



# All you need is love

Honoring the Diversity of Women's Voices in Theology

## Anabaptist Women Doing Theology Conference

February 20-22, 2014  
National Conference Center  
Leesburg, Virginia



# Welcome from Planners and Sponsors



Mennonite Church USA's Women in Leadership Project is pleased to welcome you to its first official conference. This gathering is part of a larger tradition of Anabaptist theologians, ministers, and lay people gathering together to do theological work born out of women's experience.

We expect that conference discussions will reflect on what it means to love in the midst of a world rife with struggle and oppression. The space we create together is one in which we strive to face these realities head on—tensions between women of greater and lesser privilege, the need to listen deeply to a wide variety of women's voices in matters of faith and theology, the difficulty of putting love into action and standing in solidarity with struggling sisters in our local communities and around the world.

We expect that we will see the Spirit of God living in our own stories and in the stories of our sisters in new ways. We are excited to share with you what we have prepared, and excited to receive what you share. May you speak boldly, listen deeply, and find yourself on this journey in the midst of warm company. Welcome!

## **Planning Committee**

Moniqua Acosta  
Michelle Armster  
Sarah Augustine  
Hannah Heinzekehr  
Gayle Gerber Koontz  
Chantelle Todman Moore  
Hilary J. Scarsella

## **Mennonite Church USA staff**

Brenda Zook Friesen  
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Joanna Shenk

# About the Women in Leadership Project

When Mennonite Women USA called for an audit of women leaders in Mennonite institutions in 2009, an opportunity for systemic change was created. After an examination of the numbers of women leaders in Mennonite institutions, it was clear that quantitative analysis was not enough. Thus the Women in Leadership Project (WLP) was born—an initiative to name and transform sexism in Mennonite Church USA.

## Co-coordinators:

Hilary J. Scarsella (HilaryS@MennoniteUSA.org)

Joanna Shenk (JoannaS@MennoniteUSA.org)

## Steering Committee:

Moniqua Acosta (Lititz, Pa.), Erica Littlewolf (Albuquerque, NM), Aveani Moeljono (Azusa, Calif.), Linda Gehman Peachey (Lancaster, Pa.), Sandra Perez (New York City), Regina Shands Stoltzfus (Goshen, Ind.)

**The Women in Leadership Project** depends on the participation of women and men from all parts of the church. To get connected:

- Visit the Women in Leadership Project website: <http://www.mennoniteusa.org/women>
- Encourage your congregation or small group to use the worship resources, *Do You See This Woman?*, available for free on the Women in Leadership Project website.
- Submit your story as part of the Mennonite Monologues: <http://monologues.mennoniteweb.org/>
- Lead a discussion in your congregation or workplace about transforming sexism
- Contact Hilary Scarsella or Joanna Shenk to find out how to join a focus group or use your talents to support the work of the Women in Leadership Project

## "All You Need is Love" Co-Sponsors

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# Schedule

## Thursday, February 20

<b>1:00 – 6:00 p.m.</b>	Registration
<b>4:00 – 5:30 p.m.</b>	Social Hour
<b>5:30 – 6:30 p.m.</b>	Dinner, <i>North Building Guest Dining Area</i>
<b>6:30 – 7:00 p.m.</b>	Worship, <i>Loudoun Auditorium</i>
<b>7:00 – 8:30 p.m.</b>	Large Group Conversation, <i>Loudoun Auditorium</i> <i>Framing the conversation: What does it mean to love in a world that is rife with struggle and oppression?</i>
<b>8:30 – 9:00 p.m.</b>	Circle groups
<b>9:00 p.m.</b>	Social hour
<b>9:00 p.m.</b>	Movie, <i>Loudoun Auditorium</i>

## Friday, February 21

<b>6:30 – 8:30 a.m.</b>	Breakfast, <i>North Building Guest Dining Area</i>
<b>8:30 – 9:00 a.m.</b>	Worship, <i>Loudoun Auditorium</i>
<b>9:00 – 9:20 a.m.</b>	Coffee Break

**9:20 – 10:20 a.m.** Breakout Session One (See page 8 for descriptions)

### Workshops:

<b>Room 3263:</b>	She, Me, and We: Anabaptist Women Publishing Theology
<b>Room 3264:</b>	Naomi, Ruth and Orpah: Exploring Women's Stories of Survival, Risk, and Faithfulness
<b>Room 3265:</b>	RAW: Mentoring Anabaptist Women Church Leaders
<b>Room 3367:</b>	<i>Para que Sepas</i> – So That You May Know

### Paper presentations:

#### Room 3365:

- Love and Strength are the Necessary Path toward Justice and Healing of *Pacamama* (the Earth): Theological Reflection around Rispa, a Woman who was More Generous than God (2 Samuel 21:1-11)
- 'For Such a Time as This?': Love, Power, and the Relief and Deliverance of God in the book of Esther
- Beyond Black, White, and Red All Over: Finding Footholds for Ethical Biblical Interpretation

#### Room 3262:

- Choosing Love: Adultery, Adoption, Abundance
- For the Love of Motherhood: Theological Reflections on Birth, Miscarriage, and Infant Loss
- Resisting Evil, Supporting Love

**10:40– 11:40 a.m.** Breakout Session Two

### Workshops:

<b>Room 3263:</b>	All you Need is the Word: How Slam Poetry Challenges Privilege and What the Church can Learn from It
<b>Room 3264:</b>	She Says Wake Up! Women's Role in the Psychology of Climate Change
<b>Room 3265:</b>	Encouragement, Support, Connection, Advice: Creating Spaces to Mentor Women
<b>Room 3365:</b>	Women in Mission: How Gender Shapes Opportunities and Challenges
<b>Room 3367:</b>	The Kitchen-Table Theology of More-with-Less and Mennonite Girls Can Cook

### Paper presentations:

#### Room 3262:

- Blood, Trees and Desire: A Poetic Feminist Perspective on the Crucifixion
- 'Sacred yet In-Sufficient': The Use of Scripture as a Source in a Feminist-Mennonite Approach to Sexual Ethics
- How can we Celebrate, without Lament?

**11:45 – 1:00 p.m.** Lunch, *North Building Guest Dining Area*

**1:00 – 2:00 p.m.** Reflecting, Processing, Deepening

**Optional:** Guided Meditation, *3265 North Building*

**2:00 – 3:30 p.m.** Large group conversation, *Loudoun Auditorium*

Part 1: Women in Leadership Project Update and Offering

Part 2: *What does it mean to love when it comes to:*

- Indigenous contexts?*
- contexts of militarization?*
- loving enemies?*

**3:30 – 4:00 p.m.** Circle groups

**4:15 – 5:15 p.m.** Breakout Session Three

### Workshops:

<b>Room 3263:</b>	The Broken Things: Finding the Sacred in an Empty Womb (part 1)
<b>Room 3264:</b>	Impact of Patriarchal Beliefs
<b>Room 3265:</b>	Praying with Women in the Bible
<b>Room 3367:</b>	Forgiveness and Abuse

### Paper presentations:

#### Room 3365:

- Finding Identity in Business, Anabaptism, and Diversity: A Narrative
- How does my Culture Enrich Mennonite Tradition?: The Story of the Laughing Warrior Girl

- c. From Cure to Community: Biblical Theology Informed by Voices of Disability

**Room 3262:**

- a. Tennis and the 'Hood: My Life among the Up-and-Outers and the Down-and-Outers
- b. Adventures in Mascara: How Theology of Beauty Enriches the Body and Engages the World
- c. Technology, Creation and the Sacredness of Life

**5:15 – 5:30 p.m.** Coffee Break

**5:30 – 6:30 p.m.** Breakout Session Four

**Workshops:**

**Room 3263:** The Broken Things: Finding the Sacred in an Empty Womb (part 2)

**Room 3364:** Lord, I Need to Hear Your Voice

**Room 3265:** Earth, Air, Fire, Water: Connecting as Women through Art and Story

**Room 3265:** 'All you need is Love?': I'm Not So Sure

**Room 3367:** Restorative Justice & Sexual Abuse

**Paper presentations:**

**Room 3262:**

- a. Our Words Matter: Julian of Norwich and Diverse Images of God
- b. On Claiming Sophia: Shek-shak-shen
- c. Learning to Love Our Bodies: Practicing Incarnation Through Yoga

