

BRIDGES

MAGAZINE

LANCASTER MENNONITE / FALL 2026



Rooted in Christ
Living Faith in Every Season

THIS ISSUE

LANCASTER MENNONITE MAGAZINE - VOLUME 58



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SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OF OUR CONTRIBUTING WRITERS!

Dr. Michael Badriaki, Kate Grieser, Aubrey Kreider, Dr. Kim Phipps

Bridges Designer: Aubrey Kreider; Cover Design: Greg Yoder

We have moved to one edition of BRIDGES per year and monthly email updates from the Superintendent or Blazer Bulletin e-newsletter. To be added to the email list or to share suggestions about who to feature, please email info@lancastermennonite.org.

ABOUT THE COVER: A COLLAGE MADE UP OF LANCASTER MENNONITE ALUMNI AND STUDENTS FEATURED IN THIS EDITION OF BRIDGES, FOCUSED ON THE THEME OF ROOTED IN CHRIST: LIVING FAITH IN EVERY SEASON - FROM PLANTING EARLY SEEDS OF FAITH, BAPTISM, LIFELONG DISCIPLESHIP, AND NURTURING FAITH IN OTHERS.



LANCASTER
MENNONITE

FAITH • EDUCATION • COMMUNITY

VISION

Inspired by the transforming gospel of Jesus, Lancaster Mennonite School graduates embody their faith locally and globally in vocation, service, and peacemaking.

MISSION

Rooted in Christ and guided by Scripture, Lancaster Mennonite School educates and disciples students through compassionate community, vibrant student life, and engaging curriculum.



BEARING GOOD FRUIT THROUGHOUT LIFE



Hello Alumni, Family, and Friends,

At Lancaster Mennonite School, we believe the purpose of Christian education extends far beyond graduation. Rooted in Christ and guided by Scripture, we seek to educate and disciple students whose lives are shaped by the transforming gospel of Jesus and who embody their faith through vocation, service, and peacemaking.

This edition of *BRIDGES* explores the theme *Rooted in Christ: Living Faith in Every Season*. Scripture reminds us that "there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens" (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

Within these pages, alumni share stories of God's faithfulness through seasons of growth, challenge, transition, and calling. Their journeys remind us that faith in Jesus is not confined to a moment in time but continues to deepen and bear fruit throughout life.

As you read, you will see how Jesus' love and the good news of the gospel, nurtured during alumni's years at Lancaster Mennonite School, continue to shape their work, relationships, service, and witness through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. While each story is unique, together

they testify to a common truth: Jesus remains faithful in every season. As Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:24, "He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it."

As I read these alumni reflections, I am reminded that the impact of Christian education is often measured

over a lifetime. The seeds planted through relationships, chapel experiences, classroom discussions, service opportunities, and daily discipleship continue to bear fruit decades after graduation. It is a privilege to see how God is using Lancaster Mennonite graduates around the world and in their local communities, and it

strengthens our commitment to preparing today's students to follow Jesus faithfully wherever He may lead.

We pray these reflections encourage you to recognize God's hand at work in your own journey as you remain deeply rooted in Christ.

In Christ,

Dr. Michael Badriaki, Superintendent



ROOTED IN CHRIST, LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

BY: DR. KIM PHIPPS, LM BOARD CHAIR

This summer marks both a season of continuity and a season of transition at Lancaster Mennonite School.

As I begin serving as Board Chair, I do so with deep gratitude for the faithful leadership of **KATHY BEILER '85**. Kathy has guided the Board with wisdom, humility, and a steadfast commitment to Lancaster Mennonite School's mission. As an alumna, parent, and dedicated volunteer, she has invested countless hours in helping ensure that LM remains strong and well-positioned for the future.

Reflecting on this transition, Kathy recently shared, "As I pass the baton to Dr. Phipps, I do so with great confidence in Lancaster Mennonite's future. God has

been faithful to this school for generations, and I am excited to see how God continues to work through its students, faculty, staff, and supporters." On behalf of the Board and the entire school community, I extend heartfelt thanks for Kathy's leadership and service.

This transition also comes at an exciting time in the life of Lancaster Mennonite. **Over the past year, the Board and school leadership engaged in a thoughtful and prayerful process to clarify the vision and mission that will guide our work in the years ahead.**

While our commitment to Christ-centered education remains unchanged, we sought language that more clearly expresses who we are and what we hope God will accomplish through Lancaster Mennonite.

KATHY BEILER '85, FORMER BOARD CHAIR PASSES THE BATON TO INCOMING BOARD CHAIR, DR. KIM PHIPPS AS SHE BEGINS HER NEW ROLE WITH LM.



“ AS I PASS THE BATON TO DR. PHIPPS, I DO SO WITH GREAT CONFIDENCE IN LANCASTER MENNONITE'S FUTURE. GOD HAS BEEN FAITHFUL TO THIS SCHOOL FOR GENERATIONS, AND I'M EXCITED TO SEE HOW GOD CONTINUES TO WORK...

**KATHY BEILER '85
FORMER LANCASTER MENNONITE BOARD CHAIR**

Our updated vision expresses our hope that:

Inspired by the transforming gospel of Jesus, Lancaster Mennonite School graduates embody their faith locally and globally in vocation, service, and peacemaking.

Our mission now states:

Rooted in Christ and guided by Scripture, Lancaster Mennonite School educates and discipless students through compassionate community, vibrant student life, and engaging curriculum.

These statements capture what has long been true about Lancaster Mennonite. **They reflect our desire to nurture students who not only grow academically, but who also develop a faith that shapes how they live, lead, serve, and engage the world.**

As parents of a 2010 LM graduate, my husband, Kelly and I have personally witnessed the impact of LM's mission. The education our daughter, **BROOKE PHIPPS '10** received extended far beyond the classroom. She was challenged to think deeply, grow spiritually, and consider how her gifts

could be used in service to God and others. That experience reinforces my confidence in the important work Lancaster Mennonite continues to do for students and families today.

