

# ANE Today



## ATLANTIC NORTHEAST DISTRICT CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Volume 55 Issue 1

January/February 2021

### ANE District Greeting from Pete Kontra

Greetings ANE District Brothers and Sisters, in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as we celebrate His Holy and very real presence here in our lives. My prayer is that of the Apostle Paul's for the Ephesians, that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.

There is nothing more important for us amidst all that is happening in our lives and the world right now. The list is long, right? COVID, racial injustice, political divide, theological differences—which is only getting us started here in our backyard. And so I encourage all of us to follow the lead of our Lord Jesus Christ, who humbled Himself to walk with us all the way through death and into new life.

As we continue to experience the challenges and suffering brought by the surge in COVID cases, I know how difficult it is to have to make the changes in our lives to stay safe. We're supposed to be embracing our families and friends, but instead must keep our distance, knowing that some of you have already lost loved ones from this pandemic. I don't have time to name all the ways we have been impacted—we know what those are.

But I do want to name for us as the church that in this season of Advent we want to gather together for worship and prayer and study. But we must be very careful right now. The safest action for us is to not meet together. I know that's a tough decision, especially since we're all fatigued by all this. I get it. But this will pass, and the Body of Christ will go on. If you have discerned that you will continue to meet in person in some degree,

please take every precaution. Wear a mask—always. This is not a political issue, but a life and death issue. We are called by Christ's example to consider the needs of others, so please don't take any unnecessary risks. You can go to the district website for a list of helpful resources. [www.ane-cob.org](http://www.ane-cob.org).

I am grateful for all of you, and continue to kneel before our God that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. I encourage you to do the same for one another. Pray. For peace, strength, comfort, and the joy of our salvation in Christ be evident to everyone.

Please continue to use our district prayer calendar, where each congregation is paired up with another each week to pray for one another. The calendar can be found on the district website, and is good through 2021. Reach out to one another to know how to pray. Even though we cannot gather as we are used to, we can still nurture our relationships, which is the most important thing God has given us.

Like you, I very much look forward to when we are in one another's presence again. Blessings to each of you this Christmas and New Year. May you live out of the riches of the glorious grace of Jesus Christ.



Pete Kontra

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## POWER OF PRAYER

2021

**January 3:** All ANE Pastors that they are renewed.

**January 10:** The ANE Board and Way Forward Team.

**January 17:** Moderator Q & A sessions scheduled for this week.

**January 24:** ANE Congregations continuing to have online and in person services for wisdom in their decision-making.

**January 31:** For the physical, spiritual, and emotional wellbeing of those persons who have been isolated during this time of social distancing.

**February 7:** Brethren Disaster Ministries and their willingness to move forward in their ministries during COVID, and that they will find volunteers to do so.

**February 14:** Coffee with ANE— that it may be a source of great conversation.

**February 21:** The Program & Arrangements Committee and Gifts Discernment Team as they plan for 2021 District Conference and fill open District Positions.

**February 28:** Women's Fellowship as they prepare for their virtual event.

## ANE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

*Please join us at our tables of service, ministry and fellowship!*

The ANE Gifts Discernment Team requests your assistance as we prayerfully invite pastors, leaders and members of your congregation to serve the wider Church by volunteering for various **2022 District Leadership** positions.

We are intent in our search to find new and inspired voices to gather around ANE's various meeting tables. Our team is looking for folks who feel called to do God's work and, therefore, make a real difference in our local communities and congregations. Please help us identify those in your church who might be interested in filling any of the empty seats of the Commissions of our District Leadership for 2022.

Good things happen when Brethren prayerfully gather around a table and experience great fellowship, new ideas, and inspiring initiatives.....to God be the glory.

