# THE LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE OF LIVING BRANCHES



# Course Brochure spring session

March to June 2025







Living U is the Living Branches lifelong learning institute. Recognizing the many benefits of lifelong learning, Living Branches established Living U to give older adults opportunities to broaden their knowledge and learn new things. The best part — no grades! Living U is for your pure learning enjoyment.

#### **CURRICULUM COUNCIL**

Marvin Anders
Maribeth Benner
Eileen Burks
Rich Fiedler
Richard Lichty
Carol Pratt
Heather Scattergood
Susan Shade
Mary Ann Vettese
Phyllis Young

The Living U Curriculum Council consists of residents, future residents, and Living Branches team members. The purpose of the council is to assess interest and to organize and promote lifelong learning opportunities and experiences that empower older adults to lead lives of inquiry, purpose, and joy.

#### **GET IN TOUCH**

Maribeth Benner Living U Coordinator 215-368-4438 ext. 44204 Maribeth.Benner@ livingbranches.org

Brochure designed by Emily Weber-Wood



### A Warm Welcome

As you browse through the pages of this spring course brochure, I am pleased to invite you to our classes and trips in the upcoming months. Living U students can experience the pleasure of discovery and learning, the social connections of coming together for classes and trips, and the opportunity to create and grow through new understandings and adventures. From local and national history to music, gardening, kayaking, and ancient and current faith practices, I hope that you will find some topics and activities that will interest you. Welcome to Living U!

Maribeth Benner, Living U Coordinator LIVING BRANCHES

### Join Us for the Spring Session Kickoff

You are invited to attend a kickoff presentation on Tuesday, January 21, from 1:00 to 1:45 p.m. in the Summit View Auditorium at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Living U coordinator Maribeth Benner will moderate as many of our instructors share very brief introductions to their courses. Inperson class registration will take place immediately following the presentation.

Shuttle service will be provided from the other campuses. Please call or email Maribeth Benner to schedule a ride.

Light refreshments will be served.

## ENROLL IN LIVING U

### at Living Branches

### How to Enroll

Registration will be open from Tuesday, January 21 through Friday, January 31. In-person registration will begin on January 21 immediately following the 1:00 p.m. Spring Kickoff at Souderton Mennonite Homes. Later, at 2:30 p.m. on January 21, online registration will be available through the Living U app on the resident portal and at *livingbranches.org/livingu*.

Starting Thursday, January 23, students may call Maribeth Benner directly to register.

You can also bring your completed course checklist (pages 14-15) to one of these in-person registration times:

### **QUESTIONS?** We're here to help!

#### **EMAIL**

Maribeth.Benner@ livingbranches.org

**CALL** 215-368-4438 ext. 44204

### SOUDERTON MENNONITE HOMES FRONT LOBBY

- ♦ Tuesday, January 21, after Kickoff until 3:00 p.m.
- ♦ Thursday, January 23, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.
- ♦ Tuesday, January 28, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.
- ♦ Thursday, January 30, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

#### **HEARTHSIDE BISTRO AT DOCK WOODS**

- ♦ Wednesday, January 22, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.
- ♦ Thursday, January 23, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.
- ♦ Tuesday, January 28, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.
- ♦ Thursday, January 30, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

### **Cost and Payment**

Living Branches residents may pay with a credit card or their Living Branches account. All other students may pay by credit card. Registration costs are non-refundable.

### Registration costs:

• 1-5 courses: \$30.00

• 6-10 courses: \$50.00

• 11 or more courses: \$75.00

Certain classes have extra costs listed in the course descriptions. Unless the class has an extra fee, Living Branches Personal Care residents can attend free of charge by contacting your life enrichment coordinator or Maribeth Benner.

### **Transportation and Arrival**

When registering for classes, Living Branches residents may sign up for shuttle service across our campuses. If you opt for the shuttle, a team member from Dock Woods will call the day before class to confirm your pick-up time and location. Call 215-368-4438 if you need to change your shuttle plans. Doors open 30 minutes before class.

