

MENNONITE EDUCATORS CONFERENCE

BUILDING BRIDGES

FEBRUARY 6-8

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I CORINTHIANS 3: 9-11, Common English Bible

We are God's coworkers, and you are God's field, God's building. I laid a foundation like a wise master builder according to God's grace that was given to me, but someone else is building on top of it. Each person needs to pay attention to the way they build on it.

No one can lay any other foundation besides the one that is already laid, which is Jesus Christ.



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Mennonite Schools Council: Mission and Vision

Mission

In partnership with the church, MSC advances Christ-centered early childhood-12 education by networking schools and equipping them to implement the vision of Anabaptist/Mennonite education.

Vision

MSC boldly opens doors for Christ-centered Anabaptist/Mennonite education by innovatively networking and resourcing schools.

Distinctives

MSC schools offer students a distinctive, nurturing educational experience that

- is Christ-centered,
- features educational excellence,
- provides faith enriching opportunities,
- takes place within caring and supportive community,
- emphasizes peace and service,
- is globally focused.

Educational Philosophy

MSC educators believe that God's love is the most powerful force in the universe and that, in response to God's love, we are called to live out the teachings of Jesus in daily life. This calling inspires us to see Jesus as the center of our faith, community as the center of our life, and reconciliation as the center of our work (Palmer Becker in *What is an Anabaptist Christian*; *Missio Dei* #18). In light of this conviction, MSC schools teach students to

- respect and value all people as unique creations of God,
- excel academically in collaborative environments that are developmentally appropriate,
- become active learners who think critically by asking questions, exploring and taking risks,
- build caring, trusting, and hopeful communities that nurture the gifts of all learners,
- live peaceably with others by practicing restorative strategies and resolving differences nonviolently,

- study the scriptures through the lens and life of Jesus,
- grow in Christian maturity by practicing spiritual disciplines such as prayer, simplicity, meditation, service, and worship,
- share faith stories,
- gain a perspective of the global nature of God's kingdom, discover and own their Christian vocations through faith formative opportunities,
- offer primary devotion to God, respect the environment and all people of our world, and live generously within their local communities.

Outcome

Students of Anabaptist/Mennonite schools follow Jesus Christ and, in response to God's love, grow academically, socially, and in grace, joy, and peace so that God's shalom, healing, and hope flow through them to the world.

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2024 Mennonite Educators Conference (MEC)! It is exciting to gather in person around the theme, Building Bridges.

The Mennonite Schools Network (formerly Mennonite Schools Council) is pleased to team with Everence in facilitating this convention. We are honored you can join us as we consider our role as educators in Building Bridges. Our theme verses are I Corinthians 3:9-11 ... For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

We are pleased to welcome Dr. Matinga Ragatz (award winning educator, author, speaker, and consultant) as our keynote presenter. Many of you have read one of her books, Pulse of PBL, before our conference. Dr. John Roth (author, professor, and Mennonite historian) will also join us for the opening keynote session.

We welcome over 250 Mennonite educators from across the U.S., Canada, and Albania to gather for resourcing, worshiping, learning, meeting new friends and reconnecting with old friends. As you interact, please welcome our friends from Mennonite Colleges and Universities, Everence, Mennonite Disaster Service, and Mennonite Mission Network. Welcome to all of you!

We are grateful you have answered the call to serve young people, from early childhood through twelfth grade. We believe the work of the Mennonite educator is a sacred calling that makes a difference in today's world. Our Mennonite values shape our pedagogy and provide the lens through which we view the world as we strive to make the world better for all.

This MEC is possible because of the diligent efforts of many people. We want to specifically thank the planning committee who have prepared a program with inspiring speakers, topics, and events:

Justin King (chair), Eastern Mennonite School; Tim Lehman, Bethany Christian Schools; Sharon Fransen, Dock Mennonite Academy; Lindsay Carson, Lancaster Mennonite School; Jamie Keller, Shalom Christian Academy; Nathan Holton, Central Christian School.

Our world needs bridge builders like you and your students! May the inspiration and energy from our time together inspire your practice, influence students, and deepen hope. We trust this will be a time of renewal and rest, as well as inspiration. God's blessing as you interact with other educators and are reminded of the impact of your life-changing calling.

Blessings,

Conrad Swartzentruber, MSC Executive Committee Chair

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6

- 3:00 PM – 10:00 PM Registration
- 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM Dinner
Dining Hall
- 6:45 PM – 9:00 PM General Session
Moderators: Justin King & Sharon Fransen
West Ballroom
- 7:00 PM – 7:15 PM Welcome & Introduction to Conference
- 7:15 PM – 7:35 PM Worship & Music – Nate Gundy and musicians
West Ballroom
- 7:35 PM – 7:50 PM Please Steal This
- 7:50 PM - 8:50 PM Keynote 1, Recognizing the 500th Anniversary of Anabaptism
Dr. John Roth
Bridging the Past & Future: Where is Anabaptism going and how does that impact our schools and roles?
- 8:45 PM – 9:15 PM Network Group Meeting 1 - Meet and Greet

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7

- 6:30 AM – 8:00 AM Breakfast
Dining Hall
- 8:30 AM – 8:50 AM Worship & Music – Nate Gundy and musicians
West Ballroom
- 8:50 AM – 9:00 PM Please Steal This
- 9:00 AM – 9:45 AM Keynote 2, Why Should My Students Learn from ME?
Dr. Matinga Ragatz
- 9:45 AM – 10:00 AM Refreshment Break, 1 of 2

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7 (cont.)

- 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM Keynote 3, PBL for Deeper Learning
Dr. Matinga Ragatz
- 11:30 AM - 12:45 PM Network Group Meeting 2 over Lunch
Dining Hall
- 1:00 PM – 1:45 PM Breakout Session 1
- 2:00 PM – 2:25 PM Please Steal This
- 2:25 PM – 2:45 PM A Word From Everence
- 2:45 PM – 3:00 PM Refreshment Break, 2 of 2
- 3:00 PM – 4:15 PM Keynote 4, The Art of Me
Dr. Matinga Ragatz
- 4:30 PM – 5:15 PM Breakout Session 2
- 5:15 PM – 6:00 PM Free Time, including Hymn Sing
Jared Stutzman, Eastern Mennonite School
- 5:15 PM - 6:00 PM Conversations with Dr. Matinga Ragatz
- 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM Dinner
Dining Hall
- 7:30 PM – 8:30 PM The Soil & The Seed Concert
- 9:00 PM School Free Time
Schools can connect with each other or individually.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8








