



# Intersections

*Stories and News of Franconia Mennonite Conference*

## *Pastoring after the Storm*

*Gwen Groff, Bethany*

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A friend told me a story about a minister who went down to the train station every morning to watch the trains pass. Finally someone asked why he did this. Was he considering throwing himself in front of one of them? Was he wishing he could hop on one and get out of town? Was he praying for the people as they passed through? The minister said, "I just love to see something moving that I don't have to push."

Although I'm not much of a pusher, I can sometimes identify with the desire to see movement for which I'm not responsible. But the community response to Tropical Storm Irene, which hit Vermont on Sunday, August 28, 2011, was a moving train I was not pushing. Instead I felt I was running to catch up with what was already on the move.

I was out of town when the storm hit. My husband Robert and I were at the beach in Maine celebrating our 20th anniversary when Irene poured eight inches of rain on our town and washed away roads, bridges, power lines, homes and land.

In Maine the seas were high but we saw little rain or storm damage. We were oblivious to Irene's impact until we happened to meet some other Vermonters on the beach who told us that our governor had declared a state of emergency. We started paying attention to the news and trying to phone home. We couldn't reach the friends who were keeping our kids but our neighbors told us not to bother trying to come home early. The roads to our house were closed and the road between us and our children was washed away.

I called our neighbors to ask how they were doing. When I talked with one member of the family she said, "It's like a war zone here. No power, boulders in the middle of lawns, houses washed under the bridge up the road . . ." When I talked with her husband, he said, "It's like a big party here. There's no power so we've got the grill going, there's lots of stuff thawing in the freezer we need to eat up . . ."



Photo by Brandon Bergey

*Route 100 in Plymouth, Vermont after Tropical Storm Irene tore through the region.*

When we got home on Tuesday, we started seeing the damage in our neighborhood and hearing the extent of the damage in our small state. Five people drowned, 1400 were driven from their homes. Two hundred bridges were damaged and 530 miles of roads shut down.

With power still out and roads around us yet closed, we had little to do but walk around to our neighbors and see what needed to be done. Some people immediately got busy coordinating relief supplies and equipment. We were asked if we could use the church vestibule as a distribution point, but it soon became clear we'd need a bigger space, and the Grange (town) hall next door became the local hub of activity.

I was slow to catch up with what my role should be in this situation. I mostly listened a lot as people shared their stories. When electricity was restored I baked bread and took it to neighbors who had been evacuated and people who were cleaning mud out of their basements. Many were sorting and drying out their possessions.

Several people suggested Bethany have a special service. Vermont is a notoriously secular state, and only one other time—after 9/11—did people in this community ask for a worship service. But the week after Irene several

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# God's new thing in 2012

Ertell Whigham, Executive Minister

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As I think through all of the ways that we have heard and seen the testimony of God working among us in our communities and congregations in 2011, I continue to be encouraged by the unlimited possibilities of what can be accomplished when we share our God-given time, talent and resources with a genuine spirit of cooperation. In this issue we recount some of what has come about over the last year and I notice that God is continually calling some new movement forward.

Revelation 21:1-8 tells the story of God doing a new thing. It's a new Heaven, new earth, new relationships and more. This is not merely recycled, but fresh, recent, unused, unworn. The basic message is that through an encounter with God—nothing has to remain the same. We are not merely stretched or reconstituted but transformed. It is important that we understand that my suggestion of a new experience is not in any way saying that what God is doing or has done needs to be updated or improved but should be seen as an invitation to allow our total being to be transformed by God's new thing. We also know that God alone brings forth new creations, even in our new human inventions we are simply repurposing elements that God has made in the past. New creations require the Spirit to bring life.

This past year much has happened that has enabled us get a taste of God's new thing. Sometimes what may seem to be the same experience is indeed new when we allow God to give us a new attitude or help us to see through new lenses. For example when I read the story of how the community worked together in Vermont following the devastation of Hurricane Irene, for me, it gave a new meaning to the history and tradition of "barnraising". Or when I see the collaborative efforts of Plains and Perkasio congregations and our Conference partnership with Eastern District as we work through our shared vision for youth ministry, it opens the ways for many new possibilities and models for ministry. In reading of Indian Creek's initiative and listening to the experiences of all of our CRM's, I know that even with long and faithful ministries, it's possible for God to interrupt and create something new.