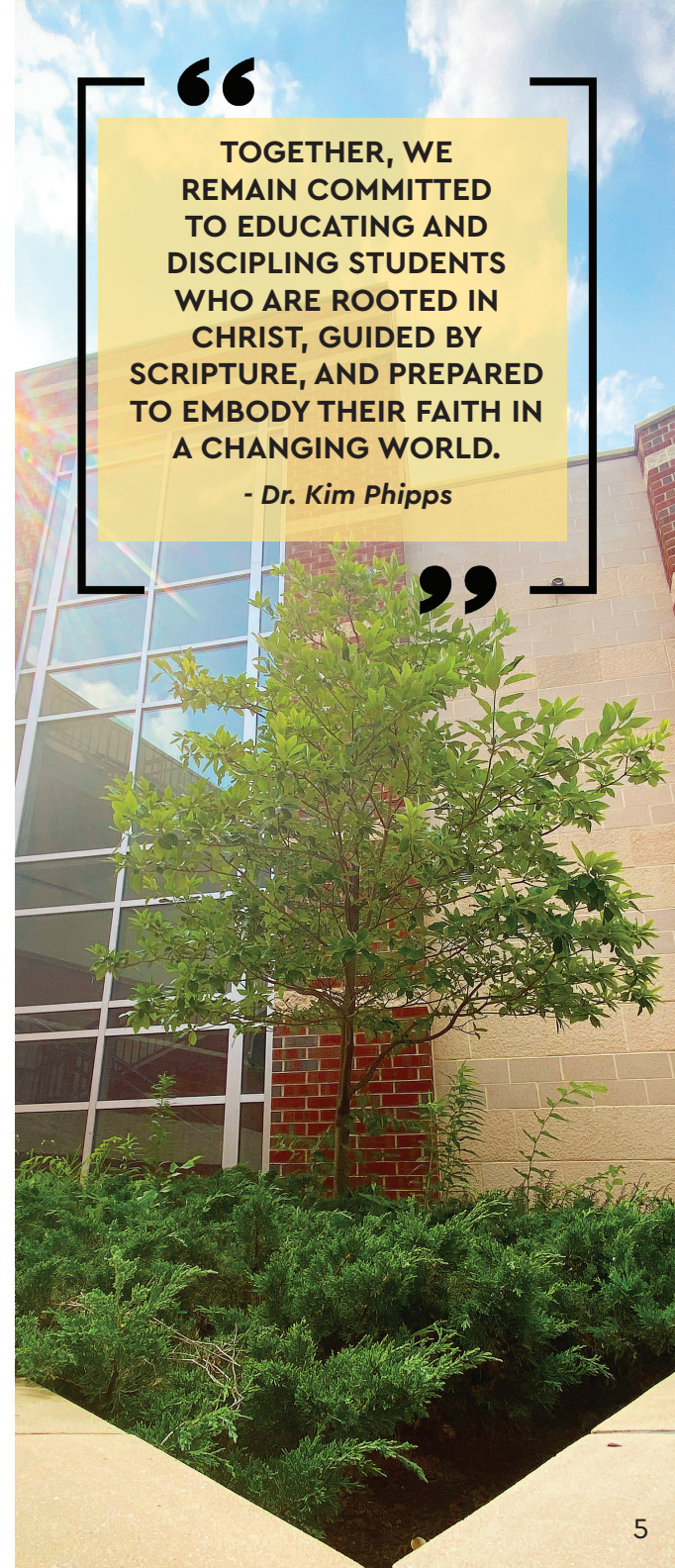
In June 2025, I retired after serving more than 20 years as President of Messiah University. During my tenure I had the privilege of encountering many LM graduates who demonstrated intellectual depth and breadth alongside a vibrant Christian faith exemplified in love and service to God and neighbor. It was very clear to me that LM was faithfully and effectively fulfilling its mission.

As we look to the future, I am encouraged by the strength of this community and by God's faithfulness through every season. Together, we remain committed to educating and discipling students who are rooted in Christ, guided by Scripture, and prepared to embody their faith in a changing world.

Thank you for your continued prayers, partnership, and support of Lancaster Mennonite School. I look forward to the journey ahead and all that God has in store for this community.

“
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A CHANGING WORLD.

”
- Dr. Kim Phipps





ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

JOHN LANDIS RUTH '48



JOHN L. RUTH '48 AT THE WISDOM TABLE
PHOTO CREDITS: WES COSAND

JOHN L. RUTH '48 has dedicated his life to preserving stories of faith, peace, and community. As a historian, author, teacher, pastor, and lifelong learner, he has helped generations understand how the past can guide faithful living in the present. It is this legacy of service, scholarship, and Christian witness that has earned him Lancaster Mennonite School's Alumni of the Year recognition.

John reflects on a lifetime shaped by Christ's enduring presence. "The years teach much that the days never know," he says, quoting Ralph Waldo Emerson. Looking back, however, he believes one lesson has remained constant since his childhood and years at Lancaster Mennonite: "True wisdom is humility."

John graduated from LMH in 1948 and credits the school with helping him understand the importance of education grounded in a community of faith. Two years later, at age 20, he was unexpectedly called into ministry when he was chosen by lot to serve a congregation in the Franconia Mennonite Conference. Though surprised by the call, he never questioned accepting it, trusting God's leading for the journey ahead.

That journey would include studies in English and history, doctoral work at Harvard University, years of teaching, pastoral ministry, and a remarkable body of historical work. Through numerous books, documentaries, historical tours, and presentations, John has served as a trusted interpreter of Anabaptist history. His writings—including *The Earth is the Lord's*, *Forgiveness: A Legacy of the West Nickel Mines Amish School*, and *This Very Ground, This Crooked Affair*—have helped readers understand the enduring themes of faith, peace, reconciliation, and community.

Throughout his life, John has been motivated by a desire to preserve and share the witness of those who came before him. "I have been a sort of cheerleader for the truths which the

Anabaptist breakthrough represented," he reflects. His work has built bridges across generations, helping others see how history continues to shape Christian discipleship today.

When asked where he has most clearly seen God's faithfulness, John points not to dramatic moments but to signs of hope emerging in unexpected places. Even amid struggles, he has witnessed evidence of God's Kingdom breaking through. Congregations find new life. Young leaders emerge. God continues to work.



JOHN L. RUTH '48 WITH NEW BOOK AT WEAVERLAND

For John, a life rooted in Christ is ultimately a life rooted in humility, service, and faithfulness—a legacy that continues to inspire generations of LM students and alumni.

ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

HANS LEAMAN, JD, PHD '96

For **HANS LEAMAN '96**, being rooted in Christ means recognizing that we belong to someone with a marvelous vision for redemption. Through his work as an educator, historian, and leader, he has dedicated his career to helping others understand their place within God's story and the global church. It is this commitment to Christian discipleship, lifelong learning, and cultivating the next generation of faith-filled leaders that led the school to name him an LM Alumnus of the Year.



HANS LEAMAN '96 TEACHING A COURSE AT SATTLER COLLEGE

Today, Hans serves as Academic Dean and Associate Professor of History at Sattler College in Boston, where he helps lead a classical Christian liberal arts program rooted in the values of the early church and the Anabaptist tradition. His teaching and scholarship focus on church history, migration, and discipleship.

