

SEMINARS | MENNOCON23

TUESDAY, JULY 4

Adult Seminars

9:00-10:00 a.m.

Believing and Belonging

Jeanne Davies, executive director, ADN

2215A

Anabaptists practice believer's baptism. We believe that every person should make their own choice about baptism and church membership. However, our membership curriculum is often inaccessible to people with intellectual disabilities. When people with intellectual disabilities have a desire to explore the possibility of membership, pastors, teachers and parents scramble to adapt or create a curriculum that is accessible. Come explore the concept of membership and belonging, what we need to know in order to make a choice, how we can know someone's ability to choose, and what to do when the ability to choose is not clear. As a part of this seminar, we'll share about ADN's new membership curriculum, Believing and Belonging, which was created with the support of an Innovation Grant from MHS Association. We hope to share some stories of people who have used the curriculum.

Churches Going Solar

Jennifer Schrock, leader, MCCN, along with Jon Rudy, who recently shepherded Landisville Mennonite Church, Landisville PA through the process of installing solar panels; and Clyde Schwanke, who did the same with Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka KS.

2215C

Meet representatives from congregations that have installed solar panels, and hear their stories. The workshop will cover the practical and faith-based reasons that churches are making this decision and provide resources for those interested in exploring solar or reducing energy consumption in other ways.

Equipped for Community Development

Leonard Dow, vice president of community and church development, and panel, Everence

2207

Join Leonard Dow and a panel of community development experts to learn more about how you, your church or your organization can effectively impact the community around you. From accessing resources, to building and promoting a vision, to finding partners and volunteers, these community development leaders have experience you can use to deepen your witness and ministry. Bring your questions and ideas to this interactive discussion about how we can all work together to better engage and serve our local communities.

Holding Your Story

Michelle L. Hofer, visual artist, moderator elect for Central Plains Mennonite Conference, leader of the Order of St. Hildegard; Jill Hofer, pastor, House Church of Freeman, Bridgewater, South Dakota

2215B

As the fracturing of our churches, communities and world grows, hurt and harm grow, too. We live in a state of extremes, in which these are becoming a constant state rather than an exception. It is increasingly important that we learn how to tell and listen to the stories around us. During this session, you will gain a new understanding of this important function of community and relationship. You will learn practical skills and gain an appreciation for this important holy work. Understanding, validation and a greater sense of belonging will become evident, as we collectively learn and use these skills.

Interpreting the Text, Interpreting the Context

Lindy Backues, Ph.D, author and associate professor of business and leadership, EMU

2209

The focus of this seminar will be on Robert A. Traina's inductive Bible study methodology, should it be taken up as a template for teaching social sciences. The workshop will examine the pedagogical practice of discovering conceptual themes in social science research, with five representative academic disciplines briefly surveyed. Thereafter, such a thematic approach will be illustrated by way of Backues's own experience in social science research and experience in the classroom.

Seeing Power as God Sees It

Dorothy Jean Weaver, author and professor emerita, EMS

2201

This workshop will be an interactive Bible study of Matthew 2:1-23, focusing on questions of power and powerlessness in the real world. The workshop will invite participants to examine the astonishing, upside-down character of power from the God's-eye view of Matthew's Gospel and reflect on the significance of this perspective for Christians living in the troubled and violent world of the 21st century. Bring your Bible, and come prepared to participate in the discussion.

Intergenerational Seminars

9:00-10:00 a.m.

Anabaptism at 500

Amy Gingerich, executive director and publisher, and Mitch Stutzman, director of development and partner engagement, MennoMedia

2210

The 500th anniversary of Anabaptism is coming up in 2025. This anniversary gives the church a unique opportunity to celebrate the Spirit calling diverse people together across boundaries of culture and geography and dream about how more people can be invited into and participate in leading and shaping Anabaptism's future. Come and dream with us about looking back and living forward in faith. We will hear and share stories of our faith — what has led us thus far and what continues to hold us — as we look ahead to 2025.

IMPROVe Your Cultural Competency Skills

Glen Guyton, author and executive director of MC USA, and Can't Tell Us Nothing Improv Group

3501EFGH

Is your workplace too woke to joke? Let's hope not! A culturally competent workplace should be fun and relaxed. If everyone worries about being canceled, you have a toxic workplace. Diversity, equity and inclusion are for everyone, but it takes practice, and it means taking risks. This IMPROV workshop aims to create an environment in which all demonstrate critical thinking and analysis skills, through describing, interpreting, verifying and evaluating in a playful, fun, low-risk setting.

Youth Seminars

9:00-10:00 a.m.

Can You Be a Rich Christian?

Lyle Miller and Marlene Kroeker, stewardship consultants, Everence

2203

Money plays an important part in our life's journey, but what does it mean to manage money as a faithful follower of Jesus? Join Everence stewardship consultants Marlene Kroeker and Lyle Miller to learn four financial fundamentals that will give you 96.82% of what you need to know to be a faithful steward.

Climate Change and Peace

Tammy Alexander, director, and Galen Fitzkee, legislative associate, National Peace & Justice Ministries of MCC

2214

Learn about the ways climate change impacts people around the world in this interactive exercise. Discover how changing rainfall patterns, severe weather, wildfires and other phenomena leads to migration, hunger and conflict, in addition to how communities are changing and adapting to a new reality — and how you can be part of the efforts to call for change!

Fighting With Peace

Jessica Stoltzfus Buller, peace education coordinator, MCC; and Mike Martin, executive director of RAWtools

2211

When conflict comes up in our lives, we often react without thinking much. Conflict is a normal part of life, and learning how to manage difference, conflict or aggression from others is important. Conflict has the ability to rip apart our relationships ... or it can be transformative. This seminar will teach the basic skills of dealing with conflict, including communication skills, problem solving and ideas for stopping violence without harming others. Come, join us and learn to make peace with conflict by practicing these skills!

It's OK to not be OK!

Sarah Neher, director of faith formation and congregational life, Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, Kansas

2202

Sometimes we feel alone and less than whole. Rather than hiding this feeling, finding connection is key. This seminar is a place to connect, learn a little and try out different practices that ground your faith, body and mind in God's love.

