



# ALLEGHENY MISCELLANY

The official newsletter of Allegheny Mennonite Conference

## WHAT'S INSIDE OUR LATEST ISSUE:

SAVE THE DATES!

WHERE IS YOUR CONFERENCE MINISTER?

2026 ANNUAL FAITH AND LIFE SPRING ASSEMBLY

CHURCH SPOTLIGHT: FRIENDSHIP MENNONITE CHURCH

VOTE TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

"VIENNA TO VENICE: UNTOLD STORIES OF WOMEN,  
PEASANTS AND THE ANABAPTIST WITNESS"

PASTORS AND LEADERS SPRING BIBLE STUDY

100-10 CAMPAIGN

## 2026 ANNUAL FAITH AND LIFE SPRING ASSEMBLY

On Saturday, March 7th, Allegheny Mennonite Conference gathered for our annual Faith and Life Spring Assembly at Pittsburgh Mennonite Church. PMC members led us in a meaningful worship in preparation for our time together, tying in scripture, song and poetry which grounded us in God's love for us and presence with us.

We discussed several important topics relevant to our conference life:

**Our expanding geography:** AMC is growing and expanding our geographic borders! This brings some challenges and many opportunities. We're adapting to what this means as we gather pastors and support each other.

## SAVE THE DATES!

Pastors and Credentialed Leader Study Week:

April 20 at 1pm - April 23 at 1pm, 2026  
Laurelville Retreat Center, Mt. Pleasant, PA

2026 AMC Celebration Weekend:

July 31 - August 2, 2026  
Laurelville Retreat Center, Mt. Pleasant, PA

## WHERE IS YOUR CONFERENCE MINISTER?

April 16-18 Constituency Leadership  
Council, Chicago, IL

April 20-23 Pastor and Credentialed  
Leader Study Week at Laurelville with  
Dr. Drew Strait

April 26--Stahl Mennonite Church

May 1-2 Gulf States Spring Assembly

June 28--Friendship Mennonite Church

July 31-August 2--AMC Celebration  
Weekend





Jayne Byler, Pastor at Stahl Mennonite Church

**Dual Affiliation:** The Leadership Council recently discerned a request from some Mosaic Mennonite Conference congregations around dual affiliation, following Mosaic's vote to leave the denomination in November of 2025. The Leadership Council looked at AMC's past and current arrangements with dual affiliated congregations and noted that the common factor has been that the congregation manages that dual affiliation—they are responsible relationally, financially, and structurally to two denominational structures. As a result, our Leadership Council expressed openness to Mosaic congregations being dually affiliated, as long as they understand that they hold the responsibility to manage their full participation in both structures.

**Future Allegheny Conference youth trip:** Amy reported her attempt to organize an AMC youth trip in 2026 to Mississippi, to understand that state's important civil rights history, and to participate in the ministries of the Mennonite congregations in Jackson and Meridian, Mississippi. Unfortunately, we couldn't get the dates to work, but we are planning to organize a trip in 2028. Our congregations tend to be small, and the opportunities to be part of a youth trip are greater when we join together!

**Summer Celebration Weekend:** July 31–August 2 is our next Celebration weekend, a favorite event for our conference! This year, our special guest speaker is Bishop Dwayne Royster, Executive Director of Faith in Action. We'll be able to register online this year, and we will be using The Gathering Place at Laurelville for the first time. This new building will give our Conference Related Ministries more space to display and engage with us, and will provide us with up to date technology as we do the business of church and worship together. And, as always, there are opportunities for kids and youth, intergenerational activities, hiking and much more!

**New Slate:** We unanimously affirmed a new slate of leaders to the Leadership Council.

- Kirsten Peterson, moderator-elect. She will become moderator following Ken Litwiller. Kirsten is a member at Hyattsville Mennonite Church.
- Alvis Pettker, to fill Kirsten's outgoing at-large seat, completing her term and becoming eligible for two full terms. Alvis is a member at our newest AMC congregation, Friendship Mennonite Church.
- Lee Good, reaffirmed for another term on Leadership Council. Lee is a member at Community Mennonite Church of Harrisonburg.

**New Conference Safety Liaison:** We introduced Joy Kreider as our new Safety Liaison. The denomination's new Safety and Accountability Policy calls on each Conference to assign a Safety Liaison to aid in investigations of credentialed ministers, and ensure that credentialed leaders are trained according to the policy stipulations. Joy comes with decades of experience supporting those who have experienced harm in the church, and has provided training for pastors in this area. We are very fortunate to have such a skilled person taking on this role.

