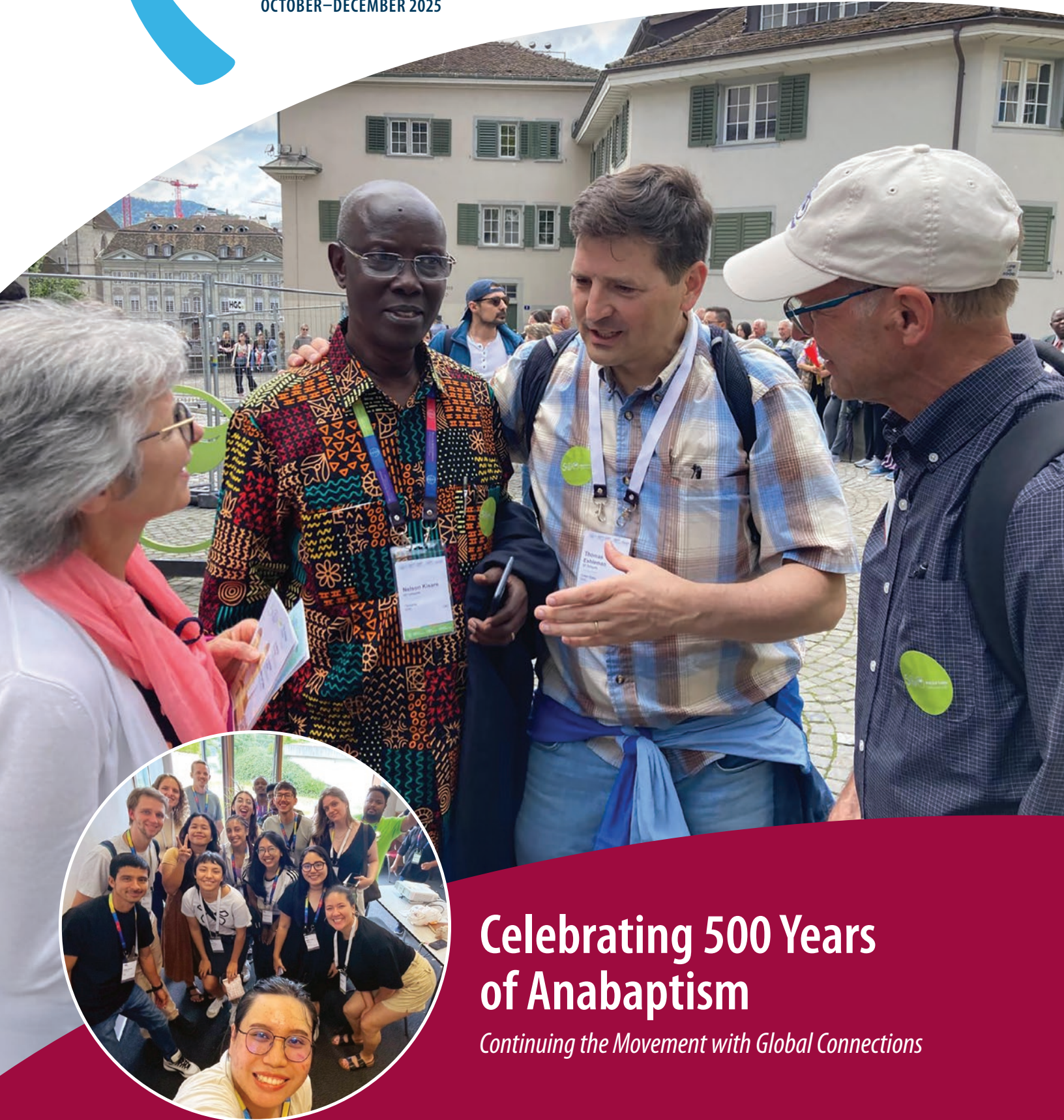




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# Shalom NEWS

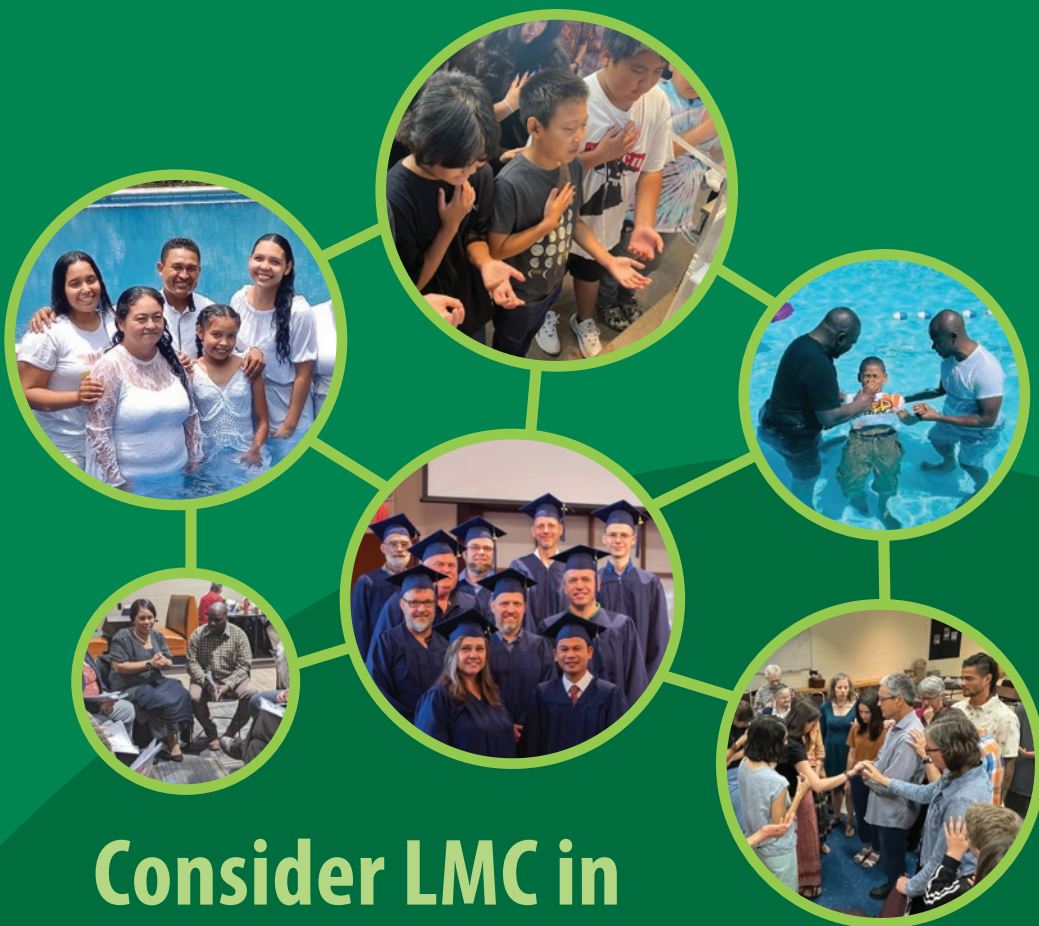
OCTOBER–DECEMBER 2025



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**October–December 2025**

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### ON THE COVER

Main photo: Tom Eshleman, LMC Global Delegate; Bishop Nelson Kisare, MKC Tanzania; and Joe & Yvonne Garber, EMM, meet at Anabaptism@500 commemorating the 500 years of the Anabaptist movement in Zurich, Switzerland. Photo provided by Tom Eshleman.

Small photo: Youth delegates gathered together at the Mennonite World Conference. Photo provided by Nyah Tinsley.



# A Weaver and a Butcher

## *Reflecting on 500 Years of Anabaptism*

BY BRINTON RUTHERFORD

**It was August 1527, a dangerous time. On January 5, 1527, Protestant authorities in Zürich drowned Felix Manz in the Limmat River. Barely three months later, May 21, Imperial authorities burned Michael Sattler in Rottenburg and drowned his wife in the Neckar River. Despite this, more than sixty travelers arrived by ones and twos, occasionally a threesome, in the humid August heat, tired and dusty from their journey to Augsburg, Germany.**

The group first gathered on August 20 at the house of Gall Fischer, a weaver, and also a deacon in an Augsburg Anabaptist congregation. They spent three days discussing doctrinal concerns and disagreements. Issues of oath-taking, public end-time preaching, and military service were discussed.

By the third day, some consensus was reached. Notably, they agreed that the apocalyptic preaching of some of the brothers, most notably Hans Hut, needed to be excluded from public preaching. Proclaim instead the good news of God, the coming of the kingdom, Christ Jesus and him crucified, the forgiveness of sin, believer's baptism, and the necessity of gathering as a voluntary community of faith.

On the last day, August 24, they gathered in the back room of Matthias Finder's house. Matthias was a butcher. With this change of location also came a change of agenda. They considered the missionary nature of God's character and of the incarnation. They considered their call as sent to preach, make disciples, baptize, and teach, likely pondering the words of Matthew 28:19-20, which according to scholars, is the most quoted passage in 16th century Anabaptist writings.



Above: Tom Eshleman and a friend gather outside the Grossmünster at the 500th Anniversary Celebration. Photo provided by Tom Eshleman.



Left: Felix Manz Baptismal Pool. Photo by Jennifer Weaver.

Below: Zürich, Switzerland. Photo by Henrique Ferreira on Unsplash.com.