**6:30 – 8:00 p.m.** Dinner *North Building Guest Dining Area*

**8:30 – 9:00 p.m.** Worship, *Loudoun Auditorium*

**9:00 p.m.** Social hour

**9:30 p.m.** Slam poetry performance, *Loudoun Auditorium*

## Saturday, February 22

**7:00 – 8:30 a.m.** Breakfast, *North Building Guest Dining Area*

**8:30 – 9:00 a.m.** Worship, *Loudoun Auditorium*

**9:00 – 10:30 a.m.** Large Group Conversation, *Loudoun Auditorium*  
*What does it mean to love in:*

- *LGBTQ contexts?*
- *contexts of sexual violation?*
- *the context of self-love?*

**10:30 – 11:00 a.m.** Circle groups

**11:00 – 11:15 a.m.** Coffee break

**11:15 – 12:15 p.m.** Reflecting, Processing, Deepening

**Optional:** Guided Meditation, *3265 North Building*

**12:15 – 1:15 p.m.** Lunch, *North Building Guest Dining Area*

**1:30 – 2:30 p.m.** Breakout Session Five

**Workshops:**

**Room 3363:** Speaking of Suffering

**Room 3264:** Maintaining Hope in the Midst of Oppression

**Room 3265:** Dancing the Great Commandment: Loving God, Self and Neighbor through Dance

**Room 3265:** Building Relationships through Love and Peace: Building the Pathways Programs

**Room 3367:** Mennonite Mothering: Join the Conversation

**Paper presentations:**

**Room 3262:**

- a. Christian Ecofeminist Images, Language and Actions: A Conversation with Feminist Theologians
- b. Women Doing Farming as Theology
- c. I am Animal: Theology, Identity and Creaturely Love

**2:45 – 3:45 p.m.** Breakout Session Six

**Workshops:**

**Room 3263:** The Omnipresent Storybook: Loving Ourselves and Each Other in the Age of Social Media

**Room 3264:** Esther's Dinner Party: Hospitality can be the First Step Towards Meaningful Conversation

**Room 3265:** Fierce Love: Women as Spiritual Leaders Building Communities of Shalom – A Theology of Woman and the Earth

**Room 3365:** Identifying Barriers and Listening to Gifts: Creating more Inclusive Communities

**Room 3367:** Snakes and other Subversive Symbols: Reclaiming What has Been Stolen, Forgotten, or Demonized

**Paper presentations:**

**Room 3262:**

- a. Letting Go
- b. Self-Love as an Intercultural Gift
- c. The Sacrament of Genuine Meeting Between the Generations

**4:00 – 4:30 p.m.** Circle groups

**4:45 – 5:30 p.m.** Closing ritual, *Loudoun Auditorium*



# Schedule Details and Components

## **Breakout sessions,** *North Building Third Floor*

Six opportunities to participate in workshops and paper presentations will be offered. See the schedule for details.

## **Check Out Time**

You will need to check out of your rooms by 1:00 p.m. on Saturday. You can store your luggage at Belmont C in the West Building for the duration of the conference.

## **Children,** *Potomac B in the West Building*

While the conference is not specifically designed for children, we value the presence of children and welcome them to accompany their caregivers to any part of the conference that caregivers deem appropriate. Children must be supervised by an adult at all times. All children and their caregivers are welcome to make use of the room designated for caregivers at any time.

## **Circle groups**

You will be assigned to a small group that you are encouraged to meet with regularly throughout the conference in order to share with each other about what you are experiencing, questioning, and learning. Our hope is that this will encourage new relationships to form, provide a space to process how what we are learning is relevant to our own lives, and help shape the conference into a series of conversations informed by the thoughts, experiences and contributions of all participants. Circle groups should choose their own meeting space.

## **Large group conversations,** *Loudoun Auditorium in the West Building*

In each of the three conversations, a group of four will lead participants in reflecting theologically about what it means to love in the midst of a world rife with struggle and oppression.

## **Meals,** *North Building Guest Dining Area*

Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be served buffet-style. On Friday and Saturday mornings and before dinner on Friday, snacks will be provided in our meeting space. Dinner on Saturday is not included in your registration, but you may purchase a dinner ticket at the Front Desk if you plan to stay for this meal.



## **Office,** *Potomac C*

In between sessions you may be able to find conference organizers here. They will be glad to take any remaining registration balances.

## **Reflecting, Processing, Deepening**

This is time set aside for you to do what you need in order to give your brain a break, engage your body and spirit, and digest the conversations you've been a part of. This could mean napping, journaling, exploring the surrounding area, taking time to pray or meditate, getting a group together to sing, etc. You are welcome to choose from the following options or do something entirely different:

### **Guided meditation,** *Room 3265 in the North Building*

Join a group gathered for guided meditation on reflecting, opening, and letting go. There will be opportunities for deep breathing, gentle body movement and silence, with the recognition that our bodies carry both joy and trauma. No practice needed; adaptations available for diverse body types and abilities.

### **Prayer & meditation room,** *Room 3455 in the North Building*

This room will be available for quiet prayer and meditation throughout the conference.

## **Walking paths**

Walk or jog along the 1.3-mile outdoor path and enjoy the 110 wooded acres surrounding the conference center. See facility map for more details.

### **Fitness center,** *West Building Second Floor*

The fitness center can be accessed by using your room key.

## **Social hour**

Relationships are important to our lives and to the process of doing theology. During the social hour, you are encouraged to relax and spend time together however you like. A few ideas:

### **Social room,** *Potomac D & E in the West Building*

This room will be available for socializing and relaxing throughout the conference.

## **Conference Center Venues**

**The Black Olive Sports Bar** features a Wii™ lounge, pool tables, dart boards, and TVs for sports lovers.

## **Worship,** *Loudoun Auditorium*

This is a time for us to encounter the Divine together and discern the role of love in our lives.

# About the Large Group Conversations

## Large Group Conversation Leaders

The conference will feature three large group conversations. The first will set the stage for the conference, exploring how we talk about love, diversity and theology. The second and third conversations will feature three storytellers and one theological responder. The three storytellers will reflect on different aspects of love from their vocational roles and life experience. The theological response will come from a scholar who draws together these stories, reflecting on their theological significance for our lives.

### Conversation One: Friday, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

#### Laura Brenneman



Laura is a chaplain resident at Advocate BroMenn Medical Center in Normal, Ill., and a visiting religion professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, and Eastern Mennonite Seminary. Laura works at the intersection of biblical studies and peace studies. She is also the New Testament editor of the *Studies in Peace and Scripture* series with the Institute of Mennonite Studies and a restorative justice practitioner. Laura enjoys biking, reading, and unwinding on the front porch with friends.

#### Calenthia S. Dowdy



Calenthia was born, raised and continues to reside in the City of Love, Philadelphia. She serves as Director of Faith Initiatives at Philadelphia FIGHT, an HIV/AIDS organization, and is on the faculty of Eastern University in St. Davids, Pa. Calenthia also co-facilitates workshops on dismantling systemic oppression with Damascus Road and Roots of Justice.

#### Blanca R. Vargas



Blanca is originally from Colombia and has worked with the Mennonite church in the United States since 2001. She is the pastor at Iglesia Menonita Comunidad De Vida; San Antonio, Texas. She is married to Victor Vargas and has four children: Diana, Edwin, Melina and Eduardo. She has four grandchildren as well.