In this issue, Jim Laverty and Rina Rampogu write of what Conference board and staff heard over this last year of listening carefully to the life of congregations in the Conference. We are a varied assortment of God's expres-

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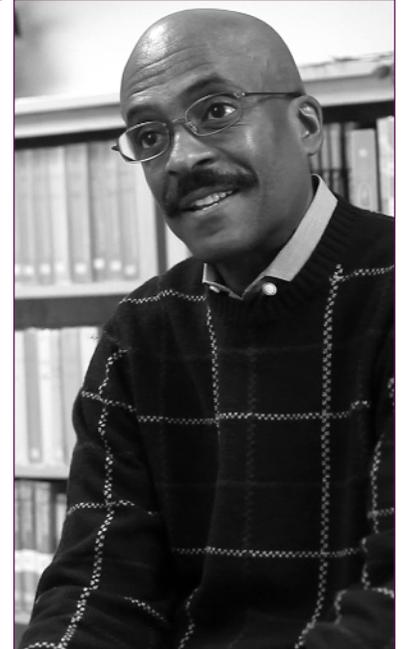


Photo by Tim Moyer

sions of love, struggle and faith. In this same struggle, a long struggle at that, we notice that congregations are also feeling God call forth new things from their midst. It is this very thing that Franconia Conference, as we are together, must nurture to call forth, to do our best to be prepared for and transformed by God's new thing among us. This means new relationships. This means seeing differently. This means changed perspectives. This doesn't mean that our past is discredited, but recognizes that God is in fact asking us in this space and time to be transformed, to let that new thing occur, to no longer simply be stretched like elastic only to snap back into the same shape, but to be transformed like alchemy through the touch of God that makes all things new.

The year 2012 is not an ending as the world claims around us, rather a beginning in which God makes everything fresh and full of hope again through the life of Christ, the power of the Spirit and the ongoing witness of God's people. Isn't it amazing, our God, the same yesterday, today and forever, makes every day new, can renew all things and is even expecting to transform our lives, our hearts, our congregations, our ministries, and our relationships so that the message of Jesus Christ might break forth through us even in 2012.

# Board members visit congregations

*Jim Laverty, Souderton & Rina Rampogu, Plains*

Over the past year members of the Franconia Conference Board have been visiting Franconia congregations. During our visits we celebrated each church's vision and mission, clarified the role of Franconia Conference and communicated the board's desire to be servants of the conference churches, to stand beside the good work each church is doing for their members and the world and to be accountable to Franconia churches in a new and better way.

## **We were excited to see what is happening in conference congregations:**

- Collaborative relationships, affinity groups (or learning communities) with churches, Conference-Related Ministries (CRMs) and Partners in Ministry (PIMs).
- Service to communities through community-building events, sports camps, support groups, pre-school programs, community gardens, and meals.
- Opportunities for everyone (gender, age, background) to get involved inside and outside of church services.
- Creative approaches to talking about following Jesus with people from different generations, cultures, ethnicities, and language groups.
- Effort to get along in the body of Christ, providing mutual aid and support through Sunday School classes and increased participation in small groups.
- Goal-setting, clarifying and reviewing roles, and aligning budget with vision and values in cooperation with LEAD teams.
- Solid lay and pastoral leadership. Strong preaching, prayer ministry and blended worship in the spoken-language of the congregation.

## **Some of the challenges that congregations are facing:**

- Financial limitations, decrease in giving, and learning how to grow people who will commit to being generous with their time, talents, and treasure.
- Fluctuation in worship attendance and coming to terms with what it means to be in fellowship with people coming and going on a regular basis as well as a loss of membership due to relocation.
- Understanding the changing nature of our world.
- Communicating stories of what God is doing in congregations while respecting people's privacy. Learning how to communicate across the generations.
- Building community when congregation and community are made up of people who speak different languages.