Rivers in the Desert: Experiences From MVS Tucson

Michaela Esau, Andrea Troyer, Cade Fisher and Jessie Landis, Mennonite Mission Network

2204

The Tucson MVS unit will share about their year of service in the desert and facilitate a discussion on some of the misconceptions about mission, and the transformative power of friendship as the guiding force of service.

Science and Faith

Peter Goerzen, assistant professor of Bible and religion, Bethel College

2208

Why do people often say that faith and science are in conflict? Do they have to be, or what areas of convergence could there be? This seminar will explore different perspectives on the Bible and science, as well as biblical passages describing the study of the natural world as a pathway to glorifying God.

Silence for Dummies Extroverts

Michele Hershberger, author and professor of Bible and youth ministry, Hesston College

2205

For some of us, the thought of silence is terrifying. Ironically, if it is terrifying, that's a sign that it may be just what we need. Join Michele Hershberger, as she explores the benefits of silence and how to practice it in transformative ways.

Adult Seminars

2:30-3:30 p.m.

Servant Leadership on Steroids: Leading in a Post-Christian World

Michele Hershberger, author and professor of Bible and youth ministry, Hesston College

2215B

Many pastors suffer stress and burnout because they're given many responsibilities but little to no authority. And congregations want a strong vision, until that vision asks them to do something they don't want to do. Join Michele Hershberger, as she discusses what it means to be an adaptive-challenge leader — a servant leader on steroids!

What Is the KINEO CENTER, and How Can It Help?

Dan White Jr., author and co-founder of Kineo Center

2207

Many pastors today are weary and/or wounded! Not only is pastoring a hard calling, doing it in today's context brings increased challenges. The KINEO center offers focused initiatives, through learning cohorts and retreats. This seminar, led by KINEO staff, will give you information on center cohorts and retreats, including details on how to participate. MC USA is a founding partner of KINEO center.

Where Two or Three Gather: Dialogue in Divisive Times*

(*Seminar is 2:30-4:45 p.m.)

Ted Lewis, consultant and trainer, Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking at University of Minnesota Duluth

2209

Church communities are challenged by anxious times and polarizing issues. Can Matthew 18 provide wisdom for helping people address micro-harms and conflicts that breed mistrust? Through the lens of restorative practices and biblical narratives, this workshop provides practical skills for both one-on-one conversations and facilitated dialogue for small groups. The power of people telling their own stories and being heard well by others is vital to let "shift happen," so that people can better co-exist with one another. Are you being called to hold space in your church for hard, but healing, conversations in the heart-zone?

Adult Seminars

3:45-4:45 p.m.

Faith and Finances 101

Lyle Miller, stewardship consultant, Everence, with other Everence consultants

2203

Is it possible to incorporate your values with your decisions about money? Come and hear how Everence is helping

individuals, congregations and organizations integrate their faith and their finances. Designed as a conversation, with lots of time for questions, Everence stewardship consultants will provide news and updates for those both familiar and unfamiliar with Everence and its mutual aid mission.

Join the Jubilee: Growing a Repair Network

Katerina Gea, pastor, Wild Church Fresno (California), and organizer of the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery

2208

Katerina Gea will share about the "Repair Network," a new way for congregations and communities to join the Coalition's work for Indigenous justice. Representatives from Repair Network communities will share stories from their journey of decolonization, such as land acknowledgment art, land return and reparations efforts, and accompaniment of Indigenous peoples protecting land and water. Come and learn how your community can join Jesus' invitation to Jubilee justice in relationship with Indigenous peoples!

What Do We Do About Kids? Faith Formation Dreaming

Moriah Hurst, nurture and faith development pastor, Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Virginia

2202

How we do faith formation with young people and children may need a shakedown and some rethinking. Old models aren't working anymore, and were they even doing what we wanted in the past? How do we get to the core of what we want to be teaching and modeling and then dream about new ways of doing this into the future? Come ready to share your ideas and dream with others about how we might be shaping the faith of young people going forward.

What to Expect During a Pastoral Search Process

Rachel Ringenberg Miller, denominational minister of ministerial leadership, MC USA

3501EFGH

Pastor transitions are a natural part of congregational life. It's also an opportunity to reflect on where the congregation has been and where the congregation is headed. And of course, with a transition comes a lot of questions. How does the search process work? How long will it take? What can we expect as a congregation? In this seminar, we will explore these questions together.

Where Two or Three Gather: Dialogue in Divisive Times

(continued from 2:30)

2209

Intergenerational Seminars

3:45-4:45 p.m.

The Anabaptist Community Bible

Sarah Augustine, author and co-founder of the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery; Gerald Mast, professor of communication and forum coordinator, Bluffton University; Amy Gingerich, executive director, and Mitch Stutzman, director of development and partner engagement, MennoMedia

2210

What does it mean to read and study Scripture together, and how do we expect God to show up when we do? Come, hear about the Anabaptist Community Bible, which will feature notes and commentary in the margins from Bible study groups from a wide spectrum of Anabaptist faith communities. Learn more about this exciting project and how Bible study can lead to renewed faith in Jesus, stronger faith communities and a more vibrant witness in the world.

Creating Relationships and Understanding in Gaza

Tareq Abuhailima, Youth Vision Society, Gaza; with Bob Atchison, steering committee member, MennoPin; and Dave Janzen, member Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart, Indiana, which partners with the Gaza YMCA

2205

MennoPIN's Gaza Twinning Initiative encourages congregations to engage in relationships with groups in Gaza through prayer, listening, support, and advocacy to address poverty, violence, and human rights abuses. Manhattan (Kansas) Mennonite Church and Youth Vision Society (YVS) was the first Twinning partnership. Relationships and projects with Tareq Abuhailima of YVS developed into a graduate assistantship at Bluffton University where he co-directs Lion and the Lamb Peace Arts Center. The seminar will share experiences growing up in Gaza under the Israeli blockade, wars and the Twinning relationships with Manhattan Mennonite Church and Fellowship of Hope. Fellowship of Hope twins with Gaza YMCA.

