



LMC *a fellowship of anabaptist churches*
Shalom NEWS

JULY–SEPTEMBER 2026



Following Jesus

LMC's Core Value #2



July–September 2026

Issue 3 / Volume 46

Executive Bishop Team

Keith Blank
Rodney Martin
Marcia Mylin
Tuyen Nguyen

Shalom News Team

Mercedes Thomas, Executive Contributing Editor
Sherri Martin, Managing Editor
Rosita N'Dikwe, Copy Editor
Felixa V. de Kunkle, Spanish Translation

Magazine design by Yoder Design Co.

Shalom News is published quarterly by LMC.
PO Box 1635
Lancaster, PA 17608-1635

717-293-5246 / 800-216-7249
www.LMCchurches.org

Shalom News (ISSN 0747-2706) is published by LMC, PO Box 1635, Lancaster, PA 17608-1635, quarterly for free distribution to all congregations in the Conference. Individual subscriptions are \$15 per year. Periodicals postage paid at Lancaster, PA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Shalom News*, LMC, PO Box 1635, Lancaster, PA 17608-1635.

© 2026 LMC, all rights reserved.

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

 facebook.com/LMCchurches

ON THE COVER

Main photo: 2026 STEP graduates (top left to right): Alexis Roman-Rodriguez, Jermaine Shannon, Gordon Reason. Bottom (bottom left to right): Sandra Granthon-Roman, Tania Madymba, Jessica Kindon.

Small photo: Families and friends pray for the youth who are about to be baptized at First Mennonite Church in Berne, IN.

The Baptism of Believing Disciples

An Anabaptist Faith and Practice Class



Coming the Fall of 2026

We will look at the biblical theology and practice of water baptism. These are some of the topics we will cover: Where does water baptism come from? Jesus's baptism by John. Baptism as cruciform. Spirit baptism. Baptisms of suffering. The mode of baptism. Infant baptism, when did it start and why? A critique of the covenant argument for infant baptism. The case for only baptizing believing disciples. What does baptism accomplish? (Baptismal realism). Should we baptize immediately upon confession of faith? Should baptism and church membership go together? Children and baptism. How do we receive those previously infant baptized into our churches? And other topics.

Two class time slots:

- Tuesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. ET, starting September 8
- Thursday mornings at 10:30 a.m. ET, starting September 10

Register by September 1

lmchurches.org/anabaptist-faith-practice/





Far Left: Terry's grandmother, Maria Emilia Fornos, age 7. Photo provided by Terry Witmer.

Left: Terry Witmer. Photo by Mercedes Thomas.

Faithful and Obedient

How One's Commitment to Following Jesus Can Impact Generations to Come

TERRY WITMER'S STORY, WRITTEN BY MERCEDES THOMAS

I had the opportunity to sit down with Terry Witmer, who was recently credentialed as lead elder at Iglesia Esperanza de Vida, a congregation within the Blue Ridge district of LMC. She shared with me her family's story of how they came to know Jesus and their surprising connection with the Mennonites.¹

The air was thick with the earthy, sweet smell of tobacco in Ybor City, Florida, 1936. The sounds of the everyday bustle of a hospital reached Maria Emilia Fornos (or Mary), age ten, who was in a hospital bed recovering from malaria. Two young Mennonite women entered the room to visit with Mary, bringing crayons, coloring books, toys, and unending kindness. No one could have imagined how this visit would shape the trajectory of a whole family.

Mary was born in Key West, Florida, in 1926 to her mother, a Latina born in the US, and her father, a first-generation Cuban-Spanish immigrant. Mary is Terry's grandmother. Mary's family worked in the cigar factories and moved to Ybor City after many of the factories in Key West closed. Ybor City, once known as the "Cigar Capital of the World," was a neighborhood in Tampa built to house the many workers needed to support the area's cigar factories. The city was mostly immigrants, with many having immigrated from Spain or Spanish Cuba.²

In the midst of this ethnically diverse city

In the midst of this ethnically diverse city was the Ybor Mennonite Mission, a missionary endeavor that began in 1930 serving the Spanish-speakers in Ybor City.

stood the Ybor Mennonite Mission, a missionary endeavor that began in 1930 and served the Spanish-speaking community in Ybor City. This work was sponsored by LMC Churches, then known as Lancaster Mennonite Conference.³ Dora Taylor, a Mennonite missionary, arrived in Ybor the same year Terry's grandmother Mary contracted malaria.

Dora and another missionary, Edna, regularly visited children in the hospital. It was here they met Mary, visiting her weekly until she recovered and was discharged. Mary's grandmother (Terry's great-great-grandmother), Victoria Nottage Dominguez, lived across the street from Dora and Edna, where Ybor Menno-

nite Mission met. After coming home from the hospital, Mary started attending their Sunday evening children's ministry program. It was here that she was gifted her first Bible after successfully memorizing John 14.

Terry's great-great grandmother Victoria had wanted to send her daughter to the best school possible, which at that time was the



local Catholic school. Mary was also sent to a Catholic school. So even though Victoria continued to worship with the Mennonite community in Ybor City, the others in her family joined the Catholic Church.

When Mary was in her 40s, she had a transformative experience and decided to surrender her life to Jesus. A week after this experience, Terry's mother, who was pregnant with Terry at the time, visited Mary and also encountered Jesus, accepting Him as her Savior. She was baptized while Terry was still in her womb.