- A need for support and advocacy in facing changing immigration policies and their implications (worship service times, hospital visitation, transportation).
- Unemployment among church members. Dealing with conflict in relationships (separation, divorce).

## **We discussed what it will take to continue to build confidence toward Franconia Conference:**

- Modeling healthy approaches to dealing with major conflicts and crisis. Encouraging unity in diversity.
- Clear communication. Relational face-to-face meetings with members of conference and board.
- Ongoing relationship with LEAD minister and guidance in pastoral searches, staff reviews, and conflict mediation.
- Fostering relationship with CRMs.
- Offering a prophetic voice to help us to see God at work in the world in a positive way and to witness to the world about what the body of Christ is.

## **We discussed what confidence will look like:**

- Celebrate the ways that diverse congregations can share in what they have in common, dialoguing on critical issues.
- Encourage better connections (such as pulpit supply) and partnerships (such as church planting mentors) between urban, suburban and rural congregations
- Recognize Conference Related Ministries and their missional value.
- Clarify the rationale for introducing LEAD and the concept of the E3-vision for churches in Vermont and other locations that aren't close to the conference offices.
- Tell more stories to fan the flames of how Franconia Conference is living out our vision and values.
- Train congregations in children and youth ministries as well as worship (such as blended music during worship services).
- Provide financial aid for documented and undocumented students who have been accepted into Mennonite and non-Mennonite institutions of higher education.
- Incorporate more non-ethnic (non-Swiss German) Mennonites into leadership positions.

Congregations expressed appreciation for the ongoing support they have received from Franconia Conference in areas of leadership development, provision of meaningful learning and sharing opportunities for pastors and leaders, and for being a point of contact for ongoing pastoral resources.

## Two are better than one

Mary Lou Cummings, Perkasie

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Let's face it, teenagers like to hang out in groups—and the more kids in the group, the better.

So what is a church to do when its life rhythms produce periods with small teenage populations? Perkasie and Plains congregations are creatively working together to provide lots of new experiences for their junior youth by pooling their programs.

Two years ago Plains had a handful of junior high girls and only a few boys. Perkasie had four boys. One of the boys from Perkasie, however, attended Plains activities and several knew each other at school. Eventually Dale Gahman of Perkasie, mentor for the boys, and Pastor Dawn Ranck, who oversees "the younger half" of the Plains congregation, got together to brainstorm how to work together.

The groups clicked right away. Now the two groups meet together for fun experiences most months, and they bring their friends—with about 15 or more showing up. They have gone hiking to Hawk Mountain and have picked and donated to Manna on Main Street and FISH organizations. They have attended an Iron Pigs baseball game, bowled, and gone on a scavenger hunt looking for disguised adult friends. There are plans for a service day at Ten Thousand Villages in Lancaster followed by a camp-out. All agree that it is a lot more fun to do these things with more people.

The two groups still reserve some months for their own separate activities. Each congregation provides adults who



Photo by Rob Kerns

Plains and Perkasie junior youth enjoy a hike on Hawk Mountain.

share in the leadership. Ranck initiates a twice-a-year meeting in her home for the leaders to sketch out the year's activities and then creates flyers of each event for the kids and parents.

"I wanted to provide experiences for these young people that would be lots of fun, but would also stretch them--help them meet new people, and do things they wouldn't ordinarily do," says Gahman. "We try to include service projects in the planning. It's great to see the kids having fun and liking the group."

"One of the great things," says Ranck, "is that by alternating the planning, sometimes leaders are able to just 'show up' and enjoy the kids. It's working well and I think it is a good model for others to try."

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people said they would like time to come together and pray. One person from the community suggested that we have a Eucharist but use water instead of the usual elements. Water is what caused us so much trauma. But water is also what we most needed, clean water to drink, water to wash our hands and shower and flush, water to cleanse the contaminated soil.

