



Intersections

Franconia Conference Snapshots (Dec. 2011)

Gathering on Holy Ground

Stephen Kriss (skriss@franconiaconference.org)

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franconiaconference.org

Gwen Groff, pastor at Bethany Mennonite Church in Bridgewater Corners, Vermont, and more than 300 others from across both Conference communities along with Mennonite Church USA representatives gathered Friday night at Penn View Christian School in Souderton, Pa, in the first joint worship service for both Conferences since 1999. The opening worship, which featured a combined cross-conference, multi-ethnic and multilingual worship team, kicked off the gathering switching swiftly back and forth between Creole, English, Indonesian, Spanish and Vietnamese—the worshipping languages of the 60 congregations that make up both conferences.



The spirit of gathered worship was framed further through Saturday’s joint delegate session held around tables that considered the further cooperation between both Conferences in a move toward healing the 1847 historic rift between the groups. Overwhelmingly, representatives from both conferences gave permission by raising green cards that suggested a continuation to explore life together more extensively and collaboratively.



Working together to forward the Reign of God

John Goshaw & Ron White, Moderators, Franconia & Eastern District Conferences

On Saturday morning of our joint assembly, Conference Ministers Warren Tyson and Ertell Whigham explored this question with the delegates of both conferences. They pointed out the numerous ways that we share a similar vision. The table group conferring and reporting that followed this presentation clearly indicated a desire for Franconia and Eastern District Conferences to continue to work together cooperatively. Conference leadership will now take this strong affirmation to engage in dialogue on developing further ways of working together to forward the Reign of God.

Financial Update

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Revenue	\$447,055	\$476,066
Expenses	\$551,328	\$543,788
Credit Payment	\$ 17,035	\$ 17,035
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Net	(\$121,308)	(\$84,757)



Enter into life with all your heart

Emily Ralph (eralph@franconiaconference.org)

Luke and Dot Beidler were recognized for their lives of ministry, service, and stewardship at Conference Assembly on November 11. Everence representative, Randy Nyce, presented Luke and Dot with the organization’s National Journey Award for excellent stewardship of time, money, and service. Ministry, for them, is a life-long calling. “Get involved in a local congregation, serve in every way you can, take opportunities to cross cultures and learn from others at home and abroad,” they encourage young leaders. “Enter into life and faith with all your hearts.”

God's "acolyte" in youth ministry

Scott Franciscus (scott@cc-fellowship.org)

From an early age, church has played an important part in my life. Growing up in the Episcopal Church, I became an acolyte (Greek for "helper" or "attendant"), also known as "altar-boy". When I started attending Messiah College, ministry was not in my plans. It took almost failing out of college for me to realize that it wasn't about what I wanted out of life. It was then that I realized the abundant life Jesus Christ offers. What a joy it has been being God's "acolyte" in youth ministry ever since!



New fruit, rooted in history

Sarah Heffner (heffners@mhep.org)

The Mennonite Heritage Center, Harleysville, and Eastern Mennonite Seminary cosponsored a class on "acquainting students with the almost 500-year sweep of Anabaptist history, experience and theological reflection since 1525. This story of a movement and faith communities will be viewed against the background of the spiritual, social, geographical and cultural dimensions both historically and from today's perspective." An ambitious agenda for the four evenings, but an excellent opportunity for participants to ponder what Ruth described as "a small chapter in a specific story with universal meaning".

A place to belong

Mary Lou Cummings (cominghome@verizon.net)

"Ever since I left home at age 17 to go to nursing school, I have always lived among strangers," Katherina Efimenko says. Born in a German Mennonite colony in the Ukraine, Katherina now lives at Rockhill Mennonite Community in Telford, Pa. A victim of World War II and conflicting ideologies, Katherina has lived a hard life—a life of terrible losses. But now, between her friends at Rockhill Mennonite Community and her Doylestown church family, she finally has found where she belongs.



Seeds and strings and welcome spaces

Samantha Lioi (samanthalioi@gmail.com)

Dave Benner has learned hospitality as a gift the church gives in a culture where too few have experiences of welcome they can count on. As a musician who plays banjo, guitar, bass guitar, and mandolin, Dave was creating welcome with church music and worship teams from a young age. In 1990, he and his wife Priscilla helped start a new community of faith. Shalom Christian Fellowship became a place where people could belong—where people who had experienced rejection elsewhere received the space and love to become part of a community.

Christopher Dock, Conferences Name Youth Minister

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School and Franconia and Eastern District Conferences celebrate their ministry partnership by naming John Stoltzfus Conference Youth Minister. Stoltzfus will become campus pastor for Christopher Dock's 365 students, and will encourage, support and promote youth ministry in the churches represented by the two conferences. It is the first time that all three entities have collaborated on a youth ministry position. Stoltzfus will begin in January 2012.