- 7:00 AM – 8:00 AM Breakfast
Dining Hall
- 8:15 AM – 9:00 AM Network Group Meeting 3
- 9:15 AM – 10:00 AM Breakout Session 3
- 10:15 AM – 10:30 AM MSC Business and Announcements
West Ballroom
- 10:30 AM – 11:15 AM Worship and Music - The Soil & Seed Project
West Ballroom
- 11:15 AM Closing and Sending
Group Photo
- 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM Lunch
Dining Hall

The National Conference Center

Campus Map



THE NATIONAL
CONFERENCE CENTER®

- Guest Rooms: 
- Meeting Space: 
- Dining: 
- Outdoor Space: 
- Pathways: 
- Mailroom: 
- Challenge Course: 
- Coin Laundry: 
- Fitness Center: 
- ATM: 
- Walking Trail: 
- Lost & Found: 
- Emergency Gathering Place: 



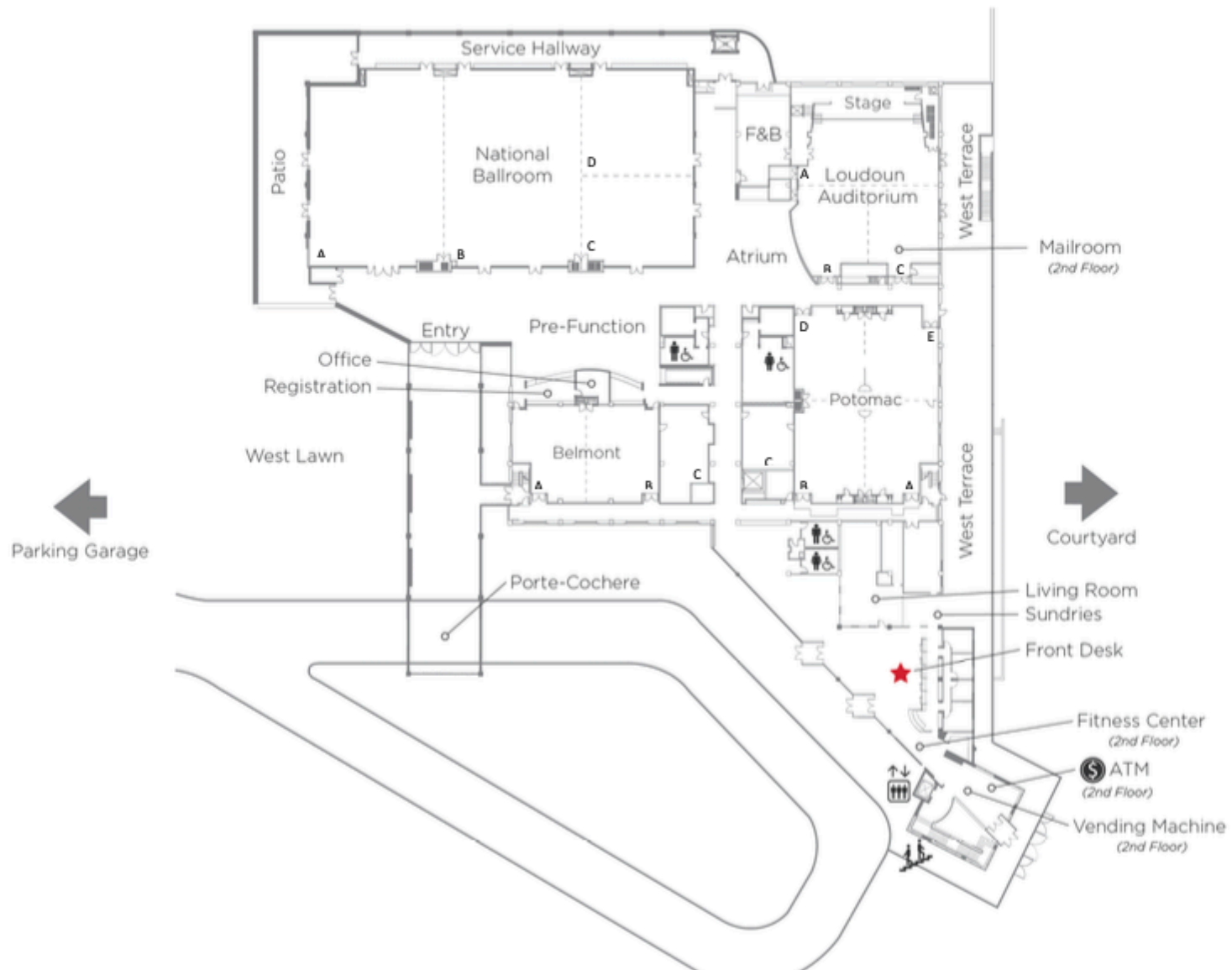
The National Conference Center

West Belmont Place



THE NATIONAL
CONFERENCE CENTER®

floor plan:



