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Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society
2215 Millstream Road,
Lancaster, PA 17602-1499
Learn from Lancaster’s Immigrant Mennonites

The Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society will celebrate the history and life of three recent immigrant Mennonite congregations in Lancaster County on Monday, November 10, 7 p.m., at Mellinger Mennonite Church (1916 Lincoln Hwy. E., Lancaster, Pa.).

The celebration will feature historical talks, singing, and light foods. They will illustrate the gift of diverse cultural expression in church life brought to Lancaster Mennonites by Karen immigrants from Burma and Thailand, Nepali-speaking Bhutanese, and immigrants who came primarily from eastern African countries.

The Karen people have been fleeing Burma since 1948, when they started efforts to become an independent country and were forcibly removed. Many Karen have lived in refugee camps in Thailand for over twenty years. Habecker Mennonite Church opened its doors to its first Karen family in 2008. Today Habecker has increased its average Sunday morning attendance from forty to over 160, especially on its third Sunday of the month when the Karen are in charge of the service.

Nepali-speaking people have become a large ethnic group in Bhutan. They were originally from Nepal. Perceiving them as a threat, the government of Bhutan compelled them to leave in 1989. They lived in refugee camps in Nepal, their country of origin, because they were not accepted there either. Soon after the Nepali Bhutanese refugees arrived in Lancaster County in 2008, West End Mennonite Church created space for them to gather.

The African Community Church of Lancaster consists of African immigrants who come primarily from eastern African countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. While they come from regions of Africa where Lancaster Mennonites created missions starting in the 1930s, most of them learned about Mennonites only after arriving in this country. The congregation, whose pastor is Sam Wanjau, meets at Rohrerstown Mennonite Church.

Karen Sensenig, pastor at Habecker Mennonite Church, says that “those of us who are traditional Mennonites need to find ways to practice radical relational hospitality by expecting new possibilities for building a home community with refugees that invite them to become part of the body of Christ.”

Pennsylvania German Folk Art Sale Opens

Looking for a gift for the holidays? Pick up art with local character at the Pennsylvania German Folk Art Sale this fall at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society. The sale begins with an opening reception from 6 to 8:30 p.m. on November 7. The reception will feature an opportunity to meet the artists, enjoy refreshments, and listen to music.

Twenty-six local artists will display their wares, covering a broad swath of traditional art forms. This includes fraktur, a “broken” method of lettering originally developed to illuminate manuscripts; redware, low-fired ceramics made with red clay; and scherenschnitte, intricate patterns and scenes cut out of paper. There will also be painted boxes, including traditional Dutch patterns and those featuring false graining; hand-woven textiles; and hand-quilted wall hangings. In addition to utilitarian offerings, some have a touch of whimsy, such as hand-carved wooden birds.

All forms of artwork in the show originate in the communities of Swiss and German immigrants to Pennsylvania. They are marked by bold colors and elaborate decoration. Common motifs include birds and flowers.

The sale continues through December 31 during normal Society operating hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.
Reading to “PA 2015”

Looking to learn more about Mennonites around the world? Trying to prepare yourself for Mennonite World Conference? Pick up the Global Mennonite History series at the Society today! Don’t forget to also get Alfred Neufeld’s “What We Believe Together: Exploring the Shared Convictions of Anabaptist-related Churches”—available only through the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society. Buy your copies in person or order online at lmhs.org.

Leading up to Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Harrisburg next year are a series of events, including discussions centered around these six books. The first is Sunday, October 26, from 3 to 4:30 pm at Mount Joy Mennonite Church, facilitated by Emerson Lesher, on European Mennonites.

Native American Tour

Join local historian Darvin Martin on a tour exploring the various pre-European indigenous cultures of Lancaster and York Counties.

The tour will include Indiantown; lunch at Shank’s Mare, overlooking the Susquehanna River at Long Level; York County; and a stop at the Lancaster Longhouse exhibit as part of the 1719 Hans Herr House & Museum.

The trip begins and ends at the Society headquarters. Tickets cost $60 for members and $65 for nonmembers.

