

#1 – “Much Fruit” at Laurelville – August 2-4!

Over 100 delegates, visitors, national staff, children and youth attended the 143rd annual Allegheny Mennonite Conference gathering at Laurelville. During a national convention year (MennoCon19 in Kansas City) we almost always see lower attendance than usual. And although that trend held true, it was evident that both Allegheny and MC USA are turning the page to something that seems “renewing” and “refocusing.”

There is a new Spirit of anticipation - looking forward to what God is doing and might do in our midst as we attend to “remaining” and “resting” in the abundance that the vine-grower is determined to share with those who abide in the way of Jesus.

Dave Mishler (Scottdale), Kate Heinzel (University) and Wes Bergen (Morgantown CoB) preached. Hyattsville led our worship times. We camped, put puzzles together, played games, studied, swam, ate ice cream, hiked, worked worshipfully, and hung out in God’s green world.

Shana Peachey Boshart (MC USA denominational minister for faith formation) shared with our pastors and delegates about the reviving energy of our denominational leadership team who seeks to lead us into an intentionally more diverse future. Les Horning inspired us with stories from the 100-year history of Mennonite Central Committee and the upcoming centennial celebrations in 2020.

Next year we plan to gather a little earlier than usual because of the leap year calendar. Put **July 31 to August 2, 2020** on your calendar for another collaborative, Jesus-centered time of inspiration for our various congregational ministries in the places we call home.

#2 - John Verburg joins Springs Mennonite Church as lead pastor

The Springs congregation called and celebrated the beginning of a new chapter with John Verburg as their pastor. John and his wife Faith moved to Springs in late August to begin a three-year term. Springs has had several interim pastors and is finding fresh vision to be the congregation God is calling them to be in their neighborhood. A Celebration of Call service was held on September 22 with over 100 persons attending.

#3 – 2020 Spring Study - Elaine James to bring new, compelling look at the Song of Songs

This ain’t your ordinary Song of Songs! Elaine T. James, Associate Professor of Old Testament at Princeton will be leading our 2020 Spring Study at Laurelville. Ecology, agrarianism, healthy view of the body and sexuality, and lots of time for reflection will shape our time together. Look for a promotional flyer and registration form by November. **Save the date – May 4-7, 2020 at Laurelville!** For pastors, leaders, everyone interested in a compelling view of this often-overlooked OT masterpiece.

**#4 – Keep those cards and letter coming!**

Thank you to all congregations, conferences and individuals who continue to support financially the work of our conference. Most congregations, as of this writing, have paid the annual \$500 administrative fee, designed to provide a smoother cash-flow over the summer months. We have maintained our reserves due to your ongoing generosity. You can review financial reports by contacting Kathy at office@alleghenymennoniteconference.org. Our delegates mandated a balanced budget by 2021, which will come more into focus by our next Faith and Life Gathering in March 2020. **(The November “optional” delegate gathering has been cancelled for this Fall in order to sustain congregational resources and allow delegates to breath deeply after several years of more intense conference focused activity.)**