



LMC *a fellowship of anabaptist churches* Shalom NEWS

JANUARY–MARCH 2025



'Liminality & Communitas' ... What?
Stepping Out into a Shared Mission Together

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up..."

—1 Thessalonians 5:11



LMC Youth Leaders' Retreat

Friday, February 28 at 6 p.m. – Saturday, March 1 at 6 p.m.

Come join us for a time of support and encouragement for ALL who work with youth. Everyone who is passionate about reaching teens with the love of Jesus Christ are welcome to come and learn together! Spouses are invited as well. You will be given practical ideas, resources, and opportunities for restoration, connection, and collaboration.

Where: MCC Welcoming Place
21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501

Cost: \$100 per person, or \$175 per couple, accommodation included. For participation without accommodation, the cost is \$50 per person.

Spanish translation is available!



Register by February 14, 2025

lmcchurches.org/2025-lmc-youth-leaders-retreat/



January–March 2025

Issue 1 / Volume 45

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Questions or comments can be directed to smartin@LMCchurches.org



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ON THE COVER

Main photo: Gathering together for corporate, multi-generational prayer at Mosaic of Grace Church.

Small photo: House church gathering from East Petersburg Mennonite Church.

On Mission Together

Embracing Risk and Challenge with Others

BY MERCEDES THOMAS

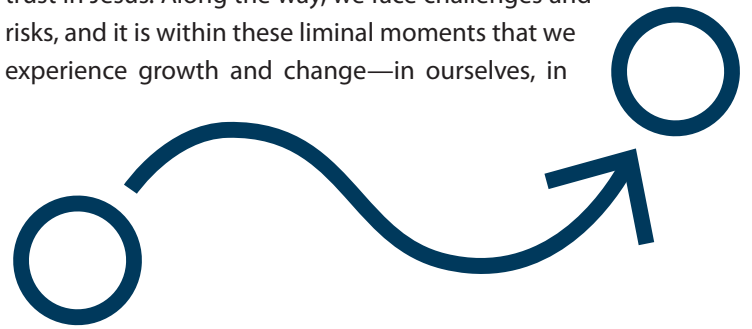
I met Jesus at eighteen sitting on the dusty floor of a retreat center. I had started my freshman year of college depressed, lonely, and looking for meaning. And that's where Jesus found me, at a turning point of my life where I was looking back at what my life had been and looking forward to what my life could be.

My college years were a flurry of activity. I went to get my bachelors degree, and I graduated with that and so much more—a new-formed hope and purpose as a child of God. I spent days on campus going to my classes, studying in the library, and hanging out with friends. I also spent my time handing out water and snacks to other students heading to the bars, sharing my faith with my classmates, and standing beside my peers of all faiths when extremist groups came onto campus to yell obscenities at us. And through every experience, I formed deep bonds with those in my campus ministry as we shared the joys and trials of living on mission together on a secular campus.

I didn't have the language for it at the time, but I now know I was experiencing what Christian thought leader Alan Hirsch calls liminality and *communitas*. While it may sound confusing or overly academic, the concept is actually quite

simple: in moments of liminality—moments where you're on the unknown threshold of what was and what is to come—you form strong comradery with those you journey with (*communitas*).

In other words, *communitas* is more than just being together with others in community; *communitas* is a group of people banded together around a shared mission. This mission is the mission of Christ, to share the message of Jesus and see every nation, tribe, and tongue come to know and trust in Jesus. Along the way, we face challenges and risks, and it is within these liminal moments that we experience growth and change—in ourselves, in



This graphic is a depiction of liminality and *communitas*. As we leave the known (first circle) and step out in the unknown (the squiggly line), we journey together on mission into what God has for us (second circle).

Below: Members of the Gaming Grounds missional community. Photos provided by the author.



our communities, and in our world.

It is also in these moments that I believe we truly and deeply experience the presence of God.