### Conversation Two: Saturday, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

#### Malinda Elizabeth Berry

##### *Theological Responder*



Malinda's life is about weaving together many strands of commitment into a colorful tapestry of living. With husband, John Stoltzfus, and son, Jeremiah, she resides in Richmond, Ind., with a backyard garden, rain barrels, cats, and chickens to help them live more lightly on the land. A member of Mennonite Church USA, Malinda currently teaches in at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, where she is Assistant Professor of Theological Studies and Director of the MA Program. In the summer of 2014 Malinda will begin teaching at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Elkhart, Ind.). She attends Unprogrammed Quaker Meeting, both of which help her reflect on the different theological roots of Christian peacemaking. In her teaching, research, and writing, Malinda seeks to develop a form of peace theology that is grounded in women-centered scriptural interpretation. Whether at faculty meeting, while watching a good period drama, or just chatting, Malinda also loves to knit.

#### Erica Littlewolf

##### *Storyteller: Love in light of Indigenous contexts*



Erica is from the Northern Cheyenne nation of southeastern Montana and currently lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She works for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Central States with the Indigenous Vision Center where she is committed to the work of decolonization, authentic relationships and healing. Erica enjoys silence, laughter, good food, writing poetry and watching reality TV. She especially enjoys spending time with her three nieces and aspires to adopt and co-parent a cat in the near future.

### Argee Macliing Malayao (Pyä)

*Storyteller: Love in light of militarized contexts*



Pyä is A Boto-Igorot (an indigenous peoples group in the Cordillera Region, Northern Philippines). She graduated with honors from the University of the Philippines with a degree in anthropology and was a founding member of TAKDER, a Cordilleran youth organization for democracy and development. She has

worked with indigenous peoples' organizations since 2010 that seek to uphold and assert the collective rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral lands and for self-determination. She currently serves as National Spokesperson of KAMP (Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas), a National Alliance of indigenous peoples' organizations in the Philippines.

### Linda Gehman Peachey

*Storyteller: Loving enemies*



Linda is married to Titus Peachey and has two adult daughters. She lives in the city of Lancaster, Pa., and is an active member at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church. She graduated from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., and has worked at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). She is a

freelance writer and editor. Most recently, she wrote the bible study guide, *Courageous Women of the Bible*, and she is a member of the Women in Leadership Project steering committee. She enjoys hiking, reading, spending time with friends, and visiting her daughters in Chicago and Guatemala.

**Conversation Three: Saturday, February 22, 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.**

### Elizabeth Soto Albrecht

*Storyteller: The importance of self-love*



Elizabeth has been working at Lancaster (Pa.) Theological Seminary (United Church of Christ) for the last six years as coordinator of field education, advisor for cross cultural programs and as an adjunct professor. Previously she worked as a chaplain for seven years at Lancaster General Hospital. Elizabeth

also served with her family in Colombia, South America and is originally from Puerto Rico. She is mother of two beautiful young adult daughters Sara and Yentli and has been married to Frank Albrecht for 22 years. She is the current moderator of Mennonite Church USA.

### Caitlin Michelle Desjardins

*Storyteller: Love in light of LGBTQ contexts*



Caitlin is a recent graduate of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, where she focused on sexual ethics, agricultural theology, New Testament theologies, and theologizing with and for children. She has a strong interest in sex education in the Church that is relevant to LGBTQ and straight youth. She currently serves as

the Director of Youth at Forest Hill Church, a Presbyterian congregation in Cleveland, Ohio. She was a 2011 Fund for Theological Education Ministry Fellow and drinks copious amounts of tea.

### Julia Feder

*Theological Responder*



Julia is a feminist theologian writing her dissertation (at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind.) on the mystical-political nature of healing from sexual abuse. She plans to graduate this May with a degree in systematic theology and put her skills to use teaching others how to think theologically about love,

suffering, and salvation. She loves living and praying with Mennonites in Northern Indiana. She dreams of living in an integrated theological-agricultural community one day (hopefully soon).

### Janie Beck Kreider

*Storyteller: Love in light of contexts of sexual violation*



In her work as Associate Coordinator of Public Programs at Merry Lee Environmental Learning Center, Janie spends her time creating, promoting, and organizing retreats, conferences, hikes and other events, as well as writing for various publications. She is a council member of the Mennonite Creation

Care Network, and is currently working on a team developing a new creation care curriculum for Mennonite Church USA. Janie is a graduate of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, where she studied theology and ethics and wrote her master's thesis on feminist biblical scholars in the Mennonite church. She is passionate about empowering marginalized voices in the church, promoting sustainable care of the earth, cooking delicious food, singing folk music with her husband, traveling to new places, and investing in her relationships with family and friends.

### Worship Planners

#### Regina Shands Stoltzfus



Regina teaches Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies at Goshen (Ind.) College. She is co-founder of the anti-racism program Damascus Road (now known as Roots of Justice). Regina lives in Goshen and attends Assembly Mennonite Church.

#### LeAnne Zook



LeAnne graduated from Eastern Mennonite University in 1995 with a B.A. in history and then, after spending a year in Haiti with Mennonite Central Committee's SALT (Service and Learning Together) program, earned her M.A in English Literature from American University. Having come to Washington, DC for graduate

school, she has remained committed to the city, living in a variety of neighborhoods but finally settling down in a historical neighborhood. She currently serves as the Editorial Platform Manager at Platts, a division of McGraw Hill Financial, and is a member of Hyattsville Mennonite Church. She enjoys movies, British crime dramas, baking and spending time with her favorite niece and friends.

# Breakout Session Descriptions

## Descriptions of Workshops and Paper Presentations

### Session One: Friday, 9:20-10:20 a.m.

#### Workshops

##### **Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah: Exploring Women's Stories of Survival, Risk, and Faithfulness**

*Jackie Wyse-Rhodes*

The Book of Ruth tells a story of cross-cultural kinship and adventure. In this workshop, we will explore the stories of the women in this book, and the way their lives exemplify loyalty and courage. We will discuss the virtues in Orpah's choice to return to her own people, and consider Naomi and Ruth's adventures as they work to ensure their family's survival. We will also view and discuss artists' depictions of Ruth, Naomi, and Orpah throughout the centuries as we consider what the women of this book can teach us about faithfulness to God and one another as we work for justice in our local communities and around the world.

##### ***Para que Sepas: So That You May Know***

*Margie Mejia-Caraballo*

It is through stories, narratives and histories of our lives that we can provide the framework through which we understand and remember love and thus live out our lives or not. Through performance and spoken word (storytelling) the presenter will share personal stories, cultural proverbs and legends which speak to the pain as well as the joy of love in women's lives today.

##### **RAW: Mentoring Anabaptist Woman Church Leaders**

*Sandra Perez and others*

RAW stands for Radical Anabaptist Women, an organization of diverse women in New York City. In this workshop we will tell our story of supporting women who are called as church leaders and are interested in being licensed/ordained, but who don't get the support they need to realize their calling from other church leaders. We will share the story of the sacrifices made by early Anabaptist women, who declared their lives inspired by Scripture and moved by the Holy Spirit. Today Anabaptist women continue to make sacrifices, and that's why RAW is establishing a model that once and for all conquers the church's glass ceiling. Participants can expect storytelling, skits, songs and dancing.

##### **She, Me, and We: Anabaptist Women Publishing Theology**

*Melodie Davis, Amy Gingerich, Valerie Weaver-Zercher*

Three MennoMedia / Herald Press editors will present on and lead a discussion about ways that women have written and continue to write theology. The workshop will include an overview of key women who have authored books and curriculum for Mennonite publishers, how their theological voices have been tamped down or encouraged, and the frequently collaborative nature of women-authored projects. Conversation will include questions about authorship and creative process, Mennonite ethos about "celebrity" women authors, blogs as a form of collaborative theology, and learning to have confidence in one's own voice. How can women writers live into their calling and share their theological voices with others? How can women encourage each other as authors?

#### Paper Presentations: Option One

##### **Beyond Black, White, and Red All Over: Finding Footholds for Ethical Biblical Interpretation**

*Lori Unger*

This paper acknowledges and engages dilemmas and conflicts facing many churches struggling to uphold biblical principles in the face of an increasingly complex and diverse world. Written and presented from the perspective of a recently realized lesbian theology student, the paper explores both the joy and pain of living in biblically oriented Christian community. Delving into our Anabaptist hermeneutical heritage, the paper finds resources for a more ethical biblical interpretive practice. This paper is an edited version of a paper first published in CMU Vision (Spring 2013).