As a young child, Terry's family was worshiping in a non-denominational context, and Terry felt a strong call to missions. She did her first cross-cultural experience in Africa before graduating from high school. Terry's guidance counselor encouraged her to check out Eastern Mennonite College (now EMU).

She attended EMC, where she met her now-husband and became a Mennonite. It was during her college years that Terry's grandmother, Mary, shared her encounters with Mennonites in Ybor City all those years ago. This was the first time Terry heard of her familial connection with the Mennonites.

Terry and her husband served for a year in Haiti with Mennonite Central Committee before starting dairy farming in Virginia. They later spent two years in Colombia, where Terry felt at home. However, after six months, another couple shared a prophetic word suggesting they weren't meant to stay long-term, but rather prepare for a future ministry back in the States.

After returning to Harrisonburg, VA, in 2012, Terry and her husband began attending both Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church and Iglesia Esperanza de Vida, their sister church, which serves as a bridge between the congregations. They later chose to focus their time and attention solely on Esperanza de Vida.

Last year, when Esperanza de Vida joined LMC, Terry came across more information about LMC's history of mission work and learned about its work in Tampa and Ybor City. She realized this must be the same missionary work that her great-great-grandmother and grandmother had been involved in in Ybor City in the 1930s.



Far left: Interior of a large cigar factory with lector, Tampa, Florida. Public domain photo retrieved from Wikimedia Commons.

Left: Terry's great-grandmother Dora Isolina Villarreal (left) and great-great grandmother Victoria Nottage Dominguez (right). Photo provided by Terry Witmer.

Terry continued researching Ybor Mennonite Mission as she prepared to seek credentials with LMC. She knew the name Dora Taylor was a name she had heard before. Then one morning, a memory hit her: in the early years after graduating with her undergraduate degree, Terry had gone to the Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community to meet with a woman who might be a

translator for her work with immigrants.

Terry looked back through an old journal from that time and found her reflection from that meeting:

"This afternoon I had lunch with Dora Taylor, a Mennonite woman who was a nurse in Honduras and Belize for many years, and who I was referred to as a possible translator for more difficult client meetings. I had the most touching, beautiful, luncheon. Dora has been positively touched by the Lord's hand and she radiates his love to everyone around her. Her stories are captivating, as is her continued love and faith and zeal for the Lord. I was crying at one point during lunch as she shared of God's very real presence with her when she had malaria and was very near to death. There is an undeniable, tangible spirituality around aged Christians which both awes me and inspires me to endure in my own feeble path to faith. I am utterly amazed at the multitudes of lives this one faithful woman has changed and touched in her eighty-four years of living. Although she's never been married, there are children all over the world who shall rise up and call Dora Taylor blessed."

As Terry has reflected on how God has woven this story—bringing her great-great-grandmother's and grandmother's experiences with LMC and with Mennonites full circle—she notes how we often don't know the full impact of our ministry. However, we are still supposed to walk with Jesus daily.

"We're not called to be successful," Terry says. "We're called to be faithful and obedient." ■

¹ The contents of this article were taken from an hour-long recorded interview I had in-person with Terry. I have done my best to cross-check details provided by Terry with official historical sources (newspapers, reports, etc.).

² "Ybor City Historic District Tampa FL," National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/places/ybor-city-historic-district-tampa-fl.htm> (accessed May 19, 2026).

³ "Ybor Mennonite Mission (Ybor City, Florida, USA)," Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. [https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Ybor_Mennonite_Mission_\(Ybor_City,_Florida,_USA\)](https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Ybor_Mennonite_Mission_(Ybor_City,_Florida,_USA)) (accessed May 19, 2026).

Fiel y obediente: Cómo el compromiso de seguir a Jesús puede impactar a las generaciones venideras

LA HISTORIA DE TERRY WITMER, ESCRITA POR MERCEDES THOMAS

En marzo de este año, tuve la oportunidad de sentarme a conversar con Terry Witmer, quien recientemente recibió su licencia para la ordenación como anciana principal en la Iglesia Esperanza de Vida, una congregación perteneciente al distrito de Blue Ridge. Ella compartió conmigo la historia de su familia: cómo llegaron a conocer a Jesús y su sorprendente conexión con los menonitas. Espero que les resulte tan edificante a ustedes como lo fue para mí.

Ybor City, Florida, 1936. El aire está impregnado del aroma terroso y dulce del tabaco. A poca distancia, se oyen las voces de los niños parlotando, el ir y venir de las enfermeras realizando pruebas y el aljetreo cotidiano de un hospital. En una cama de hospital yace María Emilia Fornos (o Mary), de diez años de edad, quien se recupera de la malaria.

Dos jóvenes menonitas entran en la habitación para visitar a Mary, trayendo consigo crayones, libros para colorear, juguetes y una bondad inagotable. Nadie en aquella habitación podía siquiera imaginar cómo este encuentro marcaría el rumbo de toda una familia.

Mary nació en Key West, Florida, en 1926; su madre era una mujer latina nacida en los Estados Unidos, y su padre, un inmigrante de primera generación de ascendencia hispano-cubana. Mary es la abuela de Terry.

La familia de Mary trabajaba en las fábricas de cigarros y se mudó a Ybor City en 1936, después de que muchas de las fábricas de Key West cerraran sus puertas. Ybor City, conocida en su momento como la «Capital Mundial del Cigarro», era un barrio dentro de Tampa construido específicamente para albergar a los numerosos trabajadores necesarios para mantener operando las fábricas de cigarros de la zona. La ciudad estaba poblada mayoritariamente por inmigrantes; muchos de ellos habían llegado desde España o desde la Cuba española.