Healthy Masculinity: On Being a Good Man

Steve Thomas, author and U.S. director, Mennonite Men

2211

Boys and men are sometimes told, "Be a man." For many males, this means being invulnerable, acting tough and dominating others. Realizing how this toxic masculinity negatively impacts us all, we need other ways of being men. We will explore healthy masculinity by looking at the roles and marks of good men following Jesus. Discover how to live a life that matters and leads to God's peace as God's beloved sons. Led by the co-editor of "Peaceful at Heart: Anabaptist Reflections on Healthy Masculinity," and author of "Living that Matters: Honest Conversations for Men of Faith."

Mennonite Disaster Service in the Age of "Nones"

Terry Zehr, volunteer development coordinator, MDS

2214

While there is an increasing number of people identifying as religiously unaffiliated — marking "none" on the census — many share the Christian value of service. This seminar will explore the ways in which MDS' "theology of the hammer" provides a place to act across the spectrum of religious conviction to bring people home following a disaster. Practice takes priority over belief, and mission over differences. Can Jesus' example of service to "the least of these" be a wide invitation to those who no longer participate in traditional church? Participants will consider the ways in which the Spirit is inviting people to serve.

Youth Seminars

3:45-4:45 p.m.

Art for Change: Exploring Your Creativity

Dr. Joseph A. Manickam, president, and Lisa Longacher, development officer, Hesston College

2215B

Do you want to work for peace and justice? What if you don't want to or can't go to a protest or you aren't interested in speaking in front of a large group? Join Dr. Joseph A. Manickam and Lisa Longacher, as they explore ways for your voice to be heard by using your creativity to produce art and work toward change.

Called to Be Bad Podcast

Mariah Martin, podcaster and pastor, Faith Mennonite Church, Goshen IN

2201

What if being "bad" is the best way to live out God's call on your life? Welcome to "Called to be Bad," a podcast in which guests reveal a "bad" — strange, non-traditional, taboo — topic that they are passionate about. Examples include: bad words, bad music, tattoos — the topics the church often finds uncomfortable. Come explore what your "bad" topic may teach you about your faith!

Change Your Mind, Change the World!

Jessica Stoltzfus Buller, peace education coordinator, and Adam and Sarah Sensamaust, area directors for central and southern Asia, MCC

2215C

How much time do you take to consider opinions that differ from yours? We all have biases that limit our compassion and understanding for those we disagree with. It's easy to dismiss one another, but developing our curiosity is a foundational practice for living out Christ's call to peacemaking. Join this workshop to discover tools for engaging across difference, as you hear stories of how MCC is working in the U.S. and abroad to encourage communities to explore our differences, change minds and bring peace to an increasingly polarized world.

Palestine Land Exercise

Anthony Khair, international fellow, and Zachary Murray, legislative associate, National Peace and Justice Ministries of MCC

2204

In this exercise, we bring you the experience of loss, movement and struggle in Palestine. We will walk you through the history of Palestinian displacement in the Middle East and globally.

This experiential exercise will lead you through that history to illustrate the Palestinian hope of return and the keys of hope they hold.

Prostitutes More Righteous Than Patriarchs?

Michele Hershberger, author and professor of Bible and youth ministry, Hesston College

2215A

Using Genesis 38 as an example, discover the joy of inductive Bible study! Contexts change, but eternal truth doesn't. Learn how to find God's message for us, even in passages that don't seem to make sense.

What You Do Next Matters

Eric Frey Martin, recruiter and church relations representative, Mennonite Mission Network, with Mennonite college representatives

2207

This seminar will be for high schoolers contemplating what is next for them after graduation. Eric Frey Martin of Mennonite Mission Network, along with representatives from Mennonite colleges, will facilitate a time to talk about the different options youths have to connect their faith and vocation, as they think about the next stage of life. Gap year — plus credit options for college — Service Adventure, the distinctives for each college, the advantages of service with Mission Network — these and more will be considered.

Friends of MDS Reception

5:15 p.m.

2102B

For more than 70 years, when disasters strike, MDS responds. Each year, approximately 6,000 volunteers respond to rebuild homes and restore hope for those impacted by disaster.

Our Friends of MDS reception is a time to share your MDS stories, reconnect with dear friends, and hear about current and upcoming volunteer opportunities. This will include brief remarks and a Q&A with Executive Director Kevin King. Light refreshments will be available.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5

Adult Seminars

9:00-10:00 a.m.

An Engaged Culture, Plain and Simple

Nelson Okanya, global missions president, Center for Serving Leadership at the Sagamore Institute

2207

Peter Drucker said, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." In fact, culture eats EVERYTHING for breakfast, starting with your capacity to attract, engage, grow and retain great talent, and finishing with the critical results you track in quality, satisfaction and effectiveness. This workshop makes plain what culture is, provides a simple self-diagnostic tool to test its vitality, and outlines the leadership tools and skills required to develop an engaged culture. Workshop elements include: the causal linkage from leadership behavior to success; simple questions that actionably diagnose a culture's characteristics; a framework for investing in better leadership; interaction; and hands-on practice.

Got Climate Anxiety? Strategies for Hope and Resilience

Sarah Werner, communications coordinator for Central District Conference, pastor of Olentangy Wild Church, and climate justice intern for MC USA.

2202

We are bombarded on almost a daily basis with news about the devastating effects of climate change across the world. From wildfires and catastrophic floods to species dying off, paying attention to the plight of our planet can feel overwhelming and keep us from working for justice and restoration. In this seminar, we will talk about the phenomenon of climate anxiety and offer practical tools for living more hopefully in a perilous world. The seminar will include time for sharing with one another and ideas for rituals and practices you can use with your family or congregation to deal with climate anxiety.

Human Resources Basics for Congregations

Rachel Ringenberg Miller, denominational minister of ministerial leadership, MC USA

3501EFGH

What are the expectations when it comes to things like the pastor's salary, family leave, sabbatical, vacation time, etc.? Come with your questions and your insights. This seminar focuses on resources and best practices for congregations related to pastors' salaries and benefits.

Practicing Nonviolence in a Time of War

Kathryn Railsback, Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action

2215C

During times of war, it is especially difficult to speak out against state-sponsored violence. Fortunately, we have many wonderful

models to learn from, including Jesus. This seminar will address questions like: What is nonviolence? How do we practice it? How can we use nonviolence to engage with the powerful forces at work today, which are promoting violence and war-making? How has it been used in the past? How can the principles and practice of non-violence help us nurture peace in ourselves, our communities and our world?