So we gathered and sang and prayed and had a water ritual. I had planned several readings and songs to follow the ritual, but sharing the water was the start of people sharing stories, and that went on for more than an hour. People didn't want to leave.

Mennonites are used to being the experts in relief and disaster services. Motivated by our faith, we are good at helping. But after Irene we saw everyone helping their neighbors. Who knew so many Vermonters had heavy

equipment stashed in their sheds? People in our town joyfully brought out whatever big rig they had and repaired roads, built makeshift bridges, refortified river banks, and removed debris. One neighbor said, "They're like boys playing in a sandbox."

People became more expressive of their compassion. Neighbors who normally barely waved at each other had conversations and came into each other's houses and helped sort through one another's chaos. Neighbors in isolated pockets shared meals and water, sump pumps and generators. In this community of independent, self-sufficient Vermonters, people gave and accepted help.

For some, fear lingers. The sound of water brings anxiety. And many people are exhausted by the process of haggling with insurance companies and FEMA. But the community has become more kind and connected, and there is no turning around that train.

## Ministry in “thin places” marks Frankenfield’s journey

Sheldon C. Good, Salford with Stephen Kriss, Philadelphia Praise Center

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After dropping her young children off for Sunday school, Marlene Frankenfield often sat on the sidewalk outside Salford Mennonite Church. She was “going through a time of disillusionment with the church,” and didn’t want anything to do with institutionalized religion. Instead, she wanted church to be “real.”

While lounging outside Salford, youth frequently walked past Frankenfield on the way to Sunday school. They soon began greeting her and making small talk.

“It wasn’t long before they’d sometimes skip Sunday school to come chat with me, sharing their real lives,” Frankenfield said. “That was the very thing I was longing for. Soon they were stopping by my house on Saturday nights.” That was over 20 years ago. Marlene’s journey moved from congregationally based youth ministry to collaborative work with Franconia Conference and Christopher Dock High School for over a dozen years.

Relationships with Salford youth awakened Frankenfield to the possibility of ministry and brought her back into congregational life. Her initial formal call to serve came shortly after those interactions with teenagers on the church sidewalk when the church invited her to serve alongside of a growing youth ministry. After eight years at Salford, she began in the joint role of conference youth minister and campus pastor. She was licensed for ministry in June 2002 and ordained in May 2007.

Frankenfield found herself ministering in what she calls the “thin spaces” between classes at Dock and working doggedly to bring youth ministry to the center of congregational life and faith formation across the Conference.

“For young people, there is so much going on in their faith and in life, you need to be a person that can listen,” she said. “You need to be a God bearer, listening through God’s ears.” A quotation from Douglas Steere shapes her work. “To listen another’s soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another.”

As she moves on, Franconia Conference and Eastern District Conference have named a shared youth minister alongside the campus pastor role at Christopher Dock. Frankenfield says this is a sign that church leaders have noticed the need for steady youth leadership. “For so long, I felt like I worked in something separate from the vision of the conference, so to see so many people excited about youth, that other people are catching the vision, as I step away, is the biggest gift I could have,” she said.

*“I am grateful for the many relationships, experiences and holy moments over the years and there are many people and stories to remember and not enough time to tell them.”*



Marlene offered this prayer and dream as she completed her work in consideration of the ongoing possibilities for youth ministry in and beyond Franconia Conference, “That adults will listen to our youth—the underrepresented, and pay attention to the diverse places where the Holy Spirit is at work. That Franconia Conference would provide ways for women young and old to be mentored and empowered. That Franconia Conference see to it that all people who work with children and youth be educated in child safety, which will provide a safe healthy environment for all. That God’s spirit would be present in each young person to feel God’s unconditional love and experience God’s grace within a faith community.”

As Marlene considered her decision to end in her dual roles, she said, “I made this decision to transition with much prayer and discernment and I felt like it was the right time to explore something new. I have faith that God will have a plan for me for the future and God also has a plan for the places where I’ve ministered. One of my goals when I started was to lead in a way that invited others to lead—to step out of the way and be a mentor and encourager for others—to create a safe place for students to explore leadership.”

