

The Licensing of Brenda Benner: Two Denominations—One God

A Bible. A book of prayers. Anointing oil. Keys to the church. These were the gifts presented to Brenda Benner at her institution service at St. Francis in the Fields Episcopal Church, Sunday, September 24, 2006. These meaningful gifts will also prove to be practical in Brenda's role of Pastoral Assistant at the Somerset, Pennsylvania church.

But why, you may ask, would a Mennonite pastor be ministering in an Episcopal church? As a student at Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS), Brenda served as intern for St. Francis, under the guidance of Father Mark Zimmerman. Brenda and the congregation developed mutual care and respect for one another during this time. As her April 2006 graduation from seminary grew close, she and her husband, Randy, in consultation with Allegheny Mennonite Conference Minister Kurt Horst and their support group, discerned God's leading her to minister at St. Francis. The official arrangement is that Brenda is licensed through Allegheny Conference and is "on loan" to the Episcopal Church.

Given the dual denominations involved, it was only appropriate to celebrate the initiation of Brenda's ministry with two services the morning of September 24. Her licensing service took place at New Life Mennonite Church at 9:00 a.m. In his sermon, Nathan Yoder, history professor at EMS, focused on the high calling of ministry by examining Jesus' instructions to Peter to tend Jesus' sheep (John 21:15-19). As with Peter, it is through interaction with Jesus that ministers today come to understand their calling and prepare for ministry.



Johnstown area Regional Minister David Garber then administered the licensing of Brenda. Ron Kratz, brother-in-law to Brenda, was song leader, and Phyllis Lehman, Brenda's mother, was pianist.

Following the licensing service, family, friends and several congregants from both St. Francis and New Life made their way through Somerset to arrive at St. Francis for the 11:00 a.m. institution service. Father Mark noted this special gathering of Anabaptist Mennonites at an Episcopal service; the forefathers of the former once persecuted by the forefathers of

Brenda Benner listens to the words of Nathan Yoder, professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

The Licensing of Brenda Benner, cont.

the latter, but now gather together as one in Christ.

Again, Nathan Yoder gave the message. Although God created the world by speaking words, God chose to use people to create His church. Yoder's focus was again on Peter, using Matthew 16:13-20 and I Peter 2. Peter declares Jesus is the Messiah and Jesus declares Peter as the Rock on which the church will be built. In honoring Brenda's calling to minister in the church, we recognize that we, the body of believers, are also called to continue God's presence in history.

Father Mark led the institution service and lay leaders presented the gifts mentioned above, with these words,

"Brenda, accept this Bible, and be among us as one who proclaims the Word.

"Receive this (prayer) book, and be among us as a woman of prayer.

"Use this oil, and be among us as a healer and reconciler.

"Receive these keys, and let the doors of this place be open to all people."

With these meaningful words and symbolic gifts, the St. Francis congregation committed to support and uphold Brenda in her ministry there. Four gifts. Two denominations. One God. Praise be to God for the calling and nurturing of Brenda. May God continue to grow His one Church through her.

—Lynette Plank, Kaufman

Please note the new Allegheny Conference News e-mail address: sendamcnews@gmail.com

Spirituality of Congregational Leadership Retreat



Mary Etta and Linford King

On November 17-18, 2006, representatives from eight different congregations in the Allegheny Conference attended the "Spirituality of Congregational Leadership" retreat hosted at Crossroads Mennonite Church in Johnstown, Pa.

The conference, led by Linford and Mary Etta King, was directed toward pastors, elders,

and pastoral care leaders within congregations. The Friday evening session focused on personal spiritual health, the spiritual health of leadership teams as a whole, and the effect that this spirituality has on both the congregation and pastoral team. The importance and

effect of prayer was reinforced throughout the evening. Communication of the leadership team both internally and while relating to the congregation, was also a topic of discussion. The Friday evening session closed with the prayer of Ephesians 4.