En medio de esta ciudad étnicamente diversa se encontraba la Misión Menonita de Ybor, una iniciativa misionera que comenzó en 1930 con el propósito de servir a la población hispanohablante de Ybor City. Esta labor era patrocinada por las Iglesias LMC —conocidas en aquel entonces como la Conferencia Menonita de Lancaster—. En 1936, Dora Taylor, una misionera menonita, llegó a Ybor. Ese mismo año, la abuela de Terry —Mary— contrajo la malaria.

Dora y otra misionera, Edna, visitaban regularmente a los niños en el hospital de Ybor City. Fue allí donde conocieron a Mary, a quien visitaron semanalmente hasta que se recuperó y le dieron de alta. La abuela de Mary (tatarabuela de Terry), Victoria Nottage Domínguez, vivía justo enfrente de Dora Taylor y Edna, lugar donde se reunía la Misión Menonita de Ybor. Tras regresar a casa desde el hospital, Mary comenzó a ir al programa de ministerio infantil de los domingos por la tarde, organizado por la Misión Menonita de Ybor. Fue allí donde recibió su primera Biblia como regalo, tras haber memorizado con éxito el capítulo 14 del Evangelio de Juan.

La tatarabuela de Terry, Victoria, había deseado enviar a su hija a la mejor escuela posible; en aquel entonces, esa era la escuela católica local. La hija de Victoria envió a su vez a Mary a esa misma escuela, y Mary hizo lo propio con la madre de Terry. Así pues, aunque Victoria continuó congregándose con la comunidad menonita de Ybor City, el resto de su familia pasó a formar parte de la Iglesia Católica.

Sin embargo, cuando Mary tenía al rededor de cuarenta años, vivió una experiencia de «nuevo nacimiento» en Jesús y le entregó su vida. La madre de Terry —quien en ese momento estaba embarazada de ella— fue a visitar a Mary una semana después de dicha experiencia; allí, ella también tuvo un encuentro con Jesús y aceptó a Cristo como su Salvador. Poco después fue bautizada, mientras Terry aún se encontraba en su vientre.

Para cuando Terry nació, sus padres ya se congregaban en un contexto no denominacional. Incluso siendo una niña pequeña, Terry sabía que sentía un fuerte llamado a las misiones. Realizó su primera experiencia intercultural en África antes de graduarse de la escuela secundaria, lo cual reafirmó ese llamado en su vida. Su consejero escolar la animó a considerar el Eastern Mennonite College (actualmente EMU).

Asistió a EMC, donde conoció a su actual esposo y se convirtió en menonita. Fue durante sus años universitarios cuando la abuela de Terry, Mary, compartió con ella sus

encuentros con los menonitas en Ybor City, ocurridos hacía ya tantos años. Esta fue la primera vez que Terry tuvo noticia de su vínculo familiar con los menonitas.

Terry y su esposo pasaron a servir en Haití durante un año con el Comité Central Menonita; tras ello, regresaron a Virginia y se dedicaron a la ganadería lechera. Más tarde, volvieron al ámbito de las misiones internacionales, sirviendo en Colombia durante dos años. En Colombia, Terry sintió como si hubiera regresado a su hogar cultural, y no deseaba marcharse jamás. Sin embargo, a los seis meses de su estancia allí, otra pareja compartió una palabra profética con Terry y su esposo, percibiendo que su destino no era permanecer en Colombia a largo plazo. Más bien, se trataba de una etapa de preparación para un ministerio del que formarían parte de regreso en los Estados Unidos.

Tras regresar a Harrisonburg, Virginia, en 2012, Terry y su esposo comenzaron a asistir tanto a la Iglesia Menonita de Mt. Clinton como a la Iglesia Esperanza de Vida —su iglesia hermana—, sirviendo como puente entre ambas congregaciones. Posteriormente, decidieron centrar su tiempo y atención exclusivamente en Esperanza de Vida.

El año pasado, cuando Esperanza de Vida tomó la decisión de unirse a LMC, Terry encontró más información sobre la historia de la labor misionera y los misioneros de LMC, enterándose de su trabajo en Tampa y Ybor City. Se percató de que aquella debía ser la misma labor misionera con la que su tatarabuela y su abuela habían tenido contacto en Ybor City durante la década de 1930.

Mientras Terry se preparaba para solicitar sus credenciales en LMC el pasado mes de marzo, continuó investigando sobre la Misión Menonita de Ybor. Sabía que el nombre de Dora Taylor —una de las misioneras menonitas que visitó a su abuela en el hospital— le resultaba familiar; era un nombre que ya había escuchado con anterioridad. Entonces, una mañana, un recuerdo acudió repentinamente a su mente: en los años inmediatamente posteriores a obtener su licenciatura, Terry había acudido a la Comunidad de Retiro Menonita de Virginia para reunirse con una mujer que podría servirle como traductora en su trabajo con los migrantes.