After these years of leadership development at Christopher Dock and Franconia Conference through chapel-planning, retreat planning, walking with youth pastors, and calling forth new youth ministers and leaders, Marlene’s work shaped space for new leaders, even now, collaboratively, across boundaries and in-between spaces, with real hope and committed service even in the midst of questions.

## *We are Messengers of Joy*

*Jennifer Malloy, Indian Creek Foundation*

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This past summer Indian Creek Foundation's inter-faith chaplain Pamela Landis, as well as Sharon Weisser and Carol Menser, both of the Spring Mount congregation, took part in a Faith and Hope Pilgrimage. Faith and Light Communities encompasses individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability and their family and friends who meet together on a regular basis in a Christian spirit to share friendship, pray together, and celebrate life.

During this four-day event, which was held in St. Louis, Missouri at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, the group took part in trolley tours of the Shrine and the St. Louis area, participated in ecumenical worship, sang uplifting hymns, and experienced the faith, fellowship, and spirituality of other Faith and Light members from all over the United States.

The theme of this year's pilgrimage was "We are Messengers of Joy." As messengers of joy, attendees were asked to be exuberant about their spirituality.

Faith and Light pilgrimages take place every ten years to commemorate the first pilgrimage the organization undertook in 1971. At that time some held a belief that those with disabilities had no place on a religious pilgrimage because they were thought to be incapable of experiencing this kind of activity and there was fear that their presence would disturb others.

Founded in Lourdes, France by two parents who began a journey to find a congregation where they would be accepted with their two sons with disabilities, the Faith and Light organization has grown to include more than 1,500 communities in 80 countries over six continents. The core value of Faith and Light remains the belief that every person, no matter what their ability, is called to be a source of grace and peace for their community.

Indian Creek Foundation's Faith and Light program has been in existence since 1989. This program seeks to enrich the lives and the often underserved aspect of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities—their spirituality. Ecumenical services are presented monthly for individuals interested in exploring this avenue. These inter-faith gatherings provide a chance for clients to gather together, sing hymns, listen to stories, participate in activities, and share in each other's fellowship. The monthly service is held on the first Friday of every month at the Indian Valley Mennonite Church from 6:30 to 8:30pm.



*Indian Creek Foundation's chaplain Pamela Landis with Sharon Weisser and Carol Menser, Spring Mount.*

Founded in 1975, Indian Creek Foundation's mission is to provide opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and to live in and enrich the community throughout their lives. Through four divisions offering residential, vocational, family services, and social work programs, the Foundation continues to grow and meet the changing needs of the surrounding community.

For more information: [indcreek.org](http://indcreek.org) or (267)203-1500.

How are you seeing  
God at work in our Conference?  
Share your stories and photos  
on Twitter, using #fmclife!

# Directory of conference related ministries

**Bethany Birches Camp**, 2610 Lynds Hill Road, Plymouth, VT 05056; TEL: 802-672-5220; [www.bethanybirches.org](http://www.bethanybirches.org). *Helping young people develop their relationship with God by providing them with a Christ-centered camping experience in a natural and nurturing environment.*

**Camp Men-O-Lan**, 1415 Doerr Road, Quakertown, PA 18951; TEL: 215-679-5144; [www.menolan.org](http://www.menolan.org). *As a Christian camp, our mission is to use the unique qualities of an outdoor setting for developing Christian commitment, character, leadership, and service, and to provide a place for retreat, worship, study, fellowship, recreation and personal development for individuals, families, and groups.*

**Care & Share Thrift Shoppes, Inc.**, 783 Route 113, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 215-723-0315; FAX: 215-723-5907; [www.careandshareshoppes.org](http://www.careandshareshoppes.org). *The vision of the Care and Share Shoppes is to be an inspiring retail shopping experience. We share our financial resources, our talents and our faith in Jesus Christ both locally and globally through Mennonite Central Committee. Our mission is to seek to model God's love and care for the earth and its people through recycling efforts and a positive shopping experience.*