Saturday opened with a time of singing and reflective prayer. The teaching session focused on assessing the emotional and spiritual health of the congregation. Linford and Mary Etta presented the "vital signs" of a healthy congregation, the art of practicing discernment, dysfunctions of a team, and the outward spiritual movement of a congregation.

Acts 6 and 1 John 1:9 were focus scriptures for these sessions. *Training Ministry Teams*, by Anne Stuckey was used as a reference book for the weekend. The afternoon session closed with prayer and an anointing service for participants. Overall, the weekend was an opportunity for retreat, personal growth and fellowship with strong directives toward leadership teams to assess and develop their spirituality. —Angie Savanick, Scottsdale

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Allegheny Conference Slate for Nominating Committee — 2007

**Lori Lichti**

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Congregation: Scottdale
Mennonite Church

*Position in congregation and
Conference:* Currently, MYF
Sponsor for past two years.

Personal: Lives at Laurelville
Mennonite Church Center and is a
stay at home mom with 2 sons.
Previously, had been the Program
Coordinator at Laurelville for 2 years.
She traded the “stay-at home”
position with husband, Jason, who
now serves as food service director at
Laurelville. Enjoys hiking, biking,
reading, sewing.

**Mary Miller**

884 Bayberry Dr., State College, PA
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mkschmid@verizon.net

Congregation: University
Mennonite Church

*Position in congregation and
Conference:* None

Personal: Married to David Miller.
Parent of 4 children; taught pre-
school for 11 years; Christian Ed
Committee Chair at UMC; volunteer
at church and community; enjoys
hiking in the Pennsylvania moun-
tains, people and gardening.

**Julie Swartzentruber**

1001 Flemington Street, Pittsburgh,
PA 15217 Ph: 412-422-0383,
jmspggh@yahoo.com

Congregation: Pittsburgh
Mennonite Church

*Position in congregation and
Conference:* Worship Commission
member, former Pastoral Care Team
and congregational chair. Current
AMC delegate, former Nurture and
Education Commission member and
Jubilee curriculum trainer.

Personal: Pittsburgh public school
librarian/teacher, frequent Ten
Thousand Villages volunteer.

At the time of this printing, a fourth candidate is still to be determined. Respectfully submitted by Allegheny Mennonite Conference Faith, Life and Procedures Commission: Conrad Mast, Trish Yoder, and Alan Kaufman, chair, Dec. 1, 2006.

Nominee Information

Each year at their spring session, Allegheny Conference delegates select and affirm persons to serve on the commissions and nominating committee of the Conference.

The five commissions and their committees involve over sixty people from across the conference. These persons use their skills, talents, and vision to further God's work in the Conference.

On this page and the following two pages is information about persons who are on this year's slate. Two persons will be chosen to serve on the Nominating Committee. This year, the Finance and Stewardship Chair is to be affirmed while one of two persons will be chosen for the rest of the commission positions.

A new Constituency Leaders Council Representative will also be selected, but will depend on the morning vote. There may be two persons to offer for a vote, one person for affirmation, or none, in which case, a constitutional revision may be necessary.

FINANCE AND STEWARDSHIP CHAIR and AMC TREASURER

To be affirmed for 3 years.

Brenda L. Benner

1462 Listie Road, Friedens, PA
15541, Ph: 814-443-3265
814-442-4265 (cell)
blbenner66@hotmail.com

Congregation:
New Life Mennonite Church

Position in congregation and Conference: Currently, Chair,
Finance & Stewardship Commission, AMC; Pastoral
Assistant at St. Francis in the Fields Episcopal Church,
Somerset, Pennsylvania

Personal: Married to Randy. Enjoys reading, music, baking.



Allegheny Conference Slate — 2007

LEADERSHIP CHAIR

To be elected for 3 years.

Steve Sauder

809 Heritage Dr., Oakland, MD 21550
Ph: 301-334-7969
sauders@verizon.net



Congregation: Gortner Union Church

Position in congregation and Conference: Currently, Pastor at Gortner, Chair of Allegheny Conference Leadership Commission. Past Board Chair and Moderator of West Marva District Church of the Brethren.