Terry revisó un antiguo diario de aquella época en busca de las reflexiones que había plasmado sobre aquel encuentro. Y entonces lo encontró:

“Esta tarde almorcé con Dora Taylor, una mujer menonita que ejerció como enfermera en Honduras y Belice durante muchos años, y a quien me recomendaron como posible traductora para las reuniones con clientes más complejas. Fue un almuerzo de lo más conmovedor y hermoso. Dora ha sido tocada de manera positiva por la mano del Señor, y ella irradia Su amor a todos cuantos la rodean. Sus historias son cautivadoras, al igual que su inquebrantable amor, fe y celo por el Señor. En un momento durante el almuerzo, rompí a llorar mientras ella compartía conmigo la experiencia de la presencia muy real de Dios a su lado cuando contrajo malaria y estuvo al borde de la muerte. Existe una espiritualidad innegable y tangible en torno a los cristianos de edad avanzada; una espiritualidad que, a un mismo tiempo, me sobrecoge y me inspira a perseverar en mi propio y frágil camino de fe. Me asombra profundamente la multitud de vidas que esta mujer fiel ha transformado y tocado a lo largo de sus ochenta y cuatro años de vida. Aunque nunca contrajo matrimonio, hay niños por todo el mundo que se levantarán para llamar a Dora Taylor “bendita!”

Terry también recordó cómo, tras almorzar con Dora, acudieron juntas a una pequeña tienda de regalos; allí, Dora le indicó a Terry que escogiera un adorno navideño, el cual ella misma compró después para regalárselo. Es un adorno que Terry conserva todavía hoy y que sigue colocando en su árbol de Navidad.

Al reflexionar sobre el modo en que Dios ha tejido esta historia —cerrando el círculo de las experiencias que su tatarabuela y su abuela vivieron en relación con LMC y con los menonitas—, Terry señala que, a menudo, desconocemos el alcance total del impacto de nuestro ministerio. No obstante, nuestra misión sigue siendo caminar con Jesús día tras día.

“No hemos sido llamados a tener éxito —afirma Terry—. Hemos sido llamados a ser fieles y obedientes.” ■

Walking Daily on Mission with Jesus

BY EDMUNDO RAMOS

Following Jesus, for me, began not from a place of strength, but rather from a place of brokenness.

There was a time in my life when my marriage was going through deep difficulties, impacted by my own choices and a life lived apart from Christ. In that season, I came to the end of myself. A search for help became a sincere turning toward God as I searched for more than just answers; I was in need of repentance, healing, and a new way of life.

It was in that place I began to understand that following Jesus is not about adopting a set of beliefs, but instead about surrendering to a Person. Jesus calls us not only to believe in him, but also to follow him—to walk in his ways, to obey his teachings, and to be transformed by his life.



Edmundo, his wife Claudia, and his son Edmundo Jr. on a trip to Europe earlier this year. Photo provided by the author.

Jesus' words in Luke 9:23 (ESV) became foundational for me: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." The word "daily" reshaped my understanding of faith. Following Jesus is not a one-time decision—it is a daily act of surrender, a continual choosing of his way over my own.

As I began to follow Jesus more intentionally, I saw his work first in my own heart, and then in my home. My marriage began to experience restoration. This did not happen instantly, but through a process of repentance, forgiveness, humility, and faithful obedience. Fol-

lowing Jesus meant learning to love my wife as Christ loves, listen more, serve more, and live with integrity in the small, unseen moments.

Over time, this personal transformation became part of a larger journey of discipleship within the body of Christ. As Anabaptists, we understand that following Jesus is not only personal, it is also communal and visible. We walk together as a church, encouraging one another to live out Jesus' teachings in practical ways: loving our neighbors, practicing forgiveness, pursuing peace, and living lives that reflect Christ.

Today, as a pastor, I have the privilege of walking alongside others in their own journey of following Jesus. I often meet people in places similar to where I once was—broken, searching, and in need of hope. And I am reminded that discipleship begins with a simple invitation: to follow Jesus, one step at a time.

Following Jesus daily still requires surrender. It means listening to the Holy Spirit, responding in obedience, and trusting God even when the path is not fully clear. It is not about perfection, but instead about faithfulness—about remaining rooted in Christ and allowing him to shape every area of life. My desire is to continue walking with Jesus daily—remaining close to him, being formed by his teachings, and living in a way that reflects his love to those around me.

My story began in brokenness, but by God's grace, it continues as a life being rebuilt on a firm foundation. ■

Edmundo Ramos is Lead Pastor at Iglesia Buenas Nuevas in Texas. His teaching and ministry are rooted in a Mennonite perspective, emphasizing discipleship, community, and a life of obedience to Jesus expressed through family, church, and everyday life.

SPANISH TRANSLATION

Caminar a diario en misión con Jesús

POR EDMUNDO RAMOS

Para mí, seguir a Jesús no comenzó desde una posición de fortaleza, sino desde un estado de quebrantamiento.

Hubo un tiempo en mi vida en el que mi matrimonio atravesaba graves dificultades, afectadas por mis propias decisiones y por una vida vivida lejos de Cristo. En esa etapa, llegué al límite de mis propias fuerzas. La búsqueda de ayuda se transformó en un sincero volverme hacia Dios, pues buscaba algo más que simples respuestas; necesitaba arrepentimiento, sanidad y una nueva forma de vida.

Fue allí donde comencé a comprender que seguir a Jesús no consiste en adoptar un conjunto de creencias, sino en rendirse ante una Persona. Jesús no solo nos llama a creer en Él, sino también a seguirle: a caminar en sus sendas, obedecer sus enseñanzas y ser transformados por su vida.

