**Discovery: A Comic Lament**

Ted Swartz and Michelle Milne from Ted & Co. will perform *Discovery: A Comic Lament*, written by Alison Brookins, at 6 PM on Saturday, April 21, at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, 100 Quarry Road, Leola, Pennsylvania.

Using humor and drama, they will unpack the Doctrine of Discovery, the legal framework that justified injustices against indigenous communities.

The performance will be followed by a panel discussion.

This event is free and open to the public; no registration required.
Lancaster Family History Conference

Historic newspapers provide a valuable sense of the way our local communities functioned a century or more ago. Now more than ever, historic newspapers are becoming digitized and easily accessible to everyone everywhere. The 2018 Lancaster Family History Conference will examine how newspapers enhance family history. Writer and columnist James M. Beidler will share insights in his keynote speech, “Extra! Extra! Research All About It.” He is the author of the newly published Family Tree Historical Newspapers Guide as well as the “Roots and Branches” newspaper column and blog.

The Lancaster Family History Conference offers workshops that will help attendees learn how to use historical newspapers in “Letterpress to Digital: Using Historical Newspapers” and “Zeitung Sightings, German-language Newspapers Worldwide.” Other workshops will address additional aspects of family history research: “Colonial Church Records,” “No Good Deed Goes Unrecorded,” and “Some Early Swiss Records of Our Mennonite Ancestors.”

This Is My Story, This Is My Song: Dow to Speak at Annual Banquet

Learn and reflect on the intersection of Lancaster County Mennonite and African American history during this year’s Annual Banquet of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, featuring Leonard Dow. He will share on the topic “This Is My Story, This Is My Song,” relating stories from his life. The banquet will be held at 6 PM on Saturday, March 17.

Tickets cost $30 and can be purchased at lmhs.org or by calling (717) 393-9745. The deadline for registration is Saturday, March 10.

Dow was reared in Philadelphia and first encountered Mennonites at Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, where he was one of thirty black students recruited to integrate the student body. He later went on to attend Eastern Mennonite University, where he still holds basketball records. He also met his wife, Rosalie Rolón, there.

Dow served as pastor at Oxford Circle Mennonite Church for nineteen years and also served as bishop of the Philadelphia district of Lancaster Mennonite Conference. He currently works for Everence Financial in Philadelphia as a stewardship and development specialist. He sees his call as using that role for the benefit of urban churches nationwide.

Melody Pannell, assistant professor of social work, will give a brief talk on her experience writing the history of Seventh Avenue Mennonite Church, Harlem, New York City.

Attendees will be treated to a performance by Franconia Conference Minister and Bishop Ertell Whigham and his ensemble, performing a blend of gospel, rhythm and blues, hymns, and black American jazz.

The banquet will take place at the DoubleTree Resort Banquet Hall, 2400 Willow Street Pike, Lancaster, Pa.
The “Theology of the Cross” at the Crux of Reformation

April 2018 marks the five hundredth anniversary of the Heidelberg Disputation, where Martin Luther articulated the theological core of his reforms for the Christian church. He called it the “theology of the cross” (theologia crucis). Most churches have commemorated the anniversary of the Reformation in October 2017, marking the date when Luther posted his “95 Theses” to protest the sale of indulgences. For Mennonites, however, the Heidelberg Disputation is the far more important document for understanding the development of our theological emphases.

To recall the importance of these ideas for the church, Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society will hold an evening program of lectures and song on Friday, April 6, Stumptown Mennonite Church, 2813 Stumptown Road, Bird in Hand, Pennsylvania.

In the Heidelberg Disputation, Luther identified what was wrong in the church as a “theology of glory.” Such a theology led people to respect what looked visibly impressive, and most damaging of all, to trust in their own accomplishments and ethics to obtain “glory.” In contrast, he claimed that true leaders of the church must be “theologians of the cross,” appreciating that God reveals himself through the “humility and shame of the cross.” Only when a person recognizes and honors God in his suffering and weakness can he experience how grace works and be saved. “It is certain,” Luther concluded, “that man must utterly despair of his own ability before he is prepared to receive the grace of Christ.”

From this core argument, Luther later developed (1) his views of the priesthood—expanding it to the lowest parishioner, who could act as priest simply by bringing his neighbor’s needs to God in prayer; (2) his priorities for the church service—emphasizing preaching and congregational singing rather than the visual spectacle of the Mass; (3) his teaching on Christians’ approach to physical suffering and grief—urging them to accept the frailty of life as a reminder that their true strength and hope for salvation comes only through Christ’s broken body on the cross; (4) his attitudes toward persecution and exile—consoling the displaced—that God reveals his faithfulness most in the midst of human insecurity.

The program will explore each of these four points with scholars of Reformation history and theology noting how early Anabaptists incorporated them into their own church life. Ann Thayer (Ph.D., Harvard), professor at Lancaster Theological Seminary, will discuss Lutheran reforms of preaching and worship. Rev. Adam Koontz (M.Div., Concordia), pastor at Mount Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) in Lititz, will compare Lutheran and Anabaptist understandings of the “priesthood of all believers.”

Vincent Evener (Ph.D., Chicago), instructor at Union Lutheran Seminary in Gettysburg, will examine early Lutheran and Anabaptist approaches to suffering. Hans Leaman (Ph.D., J.D., Yale), fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, in Göttingen, Germany, will discuss common experiences of exile among Lutherans and Anabaptists and the spiritual lessons they gleaned from forced migration. In addition, attendees will enjoy congregational singing of Lutheran hymns that have historically been important pieces of devotion among Anabaptists and Pietists.

Mennonite Poetry

Dr. Joseph Gascho will read original poetry from his recently released book Cornfields, Cottonwoods, Seagulls and Sermons: Growing Up in Nebraska from 7 to 8 PM on Thursday, March 15, in West Bethany Chapel at Landis Homes. Gascho has combined writing and publishing poetry with decades of service as a medical doctor at Hershey Medical Center. He will be available to sign copies of his book after the reading.

Beyond the Underground Railroad

“Beyond the Underground Railroad: Reclaiming African American Heritage” is a virtual tour of places and sites like the Stevens/Smith site in Lancaster City, the Mifflin House, and Columbia Crossings as well as various lesser known homes that were part of the Underground Railroad. This event will be held at 6:30 pm on Monday, March 19, at Landisville Mennonite Church, 3320 Bowman Road, Landisville, Pennsylvania.

Randolph J. Harris will share stories and talk about all the behind-the-scenes effort it takes to reclaim these sites for historic purposes. Through his extensive education, research, and more than twenty-five years of work experience in many different capacities, including past executive director of the Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County, he is uniquely qualified to speak on the preservation and promotion of these sites.

His recent projects focus on African American heritage sites in the communities of South Central Pennsylvania and the development of heritage tours. Harris is also the archivist of the African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania.

An interesting insight that he will be sharing with the attendees of this virtual tour is the important role that local government representatives should take as stewards of the heritage of their communities, including both the buildings and the natural environment of the area. Attendance is free, but there will be an offering taken to cover expenses.

The historic Mifflin House
Recent Acquisitions

Religion/Theology
Luther, Martin. Word and faith. Fortress Press, 2015 (BR331. E5 2015 v.2)
Sawyer, Edwin A. All about the Moravians: history, beliefs, and practices of a worldwide church. Moravian Church in North America, 2008 (BX8565 .S29 2008)
Weaver, Dorothy Jean. The irony of power: the politics of God within Matthew’s narrative. Pickwick Publications, 2017 (BS2555.52 W43 2017)

Biography/Genalogy/History

Miscellaneous