By the end of this final session in Matthias' butcher shop, mission teams were formed and sent throughout Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. Hans Hut was appointed to stay in Augsburg, a fatal decision for him.

Previously, Augsburg authorities had tolerated these Anabaptists, but the news of the sending evangelists generated a rabid response. One Anabaptist leader was arrested the next day. Then on Sunday, September 15, at the house of "the bell-ringer at the wall," the authorities raided and arrested all present. Among those arrested were Hans Hut. More arrests followed. But the evangelists were already gone.

Most of these evangelists were unable to work long. This Augsburg meeting became known as the *Martyr's Synod* because, within five years, almost every one of the thirty-three persons known by name who attended the meeting was martyred.

Joachim März and Eucharius Binder were burnt in Salzburg in October 1527. Leonhard Spörle was executed in November. Leonhard Schiemer was beheaded in January 1528. Hans Schlaffer was beheaded in February. Eitelhans Langenmantel was beheaded in March. Thomas Wackhausen and Hans Leupold were burned in April, only eight months after gathering in Augsburg. But reports of those sent from this Synod indicate that often a few hours sufficed to start a new congregation.

This is *liminality* and *communitas* in action in the sixteenth-century Anabaptist movement. They did not know these words, of course. They called it New Testament living, following the Spirit.



Small groups gather for conversation outside Grossmünster in Zurich, Switzerland. Photo by Tom Eshleman.

the back of a Land Rover and who regularly shared prayer requests via WhatsApp. What joy to see each other in person again!

I spent the next few days in meetings of the Mission Commission of MWC. The discussions were interesting, but the formal meetings couldn't compare to the time spent over meals telling stories, brainstorming, and sharing burdens. A highlight was the evening when participants were invited to meet in "family" groups. The LMC gathering was joined by delegates from many of the churches EMM workers helped to start in the last ninety years: Tanzania, Kenya, Belize, Honduras, Hong Kong, Philippines, and Peru.

We spent a sweet evening sharing testimonies of God's faithfulness and current challenges. We enjoyed *communitas* as we celebrated being on mission together, fueled by similar vision, and committed to the same values. I am thankful for technology that enables *communitas* to happen across cultural, language, and geographical barriers and for the opportunities we have to be stretched and shaped by those global relationships.