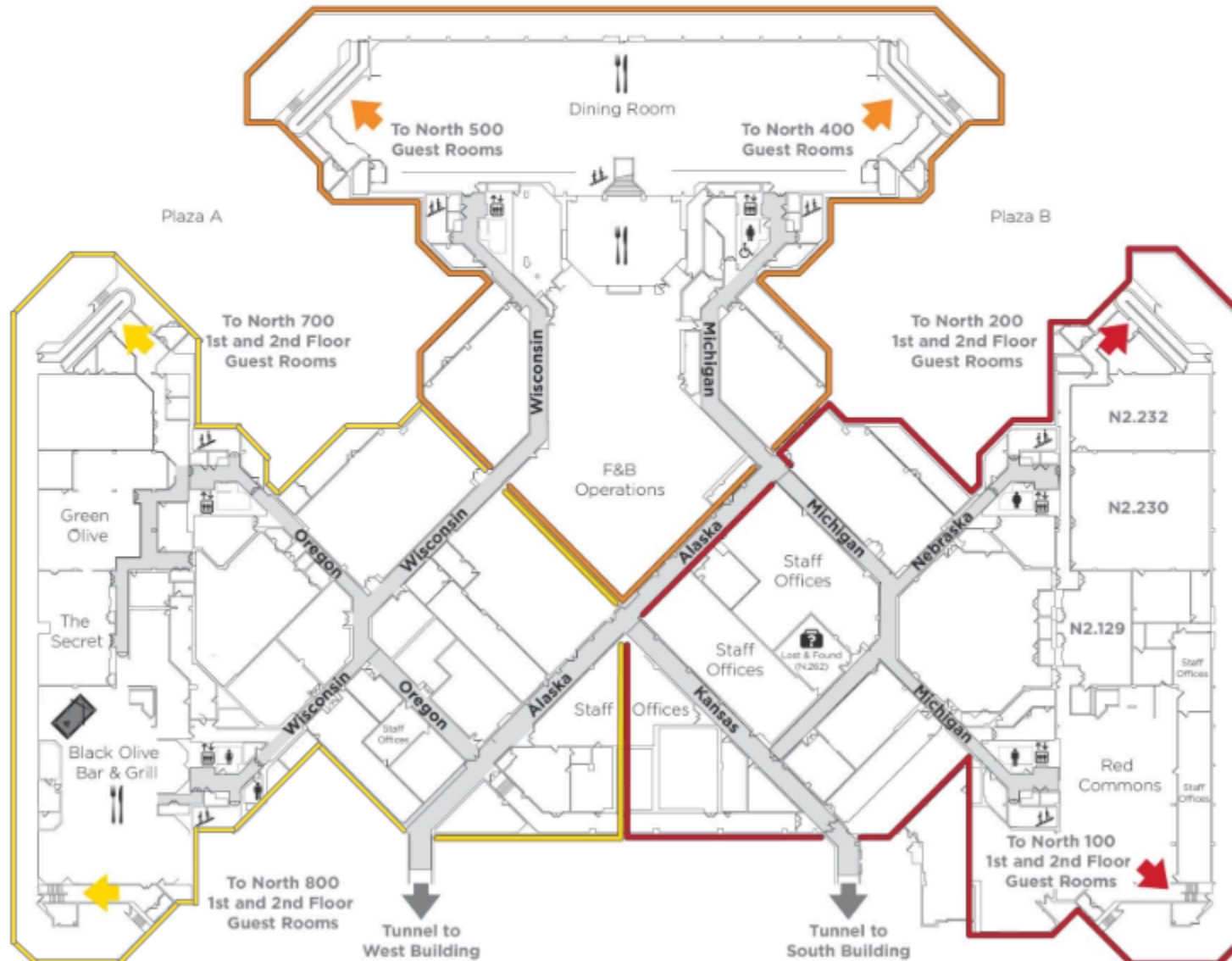
The National Conference Center

North Building



THE NATIONAL
CONFERENCE CENTER

2nd floor plan:



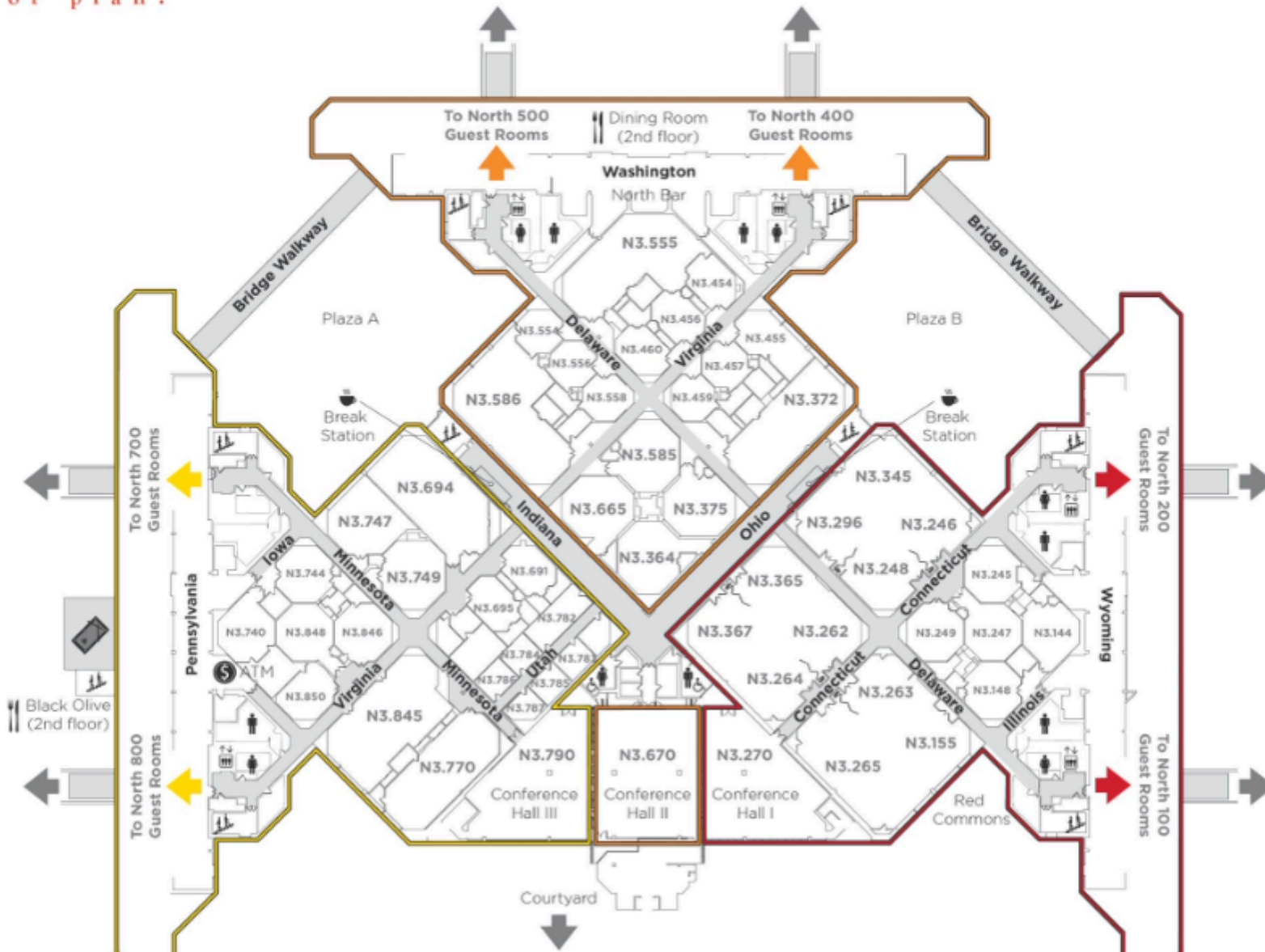
The National Conference Center

North Building



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3rd floor plan:



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Matinga Ragatz is a celebrated educator, author, keynote speaker, and instructional strategist dedicated to transforming the way children learn and teachers teach. As a seasoned project-based learning (PBL) practitioner, she has become a trusted voice in innovative education. Among her many accolades, Matinga was honored as Michigan Teacher of the Year and inducted into the U.S. National Teacher Hall of Fame in 2017. She holds a PhD in Education, specializing in Learning, Instruction, and Innovation. With an international background and firsthand experience overcoming learning challenges, Matinga brings a unique perspective to nurturing students' talents and potential. In 2017, she founded a PBL- focused

food science school in Tanzania, empowering children in extreme poverty with tailored, hands-on learning opportunities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she launched a scholarship and advocacy program in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, to support students whose families were financially impacted. Matinga inspires educators and school leaders worldwide to cultivate real-world engagement through innovative strategies she has successfully implemented over two decades. She has carried her message of equity and accessibility in education to audiences across Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas, underscoring its critical role in economic development and global progress. Her latest book, *Pulse of PBL: Cultivating Equity Through Social and Emotional Learning*, is a must-read for educators and is available on Amazon. Whether speaking on stage or working directly with schools, Matinga ignites a passion for meaningful, transformative learning.