If there is an ideal example of liminality and *communitas* lived out, we need to look no further than Jesus and the disciples. Consider for a moment the diversity of the twelve Jesus called: Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John were fishermen (Matt. 34:18–22); Matthew was a tax collector (Matt. 9:9); and Simon the Zealot was likely a part of the Zealots political movement, a group of Jewish nationalists who opposed Roman rule and paying taxes to the emperor (Luke 6:15). And in addition to the twelve, Jesus' band of followers included many others, including women like Mary Magdalene, Susanna, and Joanna (Luke 8:1–3). Yet, despite their differences in gender, socioeconomic status, and political views, Jesus' disciples were united in Jesus' mission to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.

If there is an ideal example of liminality and *communitas* lived out, we need to look no further than Jesus and the disciples.

wherever we go. This is more than just gathering together on a Sunday morning for a worship service (though these gatherings certainly can be an important piece of the Christian life). But the way of Jesus is meant to be all-encompassing, affecting every arena of our lives in ways that are of-

ten uncomfortable or countercultural.

I believe that engaging in this idea of liminality and *communitas*—embracing risk and challenge with others committed to the same thing—is essential to live a life like Jesus. But what does this look like practically? I'd like to offer a case study from my own life as just one example.

On any given Monday night, you likely can find me drinking coffee, playing games, and talking about Jesus and Scripture at Millersville Mennonite Church. That's because I facilitate what I refer to as a missional community of young adults called the Gaming Grounds. This group is founded around a shared belief that the expression of our faith shouldn't just be limited to Sunday. So we gather together to grow in our faith and to discuss how we can live missionally wherever we are: in our families, our workplaces, our friend groups, etc.

Since we started meeting in April of 2024, our lives have been changed. We have asked how we can better love others as Christ does, and we have taken tangible steps in doing so. We have prayed with and for each other, encouraging one another. We have raised money to help others in need. We have thought about more ways to be the Church to people. And yes, we have formed new friendships and community, sharing with one another our joys and our sorrows.

This kind of community doesn't happen overnight or by accident; for me, it looked like six months of daily prayer, asking God for a co-laborer who had the same vision as me, and waiting for God to reveal the way forward. Even now, it requires regular reflection, considering whether I and those in the group are growing to look more like Jesus.

But I don't think I've ever felt as close to God as I do now on this journey. Following Jesus means a continual shift away from comfort and into risk. And in these places of the unknown where we don't have the answers and don't know what to expect, we have no choice but to rely on God. And, by the way, God is faithful. ■



Mercedes Thomas serves as the Communications Director for LMC. She attends New Danville Mennonite Church and leads the Gaming Grounds.



Members of the Gaming Grounds missional community.

Those who traveled with Jesus experienced deep *communitas* as they lived together, ate together, learned together, and went out on mission together. After Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, the comradery and bonds formed were still there, creating a movement that had a unity in spirit that went beyond their differences. And it is this movement that set the stage for the Church and the Christian faith, allowing it to spread across the globe. Even in the midst of challenges and persecution, the disciples had been irrevocably changed. They were ready to champion their faith wherever they went—even to the grave.

This is the rich history and tradition we are invited to participate in today. When we make the decision to repent of our old ways, and to turn and follow Jesus, we are called to join Jesus in mission, to share the Gospel, and to be the Church

Juntos en misión

Aceptar el riesgo y el desafío con los demás

ESCRITO POR MERCEDES THOMAS

Conocí a Jesús a los dieciocho años sentada en el suelo polvoriento de un centro de retiros. Había empezado mi primer año de universidad deprimida, sola y buscando un sentido. Y ahí es donde Jesús me encontró, en un momento crucial de mi vida en el que miraba hacia atrás a lo que había sido mi vida y miraba hacia delante a lo que mi vida podría ser.

Mis años universitarios fueron un torbellino de actividad. Fui a conseguir mi licenciatura, y me gradué con eso y mucho más: una esperanza y un propósito recién formados como hija de Dios. Pasaba los días en el campus yendo a mis clases, estudiando en la biblioteca y saliendo con amigos. También pasé el tiempo repartiendo agua y tentempiés a otros estudiantes que se dirigían a los bares, compartiendo mi fe con mis compañeros de clase y estando al lado de mis compañeros de todas las religiones cuando grupos extremistas entraron en el campus para gritarnos obscenidades. Y a través de cada experiencia, formé lazos profundos con los de mi ministerio universitario mientras compartíamos las alegrías y las pruebas de vivir juntos en misión en un campus secular.

