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## From the PNMC OFFICE

[Register here](#) (through January 28) for the **2021 Conference Communications Council**. The Zoom event will take place on **Saturday, February 6**, beginning at 8:30 in the morning. We are excited to welcome guest speaker, Safwat Marzouk, Associate Professor of Old Testament / Hebrew Bible at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. He will share thoughts on “Reading the story of Joseph in an Age of Migration”. Marzouk reflects on his vocation as a professor, “I study, teach and write about the Bible with an emphasis on how the triune God forms a faith community in the world. I believe God is at work forming a community with a dual identity as sojourners and as recipients of the promise of the kingdom of God. This dual identity helps the faith community to be rooted in the world and formed by different ethics. In a world where migration is seen as a challenge, **the church should see it as an opportunity not only to show hospitality but also to celebrate difference and claim a biblical perspective on what it means to be the church.**”

Each congregation is encouraged to send at least two leaders. Additional interested leaders are welcome to attend.

## New beginnings...

Did you know that John David Thacker, formerly of PNMC's Prince of Peace Mennonite Church in Anchorage, AK, has relocated to West Virginia? In June 2020, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, John David loaded his Honda Fit with everything he owned and headed east. He moved into an apartment along the banks of the Kanawha River. He did not have a job waiting for him, but he was following God's call to do something new— to plant an Anabaptist peace church in a city with no Anabaptist presence. Although there are Mennonite and Church of the Brethren congregations in West Virginia, there are none in the state's two largest cities: the capital, Charleston, and Huntington, one hour to the west. [Read more here.](#)



## PNMC CONGREGATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS & MINISTRIES

Listed chronologically, then alphabetically by organization

### Mountain View Mennonite Church, *Excerpts from Jeryl Hollinger's year-end reflection*

It seems that everyone is ready for 2020 to come to an end. Christmas letters from friends tell the woes of dealing with the coronavirus. Columnists bemoan a turbulent election season and the deep divisions in our society. Discussions recall the economic doubts and realities that have crippled or delayed the fulfillment of dreams. Racial injustice, once thought by many to be a thing of the past, showed its unresolved face in graphic videos. Let's just get this year over with and hope 2021 will give us a better future.

Turning a page on the calendar, however, while giving an illusion of newness, will not change the realities of the journey we are taking together. The rocky and uneven ground we are treading is not a path defined or limited by a year. This ground is a mysterious section of a trail that has no predictability to it. We do not know what is around the next bend or what we will see when we get to the rise up ahead. We may hope for a level meadow with blooming wild flowers and the sweet aroma of breakfast by the creek, but if we are so fortunate as to muster an "all-is-well" feeling we will still have to watch our feet where there are certain to be some rocks and holes. Such is life.

The challenge in 2021 will be to find the beauty and to **do our best to make it beautiful for others**. If we choose, our thoughts, tongues and actions can hold each other close and find ways to spread love and kindness. We are blessed with so many ways to pick each other up when we stumble - so many opportunities to practice community. We can try to understand our differences in a way that celebrates the uniqueness of life. If there is a virus to contend with, we are more determined than ever to do what we can to practice safety. If there is a language of division festering our airwaves, **we speak a language of love**. If we face the challenge of depression and loneliness, we know who we can turn to. If problems challenge us, we will look at them squarely and honestly with the intention of doing what we can. That's what we did together in 2020. And we did it so well that we made it to this place where we stick a marker in the ground and call it 2021.

My testimony is that my desire to follow Jesus helps me keep my eyes looking for what brings health and wholeness, beauty and goodness. I am blessed by those of you who are my companions and encourage me to stay true to what is most important. Our commitment to our faith in Jesus keeps our eyes focused on those things that are most important - even when the trail challenges our abilities.

## PNMC CONGREGATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS & MINISTRIES, cont.

Listed chronologically, then alphabetically by organization

### *Sharing Stories of Hope...*

#### Salem Mennonite Church

SMC volunteers baked more than 100 dozen cookies to donate to *Church at the Park's* Christmas project to serve those living in Salem without homes. Church at the Park, located outside Cascade Gateway Park, organized the *Twelve Days of Christmas* project to provide needed items and meals to nearby homeless residents. The cookies were donated over 4 days and distributed as after meal dessert. SMC members also donated 50 activity bags for children without homes, filled with craft items, games, puzzles and small toys.



## MENNONITE CHURCH USA & OTHER CHURCHWIDE AGENCIES

listed alphabetically by organization

### Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

*AMBS is offering two new scholarships:*

—The **Multicultural Church Scholarship** is for students who are currently serving in or preparing for ministry assignments in a multicultural context and/or who belong to historically underrepresented racial or ethnic groups within the Mennonite Church. Each year, this award will provide a limited number of **100-percent tuition grants to full-time students** beginning a master's program, or a limited number of **75-percent tuition grants to part-time students** beginning a master's program.

—The **MDiv Connect Student Scholarship** provides a limited number of **75-percent tuition grants** to students beginning the Master of Divinity (MDiv) Connect program.

Recipients of either scholarship can reside anywhere in the U.S. or Canada and do not need to move to our campus in Indiana to pursue seminary studies. They may receive these scholarships for the stated length of their academic program by meeting certain conditions. Applicants must be from the U.S. or Canada and be a member in good standing of a congregation that is affiliated with Mennonite World Conference or a related Anabaptist group. The application deadline for these scholarships is **March 1**. Applicants must have been admitted to AMBS by that date to be considered for scholarships, so it's a good idea to start the application process as soon as possible. Creating these scholarships is one way in which we are working to increase accessibility to graduate-level Anabaptist theological and leadership education for students of diverse traditions, ethnicities and racial identities — wherever they may be located. (Learn more here: [ambs.edu/scholarships](http://ambs.edu/scholarships).)

### Mennonite Church USA

Follow [this link](#) for the latest edition of *PeaceMail*.

### Mennonite Disaster Service

Given the rise of COVID-19 in the U.S., MDS is delaying the start dates for several winter projects. MDS will continue to assess the situation to determine when it is safe for volunteers and community members to return to the project. Please confirm service term dates with volunteer coordinators. Find details [here](#) for prospective service opportunities.

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### Upcoming e-Bulletins:

Jan 18 (*submissions due by 1/11*)

Feb 1 (*submissions due by 1/25*)

Feb 15 (*submissions due by 2/8*)

March 1 (*submissions due by 2/25*)

If you would like to contribute, please send a brief announcement in Spanish & English with website links to [brenda@pnmc.org](mailto:brenda@pnmc.org). Our goal is to provide a valuable resource, not an In-Box jammer. If space is tight, we may omit announcements that are not as pertinent to PNMC. Announcements will run ONE time only, unless specified otherwise. *We welcome your feedback!*

For more PNMC updates: <http://pnmc.org> e-Bulletin Archives: <http://pnmc.org/Resources/eBulletin>

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