

West Swamp News

Volume 14, Issue 6

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Answers to questions about Mosaic Conference and Mennonite Church USA

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FYI

- Daylight Savings Time ends at 2 am, Sunday, Nov. 2. Don't forget to set your clocks back an hour.
- Code Blue is still looking for volunteers. Is God calling YOU to help out this vital ministry?

At its Sept. 15 meeting, the board of Mosaic Mennonite Conference voted to recommend that Mosaic discontinue its membership as an area conference of Mennonite Church USA. This recommendation will come to delegates for discernment and a vote at the Mosaic fall Assembly on Nov. 1 at Souderton Mennonite Church.

What is being proposed?

The proposal is simply that Mosaic Mennonite Conference stop being an area conference of Mennonite Church USA.

Why is this being proposed?

After more than three years of conversation and discernment, Mosaic's staff and board leadership have come to the conclusion that remaining an area conference of MC USA would prevent us from

responding to the direction the Holy Spirit is leading us to continue to partner with God in mission both within and outside the US. Not only has Mosaic been growing in the US, as Mennonite churches from California to Maine and Florida join us, but in the last few years, new Anabaptist/Mennonite

As Mosaic Mennonite Conference, we choose to center ourselves on being a community together that honors and values our differences as we partner to live, love, and become like Jesus in our broken and beautiful world.

—from A Mosaic Identity: Clarifying our Center

churches in Mexico, Colombia and the United Kingdom have sought out Mosaic to become a part of our conference. MC USA's structure does not allow for this, and MC USA has been inflexible in this re-

gard.

What is this *not* about?

This is not about the debates around human sexuality, particularly the inclusion in the life of the church of LGBTQ persons, in which Mennonites have been engaged for decades. Mosaic has made a decision since its founding to de-center those conversations, instead focusing on living into its missional, formational and intercultural priorities.

Will Mosaic still be Mennonite?

Yes, Mosaic Mennonite Conference will continue to be rooted in the Anabaptist Mennonite faith it has always been a part of. It is probable that Mosaic will seek membership on its own in the Mennonite World Conference, a global community of Mennonite churches.

(Continued on page 2)

Pastor's Corner: Fruit season

What will change for West Swamp?

For our congregation, little will change. We will continue to partner with Mennonite Central Committee, Everence and Mennonite Mission Network, as well as ministry partners in our area. And we will continue to be a part of and receive accountability and support from Mosaic Mennonite Conference.

What do the Pastor and Ministry Team think of this?

The Ministry Team spent a considerable amount of time discussing and discerning around the proposal at our Sept. 23 meeting. Each member of the ministry team was in consensus that we should move ahead with Mosaic and support the Board's proposal. As your pastor, I am saddened by the prospect of leav-

ing MC USA, where I have been a pastor for a long time, but I strongly believe that this proposal is what is best for Mosaic Mennonite Conference, enabling us to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, and that it is best for West Swamp to support the proposal.

Where can I learn more?

The best place to learn more is to read two articles in *Mosaic News* from the September 18 issue. They can be found here: <https://mailchi.mp/44b6aded1771/mosaic-news-september-18-2025?e=7a9f2b2bf0>. It's also important to read the new Mosaic Mennonite document *A Mosaic Identity: Clarifying Our Center*. It can be found here: [https://mosaicmennonites.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/](https://mosaicmennonites.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Centering-Documents_EN.pdf)

Centering-Documents_EN.pdf. Paper copies of all three of these will be available on the table in the foyer at church where the bulletins are found.

When can we talk about this?

Discussion of the proposal and our response to it will be part of our congregational conversation on Oct. 19 at 10:30 am in the fellowship hall. I welcome your feedback anytime in person or by text or phone call.

Who are West Swamp's delegates?

West Swamp's delegates to the Mosaic Mennonite Conference Assembly are Nancy Jacobs and Jan Wieand. Feel free to bring comments or concerns to them as well.