En aquel momento no tenía el lenguaje para ello, pero ahora sé que estaba experimentando lo que el líder del pensamiento cristiano Alan Hirsch llama liminalidad y *communitas*. Aunque pueda sonar confuso o demasiado académico, el concepto es en realidad bastante sencillo: en los momentos de liminalidad —momentos en los que se está en el umbral desconocido de lo que fue y lo que está por venir— se forma una fuerte camaradería con aquellos con los que se viaja (*communitas*).

En otras palabras, *communitas* es algo más que estar junto a otros en comunidad; *communitas* es un grupo de personas agrupadas en torno a una misión compartida. Esta misión es la misión de Cristo, compartir el mensaje de Jesús y ver a cada nación, tribu y lengua llegar a conocer y confiar en Jesús. A lo largo del camino, nos enfrentamos a retos y riesgos, y es en estos momentos liminales cuando experimentamos el crecimiento y el cambio, en nosotros mismos, en nuestras comunidades y en nuestro mundo.

También es en estos momentos cuando creo que experimentamos verdadera y profundamente la presencia de Dios.

Si existe un ejemplo ideal de liminalidad y *communitas* vividas, no necesitamos mirar más allá de Jesús y los discípulos. Considere por un momento la diversidad de los doce que Jesús llamó: Simón Pedro, Andrés, Santiago y Juan eran pescadores (Mateo 34:18-22); Mateo era recaudador de impuestos (Mateo 9:9); y Simón el Zelote probablemente formaba parte del movimiento político de los zelotes, un grupo de nacionalistas judíos que se oponían al dominio romano y a pagar impuestos al emperador (Lucas 6:15). Y además de los doce, la banda de seguidores de Jesús incluía a muchos otros, entre ellos mujeres como María Magdalena, Susana y Juana (Lucas 8:1-3). Sin embargo, a pesar de sus diferencias de género, estatus socioeconómico y opiniones políticas, los discípulos de Jesús estaban unidos en la misión de Jesús de proclamar la Buena Nueva del Reino.

Los que viajaron con Jesús vivieron una profunda *communitas* al vivir juntos, comer juntos, aprender juntos y salir juntos en misión. Tras la muerte, resurrección y ascensión de Jesús, la camaradería y los lazos formados seguían ahí, creando un movimiento que tenía una unidad de espíritu que iba más allá de sus diferencias. Y es este movimiento el que sentó las bases para la Iglesia y la fe cristiana, lo que

permitió que se extendiera por todo el mundo. Incluso en medio de los desafíos y la persecución, los discípulos habían cambiado irrevocablemente. Estaban dispuestos a defender su fe allá donde fueran, incluso hasta la tumba.

Esta es la rica historia y tradición a la que se nos invita a participar hoy. Cuando tomamos la decisión de arrepentirnos de nuestros viejos caminos y de volvernos y seguir a Jesús, estamos llamados a unirnos a Jesús en la misión, a compartir el Evangelio y a ser la Iglesia allá donde vayamos. Esto es algo más que reunirse un domingo por la mañana para un servicio de culto (aunque estas reuniones pueden ser ciertamente una parte importante de la vida cristiana). Pero el camino de Jesús pretende abarcarlo todo, y afectar a todos los ámbitos de nuestra vida de formas que a menudo resultan incómodas o contraculturales.

Creo que comprometerse con esta idea de liminalidad y *communitas* — aceptar el riesgo y el desafío con otras personas comprometidas con lo mismo — es esencial para vivir una vida como la de Jesús. Pero, ¿qué significa esto en la práctica? Me gustaría ofrecer un caso práctico de mi propia vida como ejemplo.

