



Field trip to explore Brethren experience of the Battle of Gettysburg

Widely considered to be the turning point of the Civil War, the Battle of Gettysburg was a pivotal event in America history. It also made a deep impact on the civilian population of Adams County, Pennsylvania, who lived through the three-day conflict, July 1–3, 1863. Among them were members of the Marsh Creek German Baptist Brethren Church.

On Saturday, October 18, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Young Center will host a field trip to explore the impact of the battle on the lives of these Brethren families. The event will begin at Gettysburg Church of the Brethren, 1710 Biglerville Road in Gettysburg, at 10 a.m. Following a welcome and overview of the day, Steve Longenecker, professor emeritus of history at Bridgewater (VA) College, will give an illustrated presentation on the Brethren experience of the battle and its aftermath, with an emphasis on the family of Joseph (1812–1882) and Mary Heagen Sherfy (1817–1904). Ordained in 1853, Joseph was a minister in the Marsh Creek congregation.

The Sherfys' farm lay south of Gettysburg, and areas that would be made famous by the battle—such as Devil's Den and the Peach Orchard—were located on land owned by the Sherfy family or their kin. After the battle, Marsh Creek members, along with many others in the area, were involved with caring for wounded soldiers and traumatized civilians.

Longenecker has researched the impact of the battle on Gettysburg's churches, including the Brethren. He is the author of seven books, including *Gettysburg Religion: Refinement, Diversity, and Race in the Antebellum South* (Fordham University Press, 2014).



Historic Marsh Creek Meetinghouse, west of Gettysburg, built in 1830 and enlarged in 1883

Following Longenecker's presentation and a time for discussion, Gettysburg Church of the Brethren members will provide lunch in the church fellowship hall. After lunch, field trip participants will travel west of town to the historic Marsh Creek Meetinghouse, built in 1830 and enlarged after the Civil War. The building has been only lightly modernized and continues to convey much of its nineteenth-century character.

At the meetinghouse, the group will learn about the history of the congregation. Elder Robert Mathews of the Old German Baptist Brethren will offer a brief devotional meditation on peace and nonresistance. There will also be an opportunity to visit the Marsh Creek cemetery, with its graves of Sherfy,

Pfautz, and other early Adams County Brethren families.

The group will then travel to Seminary Ridge Museum, located on the campus of United Lutheran Theological Seminary. The museum's self-guided tour focuses on the local impact of the battle, the seminary's use as a hospital and place of tending the wounded, and the role of religion in the political debates and antislavery efforts of the time.

Museum admission is included for all field trip participants. Those wishing to go up into the historic cupola atop the museum and view the battlefield as Union scouts did on the first day of the battle may do so for an additional cost, payable at the museum.

(continued on page 3)



From the Director

This summer, the Young Center was privileged to host a remarkable mix of local, national, and international guests. Our conference, “Early Anabaptism in Global Perspective: Past, Present, and Future at 500 Years,” held in late July, brought together over 130 participants from ten countries and at least twenty Christian denominations. Looking across the Leffler Chapel lobby at one of the coffee breaks, I saw an Ethiopian Mennonite talking with an Older Order Mennonite and Church of the Brethren folks in conversation with Hutterites from western Canada. It was a moment of striking diversity but one that is not surprising for us at the Young Center, given our mission.

The insights gleaned from listening to diverse voices are central to this year’s Brown Book Award Lecture in October. Marlene Epp will consider the role of food in religious group identity, ritual, and service, drawing on her research in Canada, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Mexico, and Paraguay.

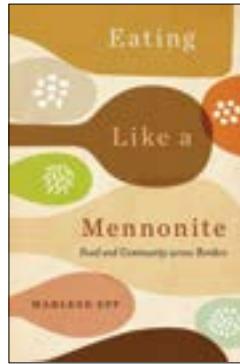
Closer to home, our field trip to Gettysburg promises to open conversations between the past and the present, the experience of Brethren and Lutherans, soldiers and civilians, enslaved and free, in the whirlwind of wartime strife.

And in November, we will consider how musicians Andy and Terry Murray have brought varied voices together in ways that simultaneously reaffirmed and expanded Brethren identity.

The Young Center is a special place, bridging diverse communities and fostering uncommon conversations. Join us this fall as we listen to one another and learn together.

Steve Nolt
Director

Brown Book Award recipient named



Eating Like a Mennonite: Food and Community Across Borders

by Marlene Epp
has received the 2025 Dale Brown Book Award. Published by McGill-Queen’s University Press in 2023, the book explores

Mennonite identity in relation to food.