##### **"For Such a Time as This?": Love, Power, and the Relief and Deliverance of God in the Book of Esther**

*Catherine Thiel Lee*

Esther is one of the few books of the Bible focusing on the experience and voice of a woman. Esther's is a dark world of great struggle, and her story centers around the oppression of her people through politically crafted genocide. This paper will offer a creative retelling and close reading of Esther, paying attention to details of literary craft in this little read (and often misunderstood) book. Together we will listen to Esther's story, examining how she participates in God's deliverance and (inevitably?) also re-engages in cycles of violence and oppression. We will ask what her story teaches us about the complex nature of love and how as Christ's followers we participate in God's promised relief and deliverance.

**Love and Strength are the Necessary Path toward Justice and Healing of *Pachamama* (the Earth): Theological Reflection around Rispa, a Woman who was more Generous than God (2 Samuel 21:1-11)**

*Sarah Augustine on behalf of Dina Ludeña Cebrián*

This article attempts to rescue a literary pearl hidden in the great story set in the time of the monarchy, recorded in 2 Samuel. This story concerns the presence of Rizpah, which means “coals or hot stone” according to some Biblical translations. Her story is told between the lines, and challenges a history of violence by weaving together both strong and faint broken threads of a story of liberation, resistance, protest and especially love. Rizpah questions the image of a violent God who meets with violence. God proclaims a quiet, loving presence in a story where innocence is violated in bodies and in human dignity. Rereading the text from the underside of history shows us that strength and love are a necessary precondition for justice, the restoration of human dignity, identity and healing of the earth.

**Paper Presentations: Option Two**

**Choosing Love: Adultery, Adoption, Abundance**

*Claire DeBerg*

Love is a choice. Listen to my story seemingly heaped with brokenness about a failed marriage and the heartbreaking adoption decision, and hear instead the jaw-dropping truth about how a single act transformed the choice to love into the creation of love. I will take attendees through my marriage, the adultery in my marriage, the plan to place my baby for adoption and the abundance of love that continues to echo into the lives of the various people my story touched. Distinct windows into how God breathed into the moments of this stage of my life aim to embolden women to pay attention to opportunities where they can choose love in their own lives.

**For the Love of Motherhood: Theological Reflections on Birth, Miscarriage, and Infant Loss**

*Sarah Ann Bixler*

This paper's central theme is my journey as a mother through celebratory birth, quiet miscarriage and painful infant death. Nothing less than our view of God is at stake in reflecting theologically on the joys and sorrows of motherhood. In this paper, I claim a God who suffers with us, present an inclusive understanding of God as Mother, examine atonement theory from the perspective of a mother who lost a child, and consider the powerful symbol of blood in both natural and spiritual life and death. The powerful role of the faith community is affirmed, especially spiritual sisters, who walk with those in the grieving process. My reflections culminate in a profound sense of hope, expressing gratitude to God for the honor of motherhood and its lessons in love and beauty.

**Resisting Evil, Supporting Love: Anabaptist Theology Opposing Violence**

*Beth E. Graybill*

This paper will use Anabaptist theology opposing violence against women to look at forms of nonviolent resistance for women facing abuse. Content will also be included from the Circles of Support and Accountability training based in Lancaster, Pa., that works with sex abuse offenders. Attendees will be invited to contribute their thoughts and concerns on this issue.

**Session Two: Friday, 10:40-11:40 a.m.**

**Workshops**

**All You Need is the Word: How Slam Poetry Challenges Privilege and What the Church Can Learn from It**

*Hillary Watson*

One of the most diverse spaces in the U.S. is the hundreds of open mics and poetry slams happening every night. Why are these spaces so diverse? What can theologians and pastors learn from these “word churches”? How can we use poetry as a tool to form and share stories of identity, trauma, and healing? How do spoken word poets address inequalities between different groups of women? This workshop will explore the power of spoken word poetry to bring together diverse populations and dismantle systems of privilege. Participants will view videos of women performing poetry, discuss poems, and of course, do several writing prompts of our own (with opportunities to share our work).

**Building Relationships Through Love and Peace: Building the Pathways Program**

*Sarah Augustine*

The Pathways Program is a new initiative at Heritage University in Toppenish, Wash. Heritage University is made up of 76% women and 68% minorities (Hispanic, Native American, Other). Sixty-five percent of the students are first-generation college attendees. The Pathways Program is about exploring who you are in the world around you; it's about exploring spirituality. We define spirituality as the active search for the answers to life's big questions, maintaining centeredness in times of stress, developing an ethic of caring and compassion for others, service, and having an inclusive, global worldview. This workshop, co-led by student leaders and faculty, will be exploring resilience, solidarity, and justice through the lens of spirituality.

### **Encouragement, Support, Connection, Advice: Creating Spaces to Mentor Women**

*Kerry Strayer and others*

A mentor is a guide, a supporter, a sponsor, an advisor. In this workshop, we will discuss a variety of ways to define a mentoring relationship. We will consider our past mentoring experiences and our current needs. While this workshop is appropriate for women in a variety of fields and life stages, we will focus some of our time on creating mentoring networks to encourage women leaders in the church to come forward, to support existing women leaders, and to learn from the experiences of past women leaders. A framework for setting up mentoring relationships—including defining the mentoring relationship, guidelines for appropriate mentor/mentee behaviors, creating a “mentoring contract,” and some suggestions for getting started—will be provided.

### **The Kitchen-Table Theology of *More-with-Less* and *Mennonite Girls Can Cook***

*Malinda Elizabeth Berry*

Herald Press’s *More-with-Less* Cookbook and its companion volume, *Living More with Less*, have sold almost a million copies. Authored by Doris Janzen Longacre (1940-1979), these books offered readers a practical theology that gives special attention to the living out of faith through daily choices of simplicity and stewardship. Malinda Elizabeth Berry will lead a discussion of the theology that imbues the three World Community Cookbooks—*More-with-Less*, *Extending the Table*, and *Simply in Season*. She will also compare the World Community Cookbooks’ theological underpinnings to the theology expressed by the more recent Herald Press titles *Mennonite Girls Can Cook* and *Mennonite Girls Can Cook Celebrations*. A Herald Press editor will offer some publishing perspectives on the cookbooks, and workshop participants will have the opportunity to articulate their own “kitchen-table theology.”

### **She says wake up!: Living and Leading with the Heart on Climate Change**

*Charletta Erb*

The earth groans for liberation, sparking theological imagination for change. Transcend name-dropping armchair-eco-theologian intellectualization & sit with soulful grief and hope! Join this workshop to learn stories of change, skills for more with less, and songs of struggle. Then step to the rhythms of movement shaped by women’s voices and practical actions. Change work informed by psychology will address the need to overcome consumption addictions, find our unique contributions, and orient our hope at today’s tipping point. Learn insights from neurobiology for development of leadership and how people change. A creative dynamic workshop that will include songs and stories!

### **Papers, presented during the same session:**

#### **Blood, Trees and Desire: A Poetic Feminist Perspective on the Crucifixion**

*Anita Hooley Yoder*

This paper re-visions traditional understandings of Jesus’ crucifixion and death. It draws on the work of female poets and feminist/Womanist theologians, as well as the author’s own life experience. The author imagines the blood of Christ as female menstrual blood, gives attention to the tree as part of the crucifixion story, and challenges the subjugation of desire that is often part of tradition’s understanding of Christ’s death. Overall, it explores the question, “What do we mean when we say that Jesus saves us?” in a way that might be life-giving to women in today’s world.