Personal: Family: Wife, Anna; Children, Beth, Holly, Andrew. I am a bivocational pastor. Along with pastoring, I do gardening and property maintenance.

Donna Mast

531 Scottdale Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683
Ph: 724-887-5563
sendamcnews@gmail.com



Congregation: Scottdale Mennonite Church

Position in congregation and Conference: Co-pastor at Scottdale, overseer for Pittsburgh Mennonite, editor of *Allegheny Conference News*. Have been Allegheny Conference Constituency Leaders Council Representative and delegate to assembly.

Personal: Married to Conrad. Daughters: Katie, Anna, and Rachel. Enjoys sewing, and solving crossword and sudoku puzzles.

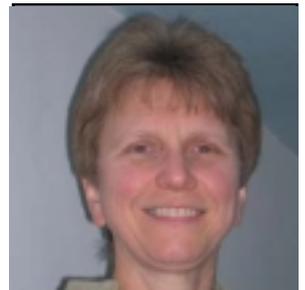
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sendamcnews@gmail.com**

LEADERSHIP MEMBER

To be elected for 3 years.

Marilyn Handrich Bender

640 Melbourne St., Pittsburgh, PA 15217, Ph: 412-421-0502



Congregation: Pittsburgh Mennonite Church

Position in congregation and Conference: Currently, Chair of Pittsburgh's Education Commission, congregational worship and music leader, and a spiritual director. Past church planter and co-pastor at Raleigh Mennonite Church, North Carolina coordinator/instructor of School for Christian Spiritual Formation.

Personal: Husband, John; Daughters, Kara, Mikaela, and Alisha. Enjoys singing, playing guitar and piano, digging in the dirt in an attempt to garden, hosting folks at home, and playing games.

Greta Beitzel

424 Maynardier Ridge Rd, Grantsville, MD 21536, Ph: 301-895-3692
wgbeitzel@fastmail.fm



Congregation: Springs Mennonite Church

Position in congregation and Conference: Delegate to Allegheny Mennonite Conference and to MC USA, Sunday School Class Treasurer, Worship Team Member, Past: Church Librarian, MMA Advocate for Springs Mennonite, Worship Committee Member.

Personal: Married to Willis; son, Wendell, married to Kim; daughter, Krista, went to be with Jesus 10 years ago after losing an 8 1/2 year battle with a brain tumor. Currently, with husband, a presenting couple for Mennonite & Brethren Marriage Encounter. A medical transcriptionist, currently working in a high-needs single-mother home in a "mom" capacity. Also an EMT and member of local volunteer fire department. Enjoys reading, cross-stitch, camping, gardening, and sports.

MISSIONS AND SERVICE

To be elected for 3 years.

T.J. Tennefoss

1922 Hickman Rd.
Greenwood, DE 19950
Ph: 302-349-5470



Congregation: Tressler
Mennonite Church

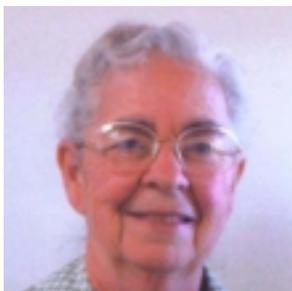
*Position in congregation
and Conference:* Adult

Sunday school teacher, delegate to Allegheny Conference, Church Constitution Committee, experience in church planting and interim pastoring.

Personal: Married to Jolene, 5 children. Graduate of Rosedale Bible Institute, Harvest Bible. Hobbies include reading and cooking special dishes & BBQ. Owner of Greenwood Pallet Company, Manufacturer and Recycler of wooden shipping pallets.

