



Intersections

Stories from Franconia Mennonite Conference

FALL 2012



Love on a Local Scale: Summer 2012 Peace Camps

This summer, “Anabaptist witness” for some folks has meant teaching a second-grader to explore ways he can care for the earth or giving a 10-year-old creative ways to deal with conflicts she’ll face at school.

Since 2007, Meredith Ehst of Salford congregation (Harleysville, Pa.) has brought her experience in public education to leading the congregation’s summer Peace Camp. Each year they choose a theme verse and age-appropriate learning goals for the week. The youngest learn

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Find more at www.franconiaconference.org

Editorial

Most of you know that in recent months Eastern District and Franconia Conferences have renewed our joint commitment to being a people called as living examples of Christ's peace by contracting Samantha Lioi as Minister of Peace and Justice.

Samantha has been meeting with congregational leaders for the last few months. Through her conversations and interactions, as she asks questions and shares information, she is helping to strengthen our understanding of true shalom and providing new opportunities for each of us to listen to one another.

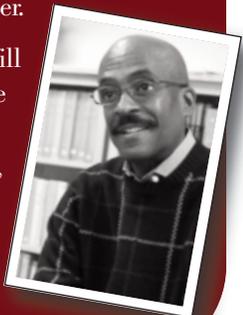
The terms "peace and justice" can sometimes feel empty or trendy. What does peace look like in the real world of Bridgewater, Norristown, Harleysville, Atlanta? How do we understand and live into the reality that charity, while important, is not justice?

Obviously as a body of believers there are many questions that we need to answer together.

Samantha is available to resource congregations toward active peace within and beyond your faith communities (samantha@interculturalchurch.com); as she has listened to your stories this summer, however, she has been reminded that Franconia congregations and Conference Related Ministries are already living as Christ's peace—and this issue of *Intersections* tells just a few of the many stories you have to share as we work to be a people of peace together.

May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace as you trust in Him!

— Ertell Whigham,
Executive Minister



Meet Derek Cooper

Derek Cooper is assistant professor of biblical studies and historical theology at Biblical Seminary in Hatfield, Pa., where he also serves as associate director of the Doctor of Ministry program. He and his wife Barb are members at Deep Run East Mennonite Church.

Get to know Derek Cooper and other new leaders in Franconia Conference by reading their stories on our website: franconiaconference.org/call.



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that they are loved by God and created with unique gifts. Second- and third-graders learn about peace with the earth, working in Salford's community garden. The oldest children gain skills for reconciling conflict without resorting to physical force. Everyone spends some time in the classroom, some playing cooperative games, and some sitting down to eat together.

Philadelphia Praise Center, knowing the needs of their children and neighbors, held their own, three-week Peace Camp this summer. Erika Bollman and Ardi Hermawan developed a program highlighting a different hero of peace each day, beginning with Menno Simons and including Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Teresa, and the local founder of what he hoped would be "a peaceful woods," William Penn. Pastor Aldo Siahann taught about God's peacefully splitting land between Abraham and Lot, the just resistance of the Egyptian midwives in refusing to kill Hebrew babies, and the four men who cared for their friend enough to carry him to Jesus for healing.

In June, Ripple-Allentown's three-day Peace Camp was full of important learning. Members from Ripple and Whitehall congregations showed up at Franklin Park to play team-building games, create works of art, and sit in a circle for a story and sharing with the "Peace Scarf" - a variation on a talking stick and an effort to practice listening to each other. After the Scripture story each evening, they passed the Blessing Cup—a sign that God loves us more than we can imagine and wants us to learn to love each other and God's world, too.

As the Church sees their neighbors for who they are, we participate in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. This Jesus strips fear of its power, walks with the smallest among us as they learn their strength to do what is right, and teaches all of us as we move out to speak and learn peace among our neighbors. — Samantha Lioi, Whitehall

Intersections

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FranconiaMC



Speaking truth to power in Norristown

A Pennsylvania law that requires all voters to present valid ID has created a new witness for the Nueva Vida Norristown New Life congregation—a new way to stand with poor and marginalized people in our community, and to speak truth to power.