### The Learning Environment

Living U provides occasions for teachers and students to learn from each other's stories, knowledge, and perspectives. Course content and discussion are offered for discovery, enrichment, and educational purposes and do not necessarily represent Living U or Living Branches.

Register starting January 21 at 2:30 p.m. at *livingbranches.org/livingu* 



### A Short Introduction to Mushroom Foraging in Pennsylvania WITH ALETHEA KIDD FROM FUNGIFIED FARM

Tuesday, March 4 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Summit View Auditorium at Souderton Mennonite Homes

Love mushrooms? Interested in learning about fungi? Learn about native mushroom species from a passionate local mushroom forager!

This course will explore how to recognize common and not-so-common mushrooms in Pennsylvania. We will discuss safe foraging techniques and the importance of a healthy fungal ecosystem.

As a small family-run farm in Montgomery County, Fungified Farm produces an array of delicious gourmet mushrooms without using any chemicals or pesticides. They are passionate about foraging local wild mushrooms.

### S2502

### Native American Jewelry of the American Southwest WITH JAMES RICHARD TUFANO

Wednesday, March 5 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Fisher Auditorium at Dock Woods

Handcrafted jewelry made by Zuni, Hopi, and Navajo silversmiths in northern Arizona and New Mexico has evolved from traditional hammered and stamped coin silver created by the Navajo to the contemporary use of multicolored turquoise, coral, onyx, mother of pearl, and other stones and shells on sterling silver. Each culture has distinctive styles of silversmithing, and examples of each will be on display in this class. Participants are invited to bring their Indian jewelry to class for Jim's version of *Antiques Roadshow*.

James Richard Tufano has made a lifelong study of Native American history and cultures, traveling extensively to visit many reservations, museums, and other places of significance. Jim is a resident of Dock Woods.

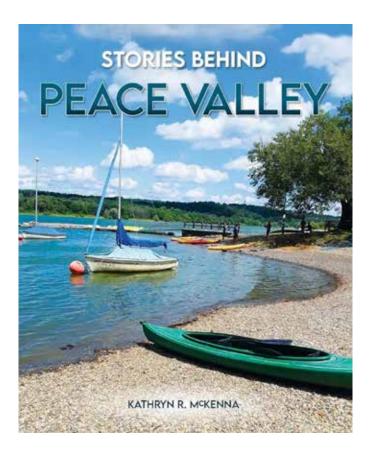


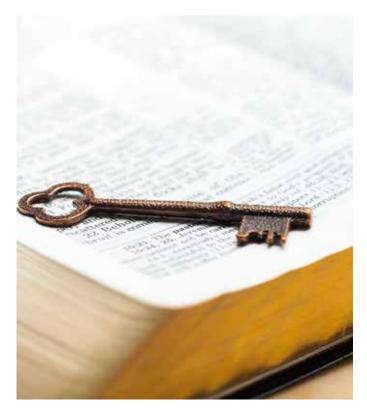
### Stories Behind Peace Valley WITH KATHRYN McKENNA

Thursday, March 6 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Fisher Auditorium at Dock Woods

Lake Galena and the village of New Galena were named after the discovery of the mineral in the valley that forever changed the lives and livelihoods of the residents and businesses there. Kathryn's book, *Stories Behind Peace Valley*, offers a glimse into the history, businesses, mining operations, lake project, and the lives and activities of those who lived and worked there before the manmade lake was created.

Kathryn R. McKenna is retired from her career as a teacher and educational consultant and has earned a certificate in historic preservation from Bucks County Community College. Three other books by Kathryn featuring local landmarks are The Mercer Museum A to Z; Treasured Legacy Stories of the James-Lorah Memorial Home; and Man About Town – W. Lester Trauch.





### S2504

Insights from Ancient Christian Questions
WITH NANCY HEISEY, Ph.D.