Supersessionism and Biblical Interpretation

Jackie Wyse-Rhodes, associate professor of Hebrew Bible and Bible department chair, AMBS

2203

Supersessionism is the harmful theological claim that the church has replaced Israel as God's covenant community and the authority of the New Testament "supersedes" that of the Old Testament. This seminar will explore how supersessionism results in shallow and unsatisfying experiences with the Bible, often leading Christians to discount whole swaths of the biblical tradition. We will also investigate various ways that supersessionism among Christians contributes to physical violence and hateful speech against Jews. Finally, we will delve into several methods of reading the whole Bible with integrity, as followers of Jesus today.

Toward a Church in Which Women in Ministry Thrive

Amy Zimbelman, former pastor and current conference minister of Mountain States Mennonite Conference, and Elizabeth Johnson, Duke University Ph.D. candidate, focusing on religion, gender, organizations and mixed-methods research, and member of Raleigh (North Carolina) Mennonite Church

2211

What are the experiences of women serving in leadership in MC USA? Do they feel empowered? Are they mistreated? And can their stories inform us to better create cultures and institutions in which all leaders thrive, regardless of gender? Amy Zimbelman and Elizabeth Johnson have teamed up with MC USA's Women in Leadership ministry on an 18-month research project to learn about the lives of clergywomen nationwide — the joys and struggles. In this presentation, Zimbelman and Johnson will share the major findings of their one-on-one interviews and nationwide survey.

Women, Men and Money

Rhoda Blough and Lyle Miller, stewardship consultants, Everence

2215A

A dollar bill is neither male nor female, but studies show that women and men have different experiences when it comes to money. Whether you're married or single, female or male, join Everence stewardship consultants Rhoda Blough and Lyle Miller, as they explore some of these differences, including some of the particular obstacles women often face.

Intergenerational Seminars

9:00-10:00 a.m.

Introduction to LGBTQIA+

Joanne Gallardo, conference minister, and Clayton Gladish, administrative coordinator, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. Clayton is also pastor of admin. and outreach at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN.

2204

An introduction to LGBTQIA+ terminology, the concept of gender, and recognizing layers of privilege a person has or doesn't have, based on identity and personhood. There will also be space for respectful questions. This seminar is open to LGBTQIA+ people and their allies.

Youth Seminars

9:00-10:00 a.m.

Fighting With Peace

Jessica Stoltzfus Buller peace education coordinator, MCC, and Mike Martin, executive director, RAWtools

2205

When conflict comes up in our lives, we often react without thinking much. Conflict is a normal part of life and learning how to manage difference, conflict or aggression from others is important. Conflict has the ability to rip apart our relationships ... or it can be transformative. This seminar will teach basic skills of dealing with conflict, including communication skills, problem solving and ideas for stopping violence without harming others. Come, join us and learn to make peace with conflict by practicing these skills!

God, Gangs and Global Violence

Robert Brenneman, professor of criminal justice and sociology, program director of Criminal Justice & Restorative Justice, Goshen College

2210

Gang violence has ripped apart families and communities across Central America, including in communities where Mennonites live and work. Where does this gang violence come from and what can be done about it? Come, hear stories about how and why so many youths are drawn to gangs and learn about the congregations whose active faith has helped gang youths find pathways to peace. Using a storytelling approach, this seminar will introduce you to powerful stories of hope, courage and transformation.

“Just a Game”: Sport and/as Religion

Peter Goerzen, assistant professor of Bible & religion, Bethel College

2208

This seminar explores the historical and contemporary connections between sport and religion. Indeed, many observe the religious-like devotion of sports fans and athletes alike. How might we think about sports in light of Christian faith? What are its promises and shadows?

Quarterback, Class President — but No Leader!

Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, vice president of advancement, Hesston College

2214

When people hear the word “leadership” they think of the speaker at the front of the room, the most talkative person in the group or their most popular friend. According to Adaptive Leadership Theory, leadership is an activity, not a position, which means anyone can practice the activity of leadership. Join Dr. Rachel Swartzendruber Miller as she explores some key components of this theory and why faith is central to the conversation. Through her personal stories and real-world examples, students will gain ideas for how to increase the activity of leadership in their own lives.

Transforming Community Through Drama!

Rachel Jantzi, director of theater, and Michele Hershberger, author and professor of Bible and youth ministry, Hesston College

2201

Explore ways to strengthen our bonds with one another through the theatrical arts. Get your body moving, discover your true self as you put others first and feel your soul start to connect with the divine!

Women Will Renew: Short Film Premiere, Discussion

Christy Kauffman, multimedia producer, along with Tammy Alexander, director, and Galen Fitzkee, legislative associate, National Peace and Justice Ministries of MCC

2215B

Enjoy popcorn and join MCC staff for an interactive discussion about a new film, “Women Will Renew.” The short film follows Caroline Pugini and Tariro Cynthia Mutsindikwa, two community leaders who hold a powerful vision of finding solutions to the overlapping challenges of climate change and gender inequity in Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe. Interactive discussion for youth will touch on themes of women’s empowerment, climate change and clean energy solutions. Youth participants will leave the session equipped with tools and language to dialogue and spark action at the intersection of gender equity and climate change.

Youth and the Contemplative Path

Elisa Parmer, associate pastor, East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

2209

While many young people are encouraged to be in relationship with God and follow The Way of Jesus, seldom are we equipped with the tools needed to engage in meaningful presence with God. This seminar centers around teaching some contemplative — reflective — practices, which open opportunities to encounter God. Participants will be invited to move about stations and try some different practices to discover what kinds of actions foster significant connection between them and the divine, such as centering prayer, meditation, journaling, doodling and more.

Adult Seminars

2:30-3:30 p.m.

Making the Church Wild

Janeen Bertsche Johnson, director of campus ministries, alumni director, AMBS

2207

Many people experience God through encountering the beauty and complexity of creation. "Wild Church" is a network of congregations who meet outdoors, using the natural world as their sanctuary. This seminar will introduce the approach of wild churches and their potential to provide a worshipping community for a wide range of people. Then we will experience a version of a wild church worship service.