People ask, “Do Mennonites get involved in politics?” To us, it’s an issue of justice. We quickly discovered that God had already equipped us to address it—within three weeks of the law’s passage in April, our voter/photo ID clinics were up and running, one of the first responses in the state.

We work with people who don’t have all the identity documents required to get a photo ID and don’t have the money to get them. We hope to run seven or eight clinics by the end of October. We also train

Sharon Williams and Donna Windle train volunteers from Montgomery County to run a voter/photo ID clinic. Pictured, counter-clockwise from the left, Williams, Windle, Rita Heinegg, Carol Newman, G. Hulings Darby, and Dot Martin. Photo by Ertell Whigham.

volunteers (from Philadelphia to Harrisburg) on how to walk people through the intricate and ever changing “hoops” of obtaining an ID and how to run voter/photo ID clinics in their communities and churches.

In 2013, we plan to continue offering this service periodically in Norristown, because photo IDs are being required by many institutions and systems: banks, medical services, mortgages, leases, rentals, and for employment.

— Sharon Williams, Nueva Vida Norristown New Life

Seeking Shalom at Peaceful Living

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructs us to pray, “...Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.” These words guide Peaceful Living Executive Director Joe Landis in his work with people with disabilities and their families, whose lives often unfold as less than heavenly. He sees his job as “building God’s kingdom here on earth” by helping these families, congregations, and the community to seek peace together.

“Peace for Peaceful Living is shalom,” Joe said. “It suggests a wholeness, a completeness in relationship with God and with yourself as a person fully integrated with your group, your town, and the world. It starts with every individual and every act of kindness we do, regardless of how small.”

Those acts of kindness, or living shalom, are demonstrated through the nonprofit’s Friendship Connection Program that connects a person with a disability with a caring friend in the community.

One such friendship developed between Phillip, who is served by Peaceful Living, and Aaron Leatherman, Towamencin. Aaron had never before had a close connection to a person with a disability, but he noted that a short time after their matching they had established a “real” friendship. Aaron said, “We are friends now, and there is no going back.” — Ella Roush, *Peaceful Living.org*



Aaron Leatherman provided support when his friend Phillip underwent major surgery. Photo provided.

Conference Related Ministries (CRMs) are organizations that collaborate with Franconia Conference and serve congregations and neighborhoods in the name of Jesus. To see a full list of CRMs, head to franconiaconference.org/directory.

Conference Financial Update

6 months (February-July)

Operating Budget	Actual	Budget	Last Year
REVENUE			
Congregational contrib.	\$169,226	\$191,096	\$233,344
<i>All Other Sources</i>	\$186,428	\$165,631	\$140,876
Total Revenue (+)	\$355,654	\$356,727	\$374,220
EXPENSES			
Ministries/Programs	\$281,517	\$268,722	\$294,717
Support Services	\$121,768	\$135,542	\$105,718
Total Expenses (-)	\$403,285	\$404,264	\$400,435
Line of Credit Payment	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500
NET	\$(60,131)	\$(60,037)	\$(38,715)

Bekah Ford, Issac Moyer, and Derek Cassel, volunteers from Franconia Mennonite Church in Telford, Pa., place a chalk line on a tool storage structure being erected in Kingdom Builders Construction's future headquarters in a North Philadelphia warehouse. Photo by Sheldon C. Good/MWR.



Campers at Men-O-Lan Christian Camp wash each other's feet. This summer, bloggers from throughout and beyond the conference considered what practices define the verb "Mennonite." Maria Byler suggested, "In taking off our socks, getting on the floor, and actually cleaning someone else's feet or allowing ours to be cleaned, our body experiences what we train our minds and hearts for as Mennonites."



Eastern Mennonite Seminary (Pa.) students investigate a peace garden that stands on a World War II bombing site in the center of Birmingham, England. Photo by Scott Hackman.

Read the full stories at franconiaconference.org/intersections