#### **How can we Celebrate without Lament?**

*Kelly Bates Oglesby*

This paper will explore the roles of women through the stories of Jephthah’s mother and daughter. How can we examine our lives and explore ways of healing to create safe and sacred space where diversity is neither exploited nor exotic in our divine expressions of worship and fellowship? These two unnamed women in Judges 11 allow us to dialogue about hesed (godly) kindness and xenos (Christian) hospitality. We often talk about a community/village raising children, but when there is a breach in the community covenant, there are consequences. Would love have allowed our sister to live as a sex slave/worker? Would love have allowed Jephthah to become homeless, a gang leader? Where was the community hesed? Where is the xenos in our congregations today? I will relate this to my experience as a Black female Pentecostal completing a seminary internship at Mennonite congregation.

#### **Sacred yet In-Sufficient: The Use of Scripture as a Source in a Feminist-Mennonite Approach to Sexual Ethics**

*Kimberly Penner*

For the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, which does not have a coherent sexual ethics and holds a high view of the authority of scripture, feminism offers valuable conversation partners for discerning not only an approach to sexual ethics that is life giving for women, but one that critically evaluates the authority of biblical texts with the norms of love and justice (values central to Mennonite theology). In conversation with leading feminists and womanists, this paper argues that a justice-oriented, Mennonite-feminist approach to sexual ethics will necessarily favor the voices of the oppressed and marginalized and value the experiences of women by breaking down the wall between scripture and experience and practicing a hermeneutics of suspicion and restoration.

## Session Three: Friday, 4:15-5:15 p.m.

### Workshops

#### **The Broken Things: Finding the Sacred in an Empty Womb (part 1)**

*Jennifer Harris Dault*

*[This is a two-part workshop. To honor the vulnerability of the topic, we encourage interested participants to consider attending both.]*  
Somewhere between 10-25% of known pregnancies end in miscarriage. Some doctors estimate that as many as half of all women experience miscarriage at some point. And yet, it is a grief often confined to the shadows, meaning couples often mourn alone and women are left with feelings of shame. This workshop will be a space to give voice to those who have experienced pregnancy loss, to think theologically about the ways that God holds us and our children, and to engage in healing worship together. I will share stories from my own miscarriages, invite others to share—either stories of their own loss or the experience of loving someone who has experienced loss - and end with a time of worship that will include a litany, a prayer station, and the sharing of communion

#### **Forgiveness and Abuse**

*Deb Byler and Jane Miller*

Forgiveness in cases of abuse is a complex issue. Deb and Jane have both experienced the difficulty of this issue as survivors of childhood sexual abuse. In this workshop we will discuss what the Bible says about forgiveness in the Old and New Testaments in all its complexity. We will also discuss the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation in light of abuse. Deb and Jane will share their stories of working at forgiveness in their own lives, and there will be time for participants to share in small groups their stories of struggle with forgiveness as well as to respond to what is presented.

#### **The Impact of Patriarchal Beliefs**

*Carmen Horst, Rhoda Keener, Cynthia Lapp*

What is the impact of patriarchy in the church for women? This workshop will include personal experiences and research about the impact of believing the doctrine of submission/hierarchy. A panel will share experiences with patriarchy in the church and participants will be invited to discuss ways to embrace a theology of gender equality. Resources will be available for understanding gender specific scriptures.

#### **Praying with Women in the Bible**

*Laura Lehman Amstutz*

Explore the prayers of women in the Bible. In this workshop, participants will discuss the stories of women in the Bible and then pray the prayers and psalms they may have prayed. As we explore these stories, we will find connections to our own stories of faith and doubt, joy and sorrow.

Come prepared to learn together, pray together and share your own faith journeys with others. Participants will spend the majority of their time in small groups exploring the connections between their own stories and the stories and prayers of women in the Bible.

### Papers Presentations: Option One

#### **Finding Identity in Business, Anabaptism, and Diversity: A Narrative**

*Tracy Neufeld*

How does one reconcile the tension of being a Christian, a business leader and a female? In general, the North American church continues to stereotype and discriminate based on race and gender, practices that business and political worlds also wrestle with. My own attitudes toward race, gender and social status were subtly but significantly shaped as I grew up in the Central Valley of California. Listen in as I reflect on being a business woman with a cadre of influences including Anabaptist, Evangelical, Mennonite Brethren, rural, and immigrant farmer perspectives.

#### **From Cure to Community: Biblical Theology Informed by Voices of Disability**

*Christine Guth*

Disability, if it enters theological expression among Mennonites at all, may appear as a metaphor for disobedience or an image of long-suffering sainthood. Living for decades with a mental illness has shaped how I have heard the Bible, thought about God, and struggled to find my voice. Focusing on the restoration of community in biblical healing stories rather than medical cure has allowed me to experience these stories as life-giving rather than exclusionary toward those of us who live with a disability. I urge the church to move beyond using disability merely as symbol and to welcome into our theological conversations the diverse voices that reflect lived experience with disability.

#### **How does my Culture Enrich Mennonite Tradition? The Story of the Laughing Warrior Girl**

*Sarah Augustine*

The laughing warrior girl is a traditional *Tewa* (Pueblo) story that describes a young woman who is ridiculed for not being a "good girl," specifically because she does not behave in a way consistent with her community's gender roles. During a time of great crisis, however, her gifts are made manifest as she comes to the aid of her people, protecting them from a powerful enemy. This traditional story explores the tensions between individuality and conformity. The traditions and theological perspectives of many minority cultures value group identity, collective discernment, simple living, and social justice. These perspectives have the potential to bring insight into the Mennonite conversation.

## Paper Presentations: Option Two

### **Adventures in Mascara: How A Theology of Beauty Enriches the Body and Engages the World**

*Erin Sams*

Dove Soap asks us to “imagine a world where Beauty is a source of confidence not anxiety.” The My Black is Beautiful campaign asks “You know you’re beautiful...but what about the young girls?” How are we inspiring the next generation and the women surrounding us to develop and define their beautiful existence? For some, it really could start with mascara (or something similar). During this presentation, thoughts will be shared on one way we grow confidence as women and shine the beauty of God’s design. The Mascara Project is an effort to donate 5,000 new cosmetic sets to women in shelters, transitional houses and rehabilitation centers across the United States during 2014, as these women embark on new lives.

### **Technology, Creation and the Sacredness of Life**

*Meg Lumsdaine*

In an age when both spiritual and material spheres are deeply distorted, we have the potential to spark a transformative renewal of hope through re-imagining the path of simple living and strategic resistance to the forces that threaten our children’s future. As Christian women, we can mobilize people to reweave a tapestry of sustainability within God’s Creation as we challenge a globalized techno-consumer matrix that commodifies life, pushes electronic addiction, displaces women from the land with biotech agribusiness, conducts worldwide surveillance, wages intensifying robotic warfare, and develops synthetic organisms threatening the integrity of all Creation. Drawing from our Anabaptist heritage, we can re-awaken new paths of relationship and bold cooperative action, reclaiming deep connection to God’s Creation and Spirit.

### **Tennis and the ‘hood: My Life among the Up-and-Outers and the Down-and-Outers**

*Cathy Stoner*

I’ll reflect on the daily realities I encounter living in a low-income neighborhood while playing on a travel league tennis team made up of women from the suburbs. Using stories and anecdotes, I’ll also tie in my membership in a wealthy Mennonite congregation with a vision of Jesus’ love for the poor. This is a tightrope walk I’ve been living and pondering for 20 years. My social location affords many challenges in identifying and loving my neighbors, as well as my enemies. I embrace this opportunity to share as a theologian on the ground.

## Session Four: Friday, 5:30-6:30

### **Workshops**

#### **“All you need is love? I’m not so sure.”**

*Sheila S. Yoder*

How can and does one love a spouse experiencing mental illness? Where is God in this journey? These questions and others it raises are ones women have asked but may find answers lacking (or hidden) in the church. Knowing how to share about a spouse’s illness while respecting and protecting their “story” and finding strength for the journey is a daunting task. Hear the stories of women who have been, and are, on this journey.

#### **The Broken Things: Finding the Sacred in an Empty Womb (part 2)**

*Jennifer Harris Dault*

[This is a two-part workshop. To honor the vulnerability of the topic, we encourage interested participants to consider attending both. Description above.]

