

# District Developments

## Congregational Spotlight

### **Bethlehem Area Moravian Freezer Ministry adds a Garden Gathering Program**



In January of this year discussions began about expanding our vegetable and fruit table offerings.

Currently there was a once-a-month June to October table setup at the Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering Weekend Lunch program, where 80-120 homeless or food insecure neighbors gather on Saturday or Sunday for lunch.

There were also connections to a new pantry at the Bethlehem - Fountain Hill Elementary School. Here we wanted to place our frozen meals on location for families in need. The need for fresh vegetables and fruit became the obvious need. If we were going to do it for one

school, why not all 8 Community Schools in Bethlehem. This program was launched at the Freezer Ministry Gathering late February, with over 100 attendees representing 17 churches or organizations.

#### ***How would we do this? –***

There is a Gathering program where churches can gather on Sundays and bring the vegetable and fruits to East Hills Moravian Church by 10 AM on Tuesday of distribution weeks. Connections have been established with local farms, local gardens and Second Harvest - part of Feed America for many items. To fill the gaps, we purchase wholesale. The future holds new connections and gardens to be planted.

On Tuesday of distribution week, a band of willing volunteers along with trucks or SUVs meet at Second Harvest to pick-up approximately 2,500 lbs. of product, return to East Hills to load the dropped off or purchased balance. The 3 tons, soon to be 4 tons, of vegetable and fruits that have been loaded, now begin their journey to 7 community school locations for unloading, in preparation for them to hand out on Wednesdays. By November, there will be over 60,000 lbs. or 30 tons of vegetable and fruits distributed. The goal is to keep

the program's cost below \$ .20 - \$ .25 per lb.

The BAM Freezer Ministry is able to do this because of the support received from BAM Ministry, Moravian Ministries Foundation Grants, area churches, individual donors and several fund raisers. If you would like to be part of this, send a check to East Hills Moravian Church, with a note for the Freezer Ministry and mail to 1830 Butztown Rd., Bethlehem, PA 18017. Thanks

This is a much longer story with so many thank yous and examples of the Spirit leading us.

#### **Following is the perspective from the Community Schools -**

When looking to expand a ministry, the schools are always a great option. The Bethlehem Area School District is a big district and knowing where to begin can be difficult. However, we are fortunate to have several schools that are designated as Community Schools by the United Way. Those schools have a coordinator that already works closely with families and helps them as needed. This coupled with the fact that some of these schools already contain food pantries that provide food for the families and the community made these schools perfect to help expand the ministry.

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Many schools already provide breakfast, lunch, and snacks for students. In addition, most community schools send food home to families weekly as well. A lot of the food given to families is processed or nonperishable items. Being able to provide families with fresh fruits and vegetables thrilled the community school coordinators. Some of the coordinators were even able to accept the offer of a refrigerator to hold the perishable food. In addition, each school received a large rolling shelf, bins, and bags to complete their distribution set up.

As the many trucks and volunteers delivered the fruits and vegetables, the coordinators were overly thankful and grateful. They knew that the impact that this food had on the families and communities would be great. Each site received approximately 1000 lbs. of fresh fruits and vegetables to distribute. The coordinators were excited to put the fresh food into bins and allow families, neighbors, and community members to take broccoli, zucchini, carrots, cauliflower, eggplant, tomatoes, peppers, onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, bananas, oranges, apples, grapes, plantains, blueberries, and more for their families to eat and enjoy.

As excited as the coordinators were, no one could have predicted what would happen. There was concern over what to do with any leftovers so that the food did not spoil. After the first distribution day, this would no longer be a problem. Most schools were wiped out of fruits and vegetables within thirty minutes. The families and community members were more than grateful for the fresh fruits and vegetables. Some of the kids ate some of them on the spot, people talked about how fresh and delicious everything was, and others told stories about what they were going to make with the food that they got that day.

Sometimes a small idea grows and grows. Although no one can tell how big this one will grow, it is clear that its impact has been great so far. Providing fresh fruits and vegetables to families, at a time when the cost of food is rising, is invaluable. Pantries and other organizations often provide food, but it is not always the healthiest or the freshest due to the constraints that they may have. This ministry has filled a void in the community and has been a blessing to all involved, especially the volunteers.

