did you do with last week's "I will" statement? How can I support/pray for you (How can I help)?
- ▶ **Discover** – Read the passage. Have someone put it in their own words. What stands out to you? What does this text say about God? What does this text say about people?
- ▶ **Go** – How can you specifically put into practice what the Holy Spirit of God is inviting you to in this passage in the next few days? Focus this thought by creating an "I will..." commitment statement. Tell the group. Who are you going to tell about what you discovered in the next week?

#### Three questions to be attentive to:

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?
2. What is the Holy Spirit showing you to do?
3. How can we support and pray for you? ■



#### Learn More About Discovery Bible Study

For more in-depth resources about Discovery Bible Studies, including a free phone app, instructions and sample Bible study lists, visit the Discovery App website at [discoverapp.org/discovery-bible-study](http://discoverapp.org/discovery-bible-study) or scan the QR code.





# NEWS NOTES

## CREDENTIALING REPORT

In recent months, the following men and women were licensed, ordained, or installed:

**Patrick Ward** (*Lori*) was licensed for specific ministry as a chaplain to first responders from the New Danville District in Pa.

**Reginaldo Hill & Celia Cardoza-Hill** were ordained as lead pastor and associate pastor at Ministerios Peniel Internacional in Ephrata, Pa.

**Daniel Ray & Maria Nissley-Ray** were licensed toward ordination as associate pastors at Wilkens Avenue Mennonite Church in Baltimore, Md.

**Jason Strauss** (*Sara*) was licensed toward ordination as associate pastor at New Life Mennonite Church in Ellicott City, Md.

**Endalk Degefu** (*Tigrest*) was licensed toward ordination as pastor/church planter of Christ's Peace Missionary Church in Va.

**Joseph Alexander** (*Laurel*) was licensed toward ordination as youth pastor at Capital Christian Fellowship in Langham, Md.

**Kelly Martin** (*Sherry*) was installed as lead pastor at Goodville Mennonite Church in Goodville, Pa.

**Ray Burkholder** (*Karen*) was ordained as a deacon at Cambridge Mennonite Church in Gordonville, Pa.

**Dean Sauder** (*Doris*) was ordained as lead pastor at Sunnyside Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

**Matthew Bye** (*Jeanne*) was ordained as lead pastor at Byerland Mennonite Church in Willow Street, Pa.

**Adam Shank** (*Bonnie*) was ordained as associate pastor at North Lima Mennonite Church in North Lima, Ohio.

**Tika Gurung** (*Arati*) was ordained as lead pastor at Vishva Jyoti Church in Akron, Ohio.

## WOMEN'S GLOBAL VILLAGE – FROM THE MARGINS TO THE MARKETPLACE TOGETHER



Women's Global Village believes in the vision of empowering immigrant women. Elizabeth Soto and community volunteers gather with immigrant women weekly as they engage in healing arts, sewing, learning English, and telling their stories. Childcare is provided. On April 26, a graduation ceremony was held at HUB 450 for the twenty-five women who completed the twelve-week program.

## STEP GRADUATION 2023

Saturday, May 20, 2023, at HUB450, eight students graduated from STEP (Study and Training for Effective Pastoral Ministry). Jeremy Ernest (Tressler Mennonite), Jason Hoover (Carpenter Community), Dan Klinger (Elizabethtown Mennonite), Tim Mello (Agape Fellowship), Ethan Meyers (Mercersburg Mennonite), Ben Simcox (Slate Hill Mennonite), Rick Socks (Bethel Community), and Dale Zimmerman (Weaverland Anabaptist Faith Community), received 30 undergraduate credits from EMU and a certificate in pastoral studies. Bishop Brian Martin was the graduation speaker.



## CONCILIO DE IGLESIAS EVANGÉLICAS SHALOM (CIES) – FIRST ASAMBLEA DE RECURSOS AND GRADUATION

Saturday, May 27, 2023, CIES leaders and their families gathered for the first CIES Asamblea de Recursos at Weaverland Mennonite Church in Ephrata, Pa. The theme focused on Identity and Unity, "Por lo que todos se unen" John 17:21. The full-day celebration included programs for adults, children, and youth and the first graduation for CIES Obreros Cristianos (Christian Workers) ministry leadership training. The graduates included: Aida Rosado, Moisés De Jesús and Jorge Páez.

## LANDISVILLE-MANOR DISTRICT CONGREGATIONS UNITE FOR SPECIAL CHURCH SERVICE

Saturday, May 7, 2023, Living Light Mennonite Church and Millersville Mennonite Church united together to welcome Pastor Pedro Moreira from Brazil to share a special sermon on the power of prayer (Mervin Charles translated). Pastro Pedro shared how over 40,000 people came to hear about Jesus in one of the most dangerous areas in Brazil—through the power of a small number of Christians, including himself, praying for God to make a way. It was an impactful service.