#### **Earth, Air, Fire, Water: Connecting as Women through Art and Story**

*Yolanda Kauffman, Kathleen Landis*

The transforming power of art and story is a cornerstone of spiritual life and growth. This experiential workshop will dovetail photographic artistry by Yolanda Kauffman with reflections, stories and poetry by Kathleen Landis. Those attending will be invited to reflect in silence, choose a symbol that represents their hopes and visions for the future of women in the Mennonite church, and contribute to a collaboratively-made artistic expression. Our hope for this workshop is to create an experience where love is honored, celebrated and embodied; hope among women is ignited; and our connections as women are strengthened.

#### **Lord, I Need to Hear Your Voice**

*Patricia Allison*

Dr. Allison has provided an instructional tool for Christian women to come together as a community of learners searching for emotional healing through a closer relationship with Christ. Her book provides a course of action for women to learn of His unconditional love for His children regardless of past mistakes or unhealthy choices. As with the woman at the well in John 4:4-26, this book helps women understand that although Christ knows everything they have done, he still offers living water so that they may be cleansed as a new creation in Christ.

## **Restorative Justice and Sexual Abuse**

*Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, Michelle Armster*

Restorative justice is often viewed as a model of “forgiveness and reconciliation.” The reality is that it provides a framework and principles for respect, relationships and accountability. This is especially important as more and more of our congregations face issues of sexual abuse and aren’t sure what it means to talk about relationship and accountability before even beginning the conversation about forgiveness and reconciliation. We’ll provide a framework and hope participants will come with questions.

## **Papers, presented in the same session:**

### **Learning to Love our Bodies: Practicing Incarnation Through Yoga**

*Suella Lehman Gerber*

Christianity has a long history of separating body from mind/spirit; shunning the body in favor of right thinking and correct beliefs. Many forms of oppression and violence, including racism, disordered eating, etc. have resulted from negating our bodies. Yet our faith claims that God became a human body in the person of Jesus. While we want to follow Jesus, we seem unwilling to claim our bodies the way God loves and claims our bodies. We have few, if any, Christian practices that teach us to love and honor our bodies. The ancient practice of yoga offers us such a practice. In this paper, I will explore yoga as an embodied, Christian practice.

### **On Claiming Sophia: Shek-shak-shen**

*Dorothy Yoder Nyce*

This paper will describe Sophia and her divine call to practice love in relationships across religious loyalties. In addition to noting women’s need for and opportunity through Sophia, diverse voices of Shekinah (Jewish), Shakti (Hindu) and Shen (Tao) sacred, female energy will also ‘speak.’ The paper will highlight several biblical texts, validate Divine Presence within each other, and prod our seeking for further Wisdom.

### **Our Words Matter: Julian of Norwich and Diverse Images of God**

*Maria Byler, Lindsay Davis*

The image of God as a strong, upright father is stable and comforting to many. But even for those who experienced this sort of father figure, that one image can’t tell us everything we need to know about God. And the life experience for many in the world does not fit into this one image. Julian of Norwich, a 14th century English mystic, expanded on some of the biblical images of God and created some new ones, portraying God in feminine and masculine terms as well as in a position of power and a position of servitude, in order to help those around her relate to God in their time. As a result, Julian connected very deeply with God as mother and father, lord and friend. When we follow the example of Julian of Norwich by using a diversity of images and descriptions for God, everyone has the opportunity to identify closely with their Creator.

## **Session 5: Saturday, 1:30-2:30 p.m.**

### **Workshops**

### **Dancing the Great Commandment: Loving God, Self, and Neighbor through Dance**

*Risha Madhavaiya Metzler*

This workshop will provide a space for participants to connect with God and each other through dance. Come and learn gentle stretches and exercises to center oneself and condition the body. Practice using the body, along with rhythm and music, as a vehicle for worship. Listen to others through dance, and reflect on what it is like to lead and to follow through a fun and simple mirroring exercise. No experience necessary. Please wear comfortable clothes.

### **Maintaining Hope in the Midst of Oppression**

*Calenthia Dowdy and Joanna Shenk*

What does it look like to claim hope when the realities around us don’t seem to be “bending toward justice?” As activists and practitioners, what does it mean to recognize the effects of sexism, racism and economic disparities and still chose to hope? In this workshop we’ll explore ways to nurture ourselves and our communities/congregations, as well as provide space for lament and stories of hope. How does our theology form us to engage these complexities?

### **Mennonite Mothering: Join the Conversation**

*Jennifer Chappell Deckert*

What is distinctive about the ways in which we have been mothered in our faith communities? What Mennonite traditions foster models of mothering that are helpful or hurtful? In what ways are we able to embrace all women in the church, regardless of whether they are mothers or (m)others, both with significant offerings to the community? How does mothering influence our relationships with children, with colleagues and friends in our faith communities, or with God? How can we contemplate diversity and love through the lens of mothering? Come join a conversation regarding perceptions of mothering Mennonites. This workshop is inspired by the 2013 anthology, *Mothering Mennonite*.

### **Speaking of Suffering**

*Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, Linda Gehman Peachey*

This workshop will be a participatory conversation addressing how we best respond to suffering. Questions may include: When might following Jesus require suffering and when might it ask us to seek healing and/or release from suffering?

- What stories and teachings from Jesus’ life have been most life-giving and hopeful to you in situations of violence and injustice?

- How do we recognize Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, without glorifying suffering?
- What pastoral care messages and practices are especially helpful to those experiencing oppression, suffering and trauma?

### **Women in Mission: How Gender Shapes Opportunities and Challenges**

*Susan Nisly, Sharon Norton,*

Young women leaders have many opportunities to use their gifts in international and U.S. mission settings, where partners of Mennonite Mission Network have invited them to come. In the midst of wonderful opportunities are also challenges that relate particularly to their gender—role expectations in male-dominated cultures, safety precautions that restrict their mobility, and biblical interpretation that limits women's involvement. Come hear stories of how women have mentored and been mentored, practiced relational leadership and collaboration in mission and service settings, and faced these challenges in places like Albuquerque, Albany, South Africa and Paraguay. An opportunity will be given for participants to share their stories.

### **Papers, presented in the same session:**

#### **Christian Ecofeminist Images, Language & Actions: A Conversation with Feminist Theologians**

*Erica Lea*

Loving people, loving God, and loving Creation are intertwined. Therefore, language used, particularly gendered language, reveals views about oneself, God, and Creation. Language is a reflection of thoughts, and is a predictor of actions. Creation is often depicted or discussed in feminine terms by using the title Mother Earth and the feminine personal pronoun. Gender personifications of neither inherently male nor female matter reflect an underlying attitude about that matter. Ecofeminist theology desires to understand and discuss this connection of gender and ecology in order to make positive ecological and social changes in both gender relations and ecological responsibility. This paper will begin broadly with discussion of Christian Feminist theology, then narrow by considering a relationship between Christian Feminist liberation theology and Ecofeminist theology.

#### **I am Animal: Theology, Identity, and Creaturely Love**

*Nekeisha Alexis-Baker*

For the past five years, I have practiced veganism and advocacy on behalf of other animals as a form of Christian peacemaking and witness. Grounded in revolutionary love of neighbors and radical embrace of the stranger, my deep compassion toward other animals has repeatedly transformed my thinking about, speaking about and experiences of God; revolutionized my identity as a Black woman; dislodged my idolatrous understanding of human being; and strengthened my commitment to undoing oppression in the church and beyond. My paper will reflect on the meaning of these surprising but vital shifts.

### **Women Doing Farming as Theology**

*Katerina Friesen*

What can women farmers and community gardeners teach us about what it means to love God, Earth, and one another in the midst of forces that turn land into profit, bodies into resources, and food into commodities? This conversational presentation draws from interviews and the presenter's own experience as a community garden organizer to share stories of women farmer-theologians from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds, from former Catholic farm workers to Episcopalian activists. For these women, the work of farming is an embodied theological practice that incorporates an earth-based spirituality, struggle for justice, and most of all, love.