### Positions Available:

**Moderator Elect (Any Section)**  
**Standing Committee Member (ANE West)**  
**District Board Chair (Any Section)**  
**Church Development & Evangelism (ANE East)**  
**Nurture (ANE East & ANE West)**  
**Stewardship (Lancaster South & ANE East)**  
**Witness & Outreach (ANE East)**  
**Program & Arrangements (ANE West & Lanc North)**

Applications are available on our website [www.ane-cob.org](http://www.ane-cob.org)





## MODERATOR'S DISTRICT Q&A SCHEDULED FOR ANE

Annual Conference Moderator Paul Munday is hosting a ZOOM session in districts, focusing on the "state of the church." Both laity and clergy are urged to participate. The ZOOM session will use a Q&A format; any and all questions are invited. Joining Moderator Paul will be the other Annual Conference Officers: Dave Sollenberger, Moderator Elect, and Jim Beckwith, Annual Conference Secretary.

The Moderator's District Q&A sessions for the Atlantic Northeast District will be Tuesday, January 19, at 1:00 PM and 7:00 PM, and Wednesday, January 20, at 1:00 PM and 7:00 PM. Links to join are available on the District website or Facebook page.

EXPLORING THE 'STATE OF THE CHURCH'  
**MODERATOR'S DISTRICT Q+A**



### The Next District-wide Zoom Gathering

**Saturday, February 20, 2021  
9:30-11:00a**

be coffee, tea or something else, and they all came with the eagerness to connect and hold great conversation. Some shared before and after COVID19 challenges, their current walk in faith, and what they currently need from the District. It was a wonderful time of gathering.

We invite all of you reading this to join us for the next one on February 20 from 9:30-11am. Ideally, we would love to have every congregation represented by at least one member. Please join us for this time of connection and conversation with your brothers and sisters in Christ. The link to join our Zoom call can be found on our Facebook page or on our website [www.ane-cob.org](http://www.ane-cob.org).

On Saturday, December 5 a small group of ANE members gathered together with ANE Staff, and District Board Chair, Jeff Glisson for an hour and a half of fellowship, praying and learning from each other. They all had their beverage of choice whether it

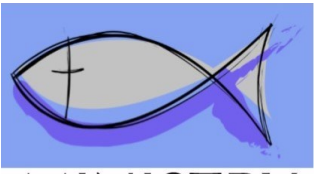
Save the date!  
Stewardship University

**Due to COVID-19  
POSTPONING UNTIL  
MARCH 5, 2022.**

Calvary Church More than 30 workshops focusing on holistic stewardship!

You can count on workshops that offer practical, relevant, useful information, and a biblical, Christ-centered, Anabaptist focus.





## MINISTRY

### Licensings, Ordinations, and Installations

**Janet Myers** (Paxton) was installed on November 15 as Pastor. Pete Kontra, District Executive, performed the service online via Zoom.



**D.Jay Martin** (Parker Ford) was ordained on December 13. Pete Kontra, District Executive performed the service online via Zoom.

### ANE DISTRICT—NEW MEMBERS

**Richland—Baptism:** Trent Shott; **Letter:** William Wink, Danielle Wink, Nikkita Wink

## Placement News

**Brooklyn First:** Beginning search process.

**Elizabethtown:** Greg Davidson Laszakovits resigned effective January 31, 2021.

**Geiger Memorial:** Open

**Green Tree:** Rod O'Donnell retiring June 1, 2021. Search Committee formed.

**Harrisburg First:** Belita Mitchell resigned effective December 31, 2020.

**Lebanon:** Erv Huston serves as Interim. Interviewing.

**Lititz:** Searching for Director of Youth Ministries.

**Mechanic Grove:** Calvin Park resigned. Developing Interim options.

**Mountville:** Joe Detrick serves as Interim. Interviewing.

**Myerstown:** Dennis Garrison serves as Interim.

**Providence:** Called Amy Messler as Associate Pastor.

**Schuylkill:** Search Committee forming.

**Wilmington:** Bob Wintsch serves as Interim.

### Bethany Seminary Freezes Tuition to Support Students

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting economic downturn, Bethany Theological Seminary has chosen to freeze its tuition rate for the 2021-22

academic year. Bethany tuition is an exceptional value at \$500 per credit hour or a base rate of \$1,100 per semester for students who qualify for scholarships and other financial aid.

