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Singing Together

Fast, slow, and half slow come together on Monday, July 20, at 7 PM. Join the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society for “Music in Worship,” an event dedicated to sharing the music from five different Anabaptist groups.

“This is an opportunity to worship in song with both familiar and unfamiliar hymns, languages, and singing styles,” says organizer David Sauder. Lancaster Mennonite Conference will be represented, singing in the fast style, and will be balanced by the slow style of the Amish, with the half-slow of the Groffdale Conference Mennonites somewhere in between. Lancaster Mennonite Conference, Old Order Amish, Old Order Groffdale Conference Mennonites, Old Order Weaverland Conference, Church of the Brethren, and Old Order River Brethren will all be present to share their worship styles.

“This program full of music is not a concert,” stresses Sauder. “It is a hymn sing; the audience is always encouraged to sing along.” Participants will be led in song from the singers’ table, where representatives from each participating group will sit.

This event is not to be missed by any who are interested in hymnody, understanding their Anabaptist neighbors, or in participating in worship through song. Sauder says the event is unique because it represents “one of the few places, if not the only place, where all of these traditions can gather in one setting.”

“Music in Worship” will be held at the Martindale Mennonite Fellowship Center, 352 Martindale Road, Ephrata, Pa. It is organized by the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society in partnership with the Swiss Pioneer Preservation Associates.

Bookworm Frolic: A Book for Everyone

Over 40,000 books are sorted and packed in the basement of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, waiting to be brought out for the Bookworm Frolic. This year, the annual sale will take place from Tuesday, August 11, until Saturday, August 15.

There are 25 categories of books waiting to be sold, ranging from paperback fiction to biographies to science. While there are rare and unique books to be found in many of the genres, the most popular genres are children’s books, Christian fiction, history, and classical literature.

New this year is an early-bird special on Tuesday, August 11, where buyers will have the opportunity to reach the most choice items a day early. In order to take advantage of this opportunity, they will need to register: from 9 AM to 1 PM, admission will be $25 per person, and from 1 to 7 PM, admission will be $15. No admission will be charged Wednesday through Saturday.

“There are books of every subject for all ages,” says David Sauder, long-time coordinator of the sale. “I believe that there will be something for all people who love to read.”

For those considering joining the Society, the Bookworm Frolic is an excellent time to do so. This year as a special offer, new members will receive a twenty-percent discount on the book purchases.

On Friday and Saturday there will be box deals, where shoppers can fill a box with as many books as they can fit for a fixed price - $15 on Friday and $10 on Saturday. The sale also includes records, DVDs, VHS tapes, CDs, puzzles, and magazines.

In the indoor, year-round bookstore, new and used books, along with genealogical sources, games, and folk art will also be for sale. There will be a 10% discount on all new books, and a 25% to 75% discount on select titles.

The Frolic will open at 9 AM each morning and close at 7 PM each evening except for Saturday, when it closes at 4 PM. Food will be available for the duration of the frolic.

The Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society is located at 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster, PA 17602, next to the Tanger Outlets on Lincoln Highway East. Parking will be available at the sale.

Pennsylvania 2015

“Music in Worship” is one of several events leading up to Pennsylvania 2015, July 21 through 26, 2015, at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg, Pa. Pennsylvania 2015 is the sixteenth assembly of Mennonite World Conference, a reunion of the Anabaptist-Mennonite family worldwide. The week-long event features worship, workshops, tours, and special events. Register online at mwc-emm.org/pa2015.
Mellinger Matters

“Mellinger Matters: A Collection of Family Resources and Church Records” is now available for purchase through the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society. Containing more than 2,400 pages of scanned documents, this collection provides a wealth of information for genealogists and Cocalico Valley historians. Seven PDF files on a flash drive include records of Mellinger Evangelical Lutheran Church (Stevens, Pa.) and the former Mellinger Union Church and Cemetery, as well as unpublished notes of genealogists C. Mervin Mellinger and Ruth N. Mellinger on the Mellinger family and others. Also included is an introduction and detailed listing of contents.

Most of the credit for gathering these resources belongs to Scott A. Mellinger, who for years has been researching the Mellinger family in the Cocalico Valley of Lancaster County and elsewhere. Without his work and encouragement to publish this material, the project likely never would have been completed.

“Mellinger Matters” can be purchased at the Society’s bookstore at Millstream Road or online at lmhs.org.

Library Buys Book, Finds Treasure

The library at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society recently purchased a rare copy of the Dutch Mennonite hymnal, “Christelijke gezangen voor de openbare godsdienstoeveningen.” Printed in 1796 by J. C. Sepp, C. De Vries, and C. Sepp, of Amsterdam, it contains 165 hymn texts without tunes. According to the “Mennonite Encyclopedia,” it was known popularly as the “Groote Bundel,” was adopted by the de Zon (Zonist) Mennonite congregation in 1796, and remained in use well after that congregation joined the Lambs in 1801.

This copy is notable for including a letter (a portion seen at right), which memorializes the Dutch Mennonite physician and poet, Martinus Nieuwenhuiuzen (1759-1793). Nieuwenhuiuzen was on the committee to publish the Zonist hymnal and is mentioned in the book’s foreword. Following is a translation of the letter.


The church council of the Mennonite congregation, meeting in the Church of the Sun (Zonist Church) at Amsterdam, with sincere gratitude, recognizing the service and satisfaction rendered by the late citizen, Martinus Nieuwenhuiuzen, to the above congregation, in the preparation of some beautiful songs for use in their public worship services—presents with due esteem, a copy of the songs, assembled for the afore-mentioned purpose, to the widow of the deceased, in gratitude.

