

#1 – Leadership Council Retreat – Plans for the coming year

Significant items from the Leadership Council retreat, held January 13-15, 2023:



- a) Conference Minister, David Mishler, has given notice that he intends to retire next June 2024. He also reported that traveling through airports has become more difficult and he is inclined to not attend national meetings. The Leadership Council has appointed Jayne Byler (she substituted for Dave while on medical leave last year) to serve as “Conference Minister Assistant” who may attend meetings such as Constituency Leaders Council, national conventions and pastors weeks.
- b) A five person task force is in place to listen, discern and make recommendations to the Leadership Council concerning youth ministry within the conference – Dave Swanson, Ryan Johnson-Evers, Michelle Burkholder, Samantha Lioi and TJ Teneffoss will lead the process, with a target to complete their work by the end of the calendar year.
- c) Due to Dave’s transition, a conference minister search committee will be formed by early next year. One of the tasks before a committee can do its work is for Allegheny to prepare a Conference Information Form, describing in some detail the work and vision of the conference. Randy Kolb (moderator), Karrie Peterson and Lee Good will spearhead this effort over the coming months.
- d) Leadership Council reviewed and adopted a recommendation from the conference minister to receive *the exchange* (Winchester, VA) as a member congregation on February 4, 2023, when they are officially released by Virginia Mennonite Conference. We will officially welcome *the exchange* at our next Faith & Life Gathering.
- e) **The date for the next Faith & Life Gathering, a fully virtual meeting, will be held, Saturday, March 4, 2023 via Zoom.** In addition to welcoming *the exchange* and introducing the congregation to delegates, agenda will include presentation of a proposed budget for 2023-24, volunteers for conference positions will be selected/appointed, and an update will be given from our Repair Committee around engagement with Native American concerns.

#2 – West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship has a new interim pastor



west philadelphia
mennonite fellowship

Will O’Brien has accepted the half-time position of interim pastor for WPMF effective November 1, 2022. The Human Resources Committee recommended Will for this

position. Among his work, Will recently served as interim pastor for Germantown Mennonite Church, and was associate editor for *The Other Side* magazine. WPMF’s future plans are to call a full-time pastor by April 2023. A search committee is working to name a pastor, and the congregation will engage their consensus process to make this decision. Welcome Will !

#3 – Winterville at Laurelville (report by Leah Rittenhouse) – Winterville was a great success! Campers and staff



had a blast playing, singing, learning, and living together for the weekend. There was even enough snow for a few sled runs. Derek and Laurie Yoder, of Harrisonburg, VA, led us in learning that we are loved children of God and that there's nothing in all creation that could

separate us from God's love. This was reinforced by 'Coop the Chicken'---an on-screen character who learned this lesson for himself. Much to our surprise, Coop the Chicken then stopped by for an in person visit at the end of the weekend! Allegheny Conference, Laurelville Retreat Center, and a great staff of volunteers partnered together to make this memorable weekend happen. A special shout out to the Johnstown Service Adventure unit for their help. There were 35 campers in attendance, 6 of them claiming AMC church membership, with most from the local community.



#4 – Dr. Deb Bergen and Anabaptist Community Bible Project focus for ‘Spring Study’ at Laurelville

April 24-27 (Monday noon through Thursday noon) “*Harvesting Treasures*” will be the featured focus for the first half of the annual Spring Study. Deb will lead us in recognizing the various levels of trauma we have been experiencing as leaders in recent years and to **“*uncover the relevance of accumulated wisdom from our own lives*”** to which we can make **“*applications in specific mental health situations, challenges of the new normal, and pastoral transitions.*”**



Trained in child psychiatry, Deb grew up on the Canadian prairies and brings the experience of being the daughter, wife and mother of pastors. She moves easily between the languages of science and faith.

For the second half of the week we will join the Anabaptist Community Bible Project - creating commentary around three biblical passages we have been assigned by project leaders - ***Exodus 19-20; Mark 1:29-45, 2:1-17; Psalm 22:12-21.*** Mark your calendars for this time of recreation, study, fellowship and retreat!