## Aare you safe?

BY JENNIFER WEAVER

Aare you safe? It was a cute pun at either end of the trail along the Aare River in the Marzili neighborhood of Bern, Switzerland. I felt physically safe as I walked along the path. However, I saw no mention of the reason for which I was there. My Anabaptist ancestors, by blood and faith, would not have felt safe there in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries. That part of the Aare River's banks was named as one of the places where Bern drowned Anabaptists who would not recant. Today, people come for recreation because that stretch of riverbank has a nice park with swimming clubs, ping pong tables, and access points to the river.

Perhaps sixteenth-century Anabaptists would appreciate the change, since Switzerland's government no longer arrests and kills Anabaptists. (Though, we also recognize that many church traditions that persecuted Anabaptists 500 years ago have expressed regret for this, and as Mennonites, we are grateful for this work of reconciliation.) However, I came to discover that nobody remembers the Anabaptists who died there either. I was aware before traveling that Swiss Anabaptists tried to stay in their beloved homeland by moving higher into the mountains and hiding in the hills. While riding on trains and buses—especially while hiking the slopes—I pondered the inaccessibility of the places where the Anabaptists fled and wondered at the ded-

## REFLECTIONS FROM MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE'S 500-YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



### Communitas Across Cultures

BY LORRI BENTCH

The bus ride from Stuttgart airport to the retreat center was the culmination of many hours of travel. Unshowered and jetlagged, everyone settled in quietly for the ride. Just as the bus was ready to depart, three passengers climbed aboard. The sight of those familiar faces instantly changed the ride for me.

"Bishop Nelson! Emmanuel! John!" They were not random conference participants; they were my brothers from Tanzania! They were people with whom I'd traveled over bumpy roads in

ication of their pursuers. Once the authorities considered them adequately eradicated in person (more by fleeing to places with better tolerance in present-day Germany and America rather than by killing through execution, torture, and prison conditions), there was no need to remember them in national history.

The Anabaptists were the reason I visited Switzerland. I am interested in church history, especially Anabaptist history, family history, and genealogy, so Mennonite World Conference's 500-year celebration since the first Anabaptist baptisms in Zürich inspired the timing of a bucket-list trip. However, many Swiss, including some who attend Anabaptist churches, were surprised when I told them of my ancestral connections to particular towns and my known ancestors that trace back to Swiss Anabaptists.

My highlight for MWC's celebration day was seeing people I knew from around the world and meeting additional brothers and sisters in Christ with similar interests. Unfortunately, the much-vaunted celebration service was a disappointment for me at the time because I was not one of the lucky ones who got into the Grossmünster. Nevertheless, a group of us castaways made the best of the situation by adding an English-language streaming overflow room, thanks to the hospitality of the Reformed church hosting the English livestream. I met up with people I knew to walk over there from the Grossmünster, recognized some others in the room, and connected in worship with those around me. Our stream crashed twice, but we had restored the audio at the end, and we formed our own conga line during the "Siya hamba" recessional.

The Swiss political and religious leaders of the day, who thought that Anabaptists were a heretical scourge on their land, probably thought they would die out. The several thousand of us from around the world trying to fit into Zürich's Grossmünster for the celebration service on Ascension Day nonverbally proclaimed, "We're still here."

## General Council Delegate to Mennonite World Conference

BY TOM ESHLEMAN

The room was still dark when I woke before dawn in my dorm at the Mennonite World Conference meetings in Germany. Bleary eyed before 5:00 AM, I turned to the bed beside mine and noticed my roommate, Bahta Kinade, was not there. As I scanned the room, my eyes fell on the silhouette of Bahta kneeling by the window in prayer. I could faintly hear the muffled sounds of Bahta pouring out his heart to God as he

**In a setting of so much activity, Bahta immersed himself in the prayer life that undoubtedly sustained him during times of danger, family separation, and uncertainty.**



knelt facedown by the chair. Of all my experiences at Mennonite World Conference, this image of Bahta in prayer is the one I carry most with me.

I first met Bahta when I arrived at the MWC Retreat Center and discovered I had a roommate. We became acquainted and I learned that Bahta was originally from Eritrea and now pastored an immigrant congregation in Toronto. We shared meals and conversation and quickly developed a warm friendship. Bahta recounted to me stories of the persecution he and other believers endured in Eritrea. At one point, Bahta's life was in danger, and he needed to leave his family to go into hiding. Then he received word that his wife had been arrested and imprisoned. She was later released, but Bahta remained in great danger. Miraculously, Bahta received assistance and was able to immigrate to Canada. For six years, Bahta waited, prayed, and cried out to God on behalf of his family. Finally, the joyful day came when Bahta's wife and children joined him in Toronto. Bahta recounted all of this with a deep sense of gratitude for God's steadfast care and provision.

I pondered all that my new friend Bahta had endured and his quiet, confident faith in God. How do people like Bahta summon the courage for such faithfulness? Part of the answer came as I observed the rhythms of Bahta's life. One afternoon during the busy General Council meetings, I returned to our room and discovered Bahta again kneeling by the window in prayer. In a setting of so much activity, Bahta immersed himself in the prayer life that undoubtedly sustained him during times of danger, family separation, and uncertainty.

I could list a myriad of experiences and people at MWC that shaped and influenced me, but none more powerfully than the prayer life and humble witness of Bahta. Thank you Jesus, for placing me in a room with this gentle brother from Eritrea, who quietly taught me so much about the lifestyle of a disciple of Jesus. ■

**Brinton Rutherford** worked as a resource staff person for LMC and also taught theology and church history at Messiah College and Eastern Mennonite Seminary prior to his retirement in 2021.

