

Mennonites launch new peace center in Brooklyn

by [Dawn Araujo-Hawkins](#) in the [July 14, 2021](#) issue



The building housing the Brooklyn Peace Center was built by the Beth Shalom congregation in 1891. From 1962 until 2019, it was home to First Mennonite Church in Brooklyn. (Courtesy photo)

The Brooklyn Peace Center in Brooklyn, New York, officially opened on June 19 with hot dogs and Icees at a stoop-side cookout.

Housed in the former location of First Mennonite Church in Brooklyn, which disbanded in 2019, the space will continue to have a strong Mennonite presence. Jason and Vonetta Storbakken—both members of Mennonite Church USA—will lead the peace center, and office space will be provided to Mennonite ministries like the

New York Mennonite Immigration Program and Believers Mennonite Garifuna Ministries.

Jason Storbakken told the *Century* there are also plans to include a thrift store and a café.

As the name implies, the primary function of the peace center will be to promote peace. The center will provide classes and workshops on topics like nonviolent communication and trauma-informed spiritual care. It will be available to host author talks, community dialogues, and cultural events.