**New Church Introduction:** The Northwest Philadelphia Peace Church introduced themselves for consideration for membership with Allegheny Mennonite Conference. The conference will vote on this request to join at our Celebration weekend in August, and until then all are invited to check out their website (<https://nppc.church/>), visit them for worship, and get to know them.



Oldest (Paul Lehman) and youngest in attendance at Spring Assembly

# CHURCH SPOTLIGHT: FRIENDSHIP MENNONITE CHURCH

By Alvis Pettker, Pastor of Friendship Mennonite Church

Friendship Mennonite Church is nestled in the city of Bedford Heights, in the greater Cleveland Ohio area. We started as an urban church plant by the Ohio Mennonite Conference almost eighty years ago. The first members and attenders met in a tent, before the first chapel was built. When the current sanctuary was constructed at the other end of the property, the old chapel grew into the parsonage, which became a rental property the congregation has since sold.



This January we hosted a screening for the latest documentary project of Eric Miller, a former FMCer. "Under the Peach Trees" is the story of a massive family association consisting of hundreds of people from across the country dedicated to tracing and celebrating their connections to a common ancestor: An Amishman named Jacob Hochstetler. The film weaves the experience of the Hochstetlers settling in Pennsylvania, living on the frontier of the French and Indian War, and being attacked, kidnapped, and adopted into a new way of living among the Indigenous people of the region, and interviews with the living descendants of Jacob Hochstetler about discovering their connection and its significance for them. A delightful Q+A time with Miller, the director, followed the screening. It went on to become an Official Selection in the 2026 Touchstone Independent Film Festival. More information about the film can be found at [UnderthePeachTrees.com](https://UnderthePeachTrees.com)

Perhaps the most special thing coming up in this season is Pastor Alvis' fast approaching sabbatical (Apr 6th–July 6th). In early 2025 Friendship applied for a Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program grant, and in September of last year we received news that our application was accepted. The theme of our proposal was "Fining Our Way" and grew out of our shared, experience navigating crises like Covid, and years-long congregational discernment that concluded with FMC joining Allegheny Mennonite Conference. Part of the grant will allow Pastor Alvis to travel to Spain to walk the Camino de Santiago, and Canada to visit family and friends. Another part will allow the congregation to pause from its regular rhythm of worship to pursue a parallel season of renewal and reflection on questions like: "How did we get here?" And "Where is the Spirit leading us from here?"

To explore these questions the congregation intends to pursue a story-sharing project intended to help the congregation discover and explore personal and communal life themes, and practice the story-sharing/testimony aspect of our tradition. Afterwards we plan on hosting an event where we can share the stories we've been working on with each other and our friends in the community.

Life at Friendship moves at the speed and with the intentionality of good friendships; sometimes dull but still delightful, and sometimes everything all at once. And through it all, we trust our friend Jesus walks with us.

## VOTE TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

What does it really mean to love your neighbor? Dorothy Shank—of Ridgeway Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, VA—pondered this question as the 2024 U.S. presidential election divided communities, families, and neighbors. This tension led her to reflect on Jesus’ words in Luke 10 about the most important commandments: love God and love your neighbor.

One phrase kept coming to her: “Vote to Love Your Neighbor.”

What began as a local idea quickly became a shared project. With the support of Ridgeway, a small team printed yard signs and placed them around town ahead of the November election. But when the ballots were counted, the message didn’t fade. It spread.

Soon, yard signs, car magnets, and T-shirts were making their way across the country to people who wanted to bring a visible reminder of compassion and unity into their own communities.

The word “vote” catches attention—and sometimes raises eyebrows. But it also leads to conversation. Ridgeway hopes that viewers will think of voting in a broad sense. “To vote means to choose,” Shank says. “It means taking action and giving your support to something. It can be as simple as how we behave in traffic and as complex as how we care for creation.”

Yes, the message is political. “We believe it always will be,” Shank says. “From Jesus’ birth to his death, his life created political tension. Similarly, our church fathers and mothers, the Anabaptists, were killed for their courage to redefine what it meant to follow Jesus.”