In his review in *American Historical Review*, David J. Neumann of Cal Poly Pomona said, “Exploring what it means to ‘eat like a Mennonite’ reveals important connections between ethnoreligious identity and immigration, colonization, gender, and memory.” He goes on to say that, “despite the book’s theoretical and conceptual framing, Epp strives to keep it accessible to a general audience by interjecting her own experiences with food as a Mennonite and by including recipes at the end of each chapter.... These strategic decisions also make her positionality clear and underscore the material nature of a book in which food is central.”

In *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Jonathan Schramm of Goshen College, wrote, “A careful read of Marlene Epp’s new book, *Eating Like a Mennonite*, proves deeply rewarding and thought-provoking. By diving deep into the food stories of [Mennonites], Epp is able to weave strong connections be-

tween their social, economic, gender, and religious histories as they interact through food.”

The Brown Book Award judges’ remarks were also appreciative. “One of a kind. Important because Epp works on questions and themes that are usually given second or third place in Anabaptist discourse,” one said. Another judge commented, “*Eating Like a Mennonite* critically examines stereotypes about Mennonite food, the gendered dynamics of its preparation, and its importance as a driver of identity. The work highlights how immigration has reshaped culinary traditions, with a particular focus on the Russian Mennonite narrative, exploring Mennonite fusion cuisine as seen at the ‘Mennomex’ restaurant. Epp discusses cookbooks at length, describing them as both immigrant documents illustrating cultural transformation and as attempts at cultural preservation. The book illuminates how food practices underpin community and religious identity.”

Marlene Epp is professor emeritus of history and peace & conflict studies at Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. She will present a lecture about the book on October 2.

The Brown Book Award, named for author and theologian Dale W. Brown, is given annually to an outstanding book in Anabaptist and Pietist studies. The deadline for 2026 nominations is December 15, 2025. Visit etown.edu/centers/young-center/award.aspx for details.

New journal issue published

The tenth issue of the *Journal of Plain Anabaptist Communities* was released in July. It includes an examination of Amish and Old Order Mennonite views on vaccine risks and benefits, a look at Amish migration patterns in Wisconsin, and two demographic studies, one focusing on the Swiss Amish and the other on longevity among Amish men in Holmes County, Ohio. This issue also contains



two fieldwork-related articles, the first detailing observations on aging in Amish society and the second revisiting Amish-themed tourist destinations in Holmes County, Ohio. A profile of Mennonite Life Library & Archives and two book reviews complete the content in this issue of the journal.

The *Journal of Plain Anabaptist Communities* is a peer-reviewed, open access journal published by the Ohio State University Libraries and cosponsored by the Young Center. For access to all issues of the journal, an option to subscribe to the mailing list, and detailed information for prospective authors, visit plainanabaptistjournal.org.

Hess Archives hosts preservation workshop

In March, Amber Hares, book conservator at the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts in Philadelphia, led a hands-on workshop, “Basics of Preservation Housing for Rare Books,” in Hess Archives. Participants learned how to measure books for custom-sized boxes and how to construct four-flap enclosures. Hares also reviewed principles on prioritizing items for housing and guidance on selecting storage materials.

Participants joined us from the Brandywine Museum of Art, Millersville University, Washington College, the East Broad Top Railroad, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, the Industrial Archives and Library, the Antique Automobile Club of America Library, and Mennonite Life.



Doctoral and Snowden Fellows in residence this summer

Rev. Theoneste Sentabire of Rubavu, Rwanda, spent time at the Young Center this summer under the auspices of the Snowden Fellowship. Rev. Sentabire is a leader in the Church of the Brethren in Rwanda and the principal of the Great Lakes Bible School. He is concurrently completing doctoral studies through the University of Nairobi. While in Pennsylvania, he connected with Church of the Brethren pastors, spoke in several churches, and attended the Young Center’s

July conference “Early Anabaptism in Global Perspective.”

In June and early July, Duke University doctoral student Nechama Huba spent a number of weeks at the Young Center conducting research for her dissertation on the political motivations and possible mobilization of separatist religious groups, including the Amish. A political science scholar, Huba specializes in the fields of political behavior and identity. While at Elizabethtown, she

worked with a number of collections in Hess Archives, conducted interviews with Amish individuals and with several Lancaster-area political figures, and discussed her hypotheses and preliminary findings with Young Center staff.

The Young Center is grateful for the Lucille Snowden and Ruth Zimmerman Kline endowments and for other donors who support the presence of visiting scholars on the Etown campus. The Young Center invites applications for its fellows programs. For details, visit etown.edu/centers/young-center/fellows.aspx.

Remembering Anita F. Hess

Anita F. Hess, a longtime supporter of the Young Center, died on February 26, 2025, at the age of 93. Anita and her husband, Earl H. Hess, who passed away in 2001, cofounded Lancaster Laboratories in Leola in 1961. In 2017, she received an honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, from Elizabethtown College for her contributions to the college community.