For more than three decades, John D. Roth served as prof. of history at Goshen College as well as director of the Mennonite Historical Library and editor of *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*. More recently, he was the founding director of the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism at Goshen College (2012) and secretary of the MWC Faith and Life Commission (2009). In 2022 he became the project director of "Anabaptism at 500," an initiative of MennoMedia, and general editor of the *Anabaptist Community Bible*. John has written widely on topics related to Anabaptist-Mennonite history and church life. He and his wife, Ruth, have four adult children, seven grandchildren, and are active members at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship in Goshen, Indiana.

BAND



THE SOIL AND THE SEED

The Soil and The Seed Project is a community-supported ministry of the church working for spiritual renewal—in individuals, families, and communities—through beautiful, creative resources that help us together turn towards Jesus in the ordinary moments of life. The core resources of the project are music, artwork, and booklets of short liturgical practices created for daily and weekly use in the home. The resources are made available free of charge because of God's faithfulness through a community of writers, musicians, artists, poets, individuals, congregations, and organizations that have joined what God is doing. The musicians of The Soil and The Seed Project sharing music for the MEC gathering in 2025 are based in Harrisonburg, VA.

MENNONITE SCHOOLS COUNCIL

Executive Committee

Conrad Swartzentruber, Chair
Dock Mennonite Academy

Angie Petersheim, Vice Chair
Shalom Christian Academy

Tim Lehman, Treasurer & Chair Elect
Bethany Christian Schools

Paul Leaman, Secretary
Eastern Mennonite School

Nathan Holton, At Large & Treasurer Elect
Central Christian School

MENNONITE EDUCATORS CONFERENCE

Planning Committee

Justin King
Eastern Mennonite School

Jaime Keller
Shalom Christian Academy

Lindsay Carson
Lancaster Mennonite School

Tim Lehman
Bethany Christian Schools

Sharon Fransen
Dock Mennonite Academy

Nate Holton
Central Christian School

BREAKOUT SESSIONS AT A GLANCE

BREAKOUT SESSION 1 Friday, 1:00 PM - 1:45 PM

Session Title	Presenter	Location	Audience
Talkback Session #1	Matinga Ragatz	Grand Ballroom AB	General
<u>Talkback Session: Future of Mennonite Education</u>	John Roth	Ballroom C	General
<u>Songs for the Rhythms of Everyday</u>	Seth Crissman and Greg Yoder	Ballroom D	Early Childhood-5, Music Teachers
<u>Grow Your Financial Health and Confidence</u>	Everence	Belmont A	General
<u>Intro to Construction & MDS</u>	Kevin King, Executive Director of MDS	Belmont B	HS Teachers, Curriculum, STEAM, Admins
<u>Building Thinking Classrooms in Math</u>	Kathy Kennel, Marcelo Mast, Dana Gehman	Room N3845	MS, HS Teachers
<u>Use Socratic Seminars to Increase Student Motivation in Humanities and Beyond</u>	Nathan Hershberger	Room N3848	MS, HS Teachers
<u>Book Talks & Read Alouds</u>	Jared Leaman	Room N3846	K-12 Teachers, Librarians
<u>All Learners are Welcome</u>	Nathan Sheffer	Room N3747	MS/HS, Music Teachers, SpEd
<u>Why I Ditched Clip Chart & Helpful Classroom Mgmt</u>	Courtney Summers	Room N3744	
<u>Facilitated School Culture & HR</u>	Paul Leaman	Room N3740	Admins, Marketing, Admissions, Business Office

BREAKOUT SESSION 2

Friday, 4:30 PM - 5:15 PM

Session Title	Presenter	Location	Audience
Talkback Session #2	Matinga Ragatz	Grand Ballroom AB	General
<u>The Anabaptist Community Bible: How & Why it Matters for Mennonite Educators</u>	John Roth	Ballroom C	K-12, Bible Teachers, Curriculum
<u>The Soil and The Seed Project: Faith Formation Resources Build Bridges</u>	Seth Crissman	Ballroom D	Administrators, Chapel Planners, Curriculum, K-12
<u>Getting off autopilot: Practicing leadership through intentionality and purpose (Presented by Everence)</u> CANCELED	Rachel Swartzentruber-Miller (Everence)	Belmont A	K-12 Teachers, Leaders
<u>One Great Show Can Change the World: Student Creativitya Tool for Faith Development</u>	Greg Yoder (The Soil & The Seed Project)	Belmont B	Chapel Planners, Music, Drama, English Teachers
<u>Finding Jesus in Numbers</u>	Rachael Thomas	Room N3845	EC-12 Teachers, Admins
<u>Where are the Women?</u>	Shannon Roth	Room N3848	K-12 Teachers, Curriculum
<u>Best Practices in Reading Instruction: The Science of Reading (With EMU Faculty)</u>	Dr. Ron Schultz and Dr. Barbara Wheatley	Room N3846	EC-8, Language Arts Teachers
<u>The Choir Community</u> - CANCELED	Tim Shue	Room N3747	Fine Arts Teachers
<u>Differentiation Content, Process, Product, Environment</u>	Kristyne Landis	Room N3744	K-12 Teachers, SpEd
<u>Ethical (and Fun) Communication in Schools: An Intentional Approach Social Media</u>	Abigail Cook	Room N3740	Advancement, Marketing, Communications

