

## Mexican historian to speak about creating church historical archives

**IN JANUARY** THE Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism (ISGA) will host a webinar on the role of historical archives for churches in Latin America. Invited guest and historian Rubí Barocio Castells will present on her experience of establishing a historical archives for the Convención Nacional Bautista de México (National Baptist Convention of Mexico), of which she is the current director. The Comunidad de Instituciones Teológicas Anabautistas (CITA) is collaborating with the ISGA to promote this webinar opportunity.

The January webinar builds on the foundation established during the 2019 “Power and Preservation” symposium, convened by the ISGA. The symposium was attended by 29 global church historians and archivists interested in source preservation and storytelling. At the conclusion of the symposium, participants drafted a statement that was later published by Mennonite World Conference. The statement included commitments to:

- Foster habits of preservation throughout the global Anabaptist-Mennonite community.
- Engage in new and continued efforts to preserve sources and to promote access.
- Nurture enthusiasm...for the tasks of collecting sources and sharing stories.

At the same time, it also named the barriers many churches face in achieving these goals, including financial constraints, external restrictions, and limited experience in the management of historical resources.

Barocio Castells’s experience gives her



Rubí Barocio Castells

a unique perspective on the importance of historical archives for church history, as well as the challenges and possibilities of historic preservation in the Latin American context. Not only does she have hands-on experience in archives collection and preservation, but she has also written extensively on the history of Baptists in Mexico, using those same archival sources for her own research.

CITA invites all of its participating institutions to attend the webinar, but the invitation is open for any individual, church, or institution that wishes to attend. The webinar will be conducted in Spanish. 🌿

### Church archives webinar with Rubí Barocio Castells

**January 28, 2024**

6:30 pm CST | 7:30 pm EST

Zoom Meeting ID: 943 0071 5753



Emma Gingerich

### Goshen College student contributes to Anabaptism and Mission bibliography update

**FOR THE PAST** three months, Tuesday mornings have found Goshen College senior Emma Gingerich in the stacks of the Mennonite Historical Library (MHL). Gingerich has been using the MHL’s collection to help compile and describe a wide range of sources that will contribute to an update of the *Anabaptism and Mission Bibliography*. Originally directed by Chad M. Bauman and James R. Krabill, the first iteration of the bibliography was published in 2002. In 2011, missiologist and pastor Joe Pfeiffer completed an updated bibliography that is currently hosted online by Mennonite World Conference. Pfeiffer and other organizers hope that a 2025 update coinciding with the 500th anniversary of the origins of Anabaptism will serve a new generation of scholars and more fully reflect the scope of recent global scholarship.

see **BIBLIOGRAPHY**, pg. 2

Published bibliographies like the *Anabaptism and Mission Bibliography* provide a comprehensive list of publications around a specific theme. Although a library catalog is certainly a great place to start, published bibliographies often include information and sources that may not appear in a catalog search. In the case of the *Anabaptism and Mission Bibliography*, this is especially true, since the

bibliography's scope is so broad; it includes publications by, for, or about Anabaptists in mission, with mission defined as boundary-crossing that involves witness.

Gingerich compiled her contributions to the bibliography, including identifying tags for further classification, in a research tool called Zotero that is easily shared with other collaborators. Of greatest personal interest to Gingerich was the literature on

Christian-Muslim relations and dialogue. "It helped me reflect on my own faith," said Gingerich. "It has been really interesting to read some of these sources in conjunction with my Islam class right now." Gingerich's experience is a testament to the ways that student research can strengthen liberal arts connections on campus, as well as contribute to initiatives beyond Goshen College. 🌿

## Quilt stories and connections



Members of the Midwest Fabric Study Group and Amish-Mennonite Exhibit Committee discuss quilt preservation and care on November 23, 2024, at Goshen College.

**ON NOVEMBER 23, 2024**, the Amish-Mennonite Exhibit Committee and the Mennonite History Library (MHL) at Goshen College welcomed 45 members of the Midwest Fabric Study Group to interact with quilts from the MHL's museum collection. The Midwest Fabric Study Group is an organization of quilt scholars, researchers, and enthusiasts with expertise in fabric dating and quilt identification.