Hans traces many of these interests back to his years at Lancaster Mennonite. "The teachers gave me a sense of excitement about being part of the global church," he recalls. Many faculty members had served in other countries and shared firsthand experiences of Christian communities around the world. Their example helped him see the church not simply as a local gathering, but as a worldwide body of believers connected through Christ.

After graduating from LM, Hans studied at Princeton University and Yale University before working as an attorney, researcher, and professor. His work with refugees and asylum seekers, research on migration and religious freedom, and recent presentations during the 500 Years of Anabaptism commemoration all reflect that calling to help others understand God's work across cultures and throughout history.

In this season of life, Hans says marriage and parenting with his wife, Kara, has become his greatest teachers. Watching his children marvel at ordinary things reminds him of the virtue Jesus commended in children. "That kind of marvel breeds gratefulness and humility," he says.

Whether teaching history, writing about Anabaptist theology, or raising his family, Hans seeks to help others understand



their place within God's larger story. **He often describes believers as becoming "a new branch on a larger tree" when they join the church**—supported by the prayers and faith of those who came before them and called to strengthen those who come after.

For Hans, a life rooted in Christ is one that remains connected—to Scripture, to the church, to the generations who have gone before, and to the God who continues to guide His people today.

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR AMAZING ALUMNI!

To learn more about our Alumni of the Year, please visit our website:

lancastermennonite.org/alumni



CULTIVATING FAITH: GROWING ROOTS THAT BEAR FRUIT



BY: KATE GRIESER, DIRECTOR OF DONOR GUIDANCE & DEVELOPMENT

For over 55 years, Shenk's Greenhouse has been in the business of growing things. **FRAN SHENK '76** and her husband, Jack, have spent decades nurturing this family business. However, even more important than the beautiful flowers and plants they grow is their focus on cultivating relationships, serving neighbors, and honoring God through faithful work.

They, along with their son, and seasonal help from their daughters and grandchildren, desire that their faith in Christ shapes each interaction they

have with customers. They strive to run the business with honesty and fairness, following Christ's command to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

During the busy Spring season, the demands of the greenhouse can feel especially overwhelming. Fran finds rest in Christ through prayer, daily time in Scripture, and worship with her church family.

Fran shares, "Being rooted in Christ means being the good soil in the Parable of the Sower: holding fast to the Word of God and allowing it to transform your life, bearing good fruit in season."



FRAN SHENK '76 WITH HER HUSBAND JACK

Today, that same depth of community continues through the greenhouse. Over the years, many customers have shared personal struggles and prayer requests. Fran and Jack faithfully lift these concerns up to God each evening after closing.

// BEING ROOTED IN CHRIST MEANS BEING THE GOOD SOIL IN THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER: HOLDING FAST TO THE WORD OF GOD AND ALLOWING IT TO TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE, BEARING GOOD FRUIT IN SEASON.

- FRAN SHENK '76

Looking back, she remembers times at LM that helped her to do just that. Chapel services, singing together, and the encouragement of being surrounded by a community of believers were significant in her journey.

As Fran reflects on God's faithfulness throughout her life, she can see God's steady presence through changing business seasons, uncertain times like COVID, and countless other moments when God provided for her needs. Her encouragement to today's students comes from Proverbs 3:5-6: Trust the Lord, acknowledge Him in all your ways, and He will faithfully direct your path.

GROWING WHAT MATTERS MOST

BY: KATE GRIESER, DIRECTOR OF DONOR GUIDANCE & DEVELOPMENT



JEREL '99 & LEAH (EVERETT) '95 FREY

Watching things grow gives **JEREL FREY '99** a glimpse of God's character and creativity. "To be able to witness daily the miracle of life is something I'm very grateful for. Whether that be a cucumber seed germinating and springing through the soil in just a few days or a small Japanese maple bud exploding into an entire leaflet in early spring, the intricacies of botanical life are true wonders that speak volumes of our Creator."

Jerel and his wife, **LEAH (EVERETT) FREY '95**, are raising six children, ages 9-20, while operating the family business, Frey's Greenhouse. He describes this season of life as one filled with abundant blessings.

But being in business is not easy. Weather, changing seasons, and the fragile nature of plants are all factors outside of human control. Jerel finds that trusting in God's provision and care helps him to maintain a long-term vision and avoid getting bogged down in the daily stresses. "God is constantly teaching me to be grateful for the blessings He provides and to remain close to Him during periods of trial and hardship."

The invitation from John 15 to abide in Christ is particularly relevant for Jerel and constant prayer throughout the day is one way he stays connected to Christ as the source of life.

Jerel is thankful for the foundation he received at LM. Chapel services, testimonies from teachers and community members, and worshiping together helped grow his relationship with Christ. Today, he continues to find

encouragement through Scripture and active involvement in the church.

Frey's Greenhouse remains a family endeavor centered on stewardship, hard work, and serving the community by helping bring beauty to people's homes. Whether interacting with customers, employees, or family members, Jerel strives to reflect Christ through kindness, respect, and dignity.

His advice to today's LM students is simple: **"Surround yourself with people who encourage you to grow in your faith, ask God for the courage to do the work He's called you to—and plant things and watch them grow."**



JEREL '99 & LEAH (EVERETT) '95 FREY WITH THEIR SIX CHILDREN

ROOTED TOGETHER: A LIFETIME OF FAITHFUL SERVICE

BY: KATE GRIESER, DIRECTOR OF DONOR GUIDANCE & DEVELOPMENT



BETH '64 & JIM '64 LEAMAN WITH THEIR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN (GRANDDAUGHTER, LEAH BOWMAN '20 NOT PICTURED).

For nearly six decades, **JIM '64 AND BETH (KLING) LEAMAN '64** have discovered that every season of life brings new opportunities to trust God. Now, as they celebrate turning 80 alongside their Lancaster Mennonite classmates, they are embracing a season of transition with gratitude, flexibility, and enduring faith.

"Being rooted in Christ in this season means holding onto faith in Christ and trusting the Holy Spirit to be our Helper," they shared. Living at Landis Homes has opened new opportunities to invest in relationships, encourage

neighbors experiencing loss or health challenges, and remain active in worship, Bible study, and service.

Their story together began at LM, where they first met as students. Looking back, they credit LM with shaping both their faith and their future. Bible classes, chapel, and teachers who broadened their

understanding of God's world nurtured a lifelong love for Scripture, while daily rides to school with teacher Myron Dietz left a lasting impression on Jim. Most importantly, Lancaster Mennonite introduced them to one another, beginning a partnership marked by God's faithfulness.