Las palabras de Jesús en Lucas 9:23 se convirtieron en un fundamento para mí: «Si alguno quiere venir en pos de mí, niéguese a sí mismo, tome su cruz cada día y sígame». La palabra «cada día» transformó mi entendimiento de la fe. Seguir a Jesús no es una decisión que se toma una sola vez; es un acto diario de entrega, una elección constante de su camino por encima del mío.

A medida que comencé a seguir a Jesús con mayor determinación, vi su obra primero en mi propio corazón y luego en mi hogar. Mi matrimonio comenzó a experimentar restauración. Esto no sucedió de la noche a la mañana, sino a través de un proceso de arrepentimiento, perdón, humildad y obediencia fiel. Seguir a Jesús significaba aprender a amar a mi esposa como Cristo ama, a escuchar más, a servir más y a vivir con integridad en los momentos pequeños y ocultos.

Con el tiempo, esta transformación personal pasó a formar parte de un camino de discipulado más amplio dentro del cuerpo de Cristo. Como anabautistas, entendemos que seguir a Jesús no es algo meramente personal, sino también comunitario y visible. Caminamos juntos como iglesia, animándonos mutuamente a poner en práctica las enseñanzas de Jesús: amar al prójimo, practicar el perdón, buscar la paz y vivir de manera que reflejemos a Cristo.

Hoy, como pastor, tengo el privilegio de acompañar a otras personas en su propio camino de seguimiento a Jesús. A menudo encuentro a personas que se hallan en situaciones similares a la que yo viví: quebrantadas, en búsqueda y necesitadas de esperanza. Y recuerdo que el discipulado comienza con una invitación sencilla: seguir a Jesús, paso a paso.

Seguir a Jesús cada día sigue requiriendo entrega. Implica escuchar al Espíritu Santo, responder con obediencia y confiar en Dios aun cuando el camino no esté del todo claro. No se trata de alcanzar la perfección, sino de fidelidad: de permanecer arraigados en Cristo y permitirle moldear cada aspecto de nuestra vida. Mi deseo es seguir caminando con Jesús día a día, manteniéndome cerca de Él, dejándome transformar por sus enseñanzas y viviendo de tal manera que refleje su amor a quienes me rodean.

Mi historia comenzó en medio del quebranto, pero por la gracia de Dios, continúa como una vida que se reconstruye sobre un fundamento firme. ■

Edmundo Ramos es el pastor principal de la Iglesia Buenas Nuevas en Texas. Su enseñanza y su ministerio tienen sus raíces en una perspectiva menonita, haciendo énfasis en el discipulado, la comunidad y una vida de obediencia a Jesús, expresada a través de la familia, la iglesia y la vida cotidiana.



Far left: Pastor Jeff presenting the youth to be baptized. Photos provided by First Mennonite Church.

Left: Wednesday night quilting for the Relief Sale.

Below: Exterior of the First Mennonite Church building.



CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE: First Mennonite Church

BY MEGAN LINTHICUM

Due to persecution, the Swiss Mennonites who founded Berne, Indiana tearfully left the majesty of the mountains in the mid 1800s in order to relocate their congregation to a safe, albeit flat land. Continuing the pursuit of service to Christ, First Mennonite currently has four commissions which oversee key components of ministry. With a focus on worship, care, witness, and discipleship, all members and attendees have an opportunity to continue the faith heritage.

Our Sunday morning services find us singing through a blend of time-tested hymns and contemporary choruses. Various choirs and congregational singing are accompanied by a magnificent pipe organ or a multi-generational worship band.

By partnering with the MCC meat canner, the Michiana Mennonite Relief Sale, a local thriving Et Cetera Ecke shop, and special projects, we offer the love of Jesus to those who are struggling overseas while our Peace and Service Committee strives to meet the pressing needs of local people.



Assembling MCC school kits

Outreach to others occurs through our seasonal farmers market, which includes a prayer tent for shoppers. Additionally, every other year we transform the gymnasium into the bustling town of Bethlehem—reminding the community of the promised Messiah. Mostly identified as a missions supporting church, we also raise funds each fall through our week-long Missions Festival to financially sustain workers who are witnessing here and abroad.

With thriving small groups, studious Sunday school classes, and Wednesday night programming, growing in the knowledge of God's word continues to be a focal point of our congregation. We take this so seriously that First Mennonite launched Renew Publishing, an Evangelical Anabaptist adult Sunday school curriculum, to share with other like-minded congregations.

With many more ministries worthy of mentioning, there's a place for everyone seeking to serve the Lord in our congregation. May we continue to glorify Christ through all generations. ■

Megan Linthicum is the wife of Jeff, the Senior Pastor of First Mennonite Church. They have two young adult boys who have a passion to serve the Lord.



DISTRICT: Great Lakes West

LOCATION: Berne, IN

AVERAGE SUNDAY ATTENDANCE: 375

WORSHIP SERVICE: Sunday 10 a.m.

PASTOR: Jeff Linthicum

FOUNDED: 1852

LEARN MORE: firstmennonite.org/welcome

The Practice of Confession

BY MARCIA MYLIN

*Precious Savior, why do I fear your scrutiny? Yours is an exam-
en of love. Still, I am afraid Afraid of what may surface. Even
so, I invite you to search me to the depths so that I may know
myself – and you – in fuller measure. Amen. (Prayer, p. 35).*

The prayer of confession is a humble recognition that we are all sinners in need of God's grace and forgiveness. It's a reminder of our dependence on God and his mercy. Confession is part of the prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray in Matthew 6, and James 5:16 reminds us to confess our sins to one another so that we may be healed. Confession has the potential to lead to transformation. It is an act of accountability and a reminder that we are not alone on this journey of discipleship.