**Lorri Bentsch** serves as the Mission Team Director at EMM, providing strategy and oversight for the sending, resourcing, and partnering of EMM workers around the world. Previously, Lorri served as a missionary in Hungary. She and her husband have three daughters.

**Tom Eshleman** serves as LMC's Global Delegate and as the Chairman for the STEP Oversight Commission. Additionally, Tom is the pastor at Groffdale Mennonite Church. He is energized by opportunities to relate with the global church and engage in cross-cultural interaction. He and his wife have three children.

**Jennifer Weaver** is a member of Harbor Fellowship in LMC's West End Network. She is an executive assistant at EMM and has taught classes on church history, singleness, and worship design for STEP. Additionally, Jennifer is preparing to serve overseas with EMM in Marseille, France.

# Un tejedor y un carnicero: Reflexiones sobre 500 años de anabautismo

ESCRITO POR BRINTON RUTHERFORD

Era agosto de 1527, una época peligrosa. El 5 de enero de 1527, las autoridades protestantes de Zúrich ahogaron a Felix Manz en el río Limmat. Apenas tres meses después, el 21 de mayo, las autoridades imperiales quemaron a Michael Sattler en Rottenburg y ahogaron a su esposa en el río Neckar. A pesar de ello, más de sesenta viajeros llegaron de uno en uno, de dos en dos, a veces en tríos, bajo el húmedo calor de agosto, cansados y polvorientos de su viaje a Augsburgo, Alemania.

El grupo se reunió por primera vez el 20 de agosto en casa de Gall Fischer, tejedor y también diácono de una congregación anabautista de Augsburgo. Pasaron tres días discutiendo preocupaciones y desacuerdos doctrinales. Se abordaron temas como la toma de juramento, la predicación pública del fin de los tiempos y el servicio militar. Al tercer día, se llegó a cierto consenso. Cabe destacar que acordaron que la predicación apocalíptica de algunos hermanos, en particular la de Hans Hut, debía excluirse de la predicación pública. En su lugar, proclamar la buena nueva de Dios, la venida del reino, a Cristo Jesús crucificado, el perdón de los pecados, el bautismo de los creyentes y la necesidad de reunirse como una comunidad de fe voluntaria.

El último día, el 24 de agosto, se reunieron en la trastienda de la casa de Matthias Finder. Matthias era carnicero. Con este cambio de ubicación también se produjo un cambio de agenda. Consideraron la naturaleza misionera del carácter de Dios y de la encarnación. Consideraron su llamado a predicar, hacer discípulos, bautizar y enseñar, probablemente reflexionando sobre las palabras de Mateo 28:19-20, que, según los eruditos, es el pasaje más citado en los escritos anabaptistas del siglo XVI. Al final de esta última sesión en la carnicería de Matías, se formaron equipos misioneros y se enviaron a Austria, Alemania y Suiza. Hans Hut fue designado para quedarse en Augsburgo, una decisión fatal para él.

Anteriormente, las autoridades de Augsburgo habían tolerado a estos anabaptistas, pero la noticia del envío de evangelistas generó una reacción furiosa. Un líder anabaptista fue arrestado al día siguiente. El domingo 15 de septiembre, en la casa del “campanero del muro”, las autoridades allanaron y arrestaron a todos los presentes. Entre los arrestados se encontraba Hans Hut. Siguieron más arrestos. Pero los evangelistas ya se habían ido.

La mayoría de estos evangelistas no pudieron trabajar mucho tiempo. Esta reunión de Augsburgo se conoció como el Sínodo de los Mártires porque, en cinco años, casi todas las treinta y tres personas conocidas por su nombre que asistieron a la reunión fueron martirizadas. Joachim März y Eucharis Binder fueron quemados en Salzburgo en octubre de 1527. Leonhard Spörle fue ejecutado en noviembre. Leonhard Schiemer fue decapitado en enero de 1528. Hans Schlaffer fue decapitado en febrero. Eitelhans Langenmantel fue decapitado en marzo. Thomas Winklhausen y Hans Leupold fueron quemados en abril, tan solo ocho meses después de reunirse en Augsburgo. Sin embargo, los informes de los enviados desde este Sínodo indican que, a menudo, bastaban unas pocas horas para fundar una nueva congregación.

Esto es liminalidad y communitas en acción en el movimiento anabaptista del siglo XVI. Desconocían estas palabras, por supuesto. Lo llamaban vivir según el Nuevo Testamento, siguiendo al Espíritu.

**A la reunión de LMC asistieron delegados de muchas de las iglesias que los obreros de EMM ayudaron a fundar en los últimos noventa años: Tanzania, Kenia, Belice, Honduras, Hong Kong, Filipinas y Perú.**

## REFLEXIONES DE LA CELEBRACIÓN DEL 500 ANIVERSARIO DEL CONGRESO MUNDIAL MENONITA

### *Comunidades a través de las culturas*

ESCRITO POR LORRI BENTCH

El viaje en autobús desde el aeropuerto de Stuttgart hasta el centro de retiros fue la culminación de muchas horas de viaje. Sin ducharnos y con jet lag, todos nos acomodamos en silencio para el viaje. Justo cuando el autobús estaba listo para partir, subieron tres pasajeros. Ver esos rostros familiares cambió el viaje al instante.

“¡Obispo Nelson! ¡Emmanuel! ¡John!”. No eran participantes de la conferencia al azar; ¡eran mis hermanos de Tanzania! Eran personas con las que había viajado por caminos difíciles en la parte trasera de un Land Rover y que compartían regularmente peticiones de oración por WhatsApp. ¡Qué alegría volver a vernos en persona!