BREAKOUT SESSION 3
Saturday, 9:15 AM - 10:00 AM

Session Title	Presenter	Location	Audience
<u>Singing our Faith (in Middle and High School)</u>	Seth Crissman and Greg Yoder	Grand Ballroom AB	MS/HS Bible, Chapel, Music, Choral, Teachers
<u>Approachable PBL Practices and Processes (K-8)</u>	Amber Bradley and Karla Rupp	Ballroom C	K-8 Teachers
<u>Practicing PBL for Understanding (MS/HS)</u>	Todd Bowman	Ballroom D	MS, HS Teachers
<u>Restorative Practices in the Classroom and Schoolwide</u>	Erika Gascho and Maria Archer (EMS Principals)	Belmont A	EC-12 Teachers, Admins
<u>Presenting Easter (and other violent Bible stories) to Children from an Anabaptist Lens</u>	Lindsay Carson	Belmont B	EC-6, Curriculum
<u>Using the Case Study Method: Incorporating Stories to teach like Jesus</u>	Dr. Dan Weaver	Room N3845	K-12 Teachers
<u>How can I help my school, when I...?</u>	Kristin Showalter	Room N3848	Specials Teachers, Staff
<u>Agriculture & Outdoor Education</u>	Mike Severino-Patterson	Room N3846	K-12 Teachers
<u>Blueprints for Success</u>	Kristyne Landis	Room N3747	K-12 Teachers, SpEd, Admins
<u>Roundtable Discussion: AI in the Classroom: Challenges & Possibilities</u>	Anabella SilverMoon	Room N3744	HS Teachers
<u>Come on in! Enrollment Priorities and Practices</u>	Melissa Beidler	Room N3740	Admissions, Marketing, Advancement

BREAKOUT SESSIONS DESCRIPTIONS

BREAKOUT SESSION 1 Friday, 1:00 PM - 1:45 PM

Talk Back Session | Dr. Matinga Ragatz | Grand Ballroom AB

Talkback with keynote speaker, Dr. Matinga Ragatz following her first two keynotes, "PBL for Deeper Learning," and "The Art of Me."

Talk Back Session | Dr. John D. Roth | Ballroom C

An opportunity for further questions and conversation about the themes raised in the plenary address by John Roth. An informal exchange with experiences and insights of participants.

Songs for the Rhythm of Everyday | Seth Crissman and Greg Yoder | Ballroom D

Seth and Greg share songs to help shape everyday rhythms from The Soil and The Seed Project and their favorite Anabaptist and Anabaptist-adjacent resources. Together we will learn and practice songs that can be used to help weave rhythms of faith through music into the fabric of classroom life.

Grow Your Financial Health and Confidence | Steve Burkholder | Belmont A

Financial wellness is an essential component of overall well-being and satisfaction. In this interactive presentation, we'll explore how our early life experiences and upbringing shape our current relationship with money. Additionally, we'll discuss practical steps you can take to improve your financial confidence, empowering you to better manage your finances and plan for the future.

Introduction to Construction & Mennonite Disaster Service | Kevin King | Belmont B

MDS collaborates with Mennonite Schools by providing resources to teach a course in construction. Come hear testimonials from those schools participating and be inspired how this might happen in your school. The course introduces students to basic building and construction techniques while incorporating Mennonite values of service, community, and faith. Students will learn practical skills modeled on the work of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), focusing on repair and rebuilding in communities affected by disaster. The course emphasizes teamwork, problem-solving, and stewardship in construction projects.

Building Thinking Classrooms in Mathematics | Kathy Kennel, Marcelo Mast, Dana Gehman | Room N3845

Building Thinking Classrooms is an educational approach developed by Dr. Peter Liljedahl. We will share our excitement and experience with implementing this approach in our math

classrooms and how it has transformed the learning experience. We will share ideas and strategies we have developed along the way to help us adjust to a variety of different classes and to help our students feel empowered to learn and grow as a thinker.

Boosting Engagement in High School: How to Use Socratic Seminars to Increase Student Motivation in the Humanities and Beyond | Nathan Hershberger | Room N3848

A Socratic Seminar is a discussion format designed to maximize student speaking time and in-depth engagement with a text and/or theme. In our time together we will briefly do a Socratic Seminar, then have facilitated discussion about how to prepare and conduct them, as well as discerning where in humanities classes (and beyond?) they can fit into a curriculum.

Book Talks and Read Alouds | Jared Leaman | Room N3846

Looking for a new read aloud or book to use in your class? Explore titles of recently published books for a variety of ages through book talks and sharing of resources to find new titles.

All Learners are Welcome: An Exploration of Inclusion in Secondary Music | Nathan Sheffer | Room N3747

Providing a learning environment that meets individual student needs and embraces all learners is essential. This session will explore authentic ways to include students with differences and disabilities in your classroom. We will investigate and discuss Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and demystify terms like differentiation, scaffolding, modification, and accommodation. Including students in secondary music education while providing applications for all classroom settings. Bring a guitar if possible, some will be available to share.

Why I Ditched the Clip Chart & Other Helpful Classroom Management Strategies | Courtney Summers | Room N3744

Classroom management goes beyond simply addressing misbehavior, it's about creating meaningful connections and nurturing a positive atmosphere. While tools like a clip chart may address issues in the short term; what impact does it have in the long run? Join us as we investigate the pros and cons of this classroom management tool and learn how to implement various strategies that will help create an inviting, safe, and positive class environment.

Facilitated Conversation: School Culture & Human Resources | Paul Leaman | Room N3740

Primarily for administrators and business office staff, conversations are intended to share experiences regarding models of employee compensation, employment workloads, and how schools adjust as enrollments change. Questions will give opportunities for school representatives to share their school experience with subsequent conversations around what works well and desired outcomes in respective schools for each topic.

BREAKOUT SESSION 2

Friday, 4:30 PM - 5:15 PM

Talkback I Dr. Matinga Ragatz I Grand Ballroom AB

Talkback with keynote speaker D.r Matinga Ragatz, following her final keynote, "Why Should My Students Learn from ME?"

***The Anabaptist Community Bible: How it Came to Be...and Why it Matters for Mennonite Educators* I Dr. John D. Roth I Ballroom C**

The Anabaptist movement emerged in the 16th century when a group of young people gathered around Scripture and were transformed as they asked new questions about its relevance for their day. Over the past 500 years, the Bible has continued to sustain and renew Anabaptist faith communities. Rooted in this tradition, the newly-issued Anabaptist Community Bible is an invitation to read Scripture together, with fresh eyes, as a living text that continues to transform our lives. This interactive workshop will introduce the Anabaptist Community Bible as a unique study Bible that promises a fresh encounter with Scripture.

The Soil and The Seed Project: Faith Formation Resources that Build Bridges I Seth Crissman I Ballroom D

Seth Crissman shares about the work of The Soil and The Seed Project and tells stories of how these easy-to-use tools for faith formation are being used to build bridges that connect schools, families, and communities as partners in faith formation.