Mary Ellen Lichty

2347 Blue Ribbon Rd,
Oakland, 21550
Ph: 301-334-2866,
ramarli@juno.com



Congregation;
Gortner Union Church

Position in congregation

and Conference: Sunday school teacher, Prior church moderator, Church delegate to Allegheny Conference, Prior Allegheny Conference delegate to General Assembly, Prior member of Mission & Service Commission

Personal: Retired Registered Nurse; Married with three adult children and 4 grandchildren. Have been on numerous medical trips to Haiti and Honduras; Have worked on Mennonite Disaster Service and Service Opportunities for Older Persons projects in the U.S.A.

FAITH, LIFE AND PROCEDURES

To be elected for 3 years.

Lynette Plank

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Congregation: Kaufman
Mennonite Church

*Position in congregation
and Conference:* Former

Church Board Chairperson, Nominating Committee, Adult & Primary S.S. Teacher, Primary S.S. Superintendent, Delegate to AMC, FLP member (ad-hoc)

Personal: B.A. Elementary Education, Bluffton University. Former Director of Publications/Alumni Relations and Dean of Girls, Western Mennonite School. Current PTA Treasurer and school volunteer. Homemaker. Enjoys walking, a good mystery, and games, particularly Scrabble. Married to Brian, mother of Nathan, grade 4.

Karen Howard

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Pittsburgh, PA 15221
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KLASSYKAY@aol.com



Congregation: Pittsburgh
Mennonite Church

Position in congregation

and Conference: Has served on Worship and Ed and Nurture commissions as well as many years on the Pastoral Care Team at Pittsburgh. Currently, chairperson of the Listening Committee.

Personal: An educator in the Pittsburgh Public School for twenty-eight years. The mother of a high school senior. Enjoys reading, writing, traveling and fellowship with her friends. Karen's greatest testimony is her love for the Lord and His people.

Respectfully submitted by Allegheny Conference Nominating Committee:

Carol Benner-Chaffinch, David Eckman, Anna Sauder, Jack Styer, Del Yoder, and Roveen Yoder. December, 2006.

Celebrating the Life of Betty T. Livengood



Betty T. Livengood

Many people may have had the occasion to cross paths with Betty T. Livengood, from the Pinto congregation, as she served enthusiastically during the 1970s and 1980s on Allegheny Mennonite Conference (AMC) committees that instituted long remembered educational opportunities. Anyone who has ever attended a TIP (Teacher Improvement Program) for Christian educators or a family oriented AMC Rally might recall that these are events which were initiated under Betty's influence.

Mrs. Livengood had a distinguished career of thirty plus years in the public school system of Mineral County, West Virginia. During that time she held a variety of positions, starting as an elementary school teacher, then teaching college graduate and undergraduate courses, while climbing through the ladder of administration. She retired in 1989 as director of general education K-12. In 1985 Livengood received the West Virginia Department of Education's highest award, "Leader of Learning," for her commitment to the development of the middle school concept in the state.

To recognize Mrs. Livengood's contributions to the field of education, her colleagues in Mineral County established the Betty T. Livengood Scholarship in 1993. This scholarship is awarded each year to students of the Mineral County School system who wish to pursue a career in education.

Though Betty's commitment to public education was fervent, her passion for Christian education was even stronger. She believed that young people in the Mennonite Church should have the opportunity to attend superior faith-based institutions as well as receive quality Christian education in their home congregations. She also believed that she had a duty to be a "participant rather than a spectator" and put her talents and experience to work for the betterment of Mennonite education.

Betty once explained, "I enjoy a challenge, like to work hard with innovative and creative endeavors, am a participant rather than a spectator, enjoy people and have a good deal of experience in teaching and administration to offer the Mennonite Church." Her colleagues described her with such phrases as, "having unique gifts, an insightful perspective, an enthusiastic work ethic, giving well-qualified counsel, being a dynamic speaker, and possessing a beautiful spirit."

To that end, Mrs. Livengood served as a member of the Mennonite Board of Education (now known as the Mennonite Education Agency) Board of Directors from 1981-1993, when her declining health required her to move to a part time consulting role. During her tenure on MBE she served on

the Personnel Committee to search out presidential candidates for church colleges and as a representative on the Education and Publishing Council.