In order to enter into the practice of confession, it is best to set aside at least thirty minutes of quiet time so you can be attentive to the Holy Spirit. You may want to use Psalm 139:23–24 as a prayer as you invite the Holy Spirit to examine your heart.

In his book, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, Foster says that this is a joint search and "since God is with us in the search, we are listening more than we are defending. Our petty rationalizations and evasions of responsibility simply will not tolerate the light of his presence." (Prayer, p. 29).

As you wait, note what the Holy Spirit highlights or brings to mind, choosing to repent, turn from the sin, and turn toward God to receive his forgiveness based on his word in 1 John 1:9. With thanksgiving, receive God's forgiveness and his help to make the needed change. Rest in his loving peace and presence as you conclude this time with the Lord. ■

Marcia Mylin is a member of the Executive Bishop Team. As LMC staff, she serves as the STEP Director and oversees event planning and HR. She has a passion to see all followers of Jesus rooted and established in the love of Christ so they may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God, living out their calling and gifting. (Eph. 3–4). Marcia and her husband Dale have five adult children and are members of Byerland Mennonite Church. Marcia has a degree in Christian Education from Messiah College, a Master's in Religion, and a ThD in Missional Theology from Evangelical Theological Seminary.



RESOURCES

- ▶ **Eyes Aren't Enough – Confession**
(eyesarentenough.com/2018/08/30/prayer-of-confession/)
- ▶ **Prayer: Find the Heart's True Home** by Richard J Foster
- ▶ **Soul Feast** by Marjorie Thompson

SPANISH TRANSLATION

La práctica de la confesión

POR MARCIA MYLIN

Precioso Salvador, ¿por qué temo tu escrutinio? El tuyo es un examen de amor. Aun así, tengo miedo... Miedo de lo que pueda salir a la superficie. Con todo, te invito a escudriñarme hasta lo más profundo, para que pueda conocerme a mí mismo—y a ti—en mayor plenitud. Amén. (Prayer, p. 35).

La oración de confesión es un humilde reconocimiento de que todos somos pecadores necesitados de la gracia y el perdón de Dios. Es un recordatorio de nuestra dependencia de Dios y de su misericordia. La confesión forma parte de la oración que Jesús enseñó a sus discípulos en Mateo 6, y Santiago 5:16 nos recuerda que debemos confesarnos nuestros pecados unos a otros para que podamos ser sanados. La confesión tiene el potencial de conducir a la transformación. Es un acto de rendición de cuentas y un recordatorio de que no estamos solos en este camino de discipulado.

Para adentrarse en la práctica de la confesión, lo ideal es reservar al menos treinta

minutos de tiempo de quietud para poder estar atento al Espíritu Santo. Quizás desee utilizar el Salmo 139:23–24 como oración mientras invita al Espíritu Santo a examinar su corazón.

En su libro *La oración: Encontrando el verdadero hogar del corazón*, Foster afirma que esta es una búsqueda conjunta y que, "puesto que Dios está con nosotros en la búsqueda, estamos más a la escucha que a la defensiva. Nuestras mezquinas racionalizaciones y evasiones de responsabilidad simplemente no soportarán la luz de su presencia." (Prayer, p. 29).

Mientras espera, preste atención a lo que el Espíritu Santo resalta o trae a su mente, eligiendo arrepentirse, apartarse del pecado y volverse hacia Dios para recibir su perdón, basándose en su palabra en 1 Juan 1:9. Con acción de gracias, reciba el perdón de Dios y su ayuda para realizar el cambio necesario. Descanse en su amorosa paz y presencia al concluir este tiempo con el Señor. ■

Marcia Mylin es miembro del Equipo Ejecutivo de Obispos. Como parte del personal de LMC, se desempeña como Directora del programa STEP y supervisa la planificación de eventos y los recursos humanos. Siente una profunda pasión por ver a todos los seguidores de Jesús arraigados y cimentados en el amor de Cristo, para que puedan ser llenos hasta la medida de toda la plenitud de Dios, viviendo conforme a su llamado y sus dones (Ef. 3–4). Marcia y su esposo, Dale, tienen cinco hijos adultos y son miembros de la Iglesia Menonita de Byerland. Marcia posee una licenciatura en Educación Cristiana del Messiah College, una maestría en Religión y un doctorado en Teología Misional del Evangelical Theological Seminary.

RECURSOS

- ▶ **Eyes Aren't Enough – Confession**
(eyesarentenough.com/2018/08/30/prayer-of-confession/)
- ▶ **Oración: Encuentra el verdadero hogar del corazón**, de Richard J Foster
- ▶ **Festín para el alma**, de Marjorie Thompson



Photo by Adobe Stock

Lectio Divina: Meeting Jesus in the Word

BY M. JOHN NISSLEY

Lectio Divina is a Latin term describing an ancient practice of a spiritual reading of the written Word. People ask me: How much time does it take to do the Lectio Divina? The answer depends on how much time you want to spend with Jesus on the “Road to Emmaus.”

