

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren Celebrates 100th Year**

For nearly 100 years, the Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren (MCOB) has served the spiritual and material needs of the surrounding community. On May 3, the church at 301 Gale St. will mark its centennial with a 10:30 a.m. worship service centered on its anniversary theme “Yesterday’s Vision: Today’s Strength, Tomorrow’s Hope.” Jeff Carter, president of Bethany Theological Seminary, will deliver a keynote sermon on the theme. Since 2013, he has led the Church of the Brethren seminary based in Richmond, Ind. MCOB Pastor Eric Seibert will serve as worship leader.

During Sunday school, Jeff Bach, director emeritus of the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College, also will offer remarks related to the congregation’s 100th anniversary.

Nashville recording artist Anita Stapleton Anderson will kick off the centennial weekend with a free concert Saturday, May 2, at 7 p.m. Anderson, who began her performing career singing in the Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren children’s choir, has been a background vocalist in the recording studio and live stage performances for country music notables that include Patty Loveless, Connie Smith, Charlie Daniels, Lee Greenwood, Moe Bandy and Gene Watson. She has appeared on *Grand Ole Opry Live*, *Live with Regis & Kathie Lee*, *Austin City Limits*, *Late Night with Conan O’Brien*, among other TV programs. In addition to playing music, she conducts guided tours of Nashville, sharing the music and history of the city. Joining her on May 2 will be her brother Brent Stapleton.

Throughout its 100 years, the Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren has been an impactful church not only locally but in the denomination. In the 56 years of Southern Pennsylvania District executive leadership, two Mechanicsburg members, Stanley Earhart and Warren Eshbach served as district executives for 30 years, and newly elected Executive, Traci Rabenstein begins her service on April 6. Others have been district conference moderators and served on the district board.

On the national level, Eshbach was General Board chair, Colin Scott was Mission and Ministry Board chair, Wayne Scott was Brethren Benefit Trust/Eder Financial chair, Theresa Eshbach was Bethany Seminary’s director of institutional advancement, Traci Rabenstein was executive director of mission advancement, and Del Keeney was denominational executive director for Congregational Life Ministries. Vernne Greiner and Margie Fultz served on the Association of Brethren Caregivers Board.

The church played a key role in establishing a Mechanicsburg branch of New Hope Ministries in 1989. The church remains an avid supporter of the Christian social service agency that provides food, basic needs and stability/workforce development to at-risk individuals in northern York and eastern Cumberland counties.

Other local nonprofits the church staunching supports are the Harrisburg office of Church World Service, Family Promise of Harrisburg Capital Region, Brethren Housing Association and the Wildcat Foundation.

In recent years, the church has fulfilled the denomination's calling to be Jesus in the Neighborhood by engaging the local community. Recent well-attended initiatives held at the church for area residents have been a spring Easter Egg Hunt, Burgers & Dogs cookout during the summer months, a spring rummage sale and late-summer yard sale, and Trunk or Treat in the fall.

The church annually supplies a team for Mechanicsburg's fall Church World Service CROP Walk and offers Caregivers and Grief Support groups as well as knitting and quilting groups, Vacation Bible School, an instrumental music ensemble and bell and vocal choirs as well as other engagement opportunities.

As the Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren sets its path into its next century, it is guided by five core values:

- *Strengthening the Congregational Community*, affirming one another's gifts and celebrating God's love and caring together
- *Witnessing through Service and Outreach*, assisting individuals and our community across cultures, religion and throughout the world
- *Welcoming and Validating Others*, receiving people with generosity, warmth and patience
- *Developing Believers*, sharing what we have learned with others so they too may grow in their spiritual lives
- *Living Our Faith*, embodying the priorities that Jesus taught.

For more information, go to <https://www.mechanicsburgcob.org>, call 717-766-8880 or email [mechanicsburgcob@verizon.net](mailto:mechanicsburgcob@verizon.net).

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### **Under Upcoming Events in the District Newsletter**

Saturday, May 2, Anita Stapleton Concert, Mechanicsburg COB, 7 p.m.

Sunday, May 3, 100th Anniversary Celebration, Mechanicsburg COB, Sunday School, 9 a.m.; worship service, 10:30 a.m.