Feather-Stitching, Grain-Painting, and Quilting

Life is busy, but looking to our roots offers some means of escape. “Handwork is important in this day and age, as a counter to the hectic pace of life,” says Jim King. “There is a rhythm to handwork that is calming, meditative, and restorative,” Lynn Sommer adds. King and Sommer will be teaching a folk art class on grain-painting and feather-stitching on Saturday, October 18, from 9 AM to 3 PM at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.

The first part of the class will cover grain-painting. Grain-painting is a technique used since the eighteenth century to make woods such as maple, pine, or poplar look like expensive hard woods. King, a local “fancy painter,” and author of “False Graining Techniques,” will be teaching this section of the class.

In the second part of the class, each student will receive a pre-assembled crazy patch of assorted silks and velveteen. Sommer will teach students how to feather stitch (a zigzag embroidery stitch) the crazy patch. Students are asked to bring their own bagged lunch. Tickets are $70 for LMHS members and $75 nonmembers.

Later this fall, Marie Brenneman will teach a class on the Amish and their quilts. Learn how quilting began and how to put stitches in yourself. Create your own “Diamond in the Square” miniature quilt. Amish and their Quilts runs on Saturday, November 1, from 9 AM to 12 PM. Tickets are $40 members and $45 for nonmembers.

Tickets for all art classes are available online at lmhs.org or by phone at (717) 393-9745. Supplies are provided and included in the listed price.

Registrations

Native American Tour, November 1, $60 members; $65 nonmembers. Registration due October 15.

Feather-Stitching and Grain-Painting, October 18, $70 members; $75 nonmembers. Registration due October 11.

The Amish and their Quilts, November 1, $40 members; $45 nonmembers. Registration due October 25.

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**Spirituality, History, and Giving**

We are spiritual beings at our core. As a Christian Anabaptist Mennonite, I experience spirituality as a journey of personal transformation that began when God reached out to me and asked me to be a faithful disciple of Jesus. I accepted the call. I committed to a lifetime of restoring relationships with others and eschewing violence. The journey is about bringing healing and hope into the world.

I am not alone in this journey. There is a community of faith around me that carries the same commitment. There are past generations of people who have made this journey. The Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society preserves and interprets the experiences of these people and the Anabaptist-related communities associated with Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The journey is not just about personal transformation. It’s also about being agents of healing and hope in the world. Anyone can join this journey. Agents of healing and hope give—they give of their time, their talents, and their money.

The Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society continues to receive generous financial support from members, congregations, and donors. We are grateful. Fundraising can be a form of ministry. In his book, “A Spirituality of Fundraising” (2010), Henri Nouwen—a pastor, professor, and writer—said, “Fundraising is proclaiming what we believe in such a way that we offer other people an opportunity to participate with us in our vision and mission.”

Upon reading Nouwen’s statement, I thought to myself: This represents nicely what the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society does when it sends its membership renewal letters or its annual fund appeals; or when it invites congregations, businesses, and individual donors to give in support of our mission. The Society’s mission is ministry!

Nouwen went on to say: “When those with money and those who need money share a mission, we see a central sign of new life in the Spirit of Christ.” When staff and board join with givers to the Society, indeed the Spirit of Christ is among us to preserve and interpret in new ways our individual and communal historical journeys.

**Old and New Books Featured at October Book Sale**

John L. Ruth’s “The Earth is the Lord’s” highlights the LMHS book sale on October 10, 2014. Also of high interest is a four-volume set of “Mennonite Encyclopedia.” Buyers looking for old Anabaptist books will be pleased to find two different English language copies of the “Martyr’s Mirror,” both in good condition. The first is an 1837 copy printed in Bielefeld, Germany in 1805.

**Recent Acquisitions**

**Religion/Theology**

“Genesis: a Bible study and devotional guide for groups or individuals.” MennoMedia, 2014 (BS1235.4 .G46 2014)


“Mark: a Bible study and devotional guide for groups or individuals.” MennoMedia, 2014 (BS2585.4 .M37 2014)


**Biography/Genealogy**


**Miscellaneous**