Praxis of Lectio Divina

- 1. Silence**—Find a quiet place to prepare to encounter the written and living Word by allowing silence to quiet the inside clutter. Journal your thoughts. What is distracting your mind?
- 2. Read**—Orally read a brief portion of Scripture, then silently read it three times, listening for a key phrase. Reflect upon the meaning emerging for you.
- 3. Meditation**—Process the meaning of the Word, “chew it over,” allow the Word to soak from your head to heart (Luke 24:32). What new insight is Jesus revealing?
- 4. Prayer**—Enter into dialogue with God by expressing your deep heart. Write down your prayer.
- 5. Contemplation**—A quiet heart at rest is solitude in the Spirit’s presence (secret place, Psalm 51:6). **What is God saying to you?**
- 6. Application**—How is God prompting you to live out the message of the Word? ■

John Nissley serves as the bishop for the Great Lakes West District of LMC. Originally from Morgantown, PA, he now resides in Findlay, OH with his wife. In his semi-retirement, he also serves as the Secretary of the LMC Board, a STEP Instructor, and a curriculum writer for Renew Publishing.



SPANISH TRANSLATION

Lectio Divina: El encuentro con Jesús en la Palabra

POR M. JOHN NISSLEY

Lectio Divina es un término en latín que describe una antigua práctica de lectura espiritual de la Palabra escrita. La gente me pregunta: “¿Cuánto tiempo se necesita para realizar la *Lectio Divina*?” La respuesta depende de cuánto tiempo desees pasar con Jesús en el “Camino a Emaús.”

La práctica de la “Lectio Divina”

- 1. Silencio**—Busca un lugar tranquilo para prepararte a encontrarte con la Palabra escrita y viva, permitiendo que el silencio apacigüe el desorden interior. Anota tus pensamientos en un diario. ¿Qué está distrayendo tu mente?
- 2. Lectura**—Lee en voz alta un breve pasaje de las Escrituras; luego, léelo en silencio tres veces, prestando atención a alguna frase clave. Reflexiona sobre el significado que surge para ti.
- 3. Meditación**—Procesa el significado de la Palabra, “rumínala,” permite que la Palabra descienda desde tu mente hasta tu corazón (Lucas 24:32). ¿Qué nueva revelación te está mostrando Jesús?
- 4. Oración**—Entabla un diálogo con Dios expresando lo más profundo de tu corazón. Pon por escrito tu oración.
- 5. Contemplación**—Un corazón sereno y en reposo es soledad en presencia del Espíritu (un «lugar secreto», Salmos 51:6). **¿Qué te está diciendo Dios?**
- 6. Aplicación**—¿De qué manera te está impulsando Dios a vivir el mensaje de la Palabra? ■

John Nissley ejerce como obispo del Distrito de los Grandes Lagos Oeste de la LMC. Originario de Morgantown, Pensilvania, actualmente reside en Findlay, Ohio, junto con su esposa. En su etapa de semirretiro, también se desempeña como secretario de la Junta Directiva de la LMC, instructor del programa STEP y redactor de planes de estudio para Renew Publishing.



Above: Full class of 2026 graduates. Left to right: Alexis Roman-Rodriguez, Sandra Granthon-Roman, Jermaine Shannon, Huỳnh Minh Hiên, Sarah Poe, Tania Madymba, Gordon Reason, Jessica Kindon.

Below: Gerry Keener presenting Huỳnh Minh Hiên with his STEP diploma while visiting him in his home country of Vietnam.



Celebrating Our Newest STEP Graduates!

BY MERCEDES THOMAS

We are excited to present to you the most recent graduating class of STEP students: Huỳnh Minh Hiên, Jessica Kindon, Tania Madymba, Sarah Poe, Gordon Reason, Jermaine Shannon, Sandra Granthon-Roman and Alexis Roman-Rodriguez. The graduation ceremony took place on Saturday, May 16 at Slate Hill Mennonite Church.

During the ceremony, Tania Madymba and Gordon Reason—selected by their peers to share—spoke briefly about their own experiences and what STEP has meant to them. And graduate Jessica Kindon led everyone in attendance in congregational singing.

Bishop and STEP Instructor John Nissley gave the Celebration Address about Lingering Leaders, highlighting the example of Joshua in Exodus 33. Even after Moses would finish speaking

with God and leave the Tent of Meeting, Joshua would linger, desiring to stay in the presence of the Lord. John encouraged the graduates to be leaders who lingered in God's presence.

The ceremony was followed by lunch, catered by Jon & Maria's. Families, friends, graduates, and instructors enjoyed a time of fellowship.

Congratulations to these new graduates!

STEP (Study, Transform, Engage, Prepare), is a three-year program in a cohort model that provides non-traditional ministry leadership training. Class meets once per month for nine months each year, with online assignments and homework between each meeting. We are now accepting applications for Fall 2026. Applications due by August 1. ■

► For more information about STEP, go to lmchurches.org/ministries/step/

Celebrations

Here are some of the things we're celebrating in LMC over the last several months!

LMC CREDENTIALING REPORT

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

Eugene & Christiana Kraybill were issued ordination credentials as chaplains sent from Living Word Bible Fellowship in Boyds, Md.

Theodore Zimmerman (*Rosalyn*) was issued an ordination credential as associate pastor at Shiloh Mennonite Church in Reading, Pa.

Daniel Beiler (*Edna*) was issued an ordination credential as minister of congregational care at Shiloh Mennonite Church in Reading, Pa.

Armando & Veronica Sanchez (*Veronica*) were issued ordination credentials as lead pastors at Shalom Nuevo Comienzo in Waynesboro, Va.

Esteban Flores & Argelia Aguilar Flores were issued a license toward ordination as associate pastors at Shalom Nuevo Comienzo in Waynesboro, Va.