Getting off autopilot: Practicing leadership through intentionality and purpose I Rachel Swartzentruber-Miller I Belmont A CANCELED

So often the rush of life and work keep us jumping from one thing to the next. With our focus on surviving all our commitments, we often lose sight of why we are doing it. This seminar will provide some strategies for rediscovering the purpose behind our punch lists, while highlighting Adaptive Leadership Theory (which tells us that when our purpose is clear, decisions are easy). Your work, finances, family decisions, friendships, and faith can all benefit through a deeper sense of clarity around your purpose. Attendees will be challenged to lean into intentionality instead of autopilot as they consider ways to ensure their daily lives are linked to their purpose – whatever it may be.

One Great Show Can Change the World I Greg Yoder I Belmont B

Greg Yoder (The Soil & The Seed Project) shares stories as a student in Mennonite schools, and provides easily actionable plans for harnessing the power of songwriting, poetry, and drama to engage and inspire students in their faith development. Attendees will practice writing a song together, and road-test Dewey Finn's assertion that "one great...show can change the world."

Finding Jesus in Numbers | Rachael Thomas | Room N3845

Romans 1:19-20, "since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made." How do we actually see God's invisible qualities in created things? What evidence is there for God's provision for a relationship with humankind in the geometry of nature? Through History, the Bible, mathematics and art will open your eyes to unexpected ways God's revealed himself to me through numbers and shapes.

Where are Women? | Shannon Roth | Room N3848

Have you ever wondered when reading your textbook or presenting your US History curriculum, "Where are the Women?" This session will go over a variety of women that you can incorporate into a US History, AP US History, or specialized History class. I will also share the curriculum I developed for a "Women in US History" Elective course taught at Eastern Mennonite School. You can also just come to learn about some incredible women that have impacted the U.S. throughout its history (it is not just for History teachers alone)!

Best Practices in Reading Instruction: The Science of Reading | Dr. Ron Schultz and Dr. Barbara Wheatley | Room N3846

There are plenty of opinions out there about best practices in reading and literacy instruction, and many teachers find that their approach to instruction is always in flux. Join an interactive conversation about the research surrounding the Science of Reading. Leave with practical classroom strategies that you can apply to support your literacy instruction beyond the basics.

The Choir Community | Tim Shue | Room N3747 - CANCELED

Choral singing is a highly communal experience that can't be duplicated in isolation or with technology. Explore creative rehearsal ideas that go beyond the performance to build strong musicianship and community.

Diff it Works | Kristyne Landis | Room N3744

Bring your device to this workshop, which is designed to equip educators with effective differentiation strategies for today's diverse classrooms. In this interactive session, learners will explore the principles of differentiation, discover practical techniques to tailor instruction and meet the varied needs, interests, and abilities of all students to create meaningful lessons in a student-centered learning environment.

Ethical (and Fun) Communication in Schools | Abigail Cook | Room N3740

A discussion designed to help those who contribute to their school's social media reflect on their practices and reinforce the importance of ethical and intentional communication in schools and how to find joy while doing it!

BREAKOUT SESSION 3

Saturday, 9:15 AM- 10:00 AM

Singing our Faith (in Middle and High School) | Seth Crissman and Greg Yoder | Grand Ballroom AB

Songs from The Soil and The Seed Project and their favorite Anabaptist and Anabaptist-adjacent resources that help students engage Christian Scripture and spiritual practices in the classroom, in chapel, on the stage, in the community and beyond.

Approachable PBL Practices & Processes K - 8 | Amber Bradley and Karla Rupp | Ballroom C

This breakout session will provide an approachable introduction to PBL across K-8 classrooms with a variety of on-demand resources. Multiple examples provided will include both collaboration and differentiation. Participants will get the most out of this presentation/discussion, if they have a device with them to access digital resources.

Practicing PBL for Understanding | Todd Bowman | Ballroom D

This facilitated discussion session will provide time and examples to engage teachers in planning for sustaining understanding through PBL in the classroom. We will use real-life PBL practices, implemented over the past 8 years, as examples to discuss and plan together. Please bring digital or print copies of any existing plans or future ideas you would like to develop as project-based plans.

Restorative Practices in the Classroom and Schoolwide | Erika Gascho and Maria Archer (EMS Principals) | Belmont A

At Eastern Mennonite School, we have implemented restorative practices schoolwide. We will share examples of how we started this and how we use it every day in the classroom, at the administration level, and with colleagues. We want to use this session to help answer questions and give ideas for beginning RJ practices in your schools and for supporting practices that already exist in your classroom or at your school.

Presenting Easter (and other violent Bible stories) to Children from an Anabaptist Lens | Lindsay Carson | Belmont B

How does Anabaptist theology of Easter differ from other Christian traditions? How might we present this to children in an age-appropriate, consistent way? Recognizing there are diverse Protestant and Anabaptist perspectives, there are some historical theological differences to inform your Easter and Holy Week storytelling using best practices and Anabaptist theology. We'll explore concrete examples of activities and resources and how they may work with your existing frameworks and resources (Encounter, *The Peace Table Bible*, and more!)

Using the Case Study Method: Incorporating Stories to teach like Jesus | Dr. Dan Weaver | Room N3845

Everybody enjoys a good story. What if educators used stories to teach content? This session is about using storytelling as a means to communicate truth and to help students remember what they are learning.

How can I help my school, when I...? | Kristin Showalter | Room N3848

In this teacher-facilitated session, discuss ideas for how to meet your school's mission when you "just" teach....(only 30 mins a week, art, music, gym, part-time , 3rd grade, etc..) What can we do to work together and help our schools, our students, and make disciples?

Agriculture and Outdoor Education | Mike Severino-Patterson | Room N3846

Join a facilitated discussion sharing experiences teaching and doing agriculture and outdoor education with students. Explore and share examples of how to make outdoor education meaningful, and how to use outdoor spaces as a classroom.

Blueprints for Success | Kristyne Landis | Room N3747

Bring your device to this session, which aims to empower educators with the tools and strategies to create personalized plans using a defined process that will help meet the diverse needs of students. Through an in-depth exploration of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), participants will identify steps in creating learning plans that provide accommodations and modifications at varying tiers of support. Focused on collaboration and proactive planning, this session will help educators ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Roundtable Discussion: AI in the Classroom: Challenges & Possibilities | Dr. Anabella SilverMoon | Room N3744

Please bring your device to a facilitated discussion on challenges and possibilities of AI.

Come on in! Enrollment Priorities and Practices | Melissa Beidler | Room N3740

Together we will share priorities and practices around how students and families move from interested families to integrated community members. From admissions to application to financial aid, how do our priorities guide our communication and decision-making? Bring your good practices and challenging questions to this facilitated discussion group.