In AMC, Mrs. Livengood was a member of the Executive Committee and chair of the Christian Education Committee, which originated the TIP and AMC Rally. She also contributed to church-wide curriculum writing projects and authored articles for journals, including the former *Builder*.

Betty's gifts were frequently utilized in her home congregation at Pinto as well. She held many positions throughout the years and was an avid Bible scholar, Bible study leader, and a long time Sunday school teacher for the young adults' class. Although her life was very busy, she rarely turned down a request for her service and was quoted as saying, "I believe that one should serve the church whenever asked if it is physically possible for one to do so."

Mrs. Livengood's strong management skills often cast her into prominent administrative roles during a time when leadership opportunities for women were few. Betty is still recognized by many as being a "trailblazer" who paved the way for women in leadership of all levels. She did all this with warmth of spirit and genuine caring for others borne of her strong personal faith. A former colleague recently reflected that because of her diplomacy in her professional interactions, Livengood only encountered two kinds of people, "friends who agreed with her or friends who disagreed."

Betty suffered from rheumatoid arthritis which was first diagnosed when she was 31 years old. She dealt admirably with the disease which ravaged her body causing her to be in almost constant pain. She always maintained a positive outlook and a fierce desire not to allow her illness to limit her ability to serve or to minister to others.

Mrs. Livengood's life accomplishments were many, but her most prized achievements were realized in the simple pleasures of her family and friends and her involvement in Christian education at local, conference, and church wide levels. Mrs. Livengood wanted others to know that she always held "Mennonite education in her heart."

Betty went to be with the Lord on May 22, 2006, after losing her struggle with the complications associated with her rheumatoid arthritis. She is survived by her husband of 59 years, Paul M. Livengood, daughter, Judith, and husband Lawrence Brenneman, and son, Paul T., and wife Janice (Hershey) Livengood, and their families. Funeral services were held at Pinto Mennonite Church with Pastors Paul T. Livengood, Phillip Dayton, and Elvin Sommers officiating. —*Judy Brenneman, Pinto*

University Holds Ten Thousand Villages Sale

Hundreds of shoppers browsed and purchased Christmas gifts while enjoying refreshments and live music at the University Mennonite Church Ten Thousand Villages Sale and Fair Trade Café on November 10 and 11, 2006.

Ten Thousand Villages, a nonprofit, fair trade retail organization, works with artisans in more than thirty countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, paying them a fair price for their creations. Each purchase of these quality, handcrafted items—including baskets, jewelry, toys, musical instruments, Christmas ornaments, and wooden and onyx pieces—offers hope and sustainability to struggling artisans, their families, and their communities.

University Mennonite, in State College, Pennsylvania, has held the international craft fair for the last sixteen years, expanding its offerings each year. For example, the past three sales have included a selection of fairly traded coffee, tea, and chocolate from the Boston-based Equal Exchange, a company endorsed by Mennonite Central Committee. Another recent addition is the Fair Trade Café, featuring coffee and tea, baked goods, and an international lunch menu.

Members of the youth group helped transform the church basement into a coffee house, with wall hangings, mood lighting, sofas, and table. Musicians from the congregation, including guitarists, singers, and fiddlers, entertained café customers with live music throughout the day on Saturday. Fliers on tables provided information for customers about Equal Exchange, which guarantees coffee and cocoa growers in Central America and Africa a fair price for their crops.



Left: Musicians Mike Bratt and Jesse Weidner entertain diners at the Fair Trade Café.

This year's sale and café benefited from local publicity, including an editorial in the local newspaper a few days before the event: "Why not celebrate simplicity, sincerity and fairness in commercial transactions and the true spirit of the season at the Fair Trade Craft Fair and Cafe this weekend? It's a great way to do some early—and sensible—Christmas shopping while helping people in impoverished countries earn a living from their work," the editorial read. It also referred to the sale as "an oasis of calm, a pocket of sanity" in the commercial flurry of the holiday season.