"We are absolutely committed to making an extraordinary biblical and theological education affordable and accessible to all our students," says President Jeff Carter. "Those who are answering a call to ministry and service and are prepared to meet the challenges of an excellent seminary education should not be impeded by financial concerns. This tuition freeze is a direct response to the pandemic, but it is part of Bethany's larger effort to help students earn their degree without taking on additional student or consumer debt."



### Women's Spring Fellowship 2021

Our Women's Spring Fellowship will be held on Saturday, March 6, 2021.

Our gathering will be a virtual event. Audrey Finkbiner will be our Guest Speaker. The theme this year is "Gardening and Spirituality".

Please **SAVE THE DATE** and look for more information about the event as the date draws closer. We hope that you will plan to join us.

**Karen Hackett, Secretary**





## Being Salt and Light

On Saturday morning, November 7, 2020 many from our ANE District urban congregations gathered virtually via ZOOM to enjoy a morning of praise, worship and words of encouragement.

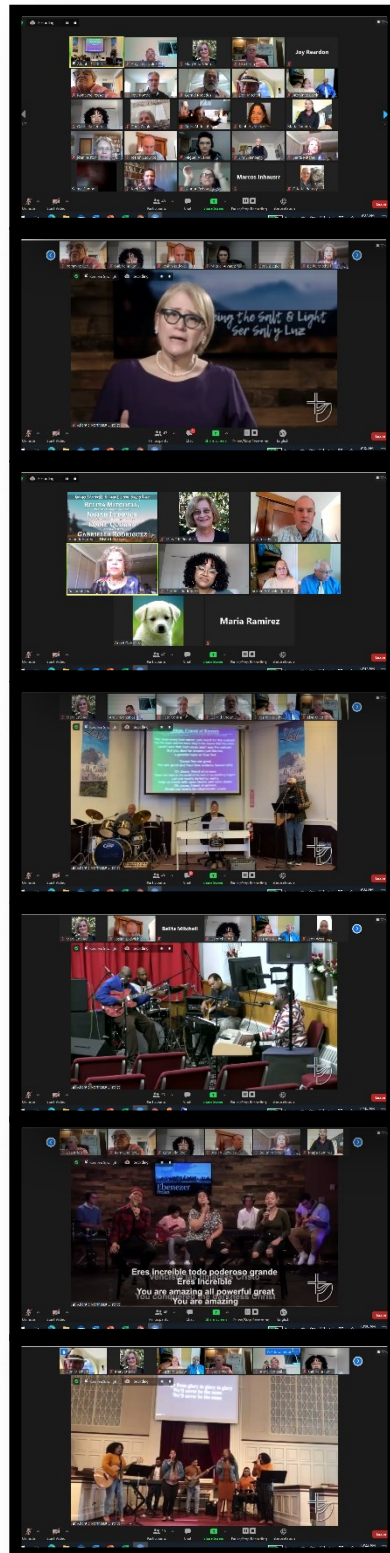
Pastor Leonor Ochoa from the Ebenezer project shared a message based on Matthew 5:13-16 that reminded us that "Jesus calls us to season human relationships so that joy, trust, and tolerance are not lacking."

Pastor Belita Mitchell, lead pastor at Harrisburg First, moderated a panel discussion focusing on how each of those in attendance could help our church family be salt and light in each of our communities.

Those participating in the panel discussion included Josiah Ludwick, who is an associate pastor at Harrisburg First; Eddie Quijano, who is a long time member at Brooklyn First; and Gabriella Rodriguez, who is a junior at Millersville University and a member of the Un Nuevo Renacer worship team.