NETWORK GROUPS

Group	<u>Grade EC/PreK</u>	<u>Grade K</u>	<u>Grade 1</u>	<u>Grade 2</u>	<u>Grade 3</u>	<u>Grade 4</u>
Room Location	Ballroom C	Ballroom C	Ballroom C	Ballroom C	Ballroom AB	Ballroom D
Leader	Kathi Hubers	Lynelle Hofer	Ashton Christy	April Lehman	Stefanie Breneman-Smith	Denise Bender
Group	<u>Grade 5</u>	<u>Art</u>	<u>Bible</u>	<u>MS English</u>	<u>HS English</u>	<u>MS Science</u>
Room Location	Ballroom D	N3846	Ballroom D	Belmont B	Belmont B	Belmont A
Leader	Jill Story	Kristin Showalter	Caleb Benner	Jason Mehlhaf	Michael Yeakey	Nathaniel Freed
Group	<u>HS Science</u>	<u>FCS</u>	<u>IT</u>	<u>Learning Support</u>	<u>Library</u>	<u>MS Math</u>
Room Location	Belmont A	Ballroom AB	Ballroom AB	N3740	Ballroom AB	Ballroom AB
Leader	Dan Weaver	Tara Swartzendruber	Jason Sprunger	Katie Longacre	Laura Martin/ Missy Camilleri	Alex Steiner
Group	<u>HS Math</u>	<u>Music Choral (HS)</u>	<u>Music Instrumental</u>	<u>Music General (EL)</u>	<u>PE/Health</u>	<u>Spanish/ World Language</u>
Room Location	Ballroom D	Ballroom AB	Ballroom AB	Ballroom AB	N3845	Ballroom AB
Leader	Rachael Thomas	Jared Stutzman	Aaron Johnson	Sarah Wingard	Stacy Lehman	Horacio De La Rosa Ortiz

Group	<u>HS AgScience/ Outdoor Ed</u>	<u>MS Social Studies</u>	<u>HS Social Studies</u>	<u>Guidance</u>	<u>Lower School Principals</u>	<u>HS Principals</u>
Room Location	Ballroom AB	N3848	N3744	Ballroom AB	Ballroom AB	Ballroom AB
Leader	<u>Mike Severino Patterson</u>	<u>Bob Troyer</u>	<u>Shannon Roth</u>	<u>Monica Jefferson</u>	<u>Claire Wanamaker</u>	<u>Craig Martin</u>
Group	<u>Heads of School</u>	<u>Curriculum & Instruction</u>	<u>Advancement/ Admissions</u>			
Room Location	Belmont C	Ballroom AB	N3747			
Leader	<u>Conrad Swartzentruber</u>	<u>Kristyne Landis</u>	<u>Trisha Blosser</u>			

PARTICIPANT LIST

Bethany Christian Schools	Bethany Christian Schools	Central Christian School
Jen Bontrager	Tara Swartzendruber-Landis	Lori Miller
Ashton Christy	Amy Thut	Christa Moore
Adam Friesen	Michael Walker	Kelly Morber
Juanita Hershberger	Josh Weaver	Lisa Otto
Katelyn Hochstetler	Michael Yeakey	Logan Schrock
Linda Hochstetler	Sarah Yoder	Allison Seymour
Lynelle Hofer	Central Christian School	Tim Shue
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Aaron Johnson	Liz Boyd	Alex Steiner
Mady Kern	Maggie Coblentz	Hannah Steiner
Andrew Lanctot	Brandon Conn	Heidi Steiner
Jared Leaman	Sheryl Edmiston	Stacie Tschiegg
Lindsey Mason	Kristan Ellington	Bob Troyer
Cheryl Mast	Barb Endsley	Juliana Victor David
Daniel Mast	Kelsey Gallant	Benita Williams
John Mast	Nate Gundy	Christal Woods
Matt Miller	Shawn Hilliard	Lily Yoder
Edgar Silva	Sara Hofstetter	Maria Zehr
Dave Stuckey	Jolene Jaquet	
Danielle Svonavec	Abby Maibach	
Calvin Swartzendruber	Craig Martin	
Madison Swartzendruber	Joanna Miller	

Dock Mennonite Academy	Dock Mennonite Academy	Dock Mennonite Academy
Jordan Ahrens	Katie Longacre	Jason Sprunger
Caleb Benner	Laura Martin	Conrad Swartzentruber
Zach Bower	Jane Mast	Kathleen Taylor
Sam Brannon	Melissa Mast	Claire Wanamaker
Danielle Camasso	Marcelo Mast	Kelly Weaver
Missy Camilleri	Taylor McKenney	Eastern Mennonite School
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Sandy Curry	Val Miller	Hannah Bailey
Christine Dando	Matt Moyer	Kendal Bauman
Michele Finger	Rachel Myers	Benjamin Bixler
Nathaniel Freed	Chris Najarian	Jesse Blosser
Dana Gehman	Bonita Ness	Trisha M Blosser
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Jason Hackman	Nikki Rossi	Andrew Gascho
Jillian Immel	Emily Rush	Erika Gascho
Monica Jefferson	Bob Rutt	Malea Gascho
Ken Kabakjian	Cheryl Ryder	Bethany Gibbs
Tim Keller	Michelle Sensenig	Mark Gornto
Kathy Kennel	Bella SilverMoon	Merridy Gnagey
Kirby King	Kellena Smith	Nathan Hershberger
Megan Landis	Matt Speck	Jodi Hertzler

Eastern Mennonite School	Freeman Academy	Hinkletown Mennonite School
Debbie Katz	Brad Anderson	Melissa Beidler
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Patsy Seitz	Dwight Gingerich	Justin Weaver
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Susan Stoltzfus	Bryn Hovde	
Jared Stutzman	AshLee Miller	
Gini Trotter	Marcus Miller	
Erin Williams	Nate Miller	
Jennifer Young	Jeremy Ours	
Karen Suderman	Beau Risley	
Diego Torres	Mike Severino-Patterson	
Gini Trotter	Mikayla Tackaberry	
Erin Williams	Megan Walsh	
Jennifer Young	Corben Weaver Boshart	