Mandi Ortwein  
Bethlehem Area School District  
Teacher  
East Hills Moravian Church Elder

Robert Wingrove  
BAM Freezer Ministry and  
Garden Gatherers Coordinator  
East Hills Moravian Church Elder

*Thanks to Tammy Lavoy (Lehigh Valley North regional rep. of the EDEB) and to Linda Wisser (Pastor at East Hills Moravian Church) for providing this article.*

**Eastern District Synod  
Save the Dates!!!  
JUNE 26 - 29, 2024**

**Regional Meetings  
(via Zoom – 7pm-8pm)  
Save the Dates!!!**

**9/13/23 – Penn Mar, Del Val  
9/14/23 – NY, Ohio  
9/19/23 – Lehigh Valley North,  
Lehigh Valley South**

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**LEAD THE CHANGE  
MASTER THE ART OF CARING**

#### The Crossroads Lay Leadership Program of Moravian Theological Seminary will hold a Zoom Info Session at 10 am on Saturday, August 5.

Crossroads prepares lay people for congregational and community ministries including lay pastoring. Many people come to improve their skills, to gain more Biblical knowledge, to live out their sense of call. Bring your questions about the program, we will share the 2023/2024 course schedule. Contact Jill Peters for the Zoom link and check out our website at [www.moravianseminary.edu/crossroads](http://www.moravianseminary.edu/crossroads).

Dr. Jill Peters

Missional Leadership Developer  
Moravian Theological Seminary

[www.moravianseminary.edu/crossroads](http://www.moravianseminary.edu/crossroads)

**Hear Us Out: Six Questions on Belief and Belonging is coming out in July.** After over 200 interviews of 18-39 year old nones and dones, the team of authors took those thoughts on life and faith. The results are an incredible look into their lives. Brian McLaren stated: If there is one book I could recommend for churches to take seriously when they consider ways to welcome emerging generations into their midst, it would be *Hear Us Out*. The authors include Sue Pizer Yoder, Steve Simmons, Brandon Heavener, Bonnie Bates, Joanne Marchetto, Jim Stahl, Janet Stahl, and Jill Peters. A Launch Party is scheduled for Aug 7 at 7 pm at Wesley UMC, Center St,

Bethlehem. Come hear the authors discuss their findings. (RSVP are helpful but not necessary: [sue@blankslatecommunity.com](mailto:sue@blankslatecommunity.com))



**Thursday, August 3, 2023, at 7:00pm Eastern Time On Zoom**

You're invited to a virtual informational session to learn more about Lancaster Theological Seminary and our Doctor of Ministry degree program. Join our Admissions team for this informative, interactive online event and bring your questions! There'll be time for a Q&A.

Here's the Eventbrite link to register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/506688768747>

**In case you are interested, here's the link to the Doctor of Ministry webpage with more information about the program.** <https://www.lancasterseminary.edu/programs/doctor-of-ministry/>

### Free Stewardship Help for the Asking

By Vince Holbrook

*"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."*

These often-quoted words from Matthew 7:7 still ring true. Many Moravian congregations struggle with stewardship. But surprisingly few take advantage of the **free** Stewardship Services available from the Moravian Ministries Foundation in America.

If your church or ministry requires time, talent, and treasure to continue to do God's work, why not ask for help? (336) 725-2589

[lwatson@mmfa.com](mailto:lwatson@mmfa.com)



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- Congregational gift planning support

##### Facilitation & coaching

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- Health assessment
- Action plan development

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- Inspiration and sharing information
- Connecting ministries

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- Capital campaign consultation and resource-sharing
- Fundraising
- Board training

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### Prayer Concerns

You are invited to offer prayers for the family of Carole Stamets, who has entered into the more immediate presence of our Savior after a three-year battle with cancer. Carole was a loving and faithful servant of Jesus Christ. She was a lifelong member of Palmyra Moravian Church in Cinnaminson, New Jersey where she lovingly served the congregation and the surrounding community through various leadership positions and ministry roles. Carole also loved serving the worldwide Moravian Church. Carole served on the Eastern District Executive Board as the Delaware Valley Regional Representative for twelve years, served on the Moravian Candidate Review Committee for several years, served on several Synod Nominating Committees, and served as Assistant Secretary for many District and Provincial Synods. Carole had a deep and loving faith in Jesus and through her attention to detail, creativity, humor, and kind and loving spirit, she shared the joy of Jesus with many others. Please continue to hold in prayer Carole's husband Rich Stamets, their sons Richie and Donnie Stamets, nieces and nephews, friends, other extended family, and church community as they mourn this heavy loss while rejoicing that Carole is home with the Savior whom she loved. Carole joins her parents, Harry and Jean Frank, and her brother, Rev. Albert "Skip" Frank in the presence of the Lord.