Tuesday, March 11 (Part 1) and Wednesday, March 12 (Part 2) 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Summit View Auditorium at Souderton Mennonite Homes

### This course is limited to 50 students.

Contemporary participants in the Christian story don't usually think about how our ancient forebears dealt with two vexing issues of their time. Our first theme is how Christians dealt with the threat of and temptation to violence. Our second theme is "women and men," or how Christians navigated cultural norms and societal customs that affected the participation of women and men in the churches.

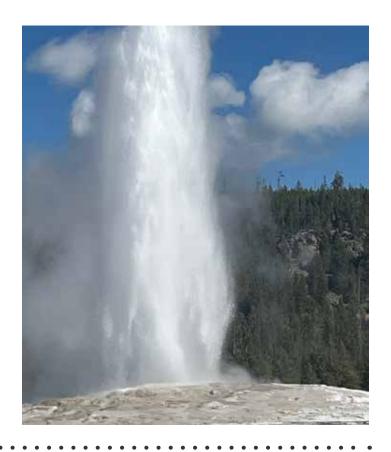
Nancy Heisey, Ph.D., recently retired from 24 years of teaching at Eastern Mennonite University. Drawing on her research into the history of the first Christians in Egypt, she taught courses in church history for over a decade.

# Come With Us on a Road Trip to Yellowstone WITH PHYLLIS YOUNG

Thursday, March 13 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Fisher Auditorium at Dock Woods

This presentation of photos taken while driving to Yellowstone will discuss how we prepared for the trip and offer tips on making the most of any road trip, as well as interesting and fun locations you won't want to miss.

**Phyllis Young** retired in 2022 after 32 years at Grand View Hospital in women's health and as a registered nurse and lactation consultant. Since retiring she has enjoyed outdoor activities, volunteering, and travel.



### **s2506**

# The Mennonite Communal Background of Living Branches WITH JOHN L. RUTH, Ph.D.

Monday, March 17 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Derstine Chapel at Dock Woods



The character of Living Branches is the fruit of a quarter millennium of Mennonite community in the Delaware Valley. This course will explore why and how this community assembled from half a dozen European sources spread over present-day Montgomery, Bucks, Chester, and Northampton counties. Learn about the creation of a range of institutions beyond home and church life from which Living Branches began and the Dock community was gathered in the 1980s. Attention will be given to the values and parochial limits of the local Mennonite tradition.

John Landis Ruth, Ph.D. was ordained a minister in the Franconia Mennonite Conference at the age of 20. He graduated from Eastern Baptist College and Harvard University. After 14 years of teaching English at Eastern University, he accepted an invitation from the Franconia Mennonite Conference to take up historical work. Among his books are Conrad Grebel, Son of Zurich; 'Twas Seeding Time': A Mennonite View of the American Revolution; The History of the Indian Valley and its Bank; Maintaining the Right Fellowship; A Quiet and Peaceable Life; The Earth is the Lord's: A Narrative History of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference; Forgiveness: A Legacy of the West Nickel Mines Amish School; Branch: A Memoir With Pictures; and This Very Ground, This Crooked Affair: A Mennonite Homestead on Lenape Land.



### S2507 Lost to the Reservoir WITH THOMAS S. HENRY

Tuesday, March 18 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Summit View Auditorium at Souderton Mennonite Homes

Learn all about the farms and structures that were razed for the Green Lane Reservoir project.

Thomas S. Henry is a native of the Upper Perkiomen Valley and a U.S. Air Force veteran retired after 41 years in the printing industry. He serves as a board member of Life Long Learning in the Upper Perkiomen School District and a member of the Upper Hanover Township Historical Committee.

S2508

A Critical History of American Journalism WITH MARK KELLEY, Ph.D.

Tuesdays, March 25 (Part 1), April 1 (Part 2), and April 8 (Part 3)

10:00 a.m. to noon

Fisher Auditorium at Dock Woods

### This course is limited to 75 students.

This course encourages students to engage in critical thinking as they consider the inventions, events, and people that have shaped American journalism from colonial times to the internet. We'll consider the impact of technical, economic, political, and cultural developments as we examine what "freedom of the press" and "the truth" have meant in American society from the Age of Jefferson to the Age of Trump.