Kraybill Mennonite School	Lancaster Mennonite School	New Holland Early Learning
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Marie Burkholder	Gail Lanas	Ali Garcia
Kylie Eby	Lydia Leaman	Jen Morales
Gena Fisher	Rachel Leshner	Connie Stauffer
Janice Greenleaf	Jenna Longenecker Conde	Quakertown Christian School
Sheryl Keller	Karen Maddox	Carla Allen
Winter Kidder	Monica Marcinkoski	Liz Dorneman
Heidi Melleby	Jon Metzler	London C. Houston
Cindy Raezar	Leslie Spurrier	Steve Schrag
Liz Smith	Neil Reinford	Amy Stephens
Curry Snell	Kayla Rohrer	Rockway Mennonite Collegiate
Lancaster Mennonite School	Sophia Rueda	Josh Hill
Michael Badriaki	Galen Sauder	Shalom Christian Academy
Denise Bender	Leslie Spurrier	Laura Adams
Kirk Benner	Nathan Sheffer	Amanda Andrews
Todd Bowman	Rachael Thomas	Kendra Angle
Elise Bruner	Lee Thurber	Amber Beckering
Monica Carlson	Fred Winey	Olivia Birkhimer
Luz Casallas	Sarah Wingard	Rochelle Brechbill
Horacio De La Rosa Ortiz	Lezha Academic Center	Stefanie Breneman-Smith
Angela Dietzel	Ermira Frrokaj	Kimberly Burkholder
Cricket Dodge	Blerina Ndreka	Joyce Camut
Michael George	Klementina Shahini	Vicki Cordell
Dawn Kaczor		Kari Davis

Shalom Christian Academy	Shalom Christian Academy	Shalom Christian Academy
Laura Dayok	Katie Kane	Angie Petersheim
Pattie Edwards	Nikole Kauffman	Debbie Pickens
Jen Emge	Madison Keck	Tawnya Priego
Crystal Etchberger	Kristyne Landis	Melanie Zook
Robb Hand	April Lehman	Brian Ramsey
Terry Harris	Stacy Lehman	Mike Shank
Jodie Harter	Becky Leonard	Kristin Showalter
Diane Helman	Dionne Martin	Randy Showalter
Megan Hoffeditz	Micah McGowan	Jill Story
Drue Hoffman	Madison McSherry	Courtney Summers
Tina Holderman	Clint Montoro	Clint Taylor
Wanette Horst	Breauna Myers	Julie Watkins
Kathi Hubers	Alyssa Oliphant	Dan Weaver
Ruthann Hull	Danette Parker	Jason Wenger
		Melanie Zook

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

MENNONITE SCHOOLS COUNCIL
certifies that

attended the
Mennonite Educators Conference 2025
February 6-7 2025, Leesburg, Virginia



Conrad Swartzentruber
Mennonite Schools Council Chair



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WHY ATTEND A MENNONITE SCHOOL?

Three faith-based reasons

Does attending a Mennonite school make a difference? If there is an interdenominational elementary school nearby, an upbeat evangelical college or seminary in the next city, or a state university that offers a desired major, why not go there?

I will be the first to admit that as Mennonite Christians, we are far from perfect and that we have much to gain from dialogue with Catholic, Reformed and Charismatic Christians. While we hold many truths in common, we do well to acknowledge that at crucial points we are different from them in our faith, our life, and our work. God has nurtured core beliefs and values within us that have the potential for making a huge difference in the faith, fellowship, and the future work of our children.

Following are three faith-based reasons for encouraging our children to go to Mennonite schools. They assume that the Mennonite school emphasizes traditional Anabaptist distinctives and a Christ-centered interpretation of Scripture.

In a Mennonite school, our youth will encounter a different understanding of Jesus.

The first Christians had a holistic understanding of Jesus. They encountered and followed him as their supreme Teacher, Savior, Lord, and Spirit-giver. Those first disciples likely said, "Jesus is the center of our faith."

However, three or four hundred years later, two men came on the scene who brought so many changes to the Christian faith that it almost became another religion. Constantine, a politician, failed to accept Jesus as his ethical norm. Augustine, a theologian, failed to adequately emphasize Christ's life, ministry, and living presence. He focused almost exclusively on the death of Jesus.

While Martin Luther and other reformers tried to correct this situation, political pressures and an interpretation of the Bible that said all parts were equal prevented them from following through with the Reformation. In their politics they went back only to Constantine and in their theology only to Augustine. As a result, the understanding of Jesus in most Christian schools today still follows the influence of these two men. This was clearly seen in the film, *The Passion of the Christ*.

Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, George Blaurock, and later, Menno Simons, insisted on going

back to the first disciples and the early church for their core values and their understanding of Jesus and the church. They interpreted the Bible from a Christ-centered point of view, accepted the living Jesus as their Lord, and affirmed the Sermon on the Mount as their ethical standard. As a result, Mennonite instructors understand and teach Jesus from a different perspective.

If we encourage our sons and daughters to go to Mennonite schools, they will be introduced to the wholeness of Jesus including his life, ministry, death, and resurrected presence. As a result, they will be more likely to embrace a Jesus who will both assure their salvation and strongly affect their ethics.

At a Mennonite school, our youth will encounter a different understanding of the church.

Jesus began his ministry by inviting a few disciples to live with him in community. They ate, dialogued, and worked together. Even after Jesus was physically gone, those first disciples continued to experience Christ-centered community. In their homes or wherever two or three of those first disciples gathered, they would probably have said, "Community is the center of our life."

Finally, in a Mennonite school, our youth will encounter a different understanding of Christ's work.

Peter, Paul and the other apostles were passionate about reconciling people to God and to each other. They saw themselves as ambassadors of reconciliation and would probably have said, "**Reconciliation is the center of our work.**"

In contrast, Constantine saw his central task as establishing order in the institutional church, while Augustine saw his as administering the sacraments of baptism, communion, marriage, and last rites. Luther and the reformers de-emphasized the sacraments and gave priority to preaching, but instead of focusing on the lordship, ministry, and reconciling power of Jesus, their messages were rooted in Augustinian concepts of original sin, total depravity, predestination, and justification by faith.

Mennonite Christians insisted on going all the way back to Jesus and the early church, not only for their faith and sense of community, but also for an understanding of their work, which they saw as reconciling people to God, to each other, and even to their enemies. They brought word and deed, peace and evangelism together by saying, "Reconciliation is the center of our work." Meanwhile, many instructors in non-Mennonite schools who continue under the influence of Constantine and Augustine give the impression that the church is a place where the pastor or priest

does the work of baptism, marriage, inspiration, and burial.

Why go to an elementary, secondary, or graduate school where God is neglected or where teaching is rooted in Constantinian and Augustinian doctrine? While these schools may offer some help, why not send our children to Mennonite schools for at least a year or two where they will be nurtured in a more specific and biblical understanding of Jesus, the church, and Christ's work.

Without a doubt, an ethical, Christ-centered interpretation of Scripture will make a major difference in the faith, fellowship, and future work of our children. I, for one, want each of my children and grandchildren to be able to say with the first Christians, Jesus is the center of my faith, Christ-centered community is the center of my life, and reconciliation is the center of my work.

Palmer Becker

BUILDING BRIDGES



Artwork for MEC 2025 by Kai Esbshade from Lancaster Mennonite School