Making Decisions Together

Michael Danner, associate executive director for Church Vitality and Engagement, MC USA, and executive director, MEA

2208

Making decisions as a group is challenging. Each new perspective adds a new layer of complexity. Yet, as Anabaptist followers of Jesus, we believe that one way God works is by the Spirit through the community of believers. But how do we do that well? This seminar will introduce you to some tools that can help your congregation make decisions together. This seminar is for anyone who has ever said, "There has got to be a better way to make decisions than voting and Robert's Rules of Order."

Intergenerational Seminars

2:30-3:30 p.m.

Both Sides of the Wall: The Good Side and the Bad Side

Abraham Diaz Alonso, immigration programs coordinator, and Anthony Khair, international fellow, National Peace and Justice Ministries of MCC

2215B

Presenters Abraham Diaz Alonso and Anthony Khair bring perspectives from two different continents where border walls play an important role in their lives, work and communities. Abraham Diaz Alonso, a Christian immigrant, living in the United States, who grew up undocumented 10 miles north of the U.S.-Mexico border wall, brings the perspective of the ongoing dynamics of U.S.-Mexico policy on border and immigration. Anthony Khair, a Christian Palestinian, who grew — and is still growing up — in the city of Bethlehem, Palestine, where his home stares directly at the border wall that makes the division of Palestine and occupied territory, brings the perspective of what it's like to live in occupation on the other side of the wall that divides Palestinians from their own homes.

Adult Seminars

3:45-4:45 p.m.

Come to The Peace Table

Amy Gingerich, executive director, MennoMedia

2205

At The Peace Table, there's room for all! Enjoy the compelling stories and find inspiration in the beautiful artwork within Shine curriculum's new story Bible, The Peace Table. We'll explore ways to share these ancient stories with children and families. Whether you are a grandparent, parent or teacher, you'll leave with ideas and practices to share with your children, as you gather around The Peace Table.

Conjuring Hope in Rural Spaces

Randall Koehler, pastor, Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman, South Dakota, and S. Roy Kaufman, author and retired pastor

2209

In our current political and denominational climate, rural spaces have sometimes been demonized as monolithic fortresses of conservatism, traditionalism and ignorance. Some wonder: What has happened to the rural voices of MC USA and the formational agrarian heritage of Anabaptism? Do those agrarian roots still matter, and how are they speaking into our current experiences? Join retired pastor Roy Kaufman and recently ordained pastor Randall Koehler, both currently living in rural South Dakota, as they share about these questions and possibilities for conjuring hope, as well as invite you to share how you are experiencing hope in your particular space.

Equipping Families for Faith Formation

Talashia Keim Yoder, pastor of Christian formation, College Mennonite Church, and theatre director for Bethany Christian High School; and Tami Keim, retired early childhood program director, Hesston College.

2203

This is especially geared for congregational leaders who are hoping to equip and empower families to practice faith at home. Focusing on early childhood, we'll look briefly at why this is important. Then, we'll give some practical ideas for ways to inspire, educate, and support parents and caregivers. (see also buildingfaithfamily.com, a website ministry of Mennonite Early Childhood Network)

How to Be Wrong

Jon Carlson, moderator-elect, MC USA, pastor, Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pennsylvania

2211

One of the central ideas of Christian faith is repentance, or, literally, "to change one's mind." Faith presumes that we're already wrong about all kinds of things. So how do we know when we're wrong, and what do we do about it? Drawing from Scripture, neuro- and social science, and lived experience, this seminar will explore how we remain faithful in the margin of error.

I Couldn't Teach Math Because I Boycott Israel

Esther Koontz, high school math teacher, Newton (Kansas) High School

2204

In fall 2017, Esther Koontz was asked to sign a loyalty pledge, stating that she would not boycott Israel, in order to get paid for her side job as a math teacher trainer for the state of Kansas. Esther called the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), sued the state of Kansas and won her preliminary injunction, before Kansas changed the law and she lost her legal standing. Hear Esther's story about how her local Mennonite church first gave her the idea to boycott Israel because of Israel's unjust treatment of Palestinians and, then, how her church stood by her during the difficult decision to sue and stand up to this First-Amendment-rights violation. Also, view a five-minute film about Esther's story.

Remembering the Forgotten War

Sue Park-Hur, director of racial/ethnic engagement, MC USA, with Austin Headrick, longtime Korean peninsula peace advocate currently partnering with the American Friends Service Committee.

2210

The Korean War has never officially ended. July 27 will mark 70 years since the signing of the Armistice Agreement that ended the active fighting on the Korean peninsula, the beginning of division within Korea and a relationship with the U.S. based on war-footing. Participants will explore the legacy of the Korean War and the continued militarization of the Korean peninsula. Sue Park-Hur and Austin Headrick will share about peacebuilding work with North Korea and efforts to build relationships across divides. Participants will learn how they can take action in the U.S. and become involved in advocating for engagement and challenging mainstream dehumanizing narratives.

Turning Your Church Toward Engaged Mission

Michael Danner, associate executive director for Church Vitality and Engagement, MC USA, executive director, MEA

3501EFGH

Most existing churches in the U.S. have plateaued and are declining. As Anabaptist followers of Jesus, it's clear that the world around us could use some good news, rooted in Jesus. How do we participate in God's shalom-building project in the world, when so much of our time and emotional energy is taken up with the hard realities of a congregation that has lost its vision? This seminar will explore some roadblocks to vital ministry and how to steer around them.

Intergenerational Seminars

3:45-4:45 p.m.

Beyond Green Growth and Creation Care

Sarah Augustine & Sheri Hostetler, co-founders, Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery

220515B

Many climate justice initiatives seek to end climate change by use of the same mechanisms that created the climate crisis. Rather than challenging and unpacking the assumptions and values that have brought humanity to the brink of collapse, conventional climate justice strategies focus on technological solutions that require more exploitation of natural resources, including the polluting extraction of materials to build these technologies. During this seminar, Sarah Augustine and Sheri Hostetler will explore decolonization as a primary mechanism for seeking ecological justice, consistent with Indigenous cosmologies and experiences.