Recommended books for this course:

- Engaging News Media (2006) by Mark Kelley
- Mightier than the Sword: How the News Media Have Shaped American History, 4th Edition (2015) by Rodger Streitmatter



Mark Kelley, Ph.D. taught journalism/mass communications at Syracuse University and the University of Maine after 25 years as a broadcast journalist. His career included producing weekend news at WSTM-TV in Syracuse, investigative reporting at WSJV-TV in Elkhart, IN, and WNDU-TV in South Bend, IN. When he retired from reporting in 1999, he was the main anchor for WNDU-TV created by Father Ted Hesburgh, former president of the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of five books, including Engaging News Media: A Practical Guide for People of Faith, This Mere Existence: Motivation and Strategies for Restoring Human Rights, and An Uncommon Woman: The Life of Lydia Hamilton Smith. Kelley lives in Lancaster with his wife, Marty.

### Presidents in Retirement WITH DAVID HUDIAK

Thursdays, March 27 (Part 1), April 3 (Part 2), and April 10 (Part 3)
10:00 to 11:30 a.m.
Summit View Auditorium at
Souderton Mennonite Homes

This course is part of a collaboration with Widener University's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and there is an extra cost of \$25.00.

This course will cover what each of our presidents did after leaving office. Some led useful lives, some did very little, but all of their stories are interesting. Additionally, students will learn how each of our former presidents died and in doing so will learn about the evolution of American medicine from our early days to the present.

David Hudiak has had the pleasure of teaching at Living Branches for the past several years as a faculty member of the Osher Lifelong Learning Program of Widener University. He is a retired member of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey bars and holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Haverford College and a juris doctorate from the Law School of the University of Pennsylvania.





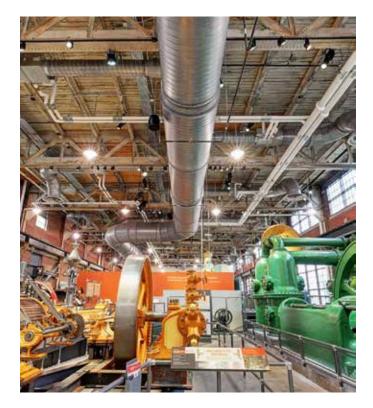
# S2510 Stents WITH MARVIN WOODALL

Wednesday, April 23 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Fisher Auditorium at Dock Woods

### This course is limited to 70 students.

This presentation will explore the original discovery of a medical device to hold an artery open for blood flow: a stent. Learn the path the stent took from an idea to one of the most important medical devices in the past 30 years.

Marvin Woodall has over 50 years of experience in creating medical devices for heart disease. Most of his career was with Johnson and Johnson, and toward the end he was the president of Johnson and Johnson Interventional Systems, which was responsible for developing the first balloon expandable stent. This led to the development of numerous analogues including stent grafts for aortic aneurysms and TAVR, a minimally invasive way to repair a faulty aortic valve.



Field Trip to the National Museum of Industrial History Followed by Ice Cream at The Cup at Lehigh

Thursday, April 24 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. (plus travel time)

This tour is limited to 20 people and has an extra cost of \$22.00, which includes shuttle service from one of our campuses. Please wear comfortable walking shoes and bring money for ice cream.

The National Museum of Industrial History in Bethlehem is dedicated to preserving America's rich industrial heritage. Located in a 100-year-old former Bethlehem Steel facility, the museum houses nearly 100 machines from the Smithsonian's 1876 collection, textile machinery and equipment from Scalamandre of New York, iron and steel objects, and historical artifacts related to the propane industry.

After a guided tour of the museum, we will stop for ice cream at The Cup at Lehigh where students may order off the menu.