Anita Hess provided the lead gift for the archives facility in the lower level of High Library, which opened in September 2014. About her gift, Anita said at the time, “As lifelong members of the Church of the Brethren, my late husband, Earl, and I have had a strong commitment to the Anabaptist tradi-

tion. When I heard about the opportunity to be a part of preserving the history of the Anabaptists, I knew it was something Earl would have wanted to support.”

The Earl H. and Anita F. Hess Archives and Special Collections is a state-of-the-art facility housing the archival, rare book, and artifact collections of the college and the Young Center. It is also the official repository for the Atlantic Northeast and Southern Pennsylvania Districts of the Church of the Brethren.

The Young Center is deeply grateful for Anita Hess’s generosity. Her gift will continue to further scholarship and knowledge of Anabaptist and Pietist groups.

Field trip to Gettysburg *(continued from page 1)*

Cost for the field trip is \$25, which includes lunch and basic admission to Seminary Ridge Museum. Reservations must be made by Monday, October 13, to assist with plans for lunch. Register online on the events page of the Young Center website (etown.edu/youngctr/events) or by calling the Young Center at 717-361-1470.

Carpooling is strongly encouraged for those driving to Gettysburg. Bus transportation from Elizabethtown College, departing at 8:30 a.m. and returning around 4:45 p.m., is available at no additional cost.

Conference receives positive responses from attendees

More than 130 people from ten countries attended the Young Center's conference, "Early Anabaptism in Global Perspective: Past, Present, and Future at 500 Years" on July 22, 23, and 24. In their comments and post-con-

ference survey responses, attendees noted the wide variety and quality of the presentations and the opportunities to connect with peers and colleagues and to meet and converse with new people with similar interests.

Abby Hershberger, storyteller for Mennonite Life, the conference co-sponsor, expressed enthusiasm about the event: "I appreciated seeing a wide range of both scholars and topics at the conference. It was an encouraging representation of today's Anabaptist community—international, deeply curious, and passionate about preserving and continuing to tell the story of Anabaptism."

"The conference had top-notch content and sparked energizing questions and conversation," Steve Nolt, conference committee member and director of the Young Center, said. "I was also pleased with the wide range of participants—academics and engaged lay people, Plain church members and those from more acculturated groups, North Americans and participants from the Global South."



Top left: Sarah Augustine, executive director of the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery, addressed a packed room on "Early Anabaptist Witness and the Work of Decolonization."

Top right: Danang Kristawan, a seminary teacher and pastor in the Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa (Mennonite Conference of Java), delivers his plenary address, "Constructing a Multi-Textual Anabaptist Theology from an Indonesian Perspective."

Bottom left: James Krabill, Andi Santoso, and Jamie Pitts discuss an issue of Anabaptist Witness highlighting stories from Ethiopia.

Bottom right: Theoneste Sentabire and Heidi Wenger chat during a break between conference sessions.

Remembering Kenneth Bowers

Kenneth L. Bowers, a longtime supporter of the Young Center, died on March 11, 2025, at the age of 87. Ken and his wife, Rosalie, made many significant contributions to Elizabethtown College and to the Young Center.

Ken was a 1959 graduate of Elizabethtown College and a corporate communications professional at the Hershey Company. He served on Etown's board of trustees for more than 25 years, earning emeritus trustee status, and he received two Educate for Service awards and an honorary doctorate from the college.

The Bowers' extensive contributions to the college have supported many of its programs and facilities. Their significant gift to the Young Center made possible the Bowers Interpretive Gallery, which opened in 2020. The gallery combines visual exhibits, objects, and sound to give a broad, general overview of Anabaptist and Pietist groups, their history, their characteristics, and their global expansion.

The Young Center is very appreciative of Ken and Rosalie's generosity. The Bowers Interpretive Gallery will continue to further understanding of the faith, history, and culture of Anabaptist and Pietist groups for years to come.

UPCOMING EVENTS

BROWN BOOK AWARD LECTURE *Eating Like a Mennonite: Food, Culture, and Community*

MARLENE EPP

Thursday, October 2, 7 p.m.

Bucher Meetinghouse



Mennonites, Amish, Brethren, and other Anabaptist groups are often associated with food practices and ideals of community. This talk will explore the role of foodways in Anabaptist communities, past and present, and highlight the complex intersection of religion and culture in a global context.