Quilts have been a powerful medium for storytelling and connection, especially for women in Mennonite and Amish communities in North America. During the group's visit, Goshen College Professor Emeritus Ervin Beck shared about the MHL's interest in the stories that quilts tell. Friendship quilts, for example, are not usually valued by

collectors, but the ways they map community networks among Amish and Mennonite women make them valuable additions to the MHL's collection. Individual contributors to these quilts often embroider their name, address, or a special message on pieces that are then stitched into the quilt top. Beck also showed the group a Log Cabin crib quilt that had been used by one Amish family to tuck in their nine children. The worn fabric and stitching of this quilt tell a vibrant story about how it was used and loved.

Members of the Midwest Fabric Study Group viewed eleven quilts from the MHL's museum collection during their visit and generously shared their expertise in quilt storage and identification. 🌿

**Radical Renewal?**  
Witnessing to a New Heaven and a New Earth  
*Amsterdam 2025*  
20th Believers Church Conference

### BCC in Amsterdam

**THE 20<sup>TH</sup> BELIEVERS** Church Conference will take place in Amsterdam from June 1-4, 2025. Hosted by Dutch Baptist and Mennonite seminaries and the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, "Radical Renewal? Witnessing to a New Heaven and a New Earth" is both an international academic conference, as well as a commemoration of 500 years of Anabaptist history. Believers Church Conferences have met regularly since 1967 and have been important ecumenical spaces for mutual enrichment and discussion on the shape of ecclesiology in "Believers Church" traditions, including Anabaptist and Baptist groups. Goshen College has hosted the BCC twice since 1967.

Plenary speakers in Amsterdam include: Siaka Traoré, Dr. Willie James Jennings, Nindy Sasongko, Sarah Augustine, Dr. Naw Eh Tar Gay, and Betty Ruth Lozano-Lerma, among others. Registration closes February 1. Undergraduate and graduate students are especially encouraged to register, and there are some scholarships available for Global South participants from (Ana)Baptist traditions. Please see [believerschurchconference.com](https://believerschurchconference.com) for further registration information. 🌿

# Mennonite Historical Library names Eric Bradley head librarian

ON SEPT. 30, 2024, Eric Bradley transitioned into the role of head librarian of the Mennonite Historical Library (MHL), where Joe Springer served as curator for the past 38 years. Bradley steps into the role with 15 years of experience in academic libraries, 11 of which have been at Goshen College. He holds a master's in library science from Indiana University and a BA in Biblical studies from Grace College. In his previous role as a research and instruction librarian at Goshen College, he greatly expanded student services and library instruction.

The Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism (ISGA) works hand-in-hand with the MHL, with a common goal to connect communities across the world and provide accessible sources for research and storytelling. Bradley brings a new perspective on broadening

the accessibility of the MHL's resources, including increased possibilities for digitization.

Karl Stutzman, director of library services at the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana, said, "The MHL collection is the richest in the world when it comes to displaying the diversity of Anabaptism, and ... it needs ongoing resources as Anabaptism continues to change and grow."

Bradley is looking forward to continuing in that trajectory. He has already collaborated with libraries across Indiana in a variety of ways, including working with the Private Academic Library Network of Indiana as a reference, instruction, and outreach coordinator, where he was named to the organization's Hall of Fame.

"Eric has some valuable skills and experience," Springer said, "in working



Joe Springer (left) and Eric Bradley pose in the MHL.

with helping manage digital assets and collaboration with other institutions. He enhances the ability for MHL to continue to evolve to serve the needs of future patrons."

Bradley said, "It's exciting to think through ways that we can move this collection into this next stage of the world of information that we live in — and the world of our faith communities as well." 🌱

*Adapted from a Goshen College press release, published October 3, 2024.*

## EARLY ANABAPTISM IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE AT 500 YEARS

JULY 22-24  
2025

JOIN US FOR A CONFERENCE at Elizabethtown College's Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, marking the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Anabaptism, with special emphasis on the global context in which the movement emerged and spread and its global reception today.