Pasé los siguientes días en reuniones de la Comisión de Misiones del CMM. Las conversaciones fueron interesantes, pero las reuniones formales no se comparaban con el tiempo dedicado a las comidas, compartiendo historias, ideas y compartiendo cargas. Un momento destacado fue la noche en que se invitó a los participantes a reunirse en grupos “familiares”. A la reunión de LMC asistieron delegados de muchas de las iglesias que los obreros de EMM ayudaron a fundar en los últimos noventa años: Tanzania, Kenia, Belice, Honduras, Hong Kong, Filipinas y Perú. Pasamos una velada agradable compartiendo testimonios de la fidelidad de Dios y los desafíos actuales. Disfrutamos de la communitas mientras celebrábamos estar juntos en misión, impulsados por una visión similar y comprometidos con los mismos valores. Agradezco la tecnología que permite que la communitas se desarrolle a través de barreras culturales, lingüísticas y geográficas, y las oportunidades que tenemos de ser expandidos y moldeados por esas relaciones globales.

### *¿Estás a salvo?*

ESCRITO POR JENNIFER WEAVER

¿Estás a salvo? Era un simpático juego de palabras al final del sendero a lo largo del río Aare, en el barrio de Marzili en Berna, Suiza. Me sentí físicamente segura mientras caminaba por el sendero. Sin embargo, no vi ninguna mención del motivo de mi visita. Mis antepasados anabautistas, por sangre y fe, no se habrían sentido seguros allí en los siglos XVI y XVII. Esa parte de la ribera del río Aar fue mencionada como uno de los lugares donde Berna ahogó a los anabaptistas que no se retractaron. Hoy en día, la gente viene a divertirse, ya que ese tramo de ribera cuenta con un bonito parque con clubes de natación, mesas de ping pong y accesos al río.

Quizás los Anabautistas del siglo XVI apreciarían este cambio, ya que el gobierno de Suiza ya no arresta ni mata a los Anabautistas. (Aunque también reconocemos que muchas tradiciones eclesiales que persiguieron a los Anabautistas hace 500 años han expresado su arrepentimiento por ello, y como menonitas, estamos agradecidos por esta labor de reconciliación.) Sin embargo, descubrí que nadie re-



cuerda a los anabaptistas que murieron allí. Antes de viajar, sabía que los anabaptistas suizos intentaban permanecer en su amada patria mudándose a las zonas más altas de las montañas y escondiéndose en las colinas. Mientras viajaba en tren y autobús, especialmente al subir las laderas, reflexionaba sobre la inaccesibilidad de los lugares adonde huyeron los anabaptistas y me maravillaba la dedicación de sus perseguidores. Una vez que las autoridades los consideraron suficientemente erradicados en persona (más por huir a lugares con mayor tolerancia en la actual Alemania y Estados Unidos que por matarlos mediante ejecuciones, torturas y condiciones carcelarias), ya no hubo necesidad de recordarlos en la historia nacional. Los anabautistas fueron la razón por la que visité Suiza. Me interesa la historia de la iglesia, especialmente la historia anabautista, la historia familiar y la genealogía, así que la celebración de los 500 años del Congreso Mundial Menonita desde los primeros bautismos anabautistas en Zúrich me inspiró a planificar un viaje inolvidable. Sin embargo, muchos suizos, incluyendo algunos que asisten a iglesias anabautistas, se sorprendieron cuando les conté sobre mis conexiones ancestrales con ciertos pueblos y sobre mis ancestros conocidos que se remontan a los anabautistas suizos.

Lo más destacado del día de celebración del CMM fue ver a gente que conocía de todo el mundo y conocer a otros hermanos y hermanas en Cristo con intereses similares. Desafortunadamente, el tan cacareado servicio de celebración fue una decepción para mí en ese momento, ya que no fui uno de los afortunados que entraron en el Grossmünster. Sin embargo, un grupo de nosotros, los marginados, aprovechamos la situación añadiendo una sala adicional para la transmisión en vivo en inglés, gracias a la hospitalidad de la iglesia reformada que organizaba la transmisión en vivo en inglés. Me encontré con conocidos que venían caminando desde el Grossmünster, reconocí a otros en la sala y conecté en la oración con quienes me rodeaban. Nuestra transmisión se cayó dos veces, pero al final restablecimos el audio y formamos nuestra propia conga durante la salida de “Siya hamba”.

Los líderes políticos y religiosos suizos de la época, que consideraban a los anabaptistas una plaga herética en su tierra, probablemente pensaron que desaparecerían. Los miles de personas de todo el mundo que intentábamos entrar en el Grossmünster de Zúrich para el servicio de celebración del Día de la Ascensión proclamamos sin palabras: “Seguimos aquí”.

## Delegado del Consejo General del Congreso Mundial Menonita

ESCRITO POR TOM ESHLEMAN

La habitación aún estaba oscura cuando me desperté antes del amanecer en mi dormitorio durante las reuniones del Congreso Mundial Menonita en Alemania. Con los ojos vidriosos antes de las 5:00 a. m., me volví hacia la cama de al lado y noté que mi compañero de cuarto, Bahta Kinade, no estaba. Al observar la habitación, mi mirada se posó en la silueta de Bahta, arrodillado junto a la ventana en oración. Podía oír débilmente los sonidos apagados de Bahta, quien se abría a Dios mientras se arrodillaba boca abajo junto a la silla. De todas mis experiencias en el Congreso Mundial Menonita, esta imagen de Bahta en oración es la que más recuerdo.

