



2023 Report to Central District Conference

\$1.5 MILLION ENDOWED CHAIR IN BOTANY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Thanks to generous funding from anonymous donors, Bluffton University has established the M'Della Moon Endowed Chair in Botany and Environmental Science. The \$1.5 million dollar gift will fund a faculty chair who will divide their time equally between managing the Bluffton University Nature Preserve and teaching university classes. The endowment is named after M'Della Moon, a member of Bluffton's science faculty from 1921-61.

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK OFFERED

Bluffton will offer a Master of Social Work (MSW) graduate degree with a mental health specialization starting in the 2023-24 academic year. The program, conducted in partnership with Goshen College, is designed to equip students with the advanced knowledge and skills required to meet the mental health needs of their communities and offers students a holistic approach to the field of social work. Coursework will prepare students to sit for licensure in any state. Applications opened in January.

LION AND LAMB UPDATES

Starting this academic year at The Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center, an emphasis is being placed on training and empowering university students to lead sessions with school children on cultural understanding and conflict resolution. To facilitate that connection and more directly align the work with Bluffton's education program, **Dr. Paul Neufeld Weaver**, professor of education and director of global education, is serving as director of The Lion and Lamb. **Tareq Abuhallima**, from Gaza, Palestine, is serving as a graduate assistant to staff the center. He is connected with MennoPIN (Mennonite Palestinian Israel Network). Bluffton senior **Grace Liechty Zickafoose**, Lima Mennonite Church, served as the undergraduate student assistant during fall 2022.

ANABAPTIST COMMUNITY BIBLE

As part of MennoMedia's Anabaptism at 500 project, **Dr. Gerald Mast's** Religious Communication class worked through assigned passages and developed notes from their discussions of those passages for the upcoming Anabaptist Community Bible. Dr. Mast is also gathering notes from historic Anabaptist sources.

CDC CONNECTIONS ON CAMPUS

Rev. Georgia Metz '13, pastor of Shalom Mennonite Congregation in Harrisonburg, Va., spoke during Forum, gave the Chapel message and visited with students the week of March 19, 2023, for Bluffton's semi-annual Spiritual Life Week. Metz's messages supported the theme "Let's Listen."

Marathana Prothro, assistant professor of communication, provided the Civic Engagement Day Forum "Echo Chambers and Funhouse Mirrors: Navigating an Age of Alternate Facts, Distorted Reality and Fractured Relationships." Prothro attends Grace Mennonite Church in Pandora, Ohio.

Thank you!

Bluffton University currently enrolls nine students from Central District Conference churches: **Theodore Andreas, Benjamin Hartzler** and **Therisanyo Phetlhu**, First Mennonite Church of Bluffton; **Rilynn Kauffman** and **Deborah Yoder**, Assembly Mennonite Church; **Grace Liechty Zickafoose**, Lima Mennonite Church; **Blake Clum, Caitlyn Renner** and **Madelyn Renner**, Grace Mennonite Church.

Church Matching Scholarship support is \$7,277 for 2022-23.

The Bluffton trustees from Central District Conference are **Annette Heslep '89**, First Mennonite Church of Bluffton; **Heather Reichenbach '99**, secretary, Eighth Street Mennonite Church; **Jane Roeschley '77**, Mennonite Church of Normal; **Tim Stried '98**, Columbus Mennonite Church.

Bluffton University at Convention!

Bluffton presenters at Mennonite Church USA Convention 2023 include:

Melissa Friesen, "Acting Out the Parable"

Marathana Prothro, "One T-Shirt at a Time: My Journey Away from Fast Fashion"

For more information, contact **Gerald Mast**

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