Following graduation, Beth and Jim entered Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) in Philadelphia, expecting to serve for two years. Instead, God led them to remain for 25 years, where they ministered as a pastor couple, raised their family, and helped establish Philadelphia Mennonite HS.

When the time came to return to Lancaster County, they stepped into another unfamiliar season, "feeling like Abraham, who went out not knowing where he was going." Once again, God faithfully provided a home, meaningful work, and a church community before eventually calling them back into pastoral ministry.

Their daughter, **MARIA BOWMAN '94**, and three of their grandchildren are LM graduates. They are pictured

here with their granddaughter, **LEAH BOWMAN '20**, during COVID at her socially-distant LMH graduation.



Their encouragement to today's students is simple but timeless: "Keep Jesus central. Listen for God's Spirit, stay connected to other believers, and love and serve others—especially those who are different from you."

ROOTED IN TRUST, SERVING IN EVERY SEASON

BY: KATE GRIESER, DIRECTOR OF DONOR GUIDANCE & DEVELOPMENT



BARBARA KEENER REED '52, reflects that "lots of water has flowed under the LM bridge" since she was a student. But she is so grateful for the foundation the school gave her.

Already a church member when she began as a student, her time at LM led her to truly choose Jesus for herself and to dedicate her life to God's mission, wherever it led. She is thankful that her late husband,

HAROLD E. REED '52, was being similarly shaped at LM.

She shared, "LM prepared us to steady ourselves in God through major uncertainties and difficulties, of which there were many!"

Serving for 15 years in Africa, Harold and Barbara's life together included the challenges of living and working in a different culture, surprise orders to leave the country immediately, and even having their lives threatened. Their witness as people of joy, kindness, and patience led others to also choose Jesus. Barbara gives God the glory for this!

Re-entry into life in North America brought new opportunities to serve. As a nurse, she ministered to patients experiencing mental illness and deep trauma. Today, she continues to share devotional messages with her Landis Homes community, prays faithfully for family, the church and the world, and encourages others

through her memoir, *Standing on Holy Ground and Some Not So Holy*.

For Barbara, being rooted in Christ means trusting in His provision. "God gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless."

Perhaps her greatest season of trust came as she cared for Harold through his journey with Alzheimer's disease. Grief was a significant piece of this "long goodbye" but she walked in the joy of the Lord.

Barbara's encouragement to students comes from Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make straight your paths...follow Jesus and root yourself in Him. The benefits are out of this world!"



TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART. FOLLOW JESUS AND ROOT YOURSELF IN HIM.

- BARBARA KEENER REED '52

THE HEALING POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS

BY: AUBREY KREIDER, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



JONATHAN '70 & RHODA CHARLES '72 WITH THEIR THREE SONS, DAUGHTER-IN-LAWS, AND GRANDCHILDREN (3 GENERATIONS).

For **JONATHAN CHARLES '70**, being rooted in Christ has looked different in every season of life. As a student, he was trying to find his place in the world. In college, during the turbulence of the Vietnam War era, he wrestled with questions of truth, faith, peace, and justice. As a husband, father, teacher, photographer, and business owner, he learned to navigate the responsibilities of work and family life. **Through every season, however, one thing remained constant: "The anchor of our lives has always been a strong commitment to Jesus as Lord and the community of faith He has placed us in."**

Jonathan credits LM with helping establish that foundation. Graduating

in 1970, he entered a secular college environment filled with competing worldviews and intense debates about war, politics, and faith. Looking back, he remains grateful for the Christ-centered education he received at LMH and for Anabaptist values that emphasized peace, justice, and following Jesus above cultural or political allegiances.

One of the most difficult seasons of Jonathan's life came when his church, Habecker Mennonite, experienced a painful division in 2005. The loss left him discouraged and struggling to see hope for the future. Then, in 2008, immigrant families—many from the Karen community of Myanmar—began arriving and became part of the Habecker congregation. Over time, those relationships brought unexpected healing. "They think we saved them, but truly they saved us," Jonathan reflects. **"That's the way it is in church. God uses people to bring healing to our souls. Relationships are sacred."**

Today, Jonathan and his wife **RHODA (REINFORD) CHARLES '72** remain deeply invested in both their church and LM. Their family spans four generations of LM

graduates, and students, from Jonathan's mother, a member of the school's second graduating class, to their six grandchildren currently enrolled. Their congregation also helps support several Karen students who attend LM.

As Jonathan reflects on God's faithfulness, what sticks out to him most are the quiet ways God has provided through family, friendships, opportunities, and community. His advice to today's students reflects that perspective: care about the person next to you, work for peace, be kind, and walk with Jesus. **For Jonathan, a life rooted in Christ is ultimately a life lived alongside others.**



JONATHAN '70 & RHODA CHARLES '72 WITH THEIR HABECKER CHURCH FRIENDS AT AN LM PASTOR'S DAY.

ANCHORED IN MUSIC: FAITH, MOTHERHOOD, AND WORSHIP

BY: AUBREY KREIDER, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

For **MACKENZIE CAMPBELL '17**, known professionally as *Mackenzie Paige*, a life rooted in Christ is not a static experience but a daily return—especially in seasons of growth, loss, and motherhood. As a worship leader and musical artist based in Lancaster, she continues to shape her life and work around the steady truth of God's unchanging character.

"The older I get, the more aware I become of my need for Christ," she shared. "Each day I have to plant my feet on the truths of who God is and who I am in Him. Currently, in my season of motherhood, I realize how much I need to surrender and remain fully rooted in Christ. He is my source of strength and hope!"

Lancaster Mennonite teachers played a formative role in shaping her faith, as their personal stories of God's faithfulness helped her see how Christ meets people in everyday life. That foundation continues to shape how she approaches worship leading and songwriting.

Today, in the midst of young motherhood and a growing creative career, she describes learning surrender in new and tangible ways. "My faith has

grown exponentially," she said. "It's only by His help we can surrender and walk in faith."