Conocí a Bahta cuando llegué al Centro de Retiros del CMM y descubrí que tenía un compañero de cuarto. Nos conocimos y supe que Bahta era originario de Eritrea



y que ahora pastoreaba una congregación de inmigrantes en Toronto. Compartimos comidas y conversaciones, y rápidamente forjamos una cálida amistad. Bahta me contó historias de la persecución que él y otros creyentes sufrieron en Eritrea. En un momento dado, su vida corrió peligro y tuvo que dejar a su familia para esconderse. Entonces, recibió la noticia de que su esposa había sido arrestada y encarcelada. Posteriormente fue liberada, pero Bahta seguía en grave peligro. Milagrosamente, Bahta recibió ayuda y pudo emigrar a Canadá. Durante seis años, Bahta esperó, oró y clamó a Dios por su familia. Finalmente, llegó el feliz día en que su esposa e hijos se reunieron con él en Toronto. Bahta relató todo esto con profunda gratitud por el cuidado y la provisión constantes de Dios.

Reflexioné sobre todo lo que mi nuevo amigo Bahta había soportado y sobre su fe tranquila y segura en Dios. ¿Cómo logran personas como Bahta tener la valentía para tal fidelidad? Parte de la respuesta surgió al observar el ritmo de la vida de Bahta. Una tarde, durante las concurridas reuniones del Consejo General, regresé a nuestra habitación y encontré a Bahta de nuevo arrodillado junto a la ventana en oración. En un ambiente de tanta actividad, Bahta se sumergió en la vida de oración que sin duda lo sostuvo en momentos de peligro, separación familiar e incertidumbre.

Podría enumerar un sinfín de experiencias y personas en el CMM que me formaron e influyeron, pero ninguna con mayor fuerza que la vida de oración y el humilde testimonio de Bahta. Gracias, Jesús, por ponerme en una habitación con este amable hermano de Eritrea, quien silenciosamente me enseñó tanto sobre el estilo de vida de un discípulo de Jesús. ■

**Brinton Rutherford** trabajó como miembro del personal de recursos para LMC y también enseñó teología e historia de la iglesia en Messiah College y el Seminario Menonita del Este antes de jubilarse en 2021.

**Lorri Bentsch** se desempeña como Directora del Equipo de Misiones en EMM, donde se encarga de la estrategia y la supervisión del envío, la dotación de recursos y la colaboración de los obreros de EMM en todo el mundo. Anteriormente, Lorri sirvió como misionera en Hungría. Ella y su esposo tienen tres hijas.

**Tom Eshleman** se desempeña como Delegado Global de LMC y Presidente de la Comisión de Supervisión de STEP. Además, Tom es pastor de la Iglesia Menonita Groffdale. Le motivan las oportunidades de relacionarse con la iglesia global y participar en la interacción intercultural. Él y su esposa tienen tres hijos.

**Jennifer Weaver** es miembro de Harbor Fellowship en la Red West End de LMC. Es asistente ejecutiva en EMM y ha impartido clases sobre historia de la iglesia, soltería y diseño de culto para STEP. Además, Jennifer se está preparando para servir en el extranjero con EMM en Marsella, Francia.

The Limmat River, where the first Anabaptist martyr, Felix Manz, was drowned. Photos provided by the author.

# A Taste of Heaven on Earth

BY NYAH TINSLEY

## *What in the world should I expect?*

This question was fresh in my mind as I was preparing to attend the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) in Germany. I'd been to one MWC before as a participant when we gathered in Harrisburg in 2015, but I had a feeling my experience this time was going to be different. This year, I was going to be representing LMC and participating in discussions with other Young Anabaptists (YABs). How did I, a young person from a small Mennonite church in Philadelphia, fit into all of this?

Exchanging ideas and sharing stories gave me a glimpse into what God is doing through young people around the world.

A couple Sundays before leaving, I remember a sermon my pastor preached from in Daniel chapter 2, when Daniel was interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The message focused on seeing God's kingdom on earth, which is part of what the dream foreshadows. Amidst the uncertainty about what my experience as a delegate would be like, the sermon prompted me to ask God to open my eyes while I was in Germany and Switzerland. To open my eyes to see what he's doing in his kingdom on Earth. It's very rare one gets to actually see this up close and on a global scale, and I'm very grateful to have had the opportunity to witness it. God certainly answered my prayers.

One way he answered my prayers was during our delegate discussions. There were about thirty to forty countries

represented among the delegates, and I enjoyed getting to learn from everyone and hear about their life experiences. Most days, we would come together and have three sessions where we would discuss various topics in groups. We talked about many issues affecting young people in the global church today, such as: How do we engage with youth more? How should churches address controversial topics? And, how can youth take part in church leadership? Exchanging ideas and sharing stories gave me a glimpse into what God is doing through young people around the world.

One discussion that stays with me was when my group was brainstorming different ways to raise up the next generation of church leaders. One of the delegates in my group, who was from Indonesia, shared with us how her church implemented cell groups where they partake in Bible studies and spend time in prayer for each other and the church. Their youth can participate in leadership roles for these groups while having the older generation disciple them at the same time. This is just one of many stories I've brought home with me and can possibly implement what I've learned in my own church. For this reason, I'm appreciative that we were given a space to experience what God is doing among the youth globally.

I then attended the 500-year anniversary celebration held in Switzerland. I was able to see part of the body of Christ on a larger scale as we came together for fellowship and to remember our heritage as Anabaptists. My favorite part was being able to walk around Zürich and see different parts of our history, such as the Zwingli monument, the house where the Bible study took place that ignited the Anabaptist movement, and the Limmat River, where Felix Manz (the first Anabaptist martyr) was drowned. Even though I was unable to get a seat inside the Grossmünster church for the celebration service, just being able to be in Zürich and learn about our heritage was a surreal experience.