Cualquier lunes por la noche, es probable que me encuentre tomando café, jugando y hablando sobre Jesús y las Escrituras en la Iglesia Menonita de Millersville. Eso se debe a que facilito lo que yo llamo una comunidad misional de jóvenes adultos llamada Gaming Grounds. Este grupo se funda en torno a la creencia compartida de que la expresión de nuestra fe no debe limitarse al domingo. Así que nos reunimos para crecer en nuestra fe y debatir cómo podemos vivir con sentido misional allí donde estemos: en nuestras familias, nuestros lugares de trabajo, nuestros grupos de amigos, etc.

Desde que empezamos a reunirnos en abril de 2024, nuestras vidas han cambiado. Nos hemos preguntado cómo podemos amar mejor a los demás como lo hace Cristo, y hemos dado pasos tangibles para hacerlo. Hemos rezado unos con otros y unos por otros, animándonos mutuamente. Hemos recaudado dinero para ayudar a otros necesitados. Hemos pensado en más formas de ser la Iglesia para la gente. Y sí, hemos formado nuevas amistades y comunidad, compartiendo unos con otros nuestras alegrías y nuestras penas.

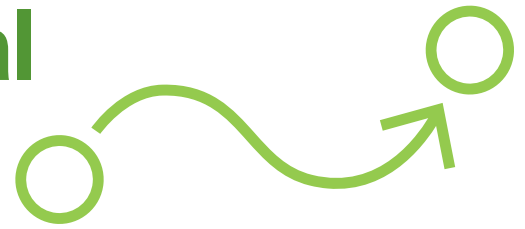
Este tipo de comunidad no surge de la noche a la mañana ni por accidente; para mí, fueron seis meses de oración diaria, pidiendo a Dios un colaborador que tuviera la misma visión que yo, y esperando a que Dios me revelara el camino a seguir. Incluso ahora, requiere una reflexión regular, considerando si yo y los del grupo estamos creciendo para parecernos más a Jesús.

Pero creo que nunca me he sentido tan cerca de Dios como ahora en este viaje. Seguir a Jesús significa alejarse continuamente de la comodidad y correr riesgos. Y en estos lugares de lo desconocido donde no tenemos las respuestas y no sabemos qué esperar, no tenemos más remedio que confiar en Dios. Y, por cierto, Dios es fiel. ■

Mercedes Thomas sirve como directora de comunicaciones de LMC. Ella se congrega en la Iglesia Menonita New Danville y dirige Gaming Grounds.

Si existe un ejemplo ideal de liminalidad y *communitas* vividas, no necesitamos mirar más allá de Jesús y los discípulos.

Communitas: An Essential Practice for Movement



BY RODNEY MARTIN

The word “communitas” is not one we use on a regular basis. Perhaps we have never even heard of this word. And now LMC is using it, and it can seem strange and alien. This strangeness does not diminish the significant meaning that communitas has for LMC in being a Spirit-led, disciple-making, Jesus Movement. To be a movement necessitates a church culture that has characteristics and practices to foster multiplication.

Communitas is one of the essential practices for movement because a group of people on mission together will have the focus and unity in spirit needed to be missionaries. The disciples following Christ are an example of communitas. They were more than a social gathering; they were a group banded together for a shared purpose and experience. This is vividly evident when Jesus sends the disciples out two-by-two into the surrounding towns and countryside to preach the Gospel and heal the sick.

We may think of missionaries as lone individuals, but in Luke 10 it is as a communitas that the disciples are sent together on mission. Jesus told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2, ESV). The seventy-two disciples are then sent out with this shared message of hope and good news. But Jesus also prepares them for when they are not received. He tells them to share a warning with those who do not welcome them and to wipe the dust off their feet. The disciples shared in their rejections as well.

This is communitas: a group of people on a journey together, joined together with a shared mission with Christ through all of the highs and lows. With LMC, the Bishop Elders are a communitas I get to experience. The four of us are a community who are bonded together for a purpose. We have the shared experience of leading LMC into our mission of being Spirit-led.



The Bishop Elder team (from left to right: Keith Blank, Rodney Martin, Marcia Mylin, and Tuyen Nguyen) at their commissioning.

We may think of missionaries as lone individuals, but in Luke 10 it is as a communitas that the disciples are sent together on mission.