**Christopher Dock Mennonite High School**, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446; TEL: 215-362-2675; FAX: 215-362-2943; [www.dockhs.org](http://www.dockhs.org). *In partnership with the family and the church, developing the God-given abilities of students in preparation for responsible stewardship of life as members of God's people in a global society.*

**Community Home Services, Souderton Center**, 781 Route 113, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 215-723-1906; FAX: 215-723-1590; [www.communityhomeservices.org](http://www.communityhomeservices.org). *A ministry of support and services to enable the elderly to remain in their own homes.*

**Crossroad Gift and Thrift**, 139 W. Main Street, Norristown, PA 19401; TEL: 610-275-3772; [crossroadgift-thrift@juno.com](mailto:crossroadgift-thrift@juno.com). *Our mission is to live Matthew 25: 35-36: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, . . . I needed clothes and you clothed me, . . . I was a stranger and you made me feel welcome."*

**Delaware Valley MEDA**, PO Box 64653, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 215-721-3030; FAX: 215-723-1211; [www.meda.org](http://www.meda.org). *Brings faith and values issues to the marketplace and professions.*

**Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust**, 6133 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144; TEL: 215-843-0943; FAX: 215-843-6263; [www.meetinghouse.info](http://www.meetinghouse.info). *Preserving and sharing the 1770 Mennonite Meetinghouse and the stories related to America's first Mennonite settlement and the "Gateway of North American Mennonites" through its four witnesses of history, service, education, and evangelism.*

**Indian Creek Foundation**, 420 Cowpath Road, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 267-203-1500; FAX: 267-203-1510; [www.indcreek.org](http://www.indcreek.org). *Improving community through services for persons with developmental disabilities.*

**Liberty Ministries**, PO Box 87, Schwenksville, PA 19473; TEL: 610-287-5481; FAX: 610-287-5286; [www.libertyministries.us](http://www.libertyministries.us). *Offering the message of Grace, Hope & Regeneration to those in prison and recently released.*

**Living Branches**, 207 West Summit St, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 215-723-9881; FAX: 215-723-9876; [www.livingbranches.org](http://www.livingbranches.org); *Enhancing the ministries of Dock Meadows, Souderton Mennonite Homes and Dock Woods, and extending the reach of quality, Anabaptist-guided retirement living services.*

**Life With God Ministries**, PO Box 64092, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 610-730-8008; **David Kochsmeier, Radio Pastor**; [www.life-with-god.org](http://www.life-with-god.org). *Proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

**Mennonite Central Committee Material Resource Center Harleysville**, 737 Hagey Center Drive, Unit C, Souderton, PA 18964. TEL: 267-203-8074. [www.mcc-harleysville.org](http://www.mcc-harleysville.org). *The MCC Material Resource Center of Harleysville serves as a liaison between the MCC Material Resource Center of Ephrata and peace churches of Eastern Pennsylvania. Through this outreach, we share God's love, hope, and joy in the name of Jesus Christ.*

**Mennonite Disaster Service**, PO Box 64794, Souderton, PA 18964. [www.mds.mennonite.net](http://www.mds.mennonite.net). *Helping God's healing and hope flow to those whose lives were affected by disaster.*

**Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania (Mennonite Heritage Center)**, PO Box 82, Harleysville, PA 19438; TEL: 215-256-3020; FAX: 215-256-3023; [www.mhep.org](http://www.mhep.org); *To collect, preserve, and interpret the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage in order to educate, inspire, and witness to the church and broader community.*

**Peaceful Living**, 2210 Shelly Road, Suite #2, Harleysville, PA 19438-1280 ; TEL: 610-287-1200; FAX: 610-287-7121; [www.peacefulliving.org](http://www.peacefulliving.org). *Creating belonging for persons with developmental disabilities within a faith community.*

**Penn Foundation, Inc.**, 807 Lawn Avenue, Sellersville, PA 18960; TEL: 215-257-6551; FAX: 215-257-9347; [www.pennfoundation.org](http://www.pennfoundation.org). *Provides continuum of behavioral health care services for all ages. Penn Foundation's Dayspring Counseling Center offers individuals, couples, and families counseling services from a Christian perspective.*

