

Menno-Life



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Wouldn't it be interesting to know what these two were thinking and trying to communicate to each other?

Everett Miller (left) and Madelyn King got acquainted in the nursery during the Christmas Eve service. Our photographer, Fred Steiner, caught them mid-chat.

Listen...

Every time I yawned in her presence, I could count on my friend, a former emergency room nurse to say, "Listen to your body! Your body's talking to you!" When I coughed or had a headache or a nosebleed, she repeated the refrain, "Listen to your body! Your body's talking to you!"

I admit it. I listen better to my body at some times than others. When illness or injury essentially immobilizes me, my body has my full attention. In fact, I've noticed that when I'm really sick, I get hyper-focused on my body. I take my pills and pay close attention to my body's every need. When I'm really sick I shrink away from others, and become completely self-absorbed. On the other hand, when I'm feeling well, I can become so focused on a project that I forget to eat, or lose track of time and end up with little rest. The result is quickly obvious. I become run down, and if I continue to ignore my body talking to me, I may even fall ill. So listening to my body is not only an important component as my body heals, but it's equally important in keeping my body healthy in the first place.

Paul talks about the church as the body of Christ. In I Corinthians 12:27 he says, "Now you are the body of Christ..." Of course, his focus is on the body of Christ being made up of many parts, all of which are important and needed. But he goes on in the next chapter to describe the most excellent way for the body to function. He devotes the entire next chapter to love.

Still one of my all-time favorite quotes, comes from a book I read many years ago, "Caring Enough to Hear and Be Heard," written by David Augsburg. He says, "Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable." I'm convinced, that like listening to our physical bodies, listening to the body of Christ, to each of the body's members, promotes health and healing. Listening carefully to the thoughts of other members of the body demonstrates our love for both the member and for the whole. Likewise, carefully sharing our thoughts with other members of the body provides them the opportunity to demonstrate their love for us and for the whole body!

We have many opportunities to listen to the body of Christ. As we gather for worship or other activities, in our day-to-day contact with one another, processing decisions, in our Sunday school and small group discussions, there is potential to listen and speak in ways that communicate our love for individuals and for the whole body. May Jesus' words be true of us, his body in this particular place and time. "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35.) Though it certainly isn't the only way to communicate our love for one another, if Augsburg has it right, then if we listen well to one another, there will be no question about our love for one another or about whose disciples we are.

-- Wanda Stopher

Among our neighbors and friends

Happy birthday to:

Margaret Weaver, 94, Jan. 8

Glennys Henry, 91, Jan. 11

Paul Dyck, 90, Jan. 14

Mary Amstutz, 85, Jan. 14

Mary Anne Moser, 83, Jan. 19

Evelyn Luginbuhl, 93, Jan. 25

75 candles on this anniversary cake

First Mennonite's longest married couple -- Luther and Geneva Shetler -- celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary on December 22.

Luther, then 23, and Geneva, 21, were married Dec. 22, 1940, at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. They met at Goshen College when Luther was a junior and Geneva a freshman. Luther recalls that he was aware of a beautiful blond girl on campus, but that he had no reason to be connected with her group of friends.



That changed when Luther and Geneva ended up in a required class together. The professor seated students alphabetically. That put Luther at one end and Geneva at the other end of a long row of last names that began with "S" (Geneva's maiden name was Stamm).

When a new student arrived and the row was rearranged, Geneva was seated beside Luther. He graciously offered to share a book with her since she did not have one. Later, Luther convinced a friend to arrange a double date to a concert in South Bend that included Luther and Geneva. Luther had a car since he was a commuter from his family's dairy farm, and he worked things out to drive to the concert, but to be in the back seat with Geneva on the way home.

Interestingly enough, Geneva accepted a goodnight kiss on that very first date! The next

morning, friends of Luther knocked on Geneva's dorm room door to "warn" her that Luther already had a girlfriend that he'd been dating for three years. Geneva wasn't worried about it – they were both young and had time to look around and decide – so, she went out on a second date with Luther. Pretty much, "that was that!"

The Shetler's wedding day was a snowy one, so Geneva's mother encouraged the couple to spend their wedding night in Archbold, in Geneva's childhood home. Luther said, "No thanks," and they headed toward their one-week honeymoon in Florida, with \$100 cash. Along the way, they bought a good set of china for \$30 and still came home with money.