### S2512

Chocolate and Your Health
WITH DR. DANIELLE KRONMULLERHARVEY AND JILLIAN PHILLIPS

Tuesday, April 29 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Summit View Auditorium at Souderton Mennonite Homes

This course is limited to 50 students and has an extra cost of \$5.00 for supplies.

Who knew – chocolate can be good for you! In this course taught by a registered dietitian and a dietetic intern, you will learn about the health benefits of chocolate and how it can positively impact your health. Samples will be provided!

Jillian Phillips is a West Chester University graduate student who will receive her master's degree in community nutrition this spring. Jillian's passion shines through her experience working at a long-term care community, delivering nutrition lessons to elementary students in low-income communities, and connecting with members at her local recreation center.

**Dr. Danielle Kronmuller, DHSc, RDN, LDN** is an assistant professor of nutrition and the dietetic internship director at West Chester University's College of Health Sciences.

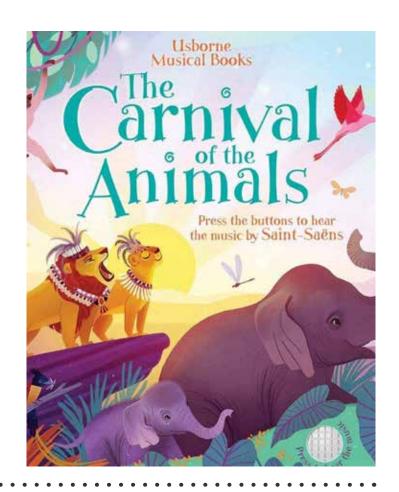


### The Musical Zoo WITH JAMES SMITH

Tuesdays, May 6 (Part 1) and 13 (Part 2) 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.
Derstine Chapel at Dock Woods

Over the years composers have created musical compositions that feature animals. We will listen to music about or including animals of various species. The featured work in this course will be the famous "Carnival of the Animals" by French composer Camille Saint-Saëns that includes humorous verses written by Ogden Nash.

James Smith earned a degree in music education from Mansfield University. A retired elementary vocal music teacher, he is the organist at Sanctuary United Methodist Church in North Wales. James and his wife, Sue, live at Dock Woods.





### S2514

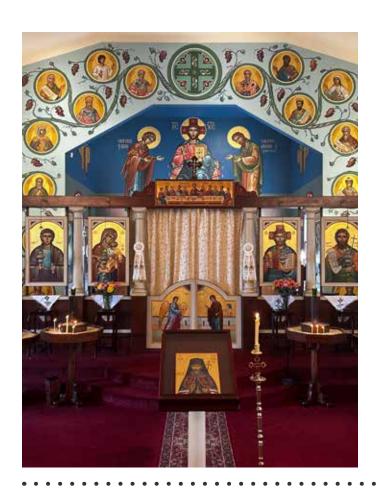
License Plate History of the U.S. WITH JOHN ANSHANT

Wednesday, May 7 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Fisher Auditorium at Dock Woods

This course is limited to 30 students.

Using real displays and artifacts, this course reveals the history of U.S. license and registration plates from the earliest issues to the present.

John Anshant became serious about collecting license plates at age 12. In his career he has worked as a mechanical technician in development of fighter jet instrumentation, an auctioneer, and a small business owner. He continues to run businesses that supply license plates to enthusiasts and collectors.



Field Trip: Tour and Tea at St. Philip **Orthodox Church** WITH PASTORAL ASSISTANT JAKE **KURTZ** 

Tuesday, May 15 10:00 a.m. to noon (plus travel time)

This tour is limited to 28 people and has an extra cost of \$4.00, which includes shuttle service from one of our campuses.

This guided tour of St. Philip Orthodox Church in Souderton is an opportunity to experience ancient Christianity as maintained in the Orthodox tradition. Participants will have an opportunity to see the original iconography and breathtaking artwork and enjoy a live concert showcasing music of the Christian East, followed by a tea and cookie social.