Since LMC changed our mission statement almost five years ago to being a Spirit-led movement, the Bishop Elders have worked together in this unknown space to listen to God and learn what this change means for us across the whole of LMC. We have faced this challenge as a team, ready

and willing to share the ups and downs together. We are journeying as one in a way that makes our task more than just an executive role. Rather, we are on an adventure together into the new horizons God has for us.

So yes, “communitas” is a strange and alien word. So too is the mission God is calling us to. All around the world the church is being called to move forward as a fellowship of believers on mission together as communitas. Because without communitas—people on mission together with the Holy Spirit—the church remains just a gathering behind four walls. ■



Rodney Martin serves on the Bishop Elder Team and is also one of the Bishops for the Conestoga River District. He has a Master of Divinity with a focus on missiology and has a passion to see the church in movement.

Celebrating 500 Years of Anabaptism

While the theme of this issue—liminality and *communitas*—may seem like a strange, modern-day idea, it is actually a defining characteristic of the early Anabaptist movement (even though they didn't use the same words to define it). A movement or a people that embodies liminality and *communitas* is one that embraces risk as a community together, dedicated to pursuing the Gospel mission.

We see this unity in spirit and mission, and this willingness to accept risk, in the early Anabaptists. Anabaptism officially began on January 21, 1525 in Zurich, Switzerland, when a small group of Christian reformers gathered together in secret. They were dissatisfied because one of their leaders, Ulrich Zwingli, was hesitating to make reforms from some of the Catholic practices. One issue of particular importance was that of infant baptism.

The Anabaptists believed baptism was an act that should be of conscious commitment, something infants are unable to do. So during their first meeting in 1525, the group baptized one another as adults, symbolizing their rebirth and new life of following Jesus obediently. Their interpretation of baptism, their practice of loving enemies, and other issues put Anabaptists at odds with official state churches and governments, laying the foundation for the extreme persecution they faced at the hands of Roman Catholics and Protestants.

Embracing risk together while unified around a shared mission. This is the legacy of the early Anabaptists. And this is the history we want to reflect on and embody as Anabaptists as we celebrate our 500-year history in 2025.

We've put together a list of various events and opportunities happening both near and far this year. We hope you'll join us in celebrating our spiritually rich history as Anabaptists by checking them out. ■

Zurich, Switzerland. Photo by Meizhi Lang, Unsplash.com.

500th Anniversary Invitation

January 20–22; New Holland, Pa

A three-day prayer and fasting gathering hosted by the Alliance Network. Sessions will include input by various Anabaptist groups. *Learn more or register at allianceus.org/the-invitation*

Anabaptist Classics Reading Group

Spring 2025, dates TBD; Live on Zoom

A guided, five-session tour of Swiss Anabaptist writings (1524–1589) that explores twenty readings. *Register by emailing William Higgins at whiggins@lmcchurches.org or call 717-293-5246, ext. 121*

The courage to love: Anabaptism@500

May 29; Zurich, Switzerland

Go back to where it all started for a day-long celebration commemorating the birth of Anabaptism. Activities include workshops, concerts, panel discussions, walking tours, and a worship service. *More information at anabaptism500.ch*

LMC's Fall Leadership Assembly

September 26–27; Location TBD

This special two-day Leadership Assembly will celebrate Anabaptism's 500th anniversary, with various speakers, seminars, tours, and more. *Registration will be available at lmcchurches.org closer to the event*

A Study of the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective (pt. 2)

Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m., starting September 9

Or Thursdays at 10:30 a.m., starting September 11

In-person or on Zoom

The course is offered by LMC Resource Staff, William Higgins. Content will cover the last twelve articles of the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective over seven sessions. *Register by emailing William Higgins at whiggins@lmcchurches.org or call 717-293-5246, ext. 121*





Far left: Time of prayer

Left: Church members together during an outdoor service.



CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE:

East Petersburg Mennonite Church

DISTRICT: Landisville-Manor

LOCATION: East Petersburg, Pa.

AVERAGE SUNDAY ATTENDANCE: 110

WORSHIP SERVICE: Sunday 9:30 a.m.

