

OHIO MENNONITE EVANGEL

News & Views of Ohio Conference

JAN/APR 2025



ohiomennoniteconference.org

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Annual Conference Assembly 2025

FOUNDATION to Future

ACA 2025 was a great success. Thank you to Berlin Mennonite, specifically, Inga, Jeff, and Ben, for the copious amount of work they poured into this event to make it a success.



A huge thank you goes out to all of our speakers and facilitators. Words from Shannon Dycus, John Roth, Pablo Delgado, David Hargrave, Henry Beun, and Jeanne Zimmerly Jantzi have left many who attended with much to be thankful for and much to reflect on in our lives.

Highlights from the event include:

- Worship at Behalt
- Powerful words from **EVERY** speaker and facilitator

- Praying for Paula as our new Conference Minister

- Praying for the new pastors who have joined Conference



- Blessing Love INC with many donated items to help them continue their ministry



Lastly, thank you to ALL of the sponsors who have joined to share about the amazing organizations they represent.

Written by Sháqūez Dickens



Fall Cluster Meetings

The Fall Cluster Meetings will be here before we know it. Meetings will be held on September 16, 18, 23, 25, and 29 at 6:30pm.

September 25 at Tedrow Mennonite Church in Wauseon

September 29- Virtual

If your congregation would like to host a cluster meeting in fall 2025, please let Sháqñez know at shaquez@ohiomennoniteconference.org.

September 16 at TBD

September 18 at TBD

September 23 at First Mennonite Church in Canton



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Conference Giving

We are so grateful for YOU - our partner congregations and delegates - who gather and engage at these events. Any gift you give today will help support our work in these projects and the many other ways Conference is ministering to our congregations. We strive at Conference to live out our mission to "gather, equip, and send our congregations to love God, love others and make disciples of Jesus Christ" - but we can't do it without your support!

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This is a group who met during ACA for the final Book Study session.

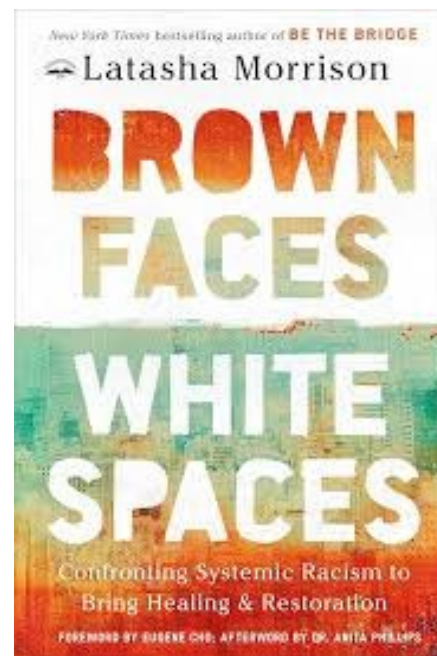
Winter Book Study Reflection

I am an incurable optimist. Therefore there is always hope. Also, because I am in recovery, I trust a process that never fails; awareness, surrender, and growth. The humanity of our group just needs to be nurtured. Life in America is always portrayed as a consistent constant, somewhat the same with slightly different variations. The reality is very different for each of us. This second book study was successful because those involved felt honest empathy. It was a new experience I think, for some, on a level that was spirit lead.

Yours in Christ,
Greg Battle (city Greg)

I found our time together meaningful in multiple ways, helping me to reconnect to part of my life experience as well as creating openings to new learnings. I would welcome ongoing conversations and ways I can be supportive and an advocate not only for infusing energy around these topics in Ohio Conference, but also beyond. I appreciated so much having Shannon's voice as well as David's with us at ACA and pray there are ways to continue to bring Black voices front and center in the public gatherings but also in our regular conversations throughout the Conference.

Keith Lyndaker Schlabach



CONFERENCE MINISTER MUSINGS

ACA Reflections

*“What we see
in the world
around us
shapes what
we see as we
look at
scripture.”*

As we gathered at Berlin Mennonite Church for the Annual Conference Assembly (ACA), I was full of anticipation. I almost always enjoy gatherings like ACA. I am an introvert that likes people! Even though there are so many people I cannot have a conversation with everyone!

What I wasn't expecting was the sense of hope that grew inside of me over those two days. Our two main speakers contributed majorly to my sense of hope.

First, John Roth helped us to think about the shadow side of the gift. This is a concept that I first learned in Clinical Pastoral Education, or CPE, and have reflected on the shadow side of my gifts. (My gifts are clustered around Pastor and Teacher.)