Finding "Home": How to Find Adults Who "Get" You

Michele Hershberger, author and professor of Bible and youth ministry, Hesston College

2214

No matter who you are or where you're from, the high school years can feel stressful and scary. Why is it so hard? How can I help my friends who feel alone? And what do I do when it seems like no place is safe? Join Michele Hershberger, as she talks about ways to find safe adults and how to be one of those safe adults.

THURSDAY, JULY 6

Adult Seminars

9:00-10:00 a.m.

Attending to the Presence of Trauma in Churches

Leah Thomas, assistant professor of pastoral care and director of contextual education, AMBS

2207

We may often hear the term “trauma,” but what exactly is it? How might it be impacting ministry in congregations? Why might it be important to pay attention to the presence of trauma, particularly at this point in history? This seminar will explore the nature of trauma and how it impacts individuals and communities. It will talk about religious manifestations of trauma and suggest some approaches and guidelines to offer trauma-informed care in the congregation.

Deep Listening, Deep Respect

Lindy Backues, Ph.D., author and associate professor of business and leadership, EMU

2209

Subtitle: Authentic Friendship As the Basis for Interfaith Understanding — A Case Study Involving a Friendship Between Lindy Backues (Christian) and Achmad Munjid (Muslim)

We take a deep and abiding, humble relationship to be the bedrock of all promising interfaith dialogue. With this seminar, Backues will put forward the necessary contours of his now 15-year friendship with Dr. Munjid, a relationship that has spanned experience both in Indonesia as well as in the United States — mainly in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

DEI: The Missing Link

Glen Guyton, executive director, MC USA

3501EFGH

Organizations started caring much more about diversity after high-profile lawsuits rocked corporations in the late 1990s and early 2000s, but to what end? Surprisingly, most diversity programs aren't increasing diversity. While putting forward a great face, organizations are simply doubling down on the same approaches they've used since the 1960s. Institutions have relied on diversity training to reduce bias on the job, hiring tests and performance ratings to limit it in recruitment and promotions, and grievance systems to give employees a way to challenge managers; in many cases, these tools can activate bias rather than stamp out bias. Find the missing link to move your organizational efforts toward cultural competency and real change.

Enabling the Church to Do War Tax Redirection

Harold A. Penner, lifelong war tax redirector who was instrumental in the renewal of the MC USA Peace Tax Fund; with Chrissy Kirchoeffer, National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, St. Louis outreach staff

2211

Conscripted daily to pay taxes that underwrite killing and war making, Mennonites are seeking ways to promote active nonviolence, participate in faithful, effective peacemaking and redirect taxable funds away from militarism and toward church-sponsored programs of social uplift. The MC USA Peace Tax Fund provides resources for the peace education of future generations, underwrites MC USA justice programs, such as the emerging POTC (formerly AMEN), recognizes youth and adults who are actively engaged in resisting war, and encouraging peace, as well as providing resources to support war tax redirectors.

Living Into Repentance and Transformation

Randy Spaulding, leadership team of Inclusive Mennonite Pastors, representative for Queer Constituency Council of MC USA, and pastor at Boulder (Colorado) Mennonite Church, and others

2202

What does it mean to be an official LGBTQIA+ welcoming denomination? What does repentance and transformation look like? How may it already be happening among us? How is God at work, and what are the challenges that lie ahead? This seminar invites group sharing, visioning and conversation. Facilitated by queer and ally Mennonites, including leaders of Inclusive Mennonite Pastors and others.

Marking Adult Transitions: Ritual and Reflection

Joel Miller, pastor, Columbus (Ohio) Mennonite Church

2203

We undergo many transitions in our lives but have few ways of marking and honoring them in community. This workshop will outline a small-group-based process developed at Columbus Mennonite Church, for adults of all ages, involving reflection and ritual around life transitions, which culminates in a participatory Sunday worship service. It will aim to be both practical, including offering resources for group exercises, discussions and rituals; and conversational, concerning how this might be adapted in different settings.

Women as Church Leaders: We Did Not Keep Silent!

Lois Barrett, retired professor of theology and Anabaptist studies, AMBS; Dorothy Nickel Friesen, retired pastor, former conference minister and former assistant dean at AMBS

2210

Lois Barrett and Dorothy Nickel Friesen will talk about highlights from their new book, “Proclaiming the Good News: Mennonite Women’s Voices 1972-2006,” published by the Institute of Mennonite Studies, which is co-sponsoring this workshop. Hear women’s stories from decades past and strategize ways the church can encourage women’s leadership today.

Intergenerational Seminars

9:00-10:00 a.m.

Considering Reparations for African Americans

Ben Bouwman, pastor, Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN

2204

The past is not behind us but continues to shape our present reality. This seminar will look at — some of — the myriad of ways in which U.S. federal, state and local governments, in collaboration with businesses and private citizens, actively worked to keep wealth in white communities and away from African American communities — and other people of color — from the end of slavery until today. Examining this past offers an opportunity for all to reflect on how we have been shaped by decades of white supremacist policies. We will also look at what reparations are and how we might take reparative actions in our local communities.

Youth Seminars

9:00-10:00 a.m.

Acting Out the Parable

Melissa Friesen, professor of theatre and communication, and art, communication and theatre department chair, Bluffton University

2201

Put yourself inside the biblical story during this interactive workshop. We'll use drama techniques to engage some of Jesus' parables and explore their meaning for us today. You'll be invited to use your inquisitive minds and bodies in images and drama — no theatre experience required!

Anabaptist Approaches to Violence in Scripture

Peter Goerzen, assistant professor of Bible and religion, Bethel College

2208

As people called by Jesus to love our enemies and to live as peacemakers, how do we think about the passages in the Bible in which there is violence — even at God's own command? This seminar looks at several different Anabaptist approaches to this important question in biblical interpretation.