Marlene Epp is professor emeritus of history and peace & conflict studies at Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Her teaching and scholarship has focused on Mennonite history, Canadian immigration history, and food studies. In addition to *Eating Like a Mennonite: Food and Community Across Borders* (2023), which received the 2025 Dale W. Brown Book Award, Epp is the author of *Mennonite Women in Canada: A History* (2008) and *Women Without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War* (2000). Copies of *Eating Like a Mennonite* will be available for sale and signing after the lecture.

YOUNG CENTER FESTIVAL

Saturday, October 4, 1 to 4 p.m.

Young Center

Come one, come all to this family friendly campus celebration! Stop by for popcorn and homemade ice cream churned by Etown's innovative engineering students. Explore interactive exhibits at the Young Center's Bowers Interpretive Gallery and learn about the college's history and traditions. And don't miss the entertaining magic show for all ages at 3 p.m.!

FIELD TRIP

Brethren Experience of the Battle of Gettysburg

Saturday, October 18, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The field trip is an opportunity to explore the impact of the Battle of Gettysburg on the lives of the Marsh Creek German Baptist Brethren families who lived in the area at the time. The day begins at Gettysburg Church of the Brethren with a presentation on the Brethren experience of the Battle of Gettysburg and its aftermath by Steve Longenecker, professor emeritus of history at Bridgewater College. After lunch in the church fellowship hall, participants travel to the Marsh Creek Meetinghouse to learn about the history of the congregation. Elder Robert Mathews of the Old German Baptist Brethren will offer a brief devotional meditation on peace and nonresistance. The group then travels to Seminary Ridge Museum for a self-guided tour and the option to tour the cupola for an additional cost.

Bus transportation from Elizabethtown College, departing at 8:30 a.m. and returning around 4:45 p.m., is available at no additional cost. Participants who prefer to drive to Gettysburg are strongly encouraged to carpool.

Cost for the field trip is \$25, which includes lunch and basic admission to Seminary Ridge Museum. The deadline for reservations is Monday, October 13. To register, visit the events page of the Young Center website (etown.edu/youngctr/events) or call the Young Center at 717-361-1470.

LECTURE

Living Our Song: The Music of Andy and Terry Murray

RACHEL BUCHER SWANK

Tuesday, November 11, 7 p.m.

Bucher Meetinghouse



Andy and Terry Murray—renowned Church of the Brethren musicians and influential theological storytellers—have spent decades blending rich harmonies with deep spiritual insight, using music to pass on essential tenets of Brethren theology, faith, and practice: heroes “never carry a gun,” pick up a “shovel instead of a gun,” and “one person at a time” can get things done.

Join us for an evening exploring the rich theological and storytelling legacy of the Murrays' music, including a time of singing together from *Living Our Song: The Music of Andy and Terry Murray*, a new songbook collection featuring many of their original compositions.

Rachel Bucher Swank (songbook editor) is a 7th grade general music teacher at Manheim Township Middle School in Lancaster and an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren, currently serving as music coordinator at Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren. She is a 2025 Master of Music and Peacebuilding graduate from Elizabethtown College and also holds a Master of Education and a certificate of Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation in Educational Settings from Eastern Mennonite University.

Andy and Terry Murray are best known within the Church of the Brethren as a singer/songwriter duo who compose songs about Brethren history and theology. Throughout his career, Andy has worked as a minister, chaplain, and college professor, and he was the founding director of the Baker Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies at Juniata College. Terry, a professional organist, has worked as a composer, arranger, and piano and organ professor at Juniata College.





THE YOUNG CENTER FOR ANABAPTIST AND PIETIST STUDIES

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Young Center acquires Chinese translation of Sollenberger diary

The Young Center recently acquired a Chinese translation of a private diary that Howard Sollenberger kept from 1938 to 1940 while delivering aid to Chinese people behind the lines of the Japanese army's occupation of Shanxi Province. Sollenberger's parents, O. C. and Hazel Sollenberger, were Brethren missionaries in Liao Chou, China, where Howard was raised.



Joseph Wampler prepared a typescript of the journal around 2000 and later gave a copy of it to

Tingru Liu, a businessman from Zhouquan, the present name for Liao Chou. Tingru Liu facilitated a translation of the journal into Simplified Chinese, and it was published in China in 2024.

The original manuscript of the diary and other documents by Sollenberger were donated to the Young Center by his daughter, Zoe Sollenberger. In addition, a copy of Wampler's transcription and the new Chinese translation are available in the Hess Archives and Special Collections.

Sollenberger's diary is an invaluable record of conditions in Shanxi during the Japanese occupation and of Sollenberger's desire and efforts to serve the Chinese people in the face of extreme risk to himself. Sollenberger later directed Brethren service efforts in China in 1945 and 1946. He worked with the U.S. Department of State from 1947 to 1976.

FALL 2025

YOUNG
CENTER
News

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