~ **Pastor Michael**
Ministry Team

Worship: Fall happenings

Summer is over, and we are enjoying splendid fall weather: God's beautiful creation in full color!

World Communion Sunday is Oct. 4. Join with Christians all over the world as we take part in this global celebration. Help decorate the sanctuary by wearing something from another country or culture.

On Oct. 12, Solidarity & Harmony will celebrate their 15th anniversary. Pastor Michael will deliver the sermon there, with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Let's keep them in our prayers.

In Pastor Michael's absence, Lynne Rush will give the message that day, sharing a bit of what the Bible Project Sunday School Class is learning from their study of Exodus.

We will meet in the Fellowship Hall on Oct. 19 for a brief worship service, followed immediately by some round table discussion. Come share your thoughts and ideas about the future of West Swamp.

November is the month of

Thanksgiving. Let's give thanks for our many opportunities and blessings. Thanks be to God!

~ **Joan Hallman**



DISCO: Fall is for Belonging and Bible Study

This fall at West Swamp you have two options for Bible study on Sunday morning. The Bible Project class meets at 8:45 in the conference room (across from the nursery), or you can join by Zoom.

This fall they have begun working through the book of Exodus. Feel free to join in person, or contact Lynne Rush for the Zoom link.

Option number two is the TLC Class—Topics, Learning and Conversation. We meet in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30 am. There is always coffee and a breakfast treat of some kind. We talk about a couple questions to

help us get to know one another better, and then do some Bible study.

Currently we are looking at the Sermon on the Mount from the gospel of Matthew, the heart of Jesus' teaching in just a few pages. No preparation is needed, just come as you are.

You are welcome to become a part of either of these classes any week you choose. Come and join us!

~ *Pastor Michael*



Stewardship: Keeping up with maintenance

We managed to take care of some items in addition to the regular checks and maintenance for this time of the year at church.

An AED has been purchased via the American Red Cross and is to be installed (likely in the Fellowship Hall or Main Vestibule) for high visibility and ease of access. It is fully automated and gives verbal instructions for its use. So no one should be afraid to use it or follow its instructions should the need arise. I will likely update in some manner once it is fully installed and functional.

It requires some initial setup by me, and it will be housed in a metal cabinet similar to a fire extinguisher. CPR specific training is always available via the Red Cross if anyone is interested (separate from AED use which does not require training).

The Township fire inspection was handled with any deficiencies being handled already. No new maintenance issues have arisen, and the new flooding monitors and controls have successfully kept the elevator pit bone dry and other areas as dry as possible considering the con-

struction of the church and existing drainage.

Over the summer we did have some issues with lights and other equipment being left on by other groups that use the church. I would like to request that everyone keep an eye out and notify me if this continues. We reached out to the groups already, and things have been better since. I'm hoping this is a non-issue going forward.

~ *Alex Parzych*

Mennonites from Lancaster among those arrested in peaceful US Capitol protest against US role in Gaza war

This article by Jordan Wilkie first appeared in Lancaster Online on Sept 12.

Twenty-one Pennsylvania Mennonites were among a group of 120 who traveled to Washington, D.C., on Tuesday to protest the war in Gaza, prompting the U.S. Capitol Police to arrest half of the group.



The protesters, organized by the Harrisonburg, Va., branch of Mennonite Action, called “for an end to the killing and forced starvation of the people of Gaza, calling for humanitarian aid to be immediately allowed into Gaza and an end to U.S. weapons to Israel,” according to the group’s statement.

After being turned away at the office of U.S. Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, the group sat outside the office and sang hymns, what Ben Rush from Lancaster called “a very Mennonite way of protesting.”

The Capitol Police responded and told the protesters to dis-

perse, then arrested 61 members of the group, according to a statement from organizers. They were charged with “Crowding, Obstructing, and Incommoding,” a misdemeanor with punishments of up to 90 days in jail, \$500 in fines, or both.

