The Bechtel Lectures in Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies were established in 2000 through the generosity of Lester Bechtel. As a devoted churchman with an active interest in Mennonite history, Lester’s dream was to make the academic world of research and study accessible to a broader constituency and to build bridges of understanding between the academy and the church. This lecture series provides a forum through which the core meaning and values of the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and heritage might be communicated to a diverse audience and be kept relevant and connected to the rapidly changing world of our day.

The Bechtel Lectures provide the opportunity for representatives of a variety of disciplines and professions to explore topics that reflect the breadth and depth of Mennonite history, identity, faith and culture. The Conrad Grebel University College Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies is pleased to host this annual event.

A video of this year’s lectures will be posted online at: grebel.ca/bechtel
February 7, 8, and 9, 2019

TAKE ME TO THE WATERS
BAPTISM, COMMITMENT, AND THE CHURCH

ABOUT THE SPEAKER
Professor Irma Fast Dueck was born and grew up in Winnipeg. She was a university chaplain and a pastor before beginning her teaching career. She received her ThD from Victoria University at the University of Toronto, her MDiv from the University of Winnipeg, and her BA from the University of Waterloo.

Fast Dueck’s teaching and research interests frequently lead her to themes connected to the practices of the church and the theology purveyed/conveyed by those practices. In the past few years she has given more sustained focus on the rituals of the church such as worship and baptism and on themes related to power. More recently, Fast Dueck’s commitment to peacemaking has led her to participate in a number of reconciliation endeavours, including Muslim-Christian dialogue (sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee). She also continues to be involved with Mennonite-Catholic dialogue groups around Winnipeg.

Thursday, February 7, 2019 | 7:30 PM
Public Lecture: “Like a Fish in Water: Reclaiming Baptism in an Anabaptist Church”

Baptism is one of the earliest Christian practices, marking the believer as Christian and initiating them into the community. For the early Anabaptists, the ritual was a political act, many times resulting in martyrdom. This lecture will explore contemporary Anabaptist baptism in light of challenges that question the conditions and necessity of baptism. Baptism is not simply an event in time, but it carries within it the contours of the Christian life and fuels the Anabaptist imagination for peace and justice. Reception to follow.

Friday, February 8, 2019 | 7:30 PM
Panel: “Taking the Plunge: Young Adults and the Church”

The experience of young adults and the decline in church attendance has been of special interest in this past decade. This evening we will engage the wisdom of young adults’ encounters with the church, with the aim of better understanding what it means to be the church together.

Panelists: Yeabsra Agonfer, 4th year Religious Studies student, UWaterloo
Colin Friesen, Master of Theological Studies student, Grebel
Emily Hunsberger, children’s programmer, Kitchener Public Library
Jonathan Klassen, 4th year Arts student, UWaterloo
Maria Klassen, high school student, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate

Moderator: Dr. Irma Fast Dueck

Saturday, February 9, 2019 | 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM
Anabaptist Learning Workshop:
“Shacking Up: Sex, Love, and Church Commitment”

Is there a difference between “shacking up” and making a long-term commitment? In the context of church, some people choose baptism, some people pursue membership without baptism, and others choose to participate without needing to make any commitments. In this interactive workshop we will learn together about the meaning of commitment through the lenses of Christian baptism and co-habitation.