# UPCOMING EVENTS

Complete calendar and more details available at [LMCchurches.org](http://LMCchurches.org).

## LMC Women's Prayer Gathering

**Every first Friday of each month  
8:00 a.m.**

LMC at 450 N. Prince St. Lancaster, Pa.  
717-293-5246 ext. 114 for more  
information

## Prayer for the Nations

**Every first and third Tuesday of  
the month**

EMM/Hub450 at 450 N. Prince Street,  
Lancaster, Pa.  
Questions? Contact [Becca@hub450.org](mailto:Becca@hub450.org)

## LMC/EMM Quarterly Prayer Meeting

**July 20, 2023**

**7:00 p.m.**

West Community Room, Landis Homes,  
Lititz, Pa.  
717-293-5246 ext 102

## LMC Fall Leadership Assembly

**September 30, 2023**

**8:00 a.m.**

East Petersburg Mennonite Church  
More at [LMCchurches.org](http://LMCchurches.org)

## Mennonite Life – Annual Storytelling Night

**August 7, 2023**

**7:00 p.m.**

Landisville Mennonite Church  
Lancaster, Pa.

## Mennonite Life – Annual Maize & Snitz Market Fair

**September 30, 2023**

1719 Museum  
Willow Street, Pa.  
More at [mennonitelife.org](http://mennonitelife.org)



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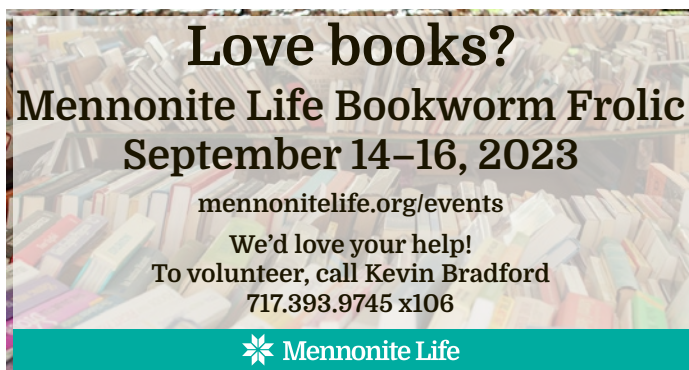
 **FRIENDSHIP COMMUNITY**  
presents  
Irvin C. Enck Memorial  
**GOLF TOURNAMENT**  
Thursday, September 14, 2023, 7:30am  
**FOXCHASE GOLF CLUB**  
[FriendshipCommunity.net/Golf](http://FriendshipCommunity.net/Golf)




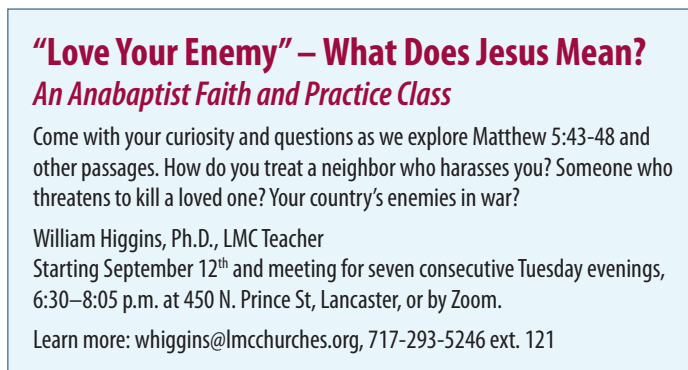
 **LANDIS HOMES**  
**FELLOWSHIP DAY**  
Saturday, September 16th, 10:30 am - 2:00 pm

 Live Quilt Auction • Chicken & Pulled Pork BBQ • Crafters Tent • Yard Sale • Kid's Activities • So Much More!

**ONLINE VIRTUAL AUCTION: [LandisFellowshipDay.org](http://LandisFellowshipDay.org)**  
*Auction Opens September 11-16*  
1001 East Oregon Road, Lititz PA | [LandisHomes.org](http://LandisHomes.org)



**Love books?**  
**Mennonite Life Bookworm Frolic**  
**September 14-16, 2023**  
[mennonitelife.org/events](http://mennonitelife.org/events)  
We'd love your help!  
To volunteer, call Kevin Bradford  
717.393.9745 x106  
 **Mennonite Life**



**"Love Your Enemy" – What Does Jesus Mean?**  
***An Anabaptist Faith and Practice Class***

Come with your curiosity and questions as we explore Matthew 5:43-48 and other passages. How do you treat a neighbor who harasses you? Someone who threatens to kill a loved one? Your country's enemies in war?

William Higgins, Ph.D., LMC Teacher  
Starting September 12<sup>th</sup> and meeting for seven consecutive Tuesday evenings, 6:30–8:05 p.m. at 450 N. Prince St, Lancaster, or by Zoom.  
Learn more: [whiggins@lmchurches.org](mailto:whiggins@lmchurches.org), 717-293-5246 ext. 121