**Penn View Christian School**, 420 Godshall Road, Souderton, PA 18964; TEL: 215-723-1196; FAX: 215-723-0148; [www.pennview.org](http://www.pennview.org). *Penn View Christian School offers academically excellent education from a biblical perspective. The faculty and staff, in partnership with families and churches, seek to nurture the God-given potential of each student in a Christ-centered community.*

**Philadelphia Mennonite High School**, 860 North 24th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130; TEL: 215-769-5363; FAX: 215-769-4063; [www.pmhsonline.org](http://www.pmhsonline.org). *PMHS exists to provide a Christ-centered, quality education in a multicultural, urban context that equips students to become servant-leaders and peacemakers.*

**Quakertown Christian School**, 50 East Paletown Road, Quakertown, PA 18951; TEL: 215-536-6970; FAX: 215-536-2115; [www.quakertownchristian.org](http://www.quakertownchristian.org). *QCS, a Mennonite school, is in partnership with home and church in the process of developing physical, spiritual and social life skills for each child using Biblical values and a challenging academic environment to instill a sense of Christian community and service.*

**Rockhill Mennonite Community**, 3250 State Road, Sellersville, PA 18960; TEL: 215-257-2751; FAX: 215-257-7390; [www.rockhill-mennonite.org](http://www.rockhill-mennonite.org). *Providing a wide range of services to meet specific needs and encompass the whole person.*

**Spruce Lake Retreat**, 5389 Route 447, Canadensis, PA 18325; TEL: 800-822-7505; FAX: 570-595-0328; [www.sprucelake.org](http://www.sprucelake.org). *Spruce Lake's core purpose is pointing people toward Christ, and in the context of a lovely outdoor setting, provides opportunities for Christian nurture, meditation, fellowship and recreation for children, youth, adults and families.*

# Conference Finance Update

December 2011

The 2011-12 fiscal year is almost over. Congregational giving continues to be behind expectations so far this year, by \$34,000. Expenses have come back to expectations, running \$2,850 below budget at this point in the year. We are currently in the time of year (December and January) when congregations usually make up for giving shortfalls, so we are praying for this to continue. 26% of congregational giving usually comes in these last two months.

A sampling of the various activities of the conference during the months of October & November:

- \$1,200 in **Missional Operations Grants (MOG)** was disbursed for youth ministry to Nueva Vida Norristown New Life.
- The annual **Conference Assembly** meetings occupied of lot of staff time these past two months. Developing worship themes, partnering with Eastern District, contacting the guest speakers, translating into four languages, organizing the Prayer Room, coordinating video recordings, and so on, took a lot of energy; for both the assembly scattered meetings and the main meetings at Penn View Christian School.
- Sandy Landes continues to lead a **weekly prayer gathering** at the conference center, but also led a day of prayer and fasting and a teaching on prayer.
- Conference leaders attended the **Constituency Leadership Council** in October, a meeting of the "elders of the denomination", who spent this time reflecting on the convention in Pittsburgh and church-wide communication.

## Other tidbits:

- The conference relies on contributions from congregations for approx. 60% of its operating budget. 27% of the revenue comes from conference-owned property subsidies, and 4% from conference related ministries. The other 9% comes from a variety of sources.

Operating Budget	10 months (Feb-Nov)		
	Actual	Budget	Last Year
Revenue	\$577,990	\$623,100	\$654,179
<i>(from all sources)</i>			
Expenses	\$670,998	\$673,851	\$736,948
Line of Credit Payment	\$21,202	\$20,833	\$20,833
Net	(\$114,210)	(\$ 71,584)	(\$103,602)



Photo by Stacy Salvatori

*Nueva Vida Norristown New Life received a grant for creative youth ministry which was partly used to develop a sacred dance team that helped to lead worship at Conference Assembly 2011 at Penn View Christian School in November.*



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**Dawn Ranck**  
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