People came from all over the world for the celebration, and I'm glad God gave me the opportunity to see how he's bringing his kingdom on earth. I'd been asking myself where I—as a young person—fit into all this. The delegate role allowed me to feel that I do have a part to play in the body of Christ, not just in my own church, but globally as well. ■



Nyah (right side) sits with other youth delegates from around the world at Mennonite World Conference in Germany



Nyah Tinsley was chosen as the youth delegate to represent LMC at the 2025 Mennonite World Conference in Germany. She's twenty-four and lives in Philadelphia, PA where she is a youth leader and worship team member at Oxford Circle Mennonite Church. She graduated from Temple University with her bachelors in Global Studies and Spanish. Nyah is currently a Spanish translator at her church community's neighborhood high school. She loves to travel, so she was excited to spend her first time in Europe for the celebration of 500 Years of Anabaptism.





Far left: Church in the Ravine. Photos provided by Martins Creek Mennonite Church.

Left: Ordination of Patrick (Pat) Miller, Youth Pastor at Martins Creek



## CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE:

# Martins Creek Mennonite Church

Martins Creek Mennonite Church is nestled in the heart of Ohio's Amish Country, between Berlin and Millersburg. The church was founded in 1865 when a group of twenty-four individuals made the bold decision to leave the Amish Church. Over the past 160 years, Martins Creek has grown to a vibrant community of around 300 members who are committed to living out the core values of the early Church: Discipleship, Fellowship, Worship, Outreach, and Prayer (Acts 2:42–47).

Our passion has always been to actively advance the kingdom of God—locally and globally. In the last seventy-five years, we helped launch six church plants and we consistently give over a quarter of our offerings to ministries that reflect the love of Jesus through their work in local, regional, and international communities.



MCC Appalachia Build (formerly SWAP) service trip

We place a strong emphasis on outreach, offering practical support like classes and mentoring for those facing spiritual, financial, emotional, or relational challenges. Discipleship is also at the heart of our mission and we provide opportunities for people to deepen their understanding of God's Word and apply it to everyday life. Our congregation is made up of caring individuals who foster an inviting, grace-filled environment where people can encounter the love of Jesus.

A recent example of this compassion in action is our support of the Horkovchuk's, a refugee family from Ukraine who lost their husband/father in the war. Over the past two years, our church has come alongside them, paving a way for them to come to our community while providing a safe place where they can emotionally heal and spiritually thrive.

Like many churches, we face the ongoing challenge of staying relevant to younger generations. Yet we remain steadfast in our identity and purpose, determined to share the love of Christ authentically—serving as his hands and feet in ways that transform both our church family and the wider community. We have been dually affiliated with both LMC and Evana since 2017 and deeply value the leadership, vision, and mission each organization embodies. ■

**DISTRICT:** Great Lakes East

**LOCATION:** Millersburg, OH

**AVERAGE SUNDAY ATTENDANCE:** 300

**WORSHIP SERVICE:** Sunday 10:30 a.m.

**PASTORAL TEAM:** Jay Conn

**FOUNDED:** 1865

**LEARN MORE:** [mcmc.org](http://mcmc.org)

# Sowing Seeds of a Jesus Movement: Assembly 2026 is for Everyone!

BY DAWN LANDES

*Gather the people, consecrate the assembly . . . and I will pour out my Spirit on all people. — Joel 2:16, 28*

Assembly 2026 is the first of a NEW biennial gathering of all families, congregations, and youth groups from across LMC. It will be held on **June 18–21, 2026** at Millersville University in Millersville, Pennsylvania. *Assembly* is an opportunity for our LMC family to pause from our normal: gathering to celebrate God's work among us, cast vision for the future, and mobilize for mission.

*Assembly* will feature gathered worship, plenary sessions, workshops, and options for recreation and local service projects for both families and youth groups. There will also be age-level activities and care for children up through elementary and a special YouthCon for middle school and high school youth. Information about meal-plans and lodging will be provided at registration later this fall.



While this first Assembly event is being held in Pennsylvania, future Assembly events will be hosted in different regions by local LMC districts. The Bishop Board will help decide the location of Assembly 2028—potentially in the mid-West or Southeast of the United States.

The gathered body at Assembly will celebrate our collection of cultures, languages, and generations as we learn to better carry out the mission of Jesus in our world. We will also provide a space for the children and youth of LMC to enjoy fun and fellowship while growing with us in our love for Jesus and the Church!

So stay tuned! More exciting info to come! ■

*Dawn Landis is Steering Committee Chair planning Assembly 2026, and a co-pastor at Habecker Mennonite Church.*

## Largest Mennonite Denomination in the World: MKC

BY GLENN KAUFFMAN

The Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) believers I have met are sincere and whole-hearted in their faith. In my role as the LMC-appointed International Partner Delegate for MKC, I have had the privilege of visiting Ethiopia four times over the past five or six years. Most recently, I had the honor of teaching a seminary class at Meserete Kristos Seminary for their missions majors.

During my teaching, there seemed to be an appropriate irony that I, a white, Western-trained, Asian-experienced missionary, taught a "Cross Cultural Communications" class to Ethiopians a generation younger than me. We ourselves were subjects in a cross-cultural lab!

At the beginning or end of class, I would often pray a casual prayer to God as if I were having an everyday conversation. However, when I asked one of the students to pray, they would stand up, bow their heads respectfully, and address God more formally.

Later, I brought up the differences in our prayers. I said I had been praying in a casual way, as friends talk to each other, because Jesus says he calls us friends. "Yes," they said, "but the way you pray seems disrespectful. Because maybe some of the people who may not have understood you also wanted to pray, and



Meserete Kristos Seminary – Cross Cultural Communications students. Photo provided by the author.

you did not give them a chance to be included. Also, God is our King and Lord! He deserves reverence and honor, not a casual address like an ordinary person."