## **Session Six: Saturday, 2:45-3:45**

### **Workshops:**

#### **Esther's Dinner Party: Hospitality Can be the First Step Towards Meaningful Conversation**

*Erin Sams*

How can women help the church engage women as women, rather than spiritual commodities or political justice issues? We take a cue from Esther, who in the face of genocide did not raise funds, draft a new law or even start a protest. She hosted a banquet--twice! During this one-hour workshop participants will explore how social and justice issues inside and outside church walls can begin to be understood better and be reversed through the intentional practice of hospitality and church-warming. Participants are encouraged to share positive memories and brainstorm a list of current challenges being faced, as well as hospitality opportunities to engage those challenges. Examples will be given.

#### **Fierce Love: Woman as Spiritual Leaders Building Communities of Shalom – a Theology of Women and the Earth**

*Anita Amstutz, Erica Littlewolf*

In the 21st century, women are being called forth as leaders to speak and act truth in love. Women's gifts and ways of leading are needed now more than ever --strength through vulnerability, relationship, collaboration, compassion, and a life affirming vision for all members of the earth community. How can we nourish these within ourselves as women of many cultures? Come and explore themes of justice-making through story telling. As women of faith, we will reclaim our voices and bodies and the sacredness of earth and her many forms of life despite centuries of profit driven exploitation and oppression.

### **Identifying Barriers and Listening to Gifts: Creating more Inclusive Communities**

*Kathy Dickson*

This workshop will focus primarily on the experience of disability within our communities, with a particular emphasis on moving beyond accessibility to inclusive and open places where all voices might be valued. We'll take a quick look at the "civil rights movement" in the area of disability, spend some time on intersectionality, and also spend time considering ways to encourage more whole communities where we live, work, and worship.

### **The Omnipresent Storybook: Loving Ourselves and Each Other in the Age of Social Media**

*Hannah Heinzekehr*

Social media has changed the ways that we interact. It can be a mirror through which we view ourselves, a dangerous tool for comparison among constructed images of what it means to be a woman, a tool for connecting, a place to encounter all kinds of theological texts and more. How should we work with and understand this mixed bag? How do you create a "safe space" online (is there such a thing)? What does it mean to think theologically together via technology? I will share stories and examples from my own experiences as a blogger at The Femonite, and there will also be ample time for conversation.

### **Snakes and Other Subversive Symbols: Reclaiming What has Been Stolen, Forgotten or Demonized**

*Mindy Nolt, Chris Hoover Seidel*

Engage in the courageous process of unearthing what has been lost to us as feminine representations of the Divine. Chris Hoover Seidel and singer-songwriter Mindy Nolt invite you to engage in a time of reflection, recognition, and ritual in order to extend our reach to unforbidden fruits. This will be a time to experience what can deeply connect us as individuals, a community and a denomination to new possibilities and healing within and around us.

### **Papers, presented in the same session:**

#### **Letting Go**

*Jane Hooper Peifer*

Kenosine -- which means to empty oneself -- is the Greek verb used in Philippians 2:7, where Paul quotes from an ancient hymn to describe what Jesus did in becoming human. The German Anabaptists had a word for this essential element necessary for transformation. They called it *gelassenheit* -- meaning yieldedness. Today contemplatives speak of "letting go." I will explore how the theology of yieldedness impacted our Anabaptist mothers and fathers, and how the theology of yieldedness

plays for women. Stories will come from my personal journey as a Mennonite woman; the stories of other women; and from the experience of working with an African American woman on the Pastoral Team of Blossom Hill Mennonite Church (2011 - 2013).

### **The Sacrament of Genuine Meeting between the Generations**

*Janet Stauffer*

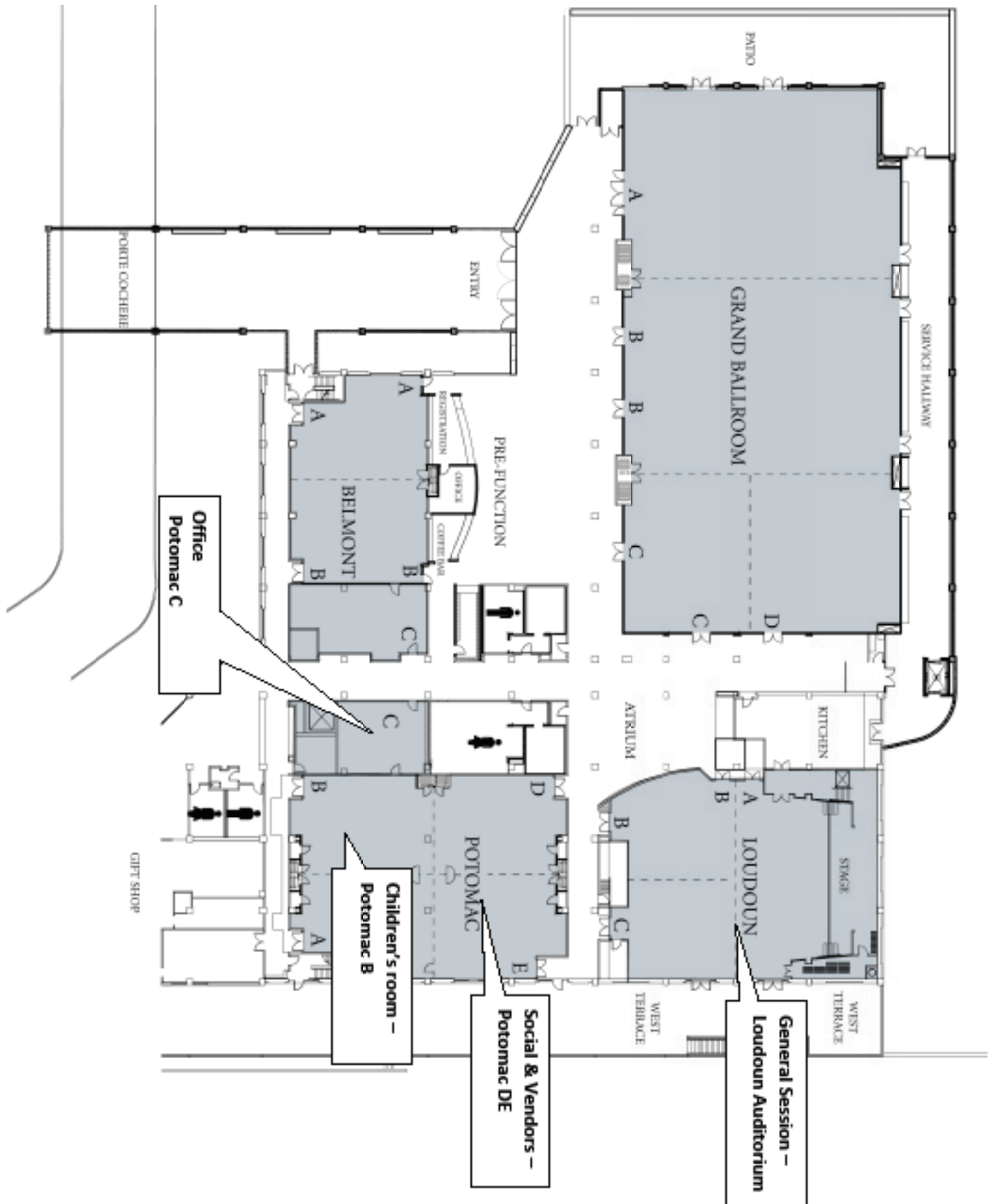
Our ways of relating to persons "other" than us are shaped by our primary relationships early in life. How we navigate differences in expectations, needs, and longings between the generations becomes a resource or an impediment to ways of engaging with persons who differ from us across racial, gender, sexual, cultural, or theological lines. This presentation rooted in story, theology, and therapy will explore the sacramental nature of being truly present to both "self" and "other" particularly between the generations of related persons. The stories, as well as theory, will demonstrate a means to find one's voice and claim one's side while also being present to the other in their "otherness" as a form of active and embodied love.