“It is against the law to protest inside the Congressional Buildings. There are other spots on Capitol grounds where demonstrations are allowed,” according to a statement from the U.S. Capitol Police.

All protesters were released within a day, Rush said. Seven of those arrested were from Lancas-

ter County, according to information Rush shared from the group’s sign-up sheets. The group anticipated arrests as part of their civil disobedience plan, he said.

“I’m committed to my faith and because it is such an important part of my life, I feel like I have to speak out against atrocities,” Rush said.

Mennonites are Christians in the Anabaptist tradition, Protestants who trace their roots back to the 16th century.

“Mennonites have been a tradition of largely pacifists and a peaceful reflection on the mes-

sage of Jesus,” according to Matthew D. Taylor, senior Christian scholar at the Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies in Baltimore, Maryland. He added that the religious tradition’s adherents are skeptical of tying religious views to political power.

Mennonite Action started in November 2023 as a response to Israel’s war tactics in Gaza, Rush said. The group opposes the use of Christianity by President Donald Trump’s administration to justify policies, according to its website.

Mennonite Action has also organized protests against immigration enforcement efforts, Rush said.

TO BUILD OUR COURAGE The Mennonite Action Training Tour

The genocide in Gaza rages on as ICE kidnaps our neighbors off the streets. That’s why we’re bringing training, tools and frameworks to help our communities respond in courage to our historical moment.

Our team is traveling across the west coast, mountains and plains, east coast and Midwest in four swings, meeting with Mennonite Action groups at every stop. We’ll enjoy food and worship together, and dive into critical trainings like Grassroots Organizing 101, Nonviolent Action 101, faith based -cooperation in the authoritarian moment, and preparing your church to meet the moment in front of us.

Closest training to West Swamp:

Friday, Dec. 12, 5:45
Salford Mennonite Church
Groff’s Mill Rd, Harleysville

Mission: Thanks for rising to the challenge

Autumn has arrived and with that, the start of a new school year.

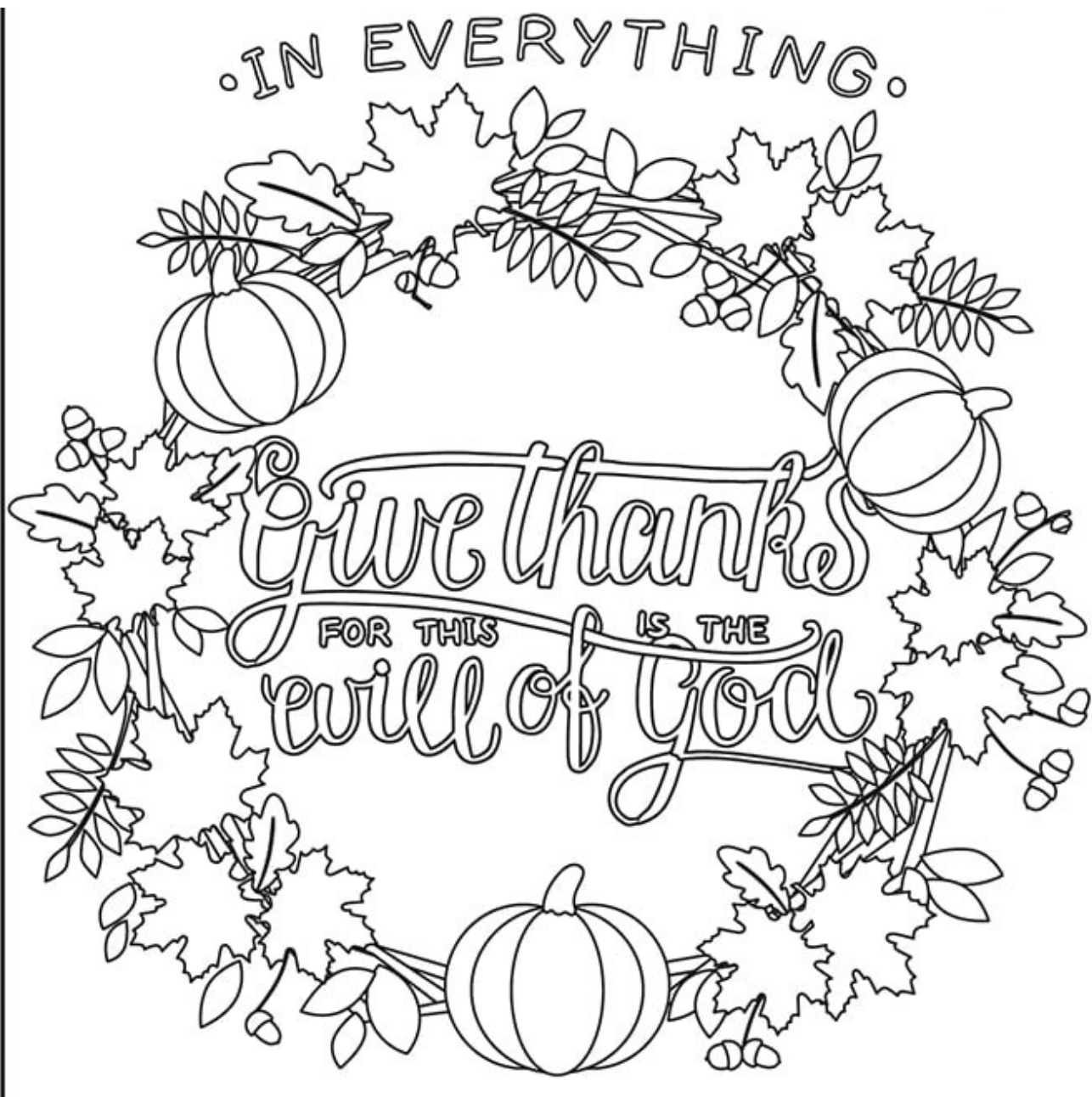
A big thank you to everyone for the donations to put together School Kits. We were able to send 58 kits to MCC. Thank you