Coming together across cultures helps all of us live in the delight of a more complete revelation of who God is, through Jesus. ■

*Glenn Kauffman is an LMC Bishop and Movement Navigator. He is also the Lead Pastor for Capital Christian Fellowship.*



# NEWS NOTES

## LMC CREDENTIALING REPORT

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

**Paul Maldonado** (*Elizabeth Perez*) was issued a license toward ordination as associate pastor at Iglesia Cristiana Ebenezer in Apopka, FL.

**Charles Bellerive** (*Lozita*) was issued a license toward ordination as associate pastor at Church of God Prince of Peace in North Miami, FL.

**Jordan & Robin Ehst** were issued ordination credentials as church planters from the West End Fellowship in Lancaster, Pa.

**Howard Wagler** (*Cathy*) was issued an ordination credential as a movement leader with the South Central District.

**Andrew Stern** (*Katy*) was issued a license for specific ministry as intentional interim pastor at First Mennonite Church in Morton, IL.

**Ansel Burnett** was issued an ordination credential as counseling pastor at East Gate Church in Bethlehem, Pa.

**Philippe Bortz** (*Abbey*) was issued an ordination credential as executive pastor at East Gate Church in Bethlehem, Pa.

**Abbey Bortz** (*Philipee*) was issued an ordination credential as family/children's pastor at East Gate Church in Bethlehem, Pa.

**Michael & Alyson Teague** were issued ordination credentials as associate pastors at East Gate Church in Bethlehem, Pa.

**James Umstetter** (*Dawn*) was issued a license toward ordination as lead pastor at Goods Mennonite Church in Bainbridge, Pa.

**Paul Mulombi** (*Fifi Okamba*) was issued a license toward ordination as associate pastor at Evangelical Center for Revival in Middletown, Pa.

**Jonathan Haley** (*Leigh*) was issued a license toward ordination as associate pastor at Emmanuel Community Church in Avis, Pa.

**Tsadik Abraham** (*Alemesh*) was issued a license toward ordination as associate pastor at the Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Baltimore in Baltimore, Md.

**Samuel Aberra** (*Freweine*) was issued a license toward ordination as associate pastor at the Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Baltimore in Baltimore, Md.

**Eleazar Sabio-Rameriz** (*Erika Jimenet*) was issued a license toward ordination as lead pastor at Evangelical Garifuna Church - Baton Rouge in Baton Rouge, La.

**Carlos Colindres** (*Rita*) was issued an ordination credential as lead pastor at New Life in Christ Church in Bethel, Pa.

## CORRECTION - JOSHUA MCCOLLOUGH

In the previous issue of *Shalom News*, we listed Joshua McCollough's credential incorrectly. It should have said he was issued an ordination credential as associate pastor at Mount Joy Mennonite Church, in Mount Joy, Pa.

## STEP ORIENTATION

In August we welcomed our new year one STEP students—the largest class we've ever had! This class is made up of twenty students across seven states and two countries. Our year one students are a mix of both men and women, and eight are persons of color. This diversity truly reflects the full breadth of our larger LMC family! We're excited to watch these twenty students grow in their relationships with the Lord and be equipped as ministry leaders.



Students at STEP Orientation in August. Photo by Mercedes Thomas.

## WINTER BIBLE SCHOOL

The next Winter Bible School, covering Mark chapters 14–16, starts in January 2026. Classes will meet seven times for an hour and a half each, in person or on Zoom. Class sessions will be Tuesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. starting January 13, or Thursday mornings at 10:30 a.m. starting January 15. Register by January 6th, and indicate whether you're attending in person or on Zoom. Contact William Higgins to register ([whiggins@lmcchurches.org](mailto:whiggins@lmcchurches.org) or call 717-293-5246 ext. 121).

## SHARE YOUR STORY

Stories are powerful; after all, sharing the gospel—the greatest story of all—is the most powerful story of all and is at the heart of what we do as Christ-followers. If you have a story related to LMC, we'd love to hear it! We've been collecting and sharing stories on our website. You can read those stories—and share your own—on our website at [lmcchurches.org/stories](https://lmcchurches.org/stories).

# 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

## Mennonite Life: Maize and Snitz Fest

October 4

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

1719 Museum

## EMM: Kairos Course

October 18 – November 17

Time varies

Hub 450, 450 N. Prince Street, Lancaster, Pa

## Mennonite Life: Author Talk – *An Uncommon Woman* with Mark Kelley

October 23

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Mennonite Life Community Room

## Capital Christian Fellowship's 100th Anniversary

October 24–26

Capital Christian Fellowship  
Visit [capitalchristian.org](http://capitalchristian.org) for more information

## Mennonite Life: Rare & Used Book Auction

November 14

6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Mennonite Life Community Room



**EMM BANQUETS**

November 13 at 6 PM  
DoubleTree Resort, Lancaster, PA

December 4 at 10 AM  
Landis Homes, Lititz, PA

February 18, 2025 at 12 pm  
Sarasota (FL) Community Church

RSVP AT  
[EMM.ORG/BANQUET](http://EMM.ORG/BANQUET)



**Explore your congregation's history!**

The Mennonite Life library & archives contain decades of church records, photos, and periodicals. Start or continue your research with the help of staff and volunteers.

 **Mennonite Life**  
717.393.9745 | [mennonitelife.org](http://mennonitelife.org)  
2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster, PA



**Friendship COMMUNITY**

SCAN TO LEARN MORE

**Friendship Heart Gallery & Studio** is an inclusive art space supporting adults with Intellectual Disability and Autism through personalized art classes and creative expression.

**Friendship Heart GALLERY & STUDIO**  
...nurturing capabilities

[FriendshipArt.net](http://FriendshipArt.net)



**Feel at Home**

Nestled in nature, our **Safe, Affordable, and Loving** community is ready to welcome you.

[WelshMountainHome.org](http://WelshMountainHome.org)

567 Springville Rd, New Holland | 717-355-9522

***There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.***

— Ephesians 4:4–6