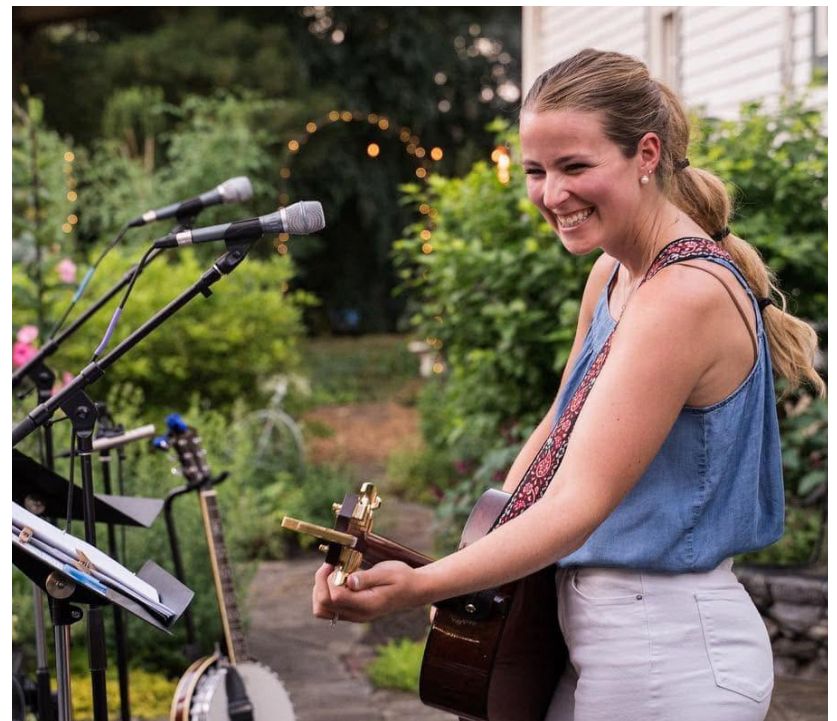
That trust has been tested in both joy and grief, including the loss of a child—a moment she describes as one where God's presence carried her and her husband forward. Even in that pain, she felt held by God. **She clings tightly to the promise of Psalm 23: that God's goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.**

Recently, she released her song *Mother(s) hood*, a project born from her own lived experience. "Motherhood can feel like a lot. God didn't make motherhood to be so pressuring," she reflected. "It is one of life's greatest gifts and refineries."

Whether leading worship or raising her daughter, Mackenzie seeks to direct every part of her life toward Christ.

She tries to start each day before her daughter wakes, spending time in God's Word, journaling, and conversing with God - to center her heart and mind on Christ for the day.

Her encouragement to current students is simple and steady: lean fully into God, trust His presence in every season, and "remember that His goodness never runs out."



MACKENZIE CAMPBELL '17 PLAYING AT HER AUNT DAWN'S BACKYARD CONCERT.
PHOTO CREDITS: KIM WINEY

LEARN MORE ABOUT HER MUSIC ON INSTAGRAM AT @MACKENZIEPAIGE

FINDING PURPOSE IN HELPING OTHERS

BY: AUBREY KREIDER, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



ANNE EDELMAN & LORETTA SHARP '70 SERVING AT MCC THRIFT STORE. PHOTO CREDITS: KRISTINA MARTIN

For **LORETTA (UMBLE) SHARP '70**, faith has always been closely connected to serving others. Whether as a nurse, volunteer, church member, wife, mother, grandmother, or friend, she has sought to live out Christ's love through practical acts of care and service.

After graduating from Lancaster Mennonite High School in 1970, Loretta's path took several unexpected turns. She began college planning to become a teacher but discovered her calling in nursing, a profession she faithfully served in for 43 years. Looking back, she sees God's hand guiding her through each transition, including supporting her husband Don as he followed a call from teaching into pastoral ministry.

Throughout the many moves and seasons of change their family experienced, Loretta found strength in Christian community. Friends and church members walked alongside them through times of discernment and uncertainty, reinforcing a lesson she first experienced at Lancaster Mennonite: faith is meant to be lived in community.

Today, in retirement, Loretta continues to serve. She works part-time at the MCC ReUzit Shop in Ephrata and volunteers with Community Meals through her church in Lancaster. Having lived in several communities over the years, she is especially passionate about welcoming people who may feel out of place or alone. "My love language is helping and serving," she says.

When asked what it means to be rooted in Christ, Loretta points to an Anabaptist understanding of faith centered on Jesus, community, and reconciliation coined by Anabaptist author and pastor, Palmer Becker. As she reflects on God's faithfulness through decades of change, she is grateful for the many friendships, opportunities to serve, and communities that have shaped her journey.

Today, that legacy continues through her family. One grandchild has already graduated from Lancaster Mennonite, and two more currently attend the school.

Loretta encourages her grandkids with the same advice she offers current students: choose friends who share your values, become involved in a church community, and find ways to serve others. **"Live out your values," she says.**

It is wisdom she has carried throughout her own life—one rooted in Christ and demonstrated through a lifetime of caring for others.



DON & LORETTA SHARP '70 WITH THEIR GRANDSON, AUGUST STETLER '24 AT HIS LMH GRADUATION. PHOTO CREDITS: COLETTE STETLER

HOLDING TIGHTLY TO CHRIST, LOOSELY TO PLANS

BY: AUBREY KREIDER, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



COURTNEY LEHMAN '21 AT HER APARTMENT
IN CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

When **COURTNEY LEHMAN '21** moved to Chiang Mai, Thailand, to teach English, she left behind much of what felt familiar—her culture, language, community, and routines. What she discovered was a deeper dependence on God than she had ever known before.

"To thrive, you need to be rooted," Courtney says. "I've learned that most clearly in this season of life."

Now in her second year teaching English to first and second grade students at *School of Promise*, a bilingual school in Thailand, Courtney has found that being rooted in Christ is not simply a comforting idea—it's a daily necessity. "Daily dependence isn't always easy," she says. "Letting go of my own plans and learning to rely on God is something I have to choose again and again, but it's in that surrender that I've experienced His faithfulness most deeply." Whether stepping into a classroom, building friendships across cultures, or navigating the uncertainties of life overseas, prayer has become the foundation of everything she does.

Courtney credits LM and college in shaping her faith and her calling to become a teacher. Teachers modeled what it looked like to love students well and live authentically for Christ, while relationships with classmates and mentors encouraged her to make her faith her own.

Living in Thailand has also taught her the power of presence. In a culture where trust is built slowly through relationships, she has learned that showing up consistently often speaks louder than words. Through her teaching, classroom prayer journal, and

daily interactions, she seeks to reflect Christ's love to students and families.

Looking back, Courtney sees God's faithfulness in His steady presence through every high and low. God has faithfully led her one step at a time.

More than anything, she now encourages students to anchor their identity in Christ rather than in their own plans or expectations. "Make Him your identity," she says. "Get to know Him, really know Him. And then hold loosely your plans and the unknowns, because He already knows it."