Help! My Phone Is Stuck to My Face

Robert Brenneman, professor of criminal justice and sociology, program director, Criminal Justice & Restorative Justice at Goshen College

2215B

Have you ever wondered why it's so hard to shut off your phone? Or worse, to live without it for a day? Have you noticed that some of your apps seem like they know you — your likes and dislikes, your BFFs and your worst enemies — almost better than you know yourself? It's time to stop pointing fingers at people — including ourselves — for supposedly being "addicted" to screens and start recognizing that massive companies and enhanced technologies have been hacking our deepest longings and our connections to one another for their own benefits. Is there anything we can do to fight back? Get unstuck: Learn strategies for recapturing your sense of time, your awareness of space and place, and your ability to connect.

Making the Bible User-Friendly

Michele Hershberger, author and professor of Bible and youth ministry, Hesston College

2205

Subtitle: Without Watering It Down. Many of us know all the stories, but we don't understand how all those stories fit together to make the Big Story. Join Michele Hershberger, and get some "hooks to hang your hat on," ways that help the Bible make sense. Be a part of a whirlwind tour of the Bible, in which all the little stories serve a larger purpose.

One Shirt at a Time: Moving Away From Fast Fashion

Marathana Prothro, assistant professor of communication, Bluffton University

2215C

How many T-shirts are in your drawer? What do you know about where they came from? Who made them? What will happen to them once you're done with them? This self-reflective seminar explores how learning about global supply chains and the fast-fashion industry can inform stewardship practices that change your relationship with your clothes and the people who make them. This seminar will be interactive and invitational with tips for crafting and maintaining a minimalist wardrobe and will take an honest look at how our faith can literally be worn on our sleeves.

Personal Brand That Is More Than Skin Deep

Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, vice president of advancement, and Grant Myers, vice president of enrollment management, Hesston College

2215A

Join Rachel Swartzendruber Miller and Grant Myers, as they explore how brands are created, cultivated and communicated. This information will help attendees think more intentionally about the personal brands they are building, why faith must be foundational, and why being clear on purpose is vital.

What Are We Doing Here Anyway?

Eric Frey Martin, recruiter and church relations representative, Mennonite Mission Network

2214

After spending any amount of time on the internet, looking through news stories or social media feeds, one can come away with a sense of dread about the trajectory of our world. The threat of climate change, failing systems, growing violence and more can seem overwhelming and lead to a valid questioning of what life is for. In this seminar, we will note the challenges that humanity faces and look at how joining in God's mission provides us with hope and purpose, even in the midst of those challenges. The aim will not be to diminish the significance of those challenges but to recognize the sense of nihilism and hopelessness that they can foster — often for good reason — and then, to recognize how God's mission in this world calls us toward action, love and hope.

Adult Seminars

2:30-3:30 p.m.

The Church, Migration and Disappeared People

Fernando Perez and Rebeca Gonzalez, executive coordinators of the Comunidad de Instituciones Teológicas Anabautistas, working with asylum seekers and families of disappeared persons; and Linda Shelly, regional director for Latin America, Mennonite Mission Network

2214

Participants will hear stories of church responses to migrants in both the U.S. and Latin America, including support for people searching for family members who have disappeared. Time will be given for observations and lessons learned in carrying out the mission of accompaniment and support for migrants in vulnerable situations.

Conversation Circles for Pastors

Rachel Ringenberg Miller, denominational minister of ministerial leadership, MC USA, and panel

2202

This collaborative seminar will include sharing from our pastor panel, as well as time for table conversation with the pastors from the panel. Discussed topics will include questions like: "What is vital to your health and wellness as a pastor?" "What is something you wished someone would have told you before you entered congregational ministry?" "How do you craft a worship series?" All are welcome to join, whether you've been pastoring for five months or 10 years or more than 20 years.

Safeguarding in Christian Institutions

Wesley Wilder, human resources coordinator and recruiter, MCC 2204

What do we do when grace and protecting those we work and serve with seem to be at odds? How can we ensure we are protecting others without unfairly condemning another member of our community? Christian institutions have historically always struggled with this tension.

Youth Seminars

2:30-5:30 p.m.

Making Space for your Questions (*Seminar is 2:30-5:30 p.m.)

Michele Hershberger, author and professor of Bible and youth, Hesston College

2211

What does it mean to be a Christian? How can I make sense of my life? What's really going on in the Bible? Why is the church so important to God? Michele Hershberger invites you to join a conversation that covers these questions — and many others — as we explore God's story and make it our own. Twenty years ago, Hershberger wrote the book "God's Story, Our Story," an introduction to Christian faith from an Anabaptist perspective. But the questions we bring to the biblical text today and how we apply it to our lives have changed. This is a three-hour seminar — ending in time for dinner — designed to capture your questions and ideas around the biblical story, as Herald Press makes plan for a new edition of this book. Your comments in this extended seminar may appear in the book, when published!

Adult Seminars

3:45-4:45 p.m.

How to Supervise Your Pastor!

Michael Danner, associate executive director for church vitality and engagement, MC USA, executive director, MEA

3501EFGH

No matter how your church is structured, it is someone's — usually a group — job to supervise the pastor. Supervising a pastor well can mean more effective years in ministry, higher levels of performance and less burnout. All this contributes to a thriving and healthy church. There's only one challenge — they are your pastor. They are one of the people you turn to for pastoral care, spiritual guidance, discipleship, teaching, etc. It can be difficult for volunteer leaders to supervise their pastor well. This seminar will explore the topic of supervising your pastor well from a structural and spiritual perspective. The goal is the flourishing of the pastor and the congregation in ministry together.

Learn to Be Happy With Your Money-Self

Marlene Kroeker and Rhoda Blough, stewardship consultants, Everence

2207

Transformation begins when we first understand ourselves. In this seminar, using Tommy Brown's book, "The Seven Money Types," you will learn how you may be naturally geared to handle resources — hospitality, discipline, beauty, connection, endurance, humility or leadership. You will understand the strengths of your resource type, as well as the areas where you can grow. Through this time of conversation and reflection, you may find that you are finally happy with your "money-self."

