

#1 – “I am going to do a new thing” Isaiah 43:19. **Annual Celebration of Congregations and Conference** will be a **Hybrid** gathering this year from August 6-8, 2021. You can choose either to attend in person at Laurelville or virtually via zoom. Registration information was sent to congregations and delegates or go to <https://www.alleghenymennoniteconference.org/>. It’s important that you register as early as possible because we are limited in the number of rooms reserved.



We all know the past year with a pandemic, heightened awareness of racial injustice, natural disasters and political divides, have shaped our lives and our relationships in personal and societal ways. It has given us a glimpse of our greatest strengths and our deepest failings. Isaiah 43 begins with reassurance that God will sustain throughout overwhelming water and consuming fire. Then God promises to bring about something new because of the struggles the people have experienced. We will explore this passage as we anticipate what God has next for us as a conference even as the water and fire continue to shift and change.

#2 – Conference Minister on leave - David Mishler continues his leave to support his wife Becky through her cancer treatment. Jayne Byler, pastor at Stahl Mennonite Church (Johnstown, PA) is filling in to assist the conference a few hours a week. Please continue to keep Becky and Dave in prayer during this time. Contact the conference office with any needs you might have in Dave’s absence.

#3 - Laurelville Summer Camps for children and youth still has some spots available. We will run at 50% capacity; you can register online at Laurelville.org website. This year we will begin a four-year series on the Sermon on the Mount, this year’s theme and Bible focus is Climbing the Mountain... Taking Hold ~ Matthew 5:1-16. Joy Cotchen, Conference Minister of Children and Youth, and Leah Rittenhouse, Summer Camp Director are hard at work to deliver an Anabaptist-focused camping experience for summer campers. Allegheny conference youth are eligible for conference-related discounts!



#4 - Note of gratitude from San Antonio: I want to thank this conference for their generous gift to San Antonio Mennonite Church ministries. My husband, Dan and I served at the hospitality house a couple weeks over the Christmas holidays a year ago. We were forever changed because of our time there! The people of this church are the hands and feet of Jesus every day. They are faithful as persons walk through their doors; helping them find resources, giving them a place to shower, sleep and eat. The spirit of the International Guest House will continue in San Antonio! God blessings be with you. Jeanette King



#5 - After a 5+ year process examining best practices and perceptions of **Laurelville**, the board voted to approve an exciting change this spring! Our official name will still be Laurelville Mennonite Church Center but moving forward we’ll do business as Laurelville Retreat Center.

#6 - MennoCon21: For the first time, Mennonite Church USA is hosting a hybrid convention on July 6-10, 2021. MennoCon21 participants may choose between attending in person in Cincinnati, Ohio, or virtually via Pheedloop, an interactive, online event platform. The delegate portion of MennoCon21 is a virtual-only meeting. Allegheny Conference is eligible to send two delegates and each congregation is eligible to send one delegate for each 100 persons or fraction thereof. Learn more about MennoCon21 virtual offerings at <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/mennocon21-virtual-opportunity/>

#7 - Leadership Council continues anti-racism training – Allegheny’s Leadership Council continues their work in anti-racism training through the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). Each member of Council had a one-on-one meeting with Ruth Wenger to review their individual results and will have a plan to move forward in their anti-racism work.