We extend our sympathy and prayers to the family of David Nelson, brother to Bruce Nelson. Bruce writes, "Lieutenant Commander David E. Nelson, 80 years old of Chesapeake, Virginia, oldest brother of Western District President Bruce Nelson passed away on Tuesday, July 04 in Virginia. He is also the brother of longtime Moravian Missionary Rick Nelson, of Dan Nelson who is currently serving as associate pastor at Friedberg Moravian Church in North Carolina, and of Christine Stack who previously had served as pastor of Rudolph and Kellner Moravian Church in central Wisconsin. He is also survived by another sister, Mary Nelson Sloan of Hart, Michigan. Please keep David's children Valerie Nelson Smith, Stephanie Nelson, and Scott Nelson as well as their significant others and children in your prayers. A private family graveside service will be held."

**Please Pray for the following churches who are without pastors:**

#### Canadian District:

Two congregations that are not in the call process but are currently without pastors: Edmonton Moravian and Heimtal Church, both in Edmonton, Alberta.

#### Eastern District:

Battle Hill, Union, New Jersey  
Central (Associate Pastor),  
Bethlehem, PA  
Egg Harbor City, Egg Harbor City,  
NJ  
Schoeneck, Nazareth, PA

Tremont Terrace, Bronx, NY  
Trinity, New Carrollton, MD  
**Western District:**

Glenwood Moravian Community  
Church in Madison, Wisconsin

Daggett Moravian Church in  
Daggett, Michigan is not in the call  
process but is currently without a  
pastor.

Grace Moravian in Westland,  
Michigan voted recently to conclude  
their ministry in Westland. Their  
final worship celebration will be  
held on Sunday, September 10.

### August Birthdays & Anniversaries

#### August Birthdays

- 1 Mrs. Nancy Harstine
- 4 The Rev. Marge Hassler
- 7 The Rev. Jay Petrella
- 8 Ms. Bonnee Lauridsen
- 11 The Rev. Terry Folk  
The Rev. Jeff Van Orden
- 13 The Rev. Garritt Fleming
- 17 Mrs. Shelia Clennon  
The Rev. Jennika Borger
- 19 Mrs. Linda Marsh  
Mr. Anthony Pula
- 21 The Rev. Dr. Stephen  
Nicholas
- 22 The Rev. Christine  
Johnson
- 23 Mrs. Pam Henning
- 24 The Rev. Aden Ward
- 30 Mrs. Amy Straghan

#### August Anniversaries

- 4 The Rev. Janel & Mr.  
Christian Rice

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- 12 The Rev. Jeffrey & Mrs. Sherry Gehris  
The Rev. David & the Rev. Cynthia Geyer
- 15 The Rev. Charles & Mrs. Francina Harewood  
The Rev. Tammie Rinker & Mr. Ostomy Matthew
- 20 The Rev. Earl Goulbourne & the Rev. Desna Henry Goulbourne
- 21 The Rev. Dr. Tracy Pryor & the Rev. Michael Poole
- 22 The Rev. Dr. Stephen & Mrs. Kathleen Nicholas  
The Rev. Dr. William & Mrs. Gail Andrews
- 30 The Rev. Jennifer & Mr. Greg Bowden

### Churches celebrating anniversaries in August:

- 13 - 1837 - Newfoundland, PA  
31 - 1873 - Castleton Hill, Staten Island, NY

### Personnel Update

The Rev. Dr. Heather H. Vacek, Vice-President and Dean of Moravian Theological Seminary and Lancaster Theological Seminary has accepted a new position as Director of Accreditation at the Association of Theological Schools (the body that accredits seminaries). She will begin her new position on September 1. In this role, she will work with seminaries across the US and Canada to equip them to more fully live into their mission and vocation.

Heather came to MTS in July 2021 just as Moravian University and Moravian Theological Seminary were beginning the process of partnering with Lancaster Theological Seminary (LTS). Over the course of these past two years, Dr. Vacek has worked effectively and faithfully to knit together the faculties and staff into a cohesive group and guided the faculties toward the development of a new, shared curriculum. She will work through August 11 to prepare for new leadership.

Moravian University President Bryon Grigsby is working with institutional, church, and seminary board leaders (including me as Chair of both seminary boards) to develop a plan to provide strong and faithful leadership to continue the important work of equipping individuals to serve the Moravian Church and beyond.

Please keep Heather and her loved ones, and the people and mission of the University, MTS, and LTS in your prayers at this time of transition.

## IBOC



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