In a world full of uncertainty, Courtney has discovered that Christ remains the constant—faithful in every place, and steady in every unknown.

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To thrive, you need to be rooted. I've learned that most clearly in this season of life.

- COURTNEY LEHMAN '21

PEDALING THROUGH LIFE WITH PURPOSE



BY: AUBREY KREIDER, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

On any given week, you might find **LARRY GROFF '80** delivering Meals on Wheels by bicycle, tending his garden and beehives, serving on a nonprofit board, teaching Sunday school, or helping tenants in a low-income apartment building. Though the settings vary, a common thread runs through each of these activities: a desire to serve others and contribute to the work God is already doing in the world.

That commitment has guided Larry throughout his adult life. As a senior at Lancaster Mennonite, he attended

a chapel presentation by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) that sparked an interest in international service. He went on to study agriculture and later served with his wife, Sherry, through MCC in Haiti and Cambodia, supporting agricultural development, reforestation efforts, and community programs.

Today, retirement has opened new opportunities for service closer to home. Larry volunteers with Meals on Wheels, Blessings of Hope, Lancaster Downtowners, and his church, while also serving on several nonprofit boards.

apartment building, where they have spent the past seven years walking alongside tenants as they navigate life's challenges.

After a previous owner expressed hopes that the building would generate significant profit, Larry recalls, "my goals as a landlord were very different." Instead, he has sought to offer stability, fairness, and support.

A lifelong cyclist, Larry still rides the bicycle he purchased while working at a bike shop during high school. Living in Lancaster City has allowed biking to become both a practical and intentional lifestyle choice—one small way he seeks to care for creation and his community.

Looking back on a journey that has taken him from Pennsylvania to Haiti, Cambodia, and back again, Larry remains grateful for God's faithfulness.

His advice to today's students is simple: be open to opportunities to serve, look beyond personal success, and find ways to encourage and empower others.



One of the most significant ways his faith has shaped this season of life began through volunteering at a transitional living facility for people experiencing homelessness. The experience inspired Larry and Sherry to purchase a low-income

LARRY GROFF '80 AND HIS WIFE, SHERRY ON A BIKE CAMPING TRIP

WE ASKED CURRENT STUDENTS: WHY DO YOU THINK SERVING OTHERS IS IMPORTANT?

We asked current students - Why did you enjoy serving during World Changer Week? And why do you think serving others is important, especially as Christians? Here is what they told us:



**LISA SULIMAN,
10TH GRADER**

"I enjoyed serving during World Changer Week because we made a difference in our community and helped others while spending time with our friends."

Serving others is important because it makes us think about different circumstances and challenges. It fosters empathy and also shows you that to have a strong community, everyone who can needs to pitch in. Additionally, it shows you that work that may seem small can make a difference."



**GRACIA EUCEDA,
9TH GRADER**

"My grade volunteered at Woodcrest Retreat and Blessings of Hope. Together with my homeroom, I helped Woodcrest prepare for their upcoming summer retreats. It was such a joy to know that our efforts could benefit others in the future."



**RYAN MAST,
12TH GRADER**

"Helping our community is incredibly important for us as Christians because Jesus tells us to help our neighbors and everyone around the world."



**DIEGO BUSTAMANTE,
3RD GRADER**

"Our class volunteered during World Changer Week by visiting a local retirement community. We got to play games with the residents, which brought them joy! It was fun for our class to serve and spend time with them."



**ELLIOTT MCGILLVRAY
KINDERGARTENER**

"I helped pack MCC school kits with older high school students. We were packing them for other kids who don't have them in other countries. It's good to help other people!"

COMMENCEMENT 2026

Lancaster Mennonite School celebrated the Class of 2026 during its 84th Commencement Ceremony, honoring 60 graduates surrounded by family, friends, and the LM community. Centered on this year's theme, Rooted in Christ (Colossians 2:6-7), the ceremony featured commencement speaker Dr. Christine Gardner, Provost of Messiah University, who encouraged graduates to stand firm in their faith. We celebrate the Class of 2026 and pray God's continued blessing as they live out their faith through vocation, service, and peacemaking wherever God leads them!



STUDENT STATS



2025-26

Demographics

Top 5 Faith Backgrounds Represented

- 32.3% Mennonite
- 22.8% Non-Denominational Christian
- 3% Other Anabaptist (Church of the Brethren, Brethren in Christ, etc.)
- 2.2% Lutheran
- 2.2% United Methodist

Top 5 School Districts Represented

- 27% School District of Lancaster (SDOL)
- 14% Manheim Township
- 13% Conestoga Valley
- 9% Lampeter Strasburg (LS)
- 8% Hempfield

International Students Per Country

- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| 11 - China | 3 - Spain |
| 7 - Ethiopia | 4 - Japan |
| 4 - Vietnam | 1 - India |

Class of 2026

- 100% college acceptance rate
- 80% went on to a 2-4 year college
- 20% went into volunteer service or into the workforce



EITC: It's not alphabet soup, It's A Powerful Way to Transform Lives!

**ALSO, KEEP AN EYE OUT
FOR NEWS REGARDING
A NEW FEDERAL
SCHOLARSHIP TAX
CREDIT COMING IN 2027!**

If you or your business owe more than \$500 in PA income taxes, you need to know about PA's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC)!

Through EITC, participants provide need-based scholarships to students while receiving a 90% Pennsylvania tax credit for their contribution.

Transform Lives, Get a 90% Tax Credit

At LM, EITC funding makes it possible to provide approximately \$800,000 in need-based financial aid each year.

Getting involved is simple and you're giving money you'd be paying anyway.

You can help students thrive academically, grow in character, and reach their God-given potential. It's an easy way to transform lives while maximizing the impact of your tax dollars.

Ask me how today! I'd love to help you sign up!



Kate Grieser
Director of Donor Guidance and Development
grieserke@lancastrermennonite.org
(717) 740-2425

Current EITC Participant Testimonial

"We are happy to give to LM through the SPE/EITC program because it allows us to directly support high-quality education via LM's financial aid program. It's a meaningful way to invest in LM and students education while also making the most of available tax benefits."



- Marta '98 & Kyle '98 Horst, LM Alumni & Current Parents

How It Works

Imagine you owe \$1,000 in Pennsylvania taxes:

Without EITC

- Pay \$1,000 in taxes
- Out-of-pocket cost: **\$1,000**

With EITC

- Contribute \$1,000 to student scholarships
- Receive a \$900 tax credit
- Out-of-pocket cost: **\$100**

For just \$100 out of pocket, you can direct \$1,000 toward changing a student's future.