And of course, this gathering could not be complete without lots of time for praise and worship. Worship teams from Brooklyn First, Ebenezer, Un Nuevo Renacer, and Germantown shared their musical talents to make this event a spirited time of worship and praise for all in attendance. You can view the event on our website on the Urban Ministries Initiative page, or on the District's YouTube page.

**SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR NEXT  
URBAN MINISTRIES EVENT:  
Saturday June 5, 2021  
Faith and Finances  
Location: TBD**



## Moving Forward with Video Streaming

*A monthly roundtable discussion for those planning and implementing the technical aspects of an online worship service*



**Every Second Thursday of  
each Month**

**7pm—8pm**

For more information to join in these roundtable discussions go to [www.ane-cob.org](http://www.ane-cob.org) or ANE Facebook page. Information can also be found in *The Parking Lot*.



Within the **Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center** (SVMC) area, persons from each of the five districts have been invited to share their “Calling” journey through the writing of short essays regarding their “call to ministry” journey. Begun in the fall of 2019, and for the remainder of 2020, we will be highlighting “calling” stories of individuals who will share their unique perspectives on our theme: *Your Call...Your Journey...Your Education.*



Doris Abdullah

I never had a burning bush or holy ghost experience but knew I had been called to preach at an early age. I have been a Christian, since childhood, dedicated to carrying forth the mission to serve my fellow human beings and bring them the Good News message of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

Somewhere between the ages of 4 and 5 my grandfather decided I should learn to read. My learner was The King James Bible. The prophet Isaiah was his favorite and remains my “go to” text these many years later. My memory is of chapters 5 and 6. The first sentence read and memorized, by me, was Isaiah 6:3; “And one cried unto another, and said, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.*” I think it was a great comfort to learn, at such a young age, that God was holy, God was powerful, and God was in control of the earth which was full of his goodness. Later, when the demons and distress crossed my life path, I have always returned to the comfort of the Isaiah text.

My call came in snippets with the first being baptism at age 9. Some said I was too young and maybe baptism should be put off until I reached my teens. Grandfather agreed with me and stood by as I easily answered the questions put to me as a Christian. “Do you believe that Jesus is the son of God and your savior and Lord? Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins and do you repent of your sin(s)?” Words about faithfulness and commitment to church followed, but I heard and saw dancing seraphim surrounding a great throne. On the throne was the king of mercy and compassion and my commitment to that great king as I entered the waters. The king was holy. The king was Jesus Christ.

After baptism I regularly attended church with my family and attended Bible studies sometimes. But never joined any church service projects, choir or even participated in church pageants. I grew up in New York City and lived around the corner from the

City University of New York. Several blocks away was Bernard College for Women and within walking distance was the entrance to the mighty grounds of Columbia University. Education was my pursuit and history my joy! I was open to all knowledge. I married a Muslim man in the Baptist church of my childhood, abandon education for the financial security offered by the corporate world for the next 30 years and had a family. I had discovered the Brethren by a simple search for a babysitter. I found at the **Brooklyn First Church of the Brethren** both childcare and spiritual care. Brooklyn First was different from my Southern Baptist heritage, but not as alien as I had imagined. God was there and the whole earth was still full of His glory. I saw that glory in Brethren commitment to peace and service. I became a deacon at Brooklyn First and returned to the pursuit of knowledge. This time it was not literature, history or behavior science, but theology.

Life has not been easy or simple and all my life journey did not just fall into place. Death and illness slowed the walk at intervals. Each became portions of the needed knowledge to push on towards what God had planned for my life. In 2001, 11 days into my retirement from the corporate world, came the terror attacks at the World Trade Center. The smoke and fires raged, in sight, until spring and in my head for years afterwards. Children's Disaster Service at “ground zero” was my second ministry after becoming a deacon. I was nominated twice to the board of On Earth Peace where I was able to carry forth my commitment to justice and peace. Both On Earth Peace and Children's Disaster, are action ministries known by their good works within these ministries. My formal education came through the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center. The opportunity to formalize and gain the theological requirements of becoming a minister were realized in the affordable fees offered at SVMC. Students have access to experienced and knowledgeable instructors and educators in the field of theology at SVMC in addition to realizing and answering the call to ministry. Thanks be to God I answered my call!