John suggested that sometimes our two-kingdom theology of church and world does not help us see reality. When we see ourselves in the church and others in the world, we miss the complexity that we are in the church and in the world. Culture, which we like to label as outside the church, deeply shapes our approaches to scripture. Noting strength and shadow felt honest to me. John offered when he held strength and shadow for us.

Second, Shannon Dycus gave me hope as she talked about holding two realities together and letting them shape each other. Themes we see as we think about the future light up what we see as we tell our histories. For example, resilience is a popular word right now in some circles; so, people are looking back and finding resilience in the lives of their ancestors. What we see in the world around us shapes what we see as we look at scripture, and as we tell our faith stories.

Shannon also wondered, “What if we engage in service and in relationships at the same time?” I’ve observed that sometimes service projects turn people into projects rather than friends. That seems disappointing to me, and I unexpectedly felt the goodness of holding both service and relationship together.

In these and other ways I found hope as we gathered at Berlin Mennonite Church. I am grateful to God for such good gifts.

Written by Dan Miller



OMC Office is Officially Closed

There was nothing small about this feat. Closing the physical Conference office was completed with what seems like a miracle. Kelsey worked tirelessly, putting in more hours above and beyond her normal work schedule, to make complete this task. This was a very daunting and overwhelming project but it is thankfully completed.

We would like to thank all those who have helped with the closing of the office.

Thank you to:

- Ben, Jeff, and Brenda (Kelsey's husband, father-in-law, and mother-in-law) for babysitting, packing, and moving furniture.
- Bill, Tim, Bob, and Orrville Mennonite Church for providing a place for storage and unloading the moving truck.
- Jolene, Scott, Angela, & the Oak Grove Youth Group for packing the moving truck, taking out COPIOUS amounts of trash, and cleaning the office.
- Deb Steiner for driving ALL the files to Elkhart Archives.
- Bob (Sháqñez's husband) for moving furniture.
- MCC for picking up donated items.
- Kidron Electric for making trash removal easier by providing mini dumpsters.
- Reed's Warehouse for giving a generous discount for shredding several documents.



"Thank you Kelsey for ALL the hard work and extra hours you put into making this happen in a short period of time."



ACA Pictures



David Hargrave during a morning worship service.

Henry Beun during a morning worship service.



Pablo Delgado during a workshop session.

New Moderator Elect

Thank you to Jeff, pastor of Berlin Mennonite Church, who has agreed to be the Conference Moderator Elect!



More ACA Pictures



FOUNDATION to Future



Credentialed Leaders Bible Study



Pastors, this guy is really looking forward to our upcoming Bible Study Day because he finds it to be a highlight – even worth rearranging his schedule for! (If possible) you won't want to miss it either.

Rebecca Kauffman and John David Thacker (Jacob Dodson is on sabbatical), have planned a day with 1 Corinthians 3:1-15, 21-23. This picks up on the theme verse from the March

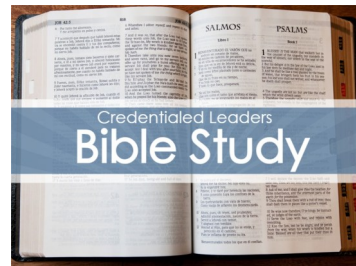
Annual Conference Assembly, 1 Corinthians 3:11. Bring along any notes you have about this passage from ACA. We will consider the chosen passage in different settings and consider its implications for life and witness in the world now.

Yes, this is on a Saturday, and we know Saturdays are valuable. We are experimenting to see if we can get the regulars plus bi-vocational pastors who cannot attend during the week. May 10, 2025, 9:30am to 3:30 pm at the Mansfield Richland County Public Library.

Lunch is provided – salad and sandwiches by Panera Bread (donations welcomed but not required).

Registration Extended to May 3! (*Registration is needed so we can order enough food.*)

[Click here to register.](#)



Pastor + 1 Retreat

November 7-9, 2025

This retreat has been designed to provide an affordable time away for pastors and their support person. The retreat will offer a combination of organized activities as well as unstructured time. During the weekend, participants will be encouraged to rest in the Lord, refresh through downtime, self-care and partner care, and to reconnect with their support person and with other pastoral couples. The retreat will end with a worship service on Sunday morning.

Registration Coming Soon.



Conference Calendar

MAY

10 Credentialed Leaders Bible Study

AUGUST

tbd Potential Social Justice/Civil Rights Tour

SEPTEMBER

Fall Cluster Meetings

NOVEMBER

7-9 Pastor + I Retreat at Deer Creek Lodge

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