PASTORS: Chad Sufficool and Josh Buser

FOUNDED: 1720

LEARN MORE: visit eastpetemc.org

East Petersburg Mennonite Church (EPMC) is a growing faith community that is learning to live and love like Jesus. Its rich history of more than 300 years is a foundation for the works that God is doing now. Over the last couple of years, God has been bringing many changes to our faith community; a change of leadership structure (was board-lead and is now elder-lead) and a change in pastors (no senior pastor by design; instead, Chad Sufficool is the Equipping Pastor and Josh Buser is the Connecting Pastor). These changes have opened the door for God to do a new work at EPMC. We have seen over thirty people give their lives to Jesus and be baptized. Many new families and neighbors have started to worship together on Sunday mornings.

As God grows EPMC, we face the subtle challenge of remaining unified. With new families mingling with people who have been at EPMC their whole lives, there comes a need for God's unifying Spirit. Yet, we are not deterred by this; rather, we are overjoyed with the chance to live and love like Jesus! We are also walking more into the works of the Spirit through testimonies of supernatural healing, demonic deliverance, and dreams and visions. We are challenged to live by faith when some of these more mysterious elements of the Lord are revealed to us. We rejoice that God is giving us the opportunity to grow in our biblical understanding of the supernatural.

Over the last couple of years, we have engaged more in evangelistic ministry where we regularly go onto college campuses, into stores, and throughout cities to offer people prayer, share the Good News of Jesus with them, and get to know our neighbors. This has led to hundreds of people feeling loved and blessed through prayer, dozens of physical healings, many spiritual awakenings, and a plethora of hearts turning towards the Lord.

Through the highs and lows and the joys and sorrows, God has shown us relying on God is of the utmost importance. As we seek to be unified, live joyfully, and walk with the Spirit, we are reminded to always depend on the Lord. If God is not in our ministry, work, and daily lives, we strive in vain. God has shown us that if we want God's result then we need to do it God's way. ■



The EPMC leadership team

Right: Members of Mosaic having a meal together.

Far right: Playing a game



CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE:

Mosaic of Grace Church

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Ephesians 2:8–10

DISTRICT: Blue Ridge

LOCATION: Harrisonburg, Virginia

AVERAGE SUNDAY ATTENDANCE: 45

WORSHIP SERVICE: Sunday 10:15 a.m.

PASTORS: Mike and Risha Metzler

FOUNDED: 2019

LEARN MORE: visit mosaicofgrace.com



Mike and Risha Metzler

Mosaic of Grace Church envisions a community redeemed by Jesus Christ and transformed into a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, together pursuing the glory of God for the good of the world. Redeemed. Transformed. Sent. Prayer birthed Mosaic. A group of ecumenical pastors gathered for a twenty-four-hour retreat in January of 2019 to pray for their city and county. As they imagined God's vision for Harrisonburg, a new Anabaptist congregation came to mind. Another Mennonite church? Yes! And not just one—many more!

A swarm of people gathered around the vision for an Anabaptist, orthodox, evangelical congregation. Sunday morning worship began the Advent of 2019 in a basement. When COVID hit in March 2020, we met outside in yards and parks for worship and Bible study. We saw neighbors walking by and some joined in to wash feet, pick raspberries, and hold baby bunnies.

By God's grace, Mosaic desires to plant churches. When and how will this happen? Prayer and disciple-making must come first. We need to consider our discipleship pathways. How is it working? Does anything need to be changed? Annual vision meetings, congregational budgets, and elder team meetings keep our church-planting vision in mind. Yet Mosaic remains small. How large do we need to grow in order to send leaders from the mother church to start new churches? Do we risk the death of the mother church in the process?

We see God moving in our middle and high school youth. They are missionaries in the public school system. Six were baptized at our annual church retreat in September. Mosaic partners with SLAQ to disciple high school youth and their families through adventure, crucial conversations, and service to immigrant and refugee middle school youth.

Redeemed. Transformed. Sent. We're reminded of our identity in Christ as we gather weekly to enjoy God through worship. We respond to the sermon by coming to the Lord's table. "The body of Christ broken for you. The blood of Christ poured out for you." Taste and see. Remember what God has done. Go, bless the world in Jesus' name! ■

Mike and Risha are co-pastors/church planters of Mosaic of Grace Church in Harrisonburg, VA. They enjoy God's gift of life with their children: Hannah, Joel, Toby, and foster daughter.