to Rod & Lynne Rush for volunteering to take them to the MCC Material Resource Center in Harleysville for distribution.

We support Ripple by serving a meal once a year and doing fund raisers throughout the year. We

encourage everyone to check out their website to see all the things that they are doing in their community: www.ripplecommunityinc.org/news.

~ **Chris Allem**





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mennonite church

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Reflecting God in our
living, loving and serving

Calendar of Events

October

1, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In
1, 7:15 pm—Choir
5—World Communion Sunday
7, 7 pm—Community Com.
14, 7 pm—Mission Com.
15, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In
15, 7:15 pm—Choir
16, 12 pm—Senior Luncheon
19, 10:30 am—Worship &
Round Table Discussion
19, 12 pm—Sunday Lunch Bunch
21, 7 pm—Ministry Team
28, 7 pm—DISCO
29, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In
29, 7:15 pm—Choir

November

4, 7 pm—Community Com.
11, 7 pm—Mission Com.
16, 12 pm—Sunday Lunch Bunch
18, 7 pm—Ministry Team
19, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In
19, 7:15 pm—Choir
20, 12 pm—Senior Luncheon
23—Mission Sunday
25, 7 pm—DISCO

Regular Activity

Tuesdays, 8 am—Knotting & Quilting



October

10/6 Matthew Opdyke
10/7 Deb Stevenback
Jan Wieand
10/14 Don Rosenberger
10/17 Case Mood
10/18 Paul Heimbach
Joann Rush
10/20 Amanda Wieand
10/21 Randy Rush
10/25 Corinne High
10/27 Dick Landt
10/29 Dale Loch

November

11/3 Nancy Jacobs
John Riley
11/5 Olivia Mood
11/6 Jordan Husvar
11/8 Alex Parzych
11/19 Pam Grube
11/20 Don Butcher
11/21 Bernice Keller
11/26 Les Rice
11/28 Kitty Stauffer