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Register now for the 2025 Conference Communication Council February 1, 2025 on ZOOM

The Transforming Church – Anabaptism at 500

Don't be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God's will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.

Romans 12:2 (CEB)

Our 2025 CCC Zoom gathering will be an opportunity to support and resource one another as we begin this year that marks the **500th Anniversary of Anabaptism**. Our gathering will include input from regional and denominational leaders who will provide resources and help us think of ways to approach this historic moment in our lineage of Christian faith.

Meeting Highlights:

8:30 Welcome/Opening Worship

9:00 Congregational Roll-Call—**Question for congregational sharing:**

How does your congregation remember and express its Anabaptist/Mennonite roots in transforming ways today?

10am Anabaptism at 500 – Reflections and Resources

Olivia Krall, MCUSA Archives – Why does our history matter? How does it shape who we are called to be as Anabaptists today? **Amy Gingerich**, Executive Director of MennoMedia, and **John D. Roth**, Mennonite historian and author – *The Anabaptist Community Bible* and resources in the **Anabaptism at 500 Toolkit**; Lin Rush, PNMHS

Q & A With Presenters

11:30 PNMC Board of Directors Reporting and Discussion

To register for the 2025 CCC (on Zoom) : [follow this link.](#)

The CCC is an important gathering point of our conference for connection, resourcing, learning and discernment.

Our hope is that each congregation will be represented by at least two members.

We especially encourage you to invite young adults in your congregation to serve as congregational representatives.

All PNMC credentialed ministry leaders are encouraged to attend this gathering as well. All are welcome to join in this gathering!

As you begin to plan for the coming new year, be sure to carve out time to attend the PNMC Annual Meeting, June 19-22 at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp near Kalsipell, MT.

Where do pastors come from?

Eric Massanari, PNMC Executive Conference Minister

In hindsight, I realize that three decades ago I was already seeing some of the early changes in seminaries and theological schools that are more readily apparent today. I now realize that as a Mennonite Christian, choosing to go to a more ecumenical Methodist seminary with the clear intention of avoiding pastoral ministry and, instead, steering towards faith-based non-profit community work, I was part of that shift. Another sign of the changes already happening 30 years ago was the growing number of second and third career folks who were my colleagues in the seminary classroom. No longer were seminaries primarily the place to train and form young, newly minted college graduates for congregational pastoral ministry. I was hearing more and more people resisting that role, and bringing other goals and vocational sensibilities to their seminary studies. For a time, I was one of them.

Today, only a handful of students in more traditional seminary degree programs like the Masters of Divinity (M.Div.) will tell you that they are there to prepare for congregational pastoral roles. The reasons for this are many. Seminaries and theological schools are making all sorts of creative adaptations to address the changing needs and desires of students, while also continuing to form and nurture congregational pastors. Schools are recognizing that pastoral leaders now emerge in highly varied ways, and under diverse circumstances.

[Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary \(AMBS\)](#) and [Eastern Mennonite Seminary \(EMS\)](#), like most other theological schools, are offering most of their degree tracks in hybrid and online formats to make them more readily accessible to folks who are working in other careers, or who are unable to make a geographical move for their studies. The [AMBS Journey Program](#) has been created to provide seminary level leadership training for ministry leaders who emerge out of our local congregational communities and who may already be serving in churches or other ministry programs. (We have two Journey Program students within our wider PNMC community.) EMS has created similar programming, including the [Master of Arts in Christian Leadership \(MACL\)](#), in order to offer highly flexible seminary level training.

Earlier this year, **Rachel Ringenberg-Miller**, Denominational Minister for Ministerial Leadership in MC USA, wrote an excellent blog post on the question: ["Where do pastors come from?"](#) I encourage you to take time to read it if you missed it. Rachel challenges former and present assumptions about where congregations might seek and find new pastors, and she offers excellent advice about ways we can be nurturing and forming future pastoral leaders.

For me, like many of my contemporary pastoral colleagues, entering the joyous, blessed, confounding, challenging and always transforming path of ministry required many shoulder-tappers, encouragers, mentors and vital congregations along my path. I see and understand now that there is no singular, clearly defined path that leads to pastoral ministry. This vocation can emerge at varied life stages and in diverse circumstances. One thing that holds true is that it always emerges in the context of community. Please consider ways you might be **nurturing pastoral gifts and leaders who are already part of your community**.



Meet PNMC's Newest Pastor:

Tyler Merrill joined the pastoral team at **Seattle Mennonite Church** in late November. He is serving as **Pastor of Faith Formation**. Tyler (he/ him) moved to Seattle with his wife Elise in 2017, from Greenville, IL where he completed an undergraduate degree in theology and began bi-vocational work as a pastoral musician in a Free Methodist church and as a guitar instructor. His twin passions for theology and music continued in Seattle as he completed a Masters of Christian Studies at Seattle Pacific Seminary, established a guitar and ukulele lesson studio for children and youth, and formed a rock band with four of his college friends who all transplanted from Illinois to the Pacific Northwest. Tyler believes that music—like art, justice, compassion, and joy—is a means through which the Spirit resurrects lives and communities in the present. He felt drawn to Seattle Mennonite Church in large part because of the church's practice of communal justice and joy, as he'd seen through SMC's public peace witness, four part-hymnody, and multifaceted reparation work.