Be the “Thin Space”

BY LMC STEWARDSHIP TEAM

The “thin space” is a beautiful place where people feel that heaven and earth are very, very close together. Perhaps it originated with the Celtic tradition, brought into attention in 2012 by New York Times Travel columnist Eric Weiner. However, it is now used to describe a spiritual space where one is close to God and is connected with the concept of liminality, which Alan J. Foxburgh writes about in *The Missionary Congregation, Leadership & Liminality* (1997).

For many of us, we experience the beauty of a “thin space” when we travel. Spiritually, one could seek time with God, and God’s presence would be the experience of a spiritually “thin space.” But these wonderful spiritual experiences are individual and mostly through the time of dwelling in the Word in solitude.

When heavenly love touches the lost world, “thin spaces” are created.

How could we as the LMC fellowship of churches experience the beauty of the “thin space” together? What would challenge our faith to see the invisible beauty of heaven, to be

touched by the fresh breeze of the Holy Spirit, to lean on the warm heart of the Lord Jesus, and to dance with the majestic overwhelming joy of God the Father? Isn’t it that moment when all LMC congregations with the same mind and the same mission reach out to the lost world we live in, actively engaging, fervently praying, and wholeheartedly supporting the work of mission?

We do not have to go far, because we can create “thin spaces” where we live, work, and play. When heavenly love touches the lost world, “thin spaces” are created. When God’s word touches people’s hearts, that is a spiritual beginning. And it is good! Remember a time when you shared the message of Jesus’ love with a not-yet-believer, and then the person said, “I want to believe in Jesus.” Isn’t that a moment when heaven and earth are next to each other? I think so.

Let not our faith in the Lord Jesus be only invisible, only bringing in the “thin space” moments occasionally, but rather boost our faith with courage. When we do so, we together become the “thin space,” the beautiful *communitas* that can face challenges.

Please actively engage, support, and pray for the work of the mission. ■



An example of a “thin space.” The woman has been attending church, but is not yet a Christian. The man is a new student committed to growing in Christ with his whole family. He is being trained to become a church leader.

WAYS TO GIVE



MAIL

Write checks to LMC at:
P.O. Box 1635, Lancaster, PA 17608



ONLINE

lmcchurches.org/donate



BECOME A MONTHLY PARTNER

Set up automatic monthly giving at
lmcchurches.org/donate



ADD LMC as part of your congregational giving plan

If you have questions about other ways to support LMC, contact Mindi at mhoover@lmcchurches.org.

NEWS NOTES

LMC CREDENTIALING REPORT

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

Abigail Guerra (*Edilsa*) was issued a license toward ordination as lead pastor at Iglesia Evangelica Altar de Dios in Lebanon, Pa.

Gordon Reason (*Heather*) was issued a license toward ordination as a missional leader at Crossroads Community Church in Lancaster, Pa.

Chad Sufficool (*Tiffany*) was issued an ordination credential as equipping pastor at East Petersburg Mennonite Church in East Petersburg, Pa.

Carlos Colindres (*Reta*) was issued a license toward ordination as assistant pastor at New Life in Christ Church in Bethel, Pa.

Mark Theissen Nation (*Mary*) was issued an ordination credential as teaching pastor at Early Church in Harrisonburg, Va.

Matt Schwartz (*Mindy*) was issued an ordination credential as associate pastor at Eastside Church in Harrisonburg, Va.

Joshua Cox (*Tiffani*) was issued an ordination credential as lead pastor at Grace Mennonite Fellowship in Harrisonburg, Va.

Harold Miller (*Karen*) was issued an ordination credential as lead pastor at Trissels Mennonite Church in Broadway, Va.

LaShonda Russell (*Charles*) was issued an ordination credential as youth pastor at Grace Mennonite Fellowship in Harrisonburg, Va.

Harrigan McMahon Bowman (*Jason*) was issued an ordination credential as co-pastor at Early Church in Harrisonburg, Va.