In the name of the said church council, A. H. van Gelder, Pieter Bel, Amsterdam, the 18th of May 1796.

This, and other books in the library collection, can be viewed during regular hours—Tuesday through Saturday, 8:30-4:30. Special thanks to Lois Bowman of Harrisonburg, Va., for assistance with the translation.

Anabaptist Books Featured In July 10 Auction

Numerous books important to the Anabaptist heritage are included in the Society’s upcoming auction of rare and used books. “Die vollständigen Werke” of Menno Simons is a featured book in the July 10, 2015, book auction. An 1814 German “Martyr’s Mirror,” published in Lancaster is also included as well as a four-volume set of “Mennonite Encyclopedia.”

Students of Anabaptist hymnody will be interested in the nineteenth century hymnals published by the Franconia and Lancaster Mennonites. There are two (1803 and 1811) editions of “Die kleine geistliche Harfe der Kinder Zions” and six editions (1804, 1808, 1841, 1854, 1865, and 1871) of the “Unparthyesisches Gesangbuch.”

The sale includes two of the 1975 reprints of the 1536 Froeschauer Bible, the preferred German translation of the early Anabaptists. Buyers will be interested in a good copy of the “Jonas Martin Era.” The sale includes a German Bible with a family record of Heinrich Eberly and Anna Garman.

Pennsylvania history students will be interested in a 1726 collection of William Penn’s writings (Volume 1 only).

The oldest book in the sale is “Ductor Dubstantium or The Rule of Conscience,” published in London in 1696 for King Charles the First.

Of importance is the book, “Among the Amish” and a collection of post cards featuring the Amish, as well as newspaper articles about the Amish from 1993-1996 and the news coverage of the Nickel Mines tragedy. Family historians will be interested in the 1888 Landis book, published by D. B. Landis.

The entire sale catalog can be accessed at lmhs.org. Information can also be obtained by calling (717) 393-9745. Mail-in bids are accepted through 4 pm, Thursday, July 9. No absentee bids under $10 will be accepted.
Interweaving Stories
Rolando Santiago, Executive Director

The mission of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society (LMHS) is to preserve and interpret the culture and context of Anabaptist-related faith communities connected to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

When LMHS “preserves” and “interprets,” it creates spaces where people can explore the story of how God has walked over three centuries with Anabaptist communities associated with Lancaster County. In many instances, these spaces become opportunities for individuals across the country to discover their family histories. Sixty percent of the Society’s 1,800 members live outside Lancaster County. Many of these appreciate the access they have to online genealogical resources.

On other occasions, the spaces grow into events with long-settled European Anabaptist groups and with migrating national groups from Latin America, Africa, and Asia who have made Lancaster County their home in recent years.

And still on other occasions, LMHS staff and volunteers from the Millstream Road site, the 1719 Hans Herr House & Museum, and the Lancaster Longhouse co-create spaces that turn into activities that benefit many different groups. They benefit members of ethnically diverse congregations of Lancaster Mennonite Conference and Atlantic Coast Conference. They inspire Anabaptist-related groups that span the spectrum from Old Order to modern. And they offer rich learning experiences for the general public and visitors of Lancaster County.

In these creative spaces, we who participate bring a wealth of our own ethnic, national, and faith stories woven into narratives that give meaning to our individual and collective human lives. These narratives help us reflect on people who lived years, decades, and even centuries ago and how their experiences can shed light on how we should live today and how we should view our own future contributions on earth.

LMHS encourages event participants to share their rich narratives with others. On July 21-26, 2015, at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg, participants will have the opportunity to interlace their stories with the stories of people coming from all around the world during the sixteenth Mennonite World Conference Assembly.

Through these narratives, participants will also sense the touch of a God who loves, cares, and interacts with them.

Hispanic Mennonites of Lancaster County, Pa.

Join the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society for a field trip about the Hispanic Mennonites of Lancaster County, Pa., from 8 AM to 4 PM on Saturday, October 31.

Go back in time when several hundred folks arrived in Lancaster County, Pa., from Puerto Rico to work in summer harvesting of tomatoes from about 1950 to 1964. See their early lodging places, work sites, and places of worship. Hear first-person accounts of initial experiences. Discover the changes as their families arrived.

Register online at lmhs.org or by calling (717) 393-9745. The deadline for registration is October 20. The trip costs $50 for members, $60 for nonmembers; one meal is included.

Historic Driving Tour Explores Villages of Willow Street and West Willow

Join the 1719 Hans Herr House & Museum for a trip through history during the Historic Driving Tour. This year’s self-guided tour explores the villages of Willow Street and West Willow, just south of Lancaster City. The tour will be held from 10 AM to 3 PM on Saturday, August 29.

Discover sites such as the first locations of Herr Foods, which began in a tobacco shed on the Martin Mylin farm, now the cultural center at Willow Valley, then moved to two locations in West Willow before its current location in Nottingham, Pa.

The tour is self-paced, and participants can choose their own path between sites. Docents will be located at stops to tell stories and push back the veil of time to give insight into the past lives of inhabitants. They will also share pictures and artifacts that represent the heritage of Willow Street and West Willow.

The tour begins at the 1719 Hans Herr House & Museum, 1849 Hans Herr Dr., Willow Street, Pa. Admission for the walking tour is $10.00 for adults, and $5.00 for children between 7 and 12. Children 6 and under are free. Tickets can be purchased at the 1719 Hans Herr House and Museum in person at 1849 Hans Herr Dr., Willow Street, by phone at (717) 464-4438, or at www.hansherr.org.