SCAN THE QR CODE to view the program and register, or visit [etown.edu/anabaptism2025](http://etown.edu/anabaptism2025)

30+ presentations, seminars, and roundtable discussions

### PLENARY SPEAKERS



Nicholas Terpstra  
Canada



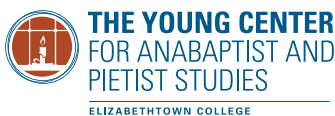
Kat Hill  
Scotland



Danang Kristiawan  
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# Storytelling at 500 Years

BY **ELIZABETH MILLER**, *Director of the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism*

**2025 PROMISES TO** be an extraordinary year of international gathering, as communities around the world commemorate 500 years of Anabaptism. Perhaps the most publicized of these events is Mennonite World Conference's commemoration, to be hosted in Zurich in May 2025, but there are many more planned. South American Anabaptists will gather in Cusco, Peru in January, coinciding with the date of the first recorded baptism in Anabaptist history. Baptists and Anabaptists will meet in Amsterdam in June for the 20th Believers Church Conference. In July, Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania will host a conference focused on global perspectives of early Anabaptism. (See additional information in this issue about the Elizabethtown and Amsterdam conferences.) These conferences are unique opportunities for church leaders and scholars to take advantage of this auspicious date for renewed reflection, study, and discernment for the future.

The reality is, however, that the majority of Anabaptists will not attend these larger international conferences. Instead, most are likely to observe the anniversary of 500 years of Anabaptism in their home congregations. Although international conferences allow



ISGA Director **Elizabeth Miller** leads youth at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship (Goshen, Ind.) in a session about global Anabaptism.

for unique forms of exchange and connection, it seems particularly appropriate for a movement that grew out of home meetings and evangelism of neighbors to be recognized and commemorated among local worshipping communities.

Over the past six months, I have been delighted to receive numerous invitations from Mennonite congregations to speak about global Anabaptism. As the 500th anniversary approaches, these congregations are using their Sunday School and corporate worship spaces to reflect on the history of Anabaptism and their own community's location within that tradition. I enter these conversations eagerly but also do so with a certain degree of caution.

Anniversaries and commemorations are tricky things, laden with unspoken expectations. Some may hope to find a "pure" form of faith that can be extracted from the past and applied to the present. Others may seek to wrestle openly with the internal contradictions inherent in any movement that spans five centuries. Perhaps some hope to see their own convictions justified. Still others may seek guidance for the future in their commemorations of the past.

The disparate expectations that underlie our commemorations, however, should not dissuade us from participating. This is especially true at a congregational level, where connection and relationship are the substrate for any reflection on 500 years of Anabaptism. Visiting congregations over the past year, my focus has been on expanding the circle of connection through storytelling. Each congregation knows its own story and history most intimately, which is as it should be, but no congregation can hold the entirety of Anabaptist faith within its own experience.

When the history and experience of a Mennonite congregation in Indiana is illuminated by the honest testimony of Anabaptists in Nicaragua, Ethiopia, or Indonesia, for example, the meaning of Anabaptism and the possibilities for faithful living in the Indiana context expand. How those possibilities are eventually realized depends on many

factors, of course, including a willingness to hold our own expectations lightly, an existing practice of communal discernment, and an attentiveness to the movements of the Holy Spirit.

In this year of commemorations, my most gratifying experience was fittingly at my home congregation where I was invited to speak with our youth group about global Anabaptism. We connected our congregational life and practice with broader expressions of Anabaptism, before exploring the ways that youth in other places have claimed Anabaptism as the way in which they feel best equipped to follow Jesus in their context. My hope is that this year of commemoration will root us more deeply in the particularities of faithful living our own contexts, even as we seek connection with the ways that Anabaptist communities across 500 years and an abundance of cultures have also struggled with, testified to, and embodied their faith. ✝



**INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY  
OF GLOBAL ANABAPTISM**

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[goshen.edu/isga](http://goshen.edu/isga)



## Give to the ISGA

The ISGA depends on your gifts to continue our mission of strengthening Anabaptist scholarship and communities through global connection and storytelling. You can contribute to the ISGA at Goshen College's giving page by selecting the ISGA in the designation menu.

**Thank you for your  
generosity and support!**