John Michael Metzler (*Risha*) was issued an ordination credential as co-pastor at Mosaic of Grace in Harrisonburg, Va.

JoEl Rhorer (*Richard*) was issued a license toward ordination as associate pastor at Oxford Circle Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, Pa.

Levi Brandon (*Jennifer*) was issued a license toward ordination as pastor/elder at Redemption Church in Bear, De.

Joshua Gish (*Janelle*) was issued a license toward ordination as lead pastor at Elizabethtown Mennonite Church in Elizabethtown, Pa.

Jim Hostetter (*Keely*) was issued an ordination credential as associate pastor at Community Mennonite Church in Milton, Pa.

Nigel Fulmore-Smith was issued an ordination credential as associate pastor at Community Mennonite Fellowship in Milton, Pa.

Gerald Gruber (*Renee*) was issued a license toward ordination as lead pastor at Marietta Community Chapel in Marietta, Pa.

Steve Hedgepeth (*Judy*) was issued a license toward ordination as associate pastor at Marietta Community Chapel in Marietta, Pa.

Chris Mummau (*Judy*) was issued an ordination credential as associate pastor at Lost Creek Mennonite Church in Mifflintown, Pa.

Chad Weaver was issued an ordination credential as lead pastor at Lost Creek Mennonite Church in Mifflintown, Pa.

Christopher Ridge (*Mandy*) was issued a license toward ordination as associate pastor at Mountainview Fellowship in Roaring Branch, Pa.

Ronald Gordon (*Sheila*) was issued an ordination credential as lead pastor at Gortner Union Church in Upper Tract, Wv.

Kenyon Hunter (*Ayisha*) was issued a license for specific ministry as deacon at The Way Through Christ Community Fellowship in Chester, Pa.



BISHOPS RETREAT AT CAMP DEERPARK

LMC hosted a retreat for our Bishops from October 25–27. The beauty of Camp Deepark provided the backdrop for Bishops and LMC staff to reflect and tend to their vertical relationship with God and their horizontal relationships with each other. This Spirit-filled time of rest, connection, and prayer is one we won't soon forget.

NEW LMC STAFF: MERCEDES THOMAS

Mercedes Thomas joined LMC staff as the new Communications Director in October. Mercedes is excited to help LMC communicate our mission, vision, and values in clear and engaging ways and find new ways to connect cross-culturally and cross-generationally. She has her BA in English and Communications and an MA in Ministry.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Complete calendar and more details available at 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

LMC/EMM Quarterly Prayer Meeting

January 16

3:00 p.m.

West Community Room

Landis Homes, Lititz, Pa.

Crossings—Second Floor

717-293-5246 ext 102

Winter Bible School — Mark 11–13

Every Tuesday for seven weeks at

6:30 p.m. starting January 14;

or every Thursday for seven weeks at

10:30 a.m. starting January 16

Registration required by Jan. 7

717-293-5246 ext. 121

Newly Credentialed Leader's Orientation

Saturday, February 1

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Registration is required at LMCchurches.org

or call 717-293-5246 ext. 102

Eastern Mennonite Missions

— Kairos Course

March 21 – April 5

Registration Required

emm.org/events/



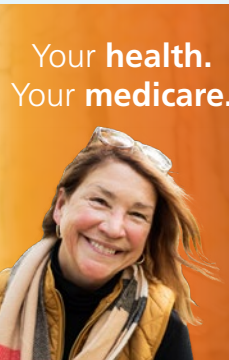
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717.393.9745
mennonitelife.org

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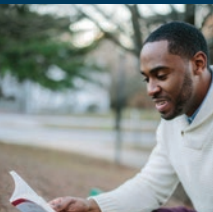


APPLY NOW

www.FriendshipCommunity.net/Employment

Anabaptist Classics Reading Group

Swiss Anabaptism 1524–1589



Coming Spring 2025

A guided tour of Swiss Anabaptist writings: Five sessions, twenty readings, 116 total pages. Contact William Higgins at whiggins@lmcchurches.org or call 717-293-5246, ext. 121