Tyler was also interested to apply at this particular time because he and Elise decided in the past year to continue living in Seattle for the foreseeable future (they had intended in years prior to move to St. Louis, where Tyler's family now resides). Tyler grew up in North Canton, OH, and credits his introduction to religious life to his oldest cousin, Michael. It was Michael's enthusiasm for and transformation through Christian faith that inspired Tyler to join a United Methodist Church as a middle school student. Tyler has since spent time with many Protestant communities, and is now eager to learn more about Mennonite life and tradition.

When he's not performing at local taverns with his band The Noble Manes, Tyler loves to spend his time hiking with friends, meditating, lounging in the sun, hearing about what imaginative projects the children in Elise's classroom have been up to (she is a play-based educator of four year olds at a cooperative preschool), and picking up various new, short lived hobbies (the most recent one being whittling Pokémon figurines for his nephews). He is absolutely thrilled to be joining the Pacific Northwest Mennonite community and is grateful to be praying together with the church for God's guidance through this season of new beginnings.

PNMC CONGREGATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS & MINISTRIES

Zion Mennonite Church

The 2024 Sing Your Own Messiah will be **Saturday, December 21 at 4pm**, Zion Mennonite Church, 6124 S Whiskey Hill Rd, Hubbard. Directed by retired CHS music teacher **Tom Gingerich**, we will sing selections from Handel's Messiah with piano and string accompaniment. New this year is a rehearsal for the choir at 3pm, 1hr prior to performance time. The director asks that singers consider practicing the following choruses at home: 4, 7, 9b, 12, 17, 22, 24, 33, 44, 46, and 53. The event is free and open to singers and listeners, and scores are available to share. Donations gladly accepted to pay instrumentalists and soloists. Refreshments following. Questions? Contact zionmc@canby.com or 503-651-2274.

Albany Mennonite Church

All are invited to Albany Mennonite Church on **Sunday morning, December 22 at 11:00am**. The Albany Mennonite Choir will provide a **Christmas musical performance**. This will be the congregation's first return to choral music since before Covid and the church is looking forward to returning to this beloved music tradition!

Corvallis Mennonite Fellowship

A note from CMF'er, **Olivia Hazelton**: "Hello! I am so excited to be part of MCC's **Serving and Learning Together (SALT)** program in Guatemala this year. MCC's commitment to peacebuilding, justice and building transformative relationships across the globe is deeply inspiring to me, and I am grateful for the opportunity to participate. I am located in Guatemala City, living with a host family and working at a local partner organization as a migrant shelter support worker. Any donations to help MCC continue this amazing work would be greatly appreciated, as well as prayers and good thoughts for the journey." (Click [here](#) to support Olivia's work.)

Portland Mennonite Church

We share with you the joyful news that **Kristen Swartley** (Associate Pastor, Portland Mennonite Church) and her husband, **Luis Tapia Rubio**, are celebrating the birth of their baby, **Gabriela Marie Swartley-Rubio**. Gabriela was born on December 6, and she and her parents are now at home, **enjoying their new life together!**

MENNONITE CHURCH USA & OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Mennonite Church USA

Registration is open! Celebrating 30 Years of Damascus Road and Its Legacy | February 28-March 2, 2025 | [Register here.](#)

A transformative celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Damascus Road anti-racism process and its pivotal role in the Anabaptist commitment to justice and reconciliation is planned for spring of 2025. The gathering will take place at Goshen College and be co-hosted by MC USA's Hope for the Future. BIPOC leaders and white allies who are actively engaged in the ongoing work of confronting and dismantling racism in the church will be present. Together, we will honor the legacy of the Damascus Road while deepening our connections and renewing our dedication to equality and **love in action**. *Hope for the Future is sponsored by Everence, Mennonite Central Committee, MC USA, Mennonite Education Agency, Mennonite Mission Network and MHS Association.*

Join the Global Anabaptist Bible Read-a-thon!

This is your opportunity to take part in a once-every-500-year moment of unity and faith! MennoMedia's Anabaptism at 500 is collaborating with Mennonite World Conference in this extraordinary event as 500 voices will join together to read through the entire Bible – from Genesis to Revelation – in multiple languages. [Register here.](#)

MC USA Climate Justice | Zoom book study

Join us in imagining a sustainable future for ourselves, our children and our planet by participating in an online book study of the compelling and timely book, "*So We and Our Children May Live*" by **Sarah Augustine** and **Sheri Hostetler**. In five sessions (**Jan. 16 through Feb. 13, 2025**), we will engage in discussions in both large and small groups, interact with the authors, and explore how we – and our communities – are called to contribute to creating a more just and vibrant world. [Register today!](#)

Upcoming e-Bulletins:

Jan 6 (submissions due by 12/30)

Jan 20 (submissions due by 1/13)

Feb 3 (submissions due by 1/27)

Feb 17 (submissions due by 2/10)

If you would like to contribute, please send a brief announcement in Spanish & English with website links to 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>