Luther remembers that there were cabins available on their route for just a few dollars a night and Geneva remembers all the orange juice you could drink for just one nickel.

Seventy-five years later, Luther and Geneva's family includes five children, 14 grandchildren and 25 great grandchildren. They find it mind-boggling to think on all that these "next generations" are into, and all that they are doing to help humanity.

Here are a few of the "keys" that have held Luther and Geneva happily together:

- In each move, a church was the first place that they sought out as a "base" in their lives.
- Luther recognized early on that in most situations a woman's intuition for problem-solving was better than his.
- Geneva said that they constantly reminded themselves that they were "in this together," and so made their decisions together.
- They determined to never carry a disagreement into the night, but to come to an understanding that day so that differences in opinions never grew into problems.

*****Photo credit to Fred Steiner; photo taken on the Shetler's 70th anniversary***

Parables to perform at FMC Jan. 30

Parables, an eight-student worship ensemble from Goshen College, will perform at First Mennonite at 6:30 p.m. The group combines music, original drama and personal stories to create an engaging worship experience designed to inspire, comfort and challenge. Lucas Harnish, a member of FMC and son of Monica and Steve Harnish, is a member of the group.

The theme for 2015-16 is Finding Hope in Christ, Community & Creation. In what seems to be a more and more chaotic world in which we live it is sometimes hard to find hope. This year Parables explores Biblical stories and scripture that help us find this hope in Christ, community and creation. One of the songs we sing this year is entitled I Dreamed of Rain. Rains come amidst both trials and blessings. They both soak and drench, yet refresh and renew. Rains bring hope, and hope brings us closer to creation, closer to community, and closer to God. As Christians, may we hold on to that hope, to that dream, with the blessed assurance that, yes, indeed, these rains will come. Parables explores these themes through scripture, drama and personal stories, augmented by songs that cover a range of styles from classical to world music and gospel.

Parables members are Clara Beck, a music education major from Archbold; Ellen Conrad, an environmental science major from Denver, CO; Isaac Godshalk, an environmental science and music double major from Plymouth, IN; Lucas Harnish, a mathematics and pre-physical therapy major from Bluffton; Katie Shank, a music education major from Goshen, IN; Emily Vogt, a TESOL major from Akron, PA; Simon Weaver, a biochemistry major from Madison, WI; and Jacob Zehr, a music education major from Carthage, NY.

The program for 2015-16 is developed by the eight student members, with direction and leadership from Eliza (Jacoby) Stoltzfus, Kristin Kauffman and Dr. Debra Brubaker.

Mennonite Women

Have you saved the date? “Make it Yourself, Monday” for all women is scheduled for **Monday, January 11 at 7 p.m.** in the fellowship hall. You are invited to bring something that you have created, collected or enjoy putting together, to share with other women. A form will be provided for you to fill in the name of your hobby and a brief description of how it was created.

Tables will surround the fellowship hall on which to place each display. Nothing is too small or too big, too unusual or too common. There will be informal time for enjoying each other’s displays, after which Monica Harnish will lead our devotions, “Creativity is Best Measured in Faithfulness and Joy.” Refreshments will be prepared by Heidrun Awad and Alice Ruth Ramseyer.

First Night returning with a few changes

Good news! First Night returns in February\March. For five weeks, from Wednesday, Feb. 17 through March 16, we will once again have a First Night meal and program to follow. There will be no 5:30 p.m. program, and the meal will begin at 6:15 p.m. After the meal we will have a 30-minute program from 6:40 until 7:10 p.m. If you are interested in presenting a 30-minute program please contact Pastors Wanda or Steve. More information will be coming soon. -- *Nurture Commission*

Two new adult Sunday school classes beginning

We are forming two new adult Sunday school classes which will begin on January 24, 2016. A class of young parents will begin a seven-week book study and discussion on “Seven Things Children Need” by John Drescher. Greg Ring will teach the class and class coordinators are Alison King and Jen Benroth. A second class designed more as intergenerational class but with an emphasis on young adult issues is being organized and led by Kaye Phillips. Please share your interest by talking with Alison, Jenny, Kaye or Steven Yoder.