STUDENT AWARDS



AJ SOUCHET '26 RECOGNIZED AS A LCCTC "OUTSTANDING STUDENT" AWARDS RECIPIENT!

We are proud to celebrate **AJ SOUCHET '26** for being recognized as a 2025-26 Lancaster County Career and Technology Center (LCCTC) "Outstanding Student" Awards Recipient!

He recently graduated from the Welding Technology program at the LCCTC while also completing his studies at LM. This honor reflects his hard work, dedication, skill, and commitment to excellence both in the classroom and in his technical training. Congrats AJ for this well-deserved recognition!

8TH GRADERS EARN GLOBAL SEAL OF BILITERACY IN SPANISH FLUENCY



Lancaster Mennonite School is proud to recognize eight rising ninth-grade students who have earned the Global Seal of Biliteracy at the Functional Fluency level in Spanish, an internationally recognized certification that validates bilingual and biliterate skills. The students receiving this distinction are (pictured left to right): Joelyn Blessing, Olivia Bare, Naomi Dalen, Isabel Reinford, Ethan Buckwalter, Silas Charles, Eric de la Rosa Ruark, and Carter Hundley.

In addition to earning the certification, two students achieved a historic milestone for Lancaster Mennonite's middle school Spanish program. **Naomi Dalen and Eric de la Rosa Ruark became the first LM middle school students to score at the Advanced level in all four assessed language categories: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. Felicidades!**



BILL ROTHWEIN '26 RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS SCHOLAR-ATHLETE AWARD

Congratulations to graduating senior **BILL ROTHWEIN '26**, who became the first male student in LM history to receive the prestigious A. Landis Brackbill Lancaster-Lebanon League Senior Scholar-Athlete Award, recognizing excellence in academics, athletics, leadership, and service. LM also celebrates **CHASE HURST '26**, who was selected as a school nominee for this distinguished honor.

We just can't fit it all!

**SEE ALL THE STORIES
& NEWS ON INSTAGRAM:
@LMBLAZERS**

MEET OUR NEW TEACHERS



MELISSA SMUCKER DE LEON,
*Kindergarten Spanish Immersion
Teacher*

Melissa brings more than a decade of experience living and teaching in Spain, where she served as a preschool music teacher, English instructor, and missionary. A graduate of Messiah University with a degree in

Church Music and Theology, Melissa is passionate about helping young learners grow academically, spiritually, and linguistically. She is excited to welcome students into the joy of language learning while nurturing a classroom rooted in Christ.



BRENT SIEGRIST,
*Middle School and High School
STEM (Science, Technology,
Engineering, and Math) Teacher*

Brent brings extensive teaching experience from both the United States and Kenya, where he taught mathematics, science, Spanish, and Christian worldview courses while

serving at an international Christian school, Rosslyn Academy, and he has also served as a pastor. Brent holds degrees in mathematics, biology, and theology from EMU, and a teaching degree from the University of Saint Francis. He is passionate about helping students develop curiosity, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of God's world. He looks forward to equipping students to explore STEM through the lens of faith while inspiring a lifelong love of learning.

MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS



ALEX ALVAREZ

Member-At-Large

Alex Alvarez is a current Lancaster Mennonite parent and has already been serving the school as an external member of the Board's Finance Committee. He brings financial expertise from his role as

a Senior Banking Business Underwriter at Fulton Bank, along with a passion for community leadership and bilingual engagement. He and his family attend The Worship Center.



ANNE BINGAMAN, J.D.

Member-At-Large

Anne Bingaman, J.D. is a current LM parent whose family has deep ties to the school, as her husband, **LUKE BINGAMAN '07** is an LM alumnus. She is currently employed as a career law clerk in the Lancaster

County Court of Common Pleas and, while in law school, worked in the federal court system and for a local legal services firm. She previously served on the Musser Park Civic Association board. Anne attends Blossom Hill Mennonite Church where she serves in children's ministry programs.



JOHN BOMBERGER

Member-At-Large

John Bomberger is a retired business executive, faithful LM supporter, and parent of two EMS (Eastern Mennonite School) graduates. His decades of leadership in Christian nonprofit organizations, church

service, and missions reflect a lifelong commitment to faith-based education and servant leadership. He and his wife, Linda attend Neffsville Mennonite Church.

UPCOMING EVENTS

lancastermennonite.org/events

Homecoming - Saturday, September 26, 2026

High School Open House - Thursday, October 29, 2026

Fall Play - Thursday-Sunday, November 5-8, 2026

Lancaster County's ExtraGive Day - Friday, November 20, 2026

SAVE THE DATE

World Changers Gala - Friday, March 5, 2027

World Changers Week - April 19-23, 2027

Spring Celebration - Saturday, April 24, 2027

Annual Golf Tournament - Tuesday, May 11, 2027



MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW FOR SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

Get ready for an exciting Homecoming at Lancaster Mennonite! Alumni, students, families, and community members are all invited to join us for the activities and events. There will be something for everyone to enjoy!

REGISTER ONLINE

lancastermennonite.org/homecoming or call at 717.509.4459, ext. 1021

Check the website for updates or event changes



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

ATHLETICS - Turf Field

12 PM → Varsity Girls Soccer vs. Lititz Christian School

2 PM → Varsity Boys Soccer vs. Ephrata Mennonite School

3:45 PM → JV Boys Soccer vs. Ephrata Mennonite School

ATHLETICS - Gym B

12 PM → Varsity Girls Volleyball vs. Ephrata Mennonite School

1:15 PM → JV Girls Volleyball vs. Ephrata Mennonite School

FOOD TRUCKS → 12 - 5 PM

Grab some lunch or tasty treats from one of our food trucks as you enjoy the games and fall activities!

Food truck vendors → TacoRV, Truckin' ChowDown, Penny's Ice Cream, Noel's Cafe, and concessions from LM Booster Clubs.

A percentage of food truck sales will be donated to support LM!

FALL FESTIVAL → 12 - 3 PM

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| - Hayride | - Corn hole | - Hay bale maze |
| - Pumpkin decorating | - Carnival games | - Corn bin |
| - Fishing for apples | - Face painting | - Petting zoo |

The **dunk tank** will be available again for a chance to **soak some of your favorite LM teachers**. \$5 for 3 throws, or \$10 for a PUSH.

ALUMNI TENT → 12 - 5 PM

Stop by the Alumni Tent under the blue canopy to grab an Alumni Bingo Card. Return your completed card to spin the prize wheel for your chance to win some great LM merch!