Resistance and Healing: Queer, Decolonial Movements

Sarah Augustine, executive director, and Katerina Gea, organizer of the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery; Tim Nafziger, Mennonite writer, activist, digital engagement consultant and web developer; Annabeth Roeschley, executive director, Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests

2203

Since the early days of the Anabaptist movement, we have sought to balance challenging unjust institutions with the communal work of healing and liberation. In this workshop, we will look at historic and present examples of how Pink Menno, Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests and the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery navigate this creative tension. Institutions and movements dance together around the need for stability, sustainability and scale. Resistance is almost always part of healing and is critical to changing the conditions that create harm.

Survived: Long-Haul Resilience

Juan Lewis is a COVID-19 survivor and is now a motivational speaker. Juan contracted COVID-19 in 2020 and fought through extensive hospitalizations, before his re-entry into everyday life.

2215C

Resilience is the ability to withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult life events. Being resilient does not mean that people don't experience stress, emotional upheaval and suffering. Rather, it is an inner trait that helps them adapt to the changing situation and keep moving forward. Hear one COVID-19 long-hauler's inspiring story of resilience and spiritual transformation.

Tending Healthy Pastor-Congregation Relationships

Doug Luginbill, conference minister, Central District Conference

2208

Healthy and strong relationships between the pastor and lay leadership are essential for vitalized congregations. We will consider several factors and practices that strengthen these relationships, including communication, clarity of decision making, stewarding the mission of the congregation and building trust-centered accountability. We will also consider the roles of Pastor-Congregation Relations Committees and Staff Relations Committees. Pastors' job descriptions and pastoral reviews will also be discussed.

Writing Words for Worship

Joanna Harader, pastor, Peace Mennonite Church, Lawrence, KS

2204

In this writing workshop, participants will learn about different types of writing for the worship context, share general strategies for writing and have an opportunity to write their own worship piece.

Intergenerational Seminars

3:45-4:45 p.m.

Teaching Anabaptism in Mennonite Higher Education

Rebecca Stoltzfus, president, Goshen College, and Robert Milliman, vice president for academic affairs/dean of faculty, Bethel College

2215B

At Mennonite higher education schools, we teach and model the way of Jesus but face challenges that include culture wars, the increasing diversity of identities and life experiences of our students, and ideologies that range from biblical fundamentalism to post-modern skepticism of the entire Judeo-Christian tradition. In 2022, Mennonite higher education presidents agreed to provide leadership and resources to facilitate the development of a shared, scalable, uniform approach to teaching Anabaptism for undergraduates at our colleges and universities. In this session, we will share the vision and our work in progress, engaging participants about what excites them about our work, what is missing and how the church may want to be engaged in this project.

Toward the May/June 2024 South African Election

Oscar Siwali, director, Southern African Development and Reconstruction Agency

2214

What is the role of peacebuilders in resolving an electoral community to deliver a peaceful, free, fair, legitimate election? How do church leaders/community mediators in South Africa do this? Are there lessons for the 2024 United States presidential election? There are many lessons between South Africa and the USA — and more often than not, the latter can learn, even after so many years of being a leading democracy. This session focuses on the role the church plays in South Africa before, during and after elections to support the electoral process and handle issues of violence, mistrust, seeds of discontent and possible unrest.

Youth Seminars

3:45-4:45 p.m.

Acting Out the Parable

Melissa Friesen, professor of theatre and communication, and art, communication and theatre department chair, Bluffton University

2205

Put yourself inside the biblical story, during this interactive workshop. We'll use drama techniques to engage some of Jesus' parables and explore their meaning for us today. You'll be invited to use your inquisitive minds and bodies in images and drama — no theatre experience required!

Creating an Intercultural Campus Culture

Sue Park-Hur, director of racial/ethnic engagement, MC USA, and panelists Abby Endashaw, Mennonite Central Committee Summer Service National Coordinator; Faith Manickam, University of Kansas School of Medicine student; and Bongwiwe Ncube, Goshen College student.

2202

This panel discussion will center the voices and experiences of BIPOC young adults who have attended Christian/Mennonite schools. Come with a posture of deep listening, as the panel discusses questions such as: What does it mean to be BIPOC and Anabaptist? What are other intersectional cultural identities you hold? When did you experience belonging or exclusion on school campus? What do you hope non-BIPOC students and staff would know to help co-create a space of learning in which everyone feels welcomed? What resources are available for BIPOC students to help encourage and empower one another on our campuses?

Dealing With ANGER: My Story

Jess Engle, pastor, Hesston (Kansas) Mennonite Church

2201

Jess Engle will share personal stories about his ANGER as a young adult, teacher and father of young children — and now as a middle-aged pastor who was widowed, remarried and lives in a blended family. Is all ANGER bad? Why or why not? This seminar will include reflections and stories about ANGER, how Jess has managed ANGER and some things the Lord has taught him about ANGER. What can you learn about ANGER from this seminar?

God, Gangs and Global Violence

Robert Brenneman, professor of criminal justice and sociology, program director of criminal justice and restorative justice, Goshen College

2210

Gang violence has ripped apart families and communities across Central America, including in communities where Mennonites live and work. Where does this gang violence come from and what can be done about it? Come and hear stories about how and why so many youths are drawn to gangs and learn about the congregations whose active faith has helped gang youths find pathways to peace. Using a storytelling approach, this seminar will introduce you to powerful stories of hope, courage and transformation.

One Shirt at a Time: Moving Away From Fast Fashion

Marathana Prothro, assistant professor of communication, Bluffton University

2209

How many T-shirts are in your drawer? What do you know about where they came from? Who made them? What will happen to them once you're done with them? This self-reflective seminar explores how learning about global supply chains and the fast-fashion industry can inform stewardship practices that change your relationship with your clothes and the people who make them. This seminar will be interactive and invitational, with tips for crafting and maintaining a minimalist wardrobe, and will take an honest look at how our faith can literally be worn on our sleeves.

Quarterback, Class President — but No Leader!

Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, vice president of advancement, Hesston College

2215A

When people hear the word "leadership" they think of the speaker at the front of the room, the most talkative person in the group or their most popular friend. According to Adaptive Leadership Theory, leadership is an activity, not a position, which means anyone can practice the activity of leadership. Join Dr. Rachel Swartzendruber Miller as she explores some key components of this theory and why faith is central to the conversation. Through her personal stories and real-world examples, students will gain ideas for how to increase the activity of leadership in their own lives.