By Rolando Santiago, Director

During challenging times—superstorms, school shootings, and fiscal cliffs—it’s important for Mennonite churches to nurture a collective identity. This is a role that Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society is eager to play.

Symbol. This coming May 18 we will celebrate a grand opening of the Lancaster Longhouse and the 1719 Hans Herr House & Museum. It is an exhibit to educate about American Indian communities that resided in Pennsylvania before, during and after European Mennonite settlement in the early eighteenth century. It is an attempt to come to grasp with difference; that believes every person and each people and traditions, the Society seeks to underscore what Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie calls the “danger of the single story.” We strive for a Mennonite identity that values difference; that believes every person has the God-given possibility for change, renewal, and redemption.

Music. On May 4 we invite everyone to enjoy the best of 20th-century Mennonite a cappella singing at Mellinger Mennonite Church. Last May 1,100 Amish, Mennonites, River Brethren, and people from the wider Lancaster County community gathered at Martinsdale Mennonite Fellowship Center to sing hymns from five Anabaptist traditions. Mennonite identity was re-invigorated by emphasizing that each person and each community is part of a larger people, a “royal priesthood” (I Peter 2:9).

Story. Since 2011 the annual Storytelling Night has featured two Mennonite leaders contrasting stories about significant experiences that have enriched their lives. On September 23, Storytelling Night will feature two more leaders—Old Order River Brethren bishop David Saader and Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society archivist Carolyn Wenger. Through the perspectives of many different people and traditions, the Society seeks to underscore what Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie calls the “danger of the single story.” We strive for a Mennonite identity that values difference; that believes every person has the God-given possibility for change, renewal, and redemption.

I am grateful that in 2013, the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society and the 1719 Hans Herr House & Museum will continue to nurture Mennonite identity through symbol, music and story through a wide variety of Lancaster Roots programs (www.lancasterroots.org). Please join us!

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Canadian harpist and pianist Paul Dueck, German guitarist and singer Wilhelm Unger, American bagpiper Keith Espenshade, and the Brooklyn-based choral group Urban Worshipers will highlight the diversity of Mennonite music at this year’s annual Music Night at Nettlefield Mennonite Church, Saturday, March 9, at 7:00 pm.

Dueck is known internationally for playing Celtic and Paraguayan harps and for his skill as a choral conductor, including leading worship at Mennonite World Conference in Paraguay in 2009.

Unger, a prolific and enthusiastic musician, copastors the Regensberg Mennonite Church in Regensburg, Germany, with his wife, Lisa, who is event coordinator for Mennonite World Conference.

Keith Espenshade is a native of Lancaster County and supervises the clinical pastoral education program for Lancaster General Health. He is a member of Ceol Neamh (pronounced “keel now”), a local pipe and drum band, and plays prelude and offertory music for his home congregation, East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church.

The Urban Worshipers are from Followers of Jesus Mennonite Church in Brooklyn, New York. They are directed by Josh Good, who sang in the Men’s Ensemble at Music Night for the past two years.

“The unifying work of Jesus in a diverse urban culture has given us the privilege of learning and enjoying a variety of musical styles including Caribbean Gospel, Latin Gospel, traditional Spirituals, and American music,” Good said.

(Continued inside)

International flavor at annual Music Night

Augsburger to address banquet

Author, professor and former college president Myron S. Augsburger will address Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society’s annual banquet on the theme “Can we move forward without looking backwards?” at Weaver Markets Banquet Facility on Saturday, April 13, at 6:00 pm. Augsburger served as president of Eastern Mennonite University from 1965 to 1980, as president of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities from 1988 to 1995, and as moderator of Mennonite Church USA from 1987 to 1989. He is the author of more than 25 books, including the 2008 historical novel The Fugitive, based on the life of Menno Simons.

“History is the ground of testing,” Augsburger said. “We see what lives on and what falls by the way.”

In hindsight, we see that the Anabaptist movement helped the church move from a sacramental to a relational understanding of faith, he said. But history also contains warnings about institutionalizing the Gospel, about elevating applications to be the heart of the Gospel.

“When Jesus came, he was the fulfillment of history,” Augsburger said. (Continued inside)
A year for the books and records

Society librarian Steve Ness reports that library attendance topped two thousand people last year for the first time since 2004. In December the library completed the “open stacks” phase of a five-year-long automation project; all of the book titles in the main reading room are now listed in the library’s online catalog at www.lmhs.org. In addition, nearly 1,500 new items were added to the catalog.

Use of the Society’s growing collection of online resources—obituary listings, surname files, genealogical databases, etc.—jumped significantly in 2012. Pages available to the public saw a 68% increase in traffic (more than 17,000 hits) and activity on members-only pages posted even bigger gains. For example, the Society’s obituary page (online at www.lmhs.org/Home/Research/Online_Resources/Obituaries) received over 25,000 hits—more than 2% times the previous year. To get access to these unique resources, join LMHS online or call (717) 393-9745.

Music (continued from cover)

Music has been held each year since 2010, when an overflow crowd attended the “Festival of Roots and Music” commemorating three years the Society’s obituary page. This year’s conference, to be held May 11 at the Lancaster Host Resort & Conference Center, features genealogist and author Dr. John Philip Colletta and other researchers will offer 16 seminars, from “Family History Using Your Smartphone” to “Fraud and Furniture of the Pennsylvania Germans” and “Pennsylvania’s Civil War Conscientious Objectors.”

Three field trips and three special discussion and work groups will be offered in conjunction with the conference, and participants are encouraged to take advantage of genealogical resources at the LMHS library down the street. "There is a wealth of information with the conference, and especially people with Pennsylvania or Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society must to make of family history conference"