CAMPUS TOUR → 3 - 4 PM

There have been many changes to our campus over the past few years! Haven't had a chance to see them for yourself? Join us for a guided tour. Meet outside under the Sky Bridge (between the high school and fine arts building) if you are interested.

Unable to make it? Contact us if you want to schedule a private tour at events@lancastermennonite.org.

ALUMNI RECEPTION → 3:30 - 5 PM

Come to the Gathering Area (by the Alumni Dining Hall) for music, refreshments, sharing memories, and the chance to reconnect with teachers and classmates. Families are welcome!

The event is free, but registration for this reception is appreciated! Please let us know you plan to attend by RSVPing online at: lancastermennonite.org/homecoming



WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU ALUMNI?

Did you just get married? Grow your family? New job or degree?
Did you recently receive an award or recognition?
Have a special life event?

We'd love to share your news! Visit
lancastermennonite.org/alumni/update-info
or scan the QR code to submit an update.



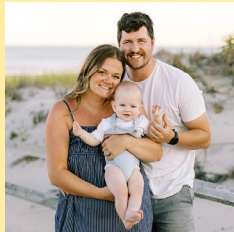
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REUNIONS

CLASS OF 1956, 70TH REUNION: September 12, 2026, 11 AM at Landis Homes, Harvest View Building, Harvest Room. Contact Don Sensenig at dondorissensenig@gmail.com for more details.

CLASS OF 1966, 60TH REUNION: September 12, 2026, 4:30-8 PM at LMH Alumni Dining Hall. Contact Dan Hess at hessdv48@gmail.com for more details.

CLASS OF 1976, 50TH REUNION: October 11, 2026, 4-9 PM at 1610 Landis Road, Mount Joy, PA 17552 (the restored barn on the property). Contact Twila Glick at twilaglick@gmail.com with questions.

CLASS OF 1981, 45TH REUNION: September 19, 2026, 3 PM at Nookside Stables. Contact Joy Martin at joy2live4him@gmail.com with any questions.

CLASS OF 1986, 40TH REUNION: September 26, 2026, 5-7 PM at LMH Alumni Dining Hall. Contact Duane Metzler at pastorduanemetzler@gmail.com or visit the class facebook page for more details.

CLASS OF 1996, 30TH REUNION: September 26, 2026, 5:30-8 PM at Quarry View Barn. Contact Jill Brenner at 4brenners@comcast.net with questions.

CLASS OF 2001, 25TH REUNION: Date TBD. Stay tuned for more details. Contact Janae (Yoder) Hostetter, janae.yoder@gmail.com with questions.

DEATHS

Daryl R. Lehman '69, Waynesboro, PA, July 21, 2026
Fran Kennel Kratz '93, Manheim, PA, June 28, 2026
Lois E. Mellinger '56, Lititz, PA, June 24, 2026
Pauline F. Sumner '57, Selinsgrove, PA, June 4, 2026
John R. Buckwalter '56, Lititz, PA, May 18, 2026
Martha (Horst) Kurtz '46, Ephrata, PA, May 16, 2026
Lowell M. Stauffer '65, Ephrata, PA, April 22, 2026
Janet L. (Shank) Eberly '58, Chambersburg, PA, April, 15, 2026
Donald Paul Sheeler '60, Bradenton, FL, April 7, 2026
Mable (Horst) Eshleman '49, Lancaster, PA, March 13, 2026
Hilda (Bender) Swartz '50, Bedford, MA, February 11, 2026
Shirley Ann Groff '65, Grantham, PA, February 10, 2026
Daniel Marvin Glick '60, Reston, VA, January 25, 2026
Paul S. Hess '60, Lititz, PA, January 24, 2026
Grace (Beachy) Mast '54, Greenwood, DE, January 20, 2026
Helen M. (Steffy) Eshleman '58, Goshen, IN, January 10, 2026
Lloyd D. Wenger '54, Ephrata, PA, January 4, 2026
Eileen (Miller) Benner '55, Mount Joy, PA, December 21, 2025
James R. Charles '64, Leola, PA, December 4, 2025
Barbara (Rutt) Longenecker '52, Lititz, PA, December 4, 2025
Joseph J. Eberly '14, Leola, PA, November 30, 2025
Bethany L. (Rainal) Tomassetti '00, Lititz, PA, November 21, 2025
Ruth Ann (Sensenig) Kopp '56, Thomasville, PA, November 18, 2025
Grace S. (Hurst) Byler '57, Lancaster, PA, October 13, 2025

MARRIAGES

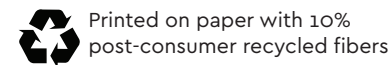
Toby Palmer '20 & Lauren Yutzy, July 10, 2026
AJ Souchet '26 & Riley Shepherd, June 5, 2026
1) Uriah Sauder '14 & Caroline Belmont, October 3, 2025

BIRTHS/ADOPTIONS

Veronica (Lopez) '17 & Ethan '17 Beiler, Bennett Anthony, July 5, 2026
Katelyn (Coryell) '15 & Nate Petley, Felix Nathanael, July 1, 2026
Andy '03 & Hannah Hoover, Leah Joy, June 18, 2026
Aleana Glah '15 & Ben Zook '15, Wesley James, May 18, 2026
Lara Weaver '14 & Paul Espinoza, Nora Leandra, April 17, 2026
Heather Beiler '17 & Brady Fehr, Maliah Noelle, March 4, 2026
Zach '14 & Emily Lehman, Avery Grace, February 22, 2026
Aidan '20 & Adrienne Sommers, Elodie Wonder, November 25, 2025
2) Isaac '16 & Anya Sommers, Rose Leilani, October 21, 2025
Trentin '13 & Justina Yoder, Treyton James, October 17, 2025
J. Curtis '04 & Christine Dehmey, John "Brayden", October 7, 2025
3) Emma (Pirrung) '17 and Tyler Zeigler, Rowan Edward, September 8, 2025



2176 Lincoln Highway East / Lancaster, PA 17602



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HOMECOMING 2026 HIGHLIGHTS

Registration Open Now!

ALUMNI RECEPTION @ 3:30-5:00 PM

Enjoy refreshments, music, and time to connect with alumni and friends. Free, but registration is appreciated.

DUNK TANK @ 12 - 3 PM

The **dunk tank** will be available again at our Fall Festival for a chance to **soak some of your favorite LM teachers**. \$5 for 3 throws, or \$10 for a PUSH.

FOOD TRUCKS @ 12 - 5 PM

TacoRV, Truckin' ChowDown, Penny's Ice Cream, and Noel's Cafe.



LEARN MORE
(717) 740-2425

lancastermennonite.org/homecoming