### S2516

### The Wonderous World of Bats STEPHANIE STRONSICK

Friday, May 16 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. **Summit View Auditorium at Souderton Mennonite Homes** 

### This course is limited to 30 students.

Learn why bats are vital to the health of our ecosystem, their natural history, species diversity, and how to protect our backyard bats. Meet some of our education bats and learn how Pennsylvania Bat Conservation and Rehabilitation saves native night protectors.

Stephanie Stronsick volunteered at Project Wildlife in San Diego, where she helped initiate rescuing bats as part of their protocol, and the San Diego Natural History Museum as a collection data analyst and field assistant. She also worked as an associate field biologist for Bat Conservation and Management and established Pennsylvania Bat Conservation and Rehabilitation in 2012.





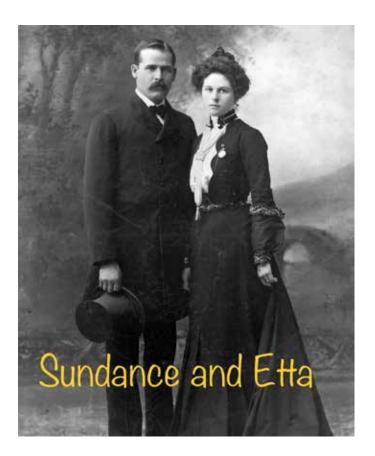
# S2517 Summer Flowering Container Workshop WITH MARIE MEIKLEJOHN

Tuesday, May 20 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Pavilion at Souderton Mennonite Homes

This class has an extra cost of \$35.00 and is limited to 15 people. All materials and tools will be provided.

You'll leave this workshop with a container filled with summer blooming annuals that will attract butterflies and provide a nice fragrance. You'll need a mostly sunny spot for your container to let your plants thrive.

Marie Meiklejohn has been working in the horticulture industry for over 20 years. She owns Marie's Garden, a business that helps homeowners and businesses with plant selection and offers garden coaching and container design. Marie studied horticulture at Temple University, Delaware Valley University, and Longwood Gardens.



# S2518 The Sundance Kid's Local Connections WITH RYAN CONROY

Thursday, May 22 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Summit View Auditorium at Souderton Mennonite Homes

One of the most infamous outlaws of the Wild West, the Sundance Kid, started his life on the streets of Phoenixville. While many did not consider the Sundance Kid to be much of a dangerous man, his stories are legendary.

Ryan Conroy has provided volunteer historical research services for local nonprofits and businesses and written articles for magazines, websites, and blogs. He serves as president of the Spring-Ford Area Historical Society and a member of the Royersford borough council and was a past president of the Historical Society of the Phoenixville area. He has a history show, Timeless Tales, on a local news outlet called Voxipop. He enjoys sharing knowledge of his favorite subjects, including local history, photography, immigration, and military history.



### S2519 Birding by Boat at the Green Lane Reservoir WITH JEFF COCCI AND THE PERKIOMEN WATERSHED

Thursday, June 5 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (plus travel time)

This tour is limited to 22 people and has an extra cost of \$29.00, which includes the kayak adventure and shuttle service from one of our campuses. Please dress appropriately for the weather and bring a packed lunch and drink to enjoy outside.

All participants will need to sign a waiver form and be able to comfortably walk for an hour, climb in and out of a kayak, and paddle in a kayak for more than an hour.

Whether you want to learn more about our feathered friends who call Green Lane home or just take in the beautiful sights of the reservoir, this program is for you! Join educators from the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy on a kayaking adventure around the various coves of the Green Lane Reservoir and learn about the many bird species who rely on this remarkable habitat. Let your curiosity take flight as our experienced guides lead you on a guided paddle and land-based Bird Bingo activity. All kayaks, paddles, and life jackets will be supplied by the conservancy.

Since 1964, the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy has been committed to protecting the land and water resources of the Perkiomen Creek Watershed. Through its conservation projects, outreach events, and education programs, the Conservancy connects thousands of people to nature each year. Environmental educator **Jeff Cocci** has over five years of experience and a lifelong passion for conservation of creatures big and small.