Theresé "Terry" Witmer (*Phil*) was issued a license toward ordination as lead elder at Iglesia Esperanza de Vida in Harrisonburg, Va.

Austin Showalter (*Emma*) was issued a license toward ordination as associate pastor at Weavers Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va.

Delmar Nolt (*Rosie*) was issued a license for specific ministry as district youth pastor of Martindale District.

Elias Perez (*Sindi*) was issued a license toward ordination as associate pastor at Iglesia Menonita Puerta de Sion in Trenton, NJ.

Mercedes Thomas was issued a license toward ordination as pastor of Gaming Grounds, a new missional community in the New Danville District.

Dwayne Hilty (*Melissa*) was issued an ordination credential as lead pastor at Western Mennonite Church in Salem, Or.

Tracy Commons (*Jenna*) was issued an ordination credential as associate pastor at Swamp Mennonite Church in Quakertown, Pa.

Cindy Blanco Ordoñez (*Ricardo*) was issued a license toward ordination as associate pastor at Nuevo Amanecer - Boston in Boston, Massachusetts.

Cohen Peifer (*Hannah*) was issued a license toward ordination as lead pastor at Old Road Mennonite Church in Gap, Pa.

David Powles (*Pamela*) was issued an ordination credential as interim pastor at Hershey Mennonite Church in Kinzers, Pa.

Frank Arzillo (*Leah*) was issued an ordination credential as associate pastor at Village Chapel in New Holland, Pa.

Cheryl Drouillard (*John*) was issued an ordination credential as community pastor within the Willow Street/Strasburg District.

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

Erica Mwanza Mukongo (*Jean*) was issued a license toward ordination as associate pastor at Evangelical Center for Revival - Hatfield in Hatfield, Pa.

Brandon Roth (*Nicole*) was issued a license toward ordination as lead pastor at Emma Creek Mennonite Church in Hesston, Ks.

Ethan Meyers (*Debbie*) was issued an ordination credential as associate pastor at Mercersburg Mennonite Church in Mercersburg, Pa.

Masemo Wakibogo (*Salima*) was issued an ordination credential as lead pastor at Amani Community Church in Wichita, Ks.

CORRECTION: SUSAN SIMKINS' "DISMISSAL TO DELIGHT" ARTICLE

In our previous April-June issue of *Shalom News*, a mistake was made in the "Dismissal to Delight" article by Susan Simkins. The final paragraph—starting with "Jesus taught us ..." and ending with "... and divine will"—was text from a previous article, and not Simkins' words. The article should end with the final questions: "Will you take this moment to delight in God for delighting in you?" We have updated the e-version of the magazine on our website to reflect this correction.

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

EMM/LMC Virtual Prayer Gathering

**Every first Monday of the month,
Zoom only; 8:00 – 9:00 a.m.**

Contact Felixa at
fvdekunkle@lmchurches.org
for more information.

Tiempo de oración de Líderes Hispanos de LMC en español

**Todos los primeros lunes de cada mes,
Solo por Zoom; De 12:00 a 12:30 p.m.**

Envíe un correo a Felixa al
fvdekunkle@lmchurches.org para
más información.

Annual Storytelling Night

August 3, 2026

7:00–9:00 p.m.

Forest Hills Mennonite Church
100 Quarry Rd., Leola, PA
More at mennonitelife.org/events.

Friendship Community's Night at the Ballpark

August 6, 2026

6:45 p.m.

650 N. Prince St., Lancaster, PA
More information at friendshipcommunity.net/night-at-the-ballpark/

Bookworm Frolic

August 27–29, 2026

**9 a.m.–7 p.m. on Thurs. & Fri.,
9 a.m.–4 p.m. on Sat.**

Mennonite Life Collections Building (2215
Millstream R., Lancaster, PA)
More at mennonitelife.org/events

EMM's Kairos Course

**Starts September 21; nine sessions
6:30 p.m.**

450 N. Prince St., Lancaster, PA
717-898-2251 or emm.org/events/kairos-course/ for more information

Your life will never be the SAME

EMM.ORG/ADVANCE



EMM ADVANCE

Everence®

Made Clear

WEBINAR SERIES

Financial education from Everence® – online, practical, and built around real life!



Learn more and register at everence.com/made-clear

September 14-19, 2026

Events support our Caring Fund which assists residents whose cost of care exceeds their personal finances.

- Live Quilt & Online Auction
- Chicken BBQ & More
- Yard Sale, Family Fun

Landis Fellowship DAYS

LandisFellowshipDay.org • 717.381.3580

Become a Mennonite Life member!

Membership includes free admission at the Biblical Tabernacle Experience, the 1719 Museum, and the Mennonite Life Museum.

Visit mennonitelife.org or call 717.393.9745



 **Mennonite Life**

Your calling to serve starts here.

Live out your faith through service.



Why You'll Love Working Here

- ✓ No GED/High School Diploma Required
- ✓ Paid Time Off
- ✓ Flexible Schedule Near Home
- ✓ Training Resources
- ✓ Great Employee Benefits
- ✓ Every shift makes a meaningful impact in the lives of people with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism

About Friendship Community:

Friendship Community is a nonprofit ministry serving individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism through residential services and day programs like the Heart Gallery & Market, where artists can develop skills, create art, and sell their artwork.



Apply today at www.friendshipcommunity.net/employment or scan the QR code

717.656.2466