~Shared from the ‘Calling Stories’ from SVMC



## ANE Clergy Women's Virtual Gathering



A number of our ANE District Clergy Women gathered via ZOOM on Tuesday evening, November 10 for a time of fellowship and insightful discussion. The evening discussion was led by Nancy Hess, an

ordained minister from Mountville COB. Nancy shared the concept of "kin-keeping" as the way that persons in a family find ways to intentionally maintain relationships in the family groups by activities such as sending birthday cards, holiday gatherings and celebrating special milestones in the lives of those in the family group. She compared this "kin-keeping" to the way that church families might intentionally find ways to maintain relationships in and among other church congregations both near and sometimes further away.

All who were present then joined in a good discussion about how this kind of "kin-keeping" might look and how each of those present might use this model to encourage their church families to encourage healthy relationships among those in our own churches and in other churches in our ANE District.

This was a pleasant evening gathering for all who participated. Keep your eyes open for upcoming information about the next gathering on February 9.



## Outreach Update:

### Little Swatara Quilt Donation raises \$1,500 for Disaster Relief

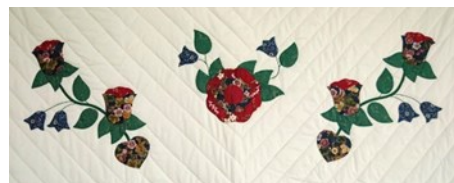
When the late J. Hershey and Anna Mary Myer started the process of down-sizing, they were very generous in giving the quilters at Little Swatara several appliqued quilt tops and a wall hanging. One of the quilt tops, Hearts and Flowers, was quilted and ready to be donated to the annual Disaster Relief Auction in September.

When the auction for 2020 was cancelled, due to the Corona Virus, the quilters decided to hold a silent auction to benefit the Disaster Relief Fund. The quilt was displayed in the sanctuary for several weeks. A picture was taken and it, along with information, was placed in the church bulletin, the monthly newsletter and social media.

The first bid came in from someone who saw the quilt on social media. When the latest bid was announced on a Sunday morning, more bids began to come in from the congregation. Then higher bids came from people who were not from the church and finally just before the bids were closed, a final bid of \$1500 came in from an anonymous donor.

The quilters were overjoyed that their labor of love would be able to help so many persons suffering from disasters.

**"To the Glory of God."**



**ATLANTIC NORTHEAST DISTRICT  
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN  
500 East Cedar Street  
Elizabethtown, PA 17022**

**Non-Profit Organization**

**AUTOMATION**

**U. S. POSTAGE PAID  
Elizabethtown, PA  
Permit No. 53**



**OFFICE HOURS**

Monday - Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**STAFF**

Pete Kontra, **District Executive**

Don Mitchell, **Director of Church Development & Evangelism**

Mary Etta Reinhart, **Director of Witness & Outreach & Interim**

**Director of Nurture**

Kay M. Weaver, **Director of Stewardship**

Krista Dickson, **Office Administrator**

Kelly Bernstein, **Communications Manager &**

**District Conference Coordinator**

**Phone Number:** 717- 367- 4730

**FAX Number:** 717- 367- 8737

**Website:** [www.ane-cob.org](http://www.ane-cob.org)



**AtlanticNortheastDistrict**



**Atlantic Northeast District Church of  
the Brethren**

**Our Vision:**

*Guided by scripture, heritage and the  
Holy Spirit, we are creating spiritually  
healthy New Testament congregations  
who covenant and network  
together to further the Kingdom of God.*

Deadline for the March/April issue of  
ANE Today is February 8.  
[kbernstein@ane-cob.org](mailto:kbernstein@ane-cob.org)