

## One Lord. One Faith. One Baptism.



The theme for this year's District Conference draws on a part of Paul's letter to the early church in Ephesus which was a collection of disparate groups of people. At the beginning of the letter Paul reminds the church of the story of the Good News. In the second half Paul attempts to flesh out what that Good News story means for their everyday life. Right in the middle, at the beginning of chapter 4, Paul connects the two. "Therefore (because of the Good News of Jesus' life, death and resurrection)... I beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace:...."

I think humility, gentleness, patience, love and peace are good in and of themselves. However, Paul seems to indicate that the church has even more reason to exhibit these characteristics in their walk. "... One body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, *one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all*" (emphasis is mine).

What I have so appreciated about, not only, the Atlantic Northeast District, but also the wider Church of the Brethren, is being a part of a community of faith that takes the words of Jesus seriously and seeks to embody that faith in action. I have valued the efforts of those who have been committed to the youth of the District leading retreats, service projects and fellowship activities over the years. I remember with great appreciation times when the Mechanic Grove congregation and the Alpha y Omega congregation shared lovefeast and Pentecost baptisms. I've been thankful for and challenged by the family at the Elizabethtown congregation and their public statement against Christian nationalism. My experiences at Camp Swatara have left a deep impact on me along with relationships that I value greatly. I'm grateful for the Harrisburg First congregation's long-term commitment to an embodied presence of Christ in their neighborhood. These are just a few of the people and groups from whom I have learned much. There are many others across the district that have taught me, and I value the perspectives and gifts that each contributes to the broader community of faith.

Like the diversity in backgrounds and experiences of those in ancient Ephesus, the district brings together ethnic, social, and theological diversity. What connects us together is one Lord, Jesus of Nazareth, one faith grounded in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and one baptism signifying our commitment to the ways of Jesus and the reign of God. This is the center of our commitment to "network together to further the Kingdom of God" (from the ANE District purpose), and will be the focus as we meet together for worship, relationship, equipping and the shared ministry of District Conference October 10-11, 2025.

Ephesians 4:1-6

-Adam Ulm  
2025 District Conference Moderator  
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