At its heart, the project isn’t at all about partisanship. It’s about making deliberate daily decisions—to treat neighbors across the street and across the world with compassion, respect, kindness, dignity, and care.

If this message resonates with you, Vote to Love Your Neighbor materials are available at <https://www.muddyfeet.shop/collections/vote-to-love-your-neighbor>. Please note, Ridgeway Mennonite Church does not profit from these sales; we simply hope you will share our message with your neighbors.



Dorothy Shank, from Ridgeway Mennonite Church



Ridgeway Mennonite Chrch Youth at MennoCon

# "VIENNA TO VENICE: UNTOLD STORIES OF WOMEN, PEASANTS AND THE ANABAPTIST WITNESS"

There's still room to join historian Kimberly Schmidt (Hyattsville Mennonite) on a tour to discover how women and peasants shaped early Anabaptism. "Vienna to Venice: Untold Stories of Women, Peasants and the Anabaptist Witness" starts in Vienna on Sept. 16. A group of historians in Austria has been assiduously installing monuments and plaques related to Anabaptism. Some sites are in the major tourist zones, while others are tucked away. In the Italian Dolomites we visit alpine areas (via gondolas), quaint towns and small cities where Anabaptists were active. We will end our tour in Venice where we will explore the overlooked history of Venetian Anabaptism. For more information, contact [kimberly.schmidt@emu.edu](mailto:kimberly.schmidt@emu.edu) or <https://www.tourmagination.com/tours/vienna-to-venice-the-untold-stories-of-women-peasants-the-anabaptist-witness-fall-2026>.



Last year's tour, women row in a replica galley ship at Falkenstein Castle, a place where Anabaptists were held as prisoners before being transferred to Venice.



Michael and Martha Deimel, our Austrian hosts, pose in front of the "Anabaptist Cottage" in Niedersulz, Austria.



The 2025 tour group posed in front of a plaque honoring Conrad Grebel's time at Vienna University.



The path up a steep hillside to an abbey in Klausen, Georg Blaurock's base of operations in Sudtiroal (South Tyrol, Italy) and a hotbed of early Anabaptist activity.



Allegheny  
Mennonite  
Conference

A conference of  
Mennonite Church USA

# PASTORS AND LEADERS SPRING BIBLE STUDY

April 20, 2026 at 1:00 pm thru  
April 23, 2026 at 12:00 pm  
Laurelville Retreat Center

REGISTRATION OPENS JANUARY 1, 2026  
Open to all credentialed leaders

## A THOUGHTFUL ANABAPTIST RESPONSE TO CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

Dr. Drew Strait will join us to talk with Pastors and Credentialed Leaders about Christian Nationalism and how we might respond to it at this moment in our national history.

We'll have a morning and afternoon session every day, with ample time for learning, rest, conversation, and hiking.



Speaker

**DR. DREW STRAIT**

For more information and to register visit:  
[alleghenymennoniteconference.org/events/](https://alleghenymennoniteconference.org/events/)  
(814) 443-2007





# 100 FOR \$10

## CONSIDER GIVING TO “100 FOR \$10” STRENGTHENING OUR FAITH COMMUNITY TOGETHER

What if 100 people gave just \$10 a month?

That simple idea is the heart of Allegheny Mennonite Conference’s new campaign: 100 for \$10 — small gifts with a big impact.

This initiative invites us to build a sustainable foundation for the vital, Spirit-led work we share across the conference. Together, we can grow something deeply rooted, relational, and lasting.

Allegheny Mennonite Conference is more than an administrative body. Conference has played a formative role in shaping individual lives.

### Be Part of the Movement

- Be one of the 100: Start a recurring gift of \$10/month (or any amount you choose)
- Spread the word: Invite others in your congregation or network to join the mission



Amy Yoder McGloughlin, Conference Minister | [amy@allghenymennoniteconference.org](mailto:amy@allghenymennoniteconference.org)

Beth Dalansky, Conference Administrator | [office@allghenymennoniteconference.org](mailto:office@allghenymennoniteconference.org)

PO BOX 2, Scottdale, PA 15683 | phone: 814-443-2007

[ALLEGHENYMENNONITECONFERENCE.ORG](http://ALLEGHENYMENNONITECONFERENCE.ORG)

Have something you want us to share in the Miscellany?

Email us at [office@alleghenymennoniteconference.org](mailto:office@alleghenymennoniteconference.org)

Follow us on   