### **Self-Love as an Intercultural Gift**

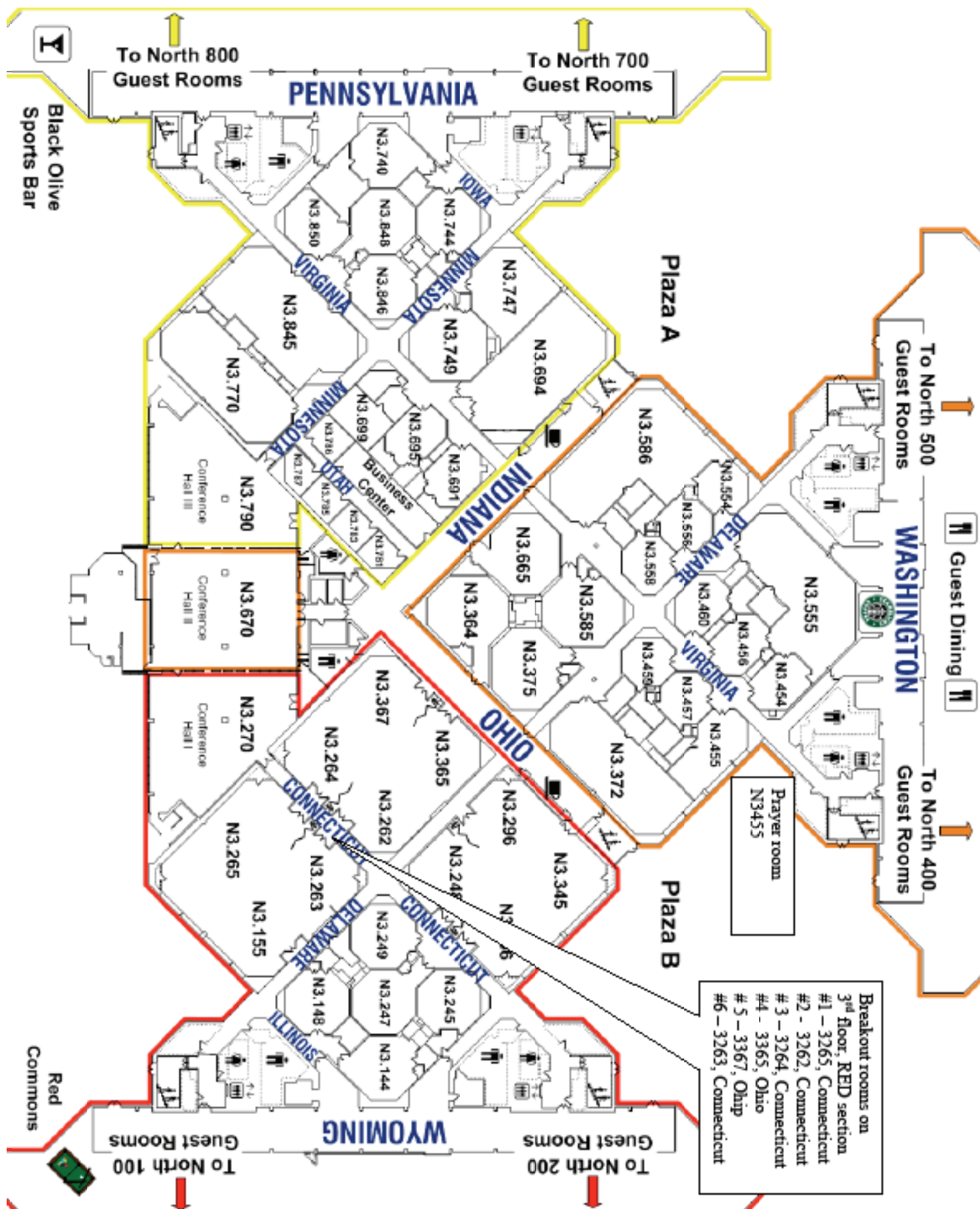
*Emily Morgan Ralph*

For many years, Christian (and especially Mennonite) tradition has emphasized self-sacrifice over self-realization and self-care. The witness of the Gospel, however, is that humans are made to love God, love others, and love ourselves; as humans created in the image of God, this is truly good news. In the context of intercultural communities, self-love—as expressed by self-awareness, dignity, and humility—becomes a gift to the whole as we offer all of ourselves to one another, knowing that what we offer is worthy of love, honor, and celebration.

# West Building



## North Building



# Schedule

## Thursday, February 20



### AT A GLANCE

**1:00 - 6:00 p.m.** Registration

**4:00 - 5:30 p.m.** Social Hour

**5:30 - 6:30 p.m.** Dinner  
*North Building Guest Dining Area*

**6:30 - 7:00 p.m.** Worship  
*Loudoun Auditorium*

**7:00 - 8:30 p.m.** Large Group Conversation  
*Loudoun Auditorium*  
Framing the conversation: What does it mean to love in a world that is rife with struggle and oppression?

**8:30 - 9:00 p.m.** Circle Groups

**9:00 p.m.** Social Hour

**9:00 p.m.** Movie  
*Loudoun Auditorium*

## Friday, February 21

**6:30 - 8:30 a.m.** Breakfast  
*North Building Guest Dining Area*

**8:30 - 9:00 a.m.** Worship  
*Loudoun Auditorium*

**9:00 - 9:20 a.m.** Coffee Break

**9:20 - 10:20 a.m.** Breakout Session One  
**Workshops**  
**Paper Presentations**

**10:40 - 11:40 a.m.** Breakout Session Two  
**Workshops**  
**Paper Presentations**

**11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.** Lunch  
*North Building Guest Dining Area*

**1:00 - 2:00 p.m.**  
Reflecting, Processing, Deepening  
Optional: Guided Meditation, *3265 North Building*

**2:00 - 3:30 p.m.** Large Group Conversation  
*Loudoun Auditorium*

Part 1: Women in Leadership Project  
Update and Offering

Part 2: What does it mean to love when it comes to:  
~ Indigenous contexts?  
~ contexts of militarization?  
~ loving enemies?

**3:30 - 4:00 p.m.** Circle Groups

**4:15 - 5:15 p.m.** Breakout Session Three  
**Workshops**  
**Paper Presentations**

**5:15 - 5:30 p.m.** Coffee Break

**5:30 - 6:30 p.m.** Breakout Session Four  
**Workshops**  
**Paper Presentations**

**6:30 - 8:00 p.m.** Dinner  
*North Building Guest Dining Area*

**8:30 - 9:00 p.m.** Worship  
*Loudoun Auditorium*

**9:00 p.m.** Social Hour

**9:30 p.m.** Slam Poetry Performance  
*Loudoun Auditorium*

## Saturday, February 22

**7:00 - 8:30 a.m.** Breakfast  
*North Building Guest Dining Area*

**8:30 - 9:00 a.m.** Worship  
*Loudoun Auditorium*

**9:00 - 10:30 a.m.** Large Group Conversation  
*Loudoun Auditorium*

What does it mean to love when it comes to:  
~ LGBTQ contexts?  
~ contexts of sexual violence?  
~ the context of self-love?

**10:30 - 11:00 a.m.** Circle Groups

**11:00 - 11:15 a.m.** Coffee Break

**11:15 - 12:15 a.m.**  
Reflecting, Processing, Deepening  
Optional: Guided Meditation, *3265 North Building*

**12:15 - 1:15 p.m.** Lunch  
*North Building Guest Dining Area*

**1:30 - 2:30 p.m.** Breakout Session Five  
**Workshops**  
**Paper Presentations**

**2:45 - 3:45 p.m.** Breakout Session Six  
**Workshops**  
**Paper Presentations**

**4:00 - 4:30 p.m.** Circle Groups

**4:45 - 5:30 p.m.** Closing Ritual  
*Loudoun Auditorium*

**Traveling Mercies!**