### SPRING 2025

Prefer to register in person? Bring this completed checklist to one of the registration sessions on page 3.

Going?	Shuttle?	Course Title	Date and Time	Location
		S2501 A Short Introduction to Mushroom Foraging in Pennsylvania	Tuesday, March 4 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Summit View Auditorium Souderton Mennonite Homes
		S2502 Native American Jewelry of the American Southwest	Wednesday, March 5 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Fisher Auditorium Dock Woods
		S2503 Stories Behind Peace Valley	Thursday, March 6 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Fisher Auditorium Dock Woods
		S2504 Insights from Ancient Christian Questions	Tuesday, March 11 and Wednesday, March 12 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Summit View Auditorium Souderton Mennonite Homes
		S2505 Come With Us on a Road Trip to Yellowstone	Thursday, March 13 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Fisher Auditorium Dock Woods
		S2506 The Mennonite Communal Background of Living Branches	Monday, March 17 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Derstine Chapel Dock Woods
		S2507 Lost to the Reservoir	Tuesday, March 18 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Summit View Auditorium Souderton Mennonite Homes
		S2508 A Critical History of American Journalism	Tuesdays, March 25, April 1, and April 8 10:00 a.m. to noon	Fisher Auditorium Dock Woods
		S2509 Presidents in Retirement	Thursdays, March 27, April 3, and April 10 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Summit View Auditorium Souderton Mennonite Homes
		S2510 Stents	Wednesday, April 23 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Fisher Auditorium Dock Woods

### COURSE CHECKLIST

Please be prepared to provide payment and contact information (including your phone number).

Going?	Shuttle?	Course Title	Date	Location
		S2511 Field Trip: National Museum of Industrial History	Thursday, April 24 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. (plus travel time)	National Museum of Industrial History, Bethlehem
		S2512 Chocolate and Your Health	Tuesday, April 29 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Summit View Auditorium Souderton Mennonite Homes
		S2513 The Musical Zoo	Tuesdays, May 6 and 13 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Derstine Chapel Dock Woods
		S2514 License Plate History of the US	Wednesday, May 7 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Fisher Auditorium Dock Woods
		S2515 Tour and Tea at St. Philip Orthodox Church	Thursday, May 15 10:00 a.m. to noon (plus travel time)	St. Philip Orthodox Church, Souderton
		S2516 The Wonderous World of Bats	Friday, May 16 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Summit View Auditorium Souderton Mennonite Homes
		S2517 Summer Flowering Container Workshop	Tuesday, May 20 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.	Pavilion Souderton Mennonite Homes
		S2518 The Sundance Kid's Local Connections	Thursday, May 22 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Summit View Auditorium Souderton Mennonite Homes
		S2519 Birding by Boat at the Green Lane Reservoir	Thursday, June 5 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (plus travel time)	Green Lane Reservoir



242 W Reliance Rd Souderton, PA 18964

The Willows of Living Branches 2343 Bethlehem Pike Hatfield, PA 19440 Tel: 215-822-0688 Souderton Mennonite Homes 207 West Summit Street Souderton, PA 18964 Tel: 215-723-9881 Dock Woods 275 Dock Drive Lansdale, PA 19446 Tel: 215-368-4438

Living Branches is a not-for-profit system of retirement living and affordable housing communities dedicated to providing quality, life-enriching services on three campuses in southeastern Pennsylvania. As residents of life plan communities, residents have access to a wide variety of services and amenities on our vibrant, inclusive campuses.

Souderton Mennonite Homes and Dock Woods offer Residential Living, Personal Care, and Health Care, as well as services for Memory Care. The Willows of Living Branches provides Personal Care, and residents have access to Health Care within the Living Branches system. Living Branches also offers affordable housing for older adults and families who qualify for HUD housing rental assistance at its Dock Woods campus.

For more information visit our website at *livingbranches.org/care-services/* residential-living