Sales were brisk on both days, according to volunteers, and totaled more than \$20,000. "The Ten Thousand Villages sale is always a rewarding experience," says sale coordinator Tina Leitzel. "We've done the sale for so long, and so many people are willing to help, that it always goes smoothly. It's really a well-oiled machine."

—Krista Weidner, University

◀ PEOPLE ▶▶▶▶

Two Allegheny Conference natives participated on a Goshen College sports team during the fall semester.

Anna Mast, daughter of Conrad and Donna Mast of Scottdale, was a member of the women's cross country team coached by Doug Yoder. The junior art major is a 2004 graduate of Southmoreland Senior High School and attends Scottdale Mennonite Church.

Brennan Troyer, son of Craig and Lisa Troyer of Bridgeville, was a member of the men's soccer team coached by Thavisak Mounsithiraj. The sophomore business major is a 2005 graduate of South Fayette High School and attends Pittsburgh Mennonite Church.

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Conference Calendar ▼

January 26-28

SnoKamp, Grades 9-12, at Laurelville

February 6

Deadline Mar.-Apr. issue *ACNews*

March 3

Spring Delegates Meeting

March 16-18

Jr. High Retreat, Grades 6-8, at Laurelville

March 27

Pastors Meeting: Pastors & Power Politics at Bedford, Pa

April 21

TriState Relief Sale Workday at Springs Mennonite Church, 9:00-3:00.

July 2-7

National Youth Convention, Biennial Convention and Delegate Assembly, San Jose, California

July 20-21

TriState Relief Sale, McHenry, Md.

August 3-5

Summer Conference at Laurelville

Postmaster: Send Form 3579 to *Allegheny Conference News*, 531 Scottdale Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683-1243.

Volunteers Helping People Dream Up a Pot of Soup



Children gather to knot comforters and pack layette kits.

Right: Dan Yoder family making cider to raise funds for Penny Power.

Below right : Quartet groups formed a chorus to sing for MCC at Kaufman .

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. James 1:17

Every day, hundreds of families in Colombia flee their homes because of a long-running armed conflict. Joba and her eight children were forced from their land after her husband was killed and their animals were slaughtered. They fled to the capital, Bogotá, begging for food in the central farmer's market to survive.

Now, Joba and 50 other women in the neighborhood of Cazucá, just outside Bogotá, have organized themselves as "Women Dream-Builders." With help and encouragement from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and the Colombian Mennonite Foundation for Development (MENCOLDES), they have created a community soup pot that feeds more than 200 women and children every day. Two years ago, more than 80 percent of the children in the neighborhood suffered from serious or severe malnutrition. Now these children, whose health has greatly improved, are signs of hope and life.

Volunteers supporting TriState Relief Sale are working year-round to help meet these needs. People from churches near and far gathered at the Kaufman Mennonite Church (MC) for the TriState Fall Workday recently. They quilted and knotted and hammered and sewed to create items to be sold July 20-21, 2007, at the benefit for MCC. Children knotted comforters and packed layette kits to be sent where needed, appreciating the fact that others aren't as lucky as they.

A music celebration was held the next day featuring local gospel quartets who performed

to a packed house at the Kaufman MC. An offering was taken to support MCC's work around the world.

Penny Power, a program to collect coins and funds during the year to help feed those in need, is off to a good start in many churches.

At Kaufman MC they offered "seed" packets containing \$3.00 "seed" money to those who wished to participate. Each person or family was encouraged to use this seed money to multiply their Penny Power donation. One family hosted a gathering at their barn that included food and a mini-auction. Another family made cider pressed the old-fashioned way.

Now is the time to start those plants or plan your project. If your group would like to host a food booth, contact the Bergs at (814) 445-6945. TriState Relief Sale dates are July 20-21, 2007. Together we can make it happen! —Harriet Berg, Springs



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