SHYF/JHYF update

December was a busy month, with both groups caroling at Maple Crest and Mennonite Memorial Home and returning to the church for some holiday-themed treats and hot chocolate. When asked if they would like to go caroling again next year, there was a collective “Yes!” The following week was the Christmas program, where youth performed musical pieces and skits. Finally, they decorated the sanctuary for the Christmas season and lit the candles during the Christmas Eve service.

SHYF will attend winter retreat at Camp Friedenswald January 8-10. Their theme is “Finding Hope in Christ, Community, and Creation,” with Goshen College professor Jo-ann Brant as the speaker. Parables, a student group also from Goshen College, will be providing worship for campers. JHYF will be at retreat January 22-24 to discuss “#BlackLivesMatter and the Gospel.” Kansas native Caleb Stephens, a social worker and founder of the justice-centered company Identifight, as well as Pastor John Hymon of the Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ in Topeka, Kansas, will be the speakers.

JHYF schedule for January

**Please note that there is only one regular JHYF meeting in January.*

Sunday, January 3: Christmas tear down, 6PM-?. Taking down the sanctuary decorations won’t take long, and afterward we can do some group bonding time with SHYF and hang out in the youth room to play games, watch a movie, etc. Bring friends and a snack to share!

Sunday, January 10: Carrie Mast will be leading JHYF. Meet in junior high room at 2:30 p.m.

January 22-24: Jr. High winter retreat at Friedenswald.

SHYF schedule for January

**Please note: There is only one regular SHYF meeting this month.*

Sunday, January 3: Christmas tear down, 6PM-?. Taking down the sanctuary decorations won’t take long, and afterward we can do some group bonding time with the JHYF and hang out in the youth room to play games, watch a movie, etc. Bring friends and a snack to share.

January 8-10: Sr. High winter retreat at Friedenswald! More information coming soon.

Sunday, January 17: Ask the Pastor. Youth room, 6 p.m. Pastor Wanda Stopher will be joining us so she can get to know you and you can get to know her (and maybe play a game.) Start thinking of questions to ask.

Sunday school: On January 3, we will start the *Thermostat* series from Mennonite Central Committee to learn about the importance of nonviolence and pacifism in an Anabaptist context.

Both groups: Please check your email, the Twitter page (@fmcyouthmin), or the Facebook group (First Mennonite Church JHYF) an hour before an event in case of changes. If you have any questions, email shannonthiebeau@gmail.com or call/text at 419-773-9446.

Shannon Thiebeau will attend the MCUSA Youth Ministry Council: The Gathering 2016 January 29-February 1 in Orlando, Florida. The theme is "Ministry Matters: Youth and Real World Theology." It will be a continuation of many of the topics that were presented at the youth convention last summer. We will discuss the importance of Anabaptist theology and how we can implement it in our youth ministry's day-to-day situations. Bible professor Michelle Hershberger of Hesston College will facilitate these discussions.

From other Mennonite organizations

You are invited to Grace Mennonite's comforter knotting day on Thursday, Jan. 7 at 9 a.m. Lunch will be provided. Hope to see you.
-- Carolyn McDaniel

Mennonite Arts Weekend 2016 is scheduled for February 5-7 at Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati. Organized and supported by members of Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship, the event invites artists and art enthusiasts to join together for a weekend of presentations, workshops, performances and worship. Registration is now open – the deadline for early registration is January 15.

The first Mennonite Arts Weekend (MAW) took place in 1992 with a goal to celebrate the contributions of Mennonite artists by supporting them in their efforts to "reclaim their identity/relationship with the church." The successful event became a biennial gathering, organized and supported by members of Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship. MAW seeks to encourage creative expression to all who attend and to provide exposure for artists working in different facets of the arts, and to provide a setting for interaction.



This year's performers and presenters include Andreas Baumgartner, digital art; Anthony Brown, baritone; Dan Charles, writer and radio producer; Allan Rudy Froese, homiletics; Scott Holland, peace studies/cross cultural studies; Mike Horner, puppeteer; Mark Nafziger, ceramics; Zachary Nafziger, stained glass; Keith Ratzlaff, poetry; Ethan Setiawan, mandolin; Kris Shenk, fiber artist; Rebecca Slough, music leader/worship planner; and Randy Spaulding, accompanist/composer.

More details are available at <http://www.mennoniteartsweekend.org/>.

Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers needed Feb. 1-5, 2016: Volunteers for cleanup and repair work are needed in Detroit. Meaningful work, comfortable overnight accommodations, and awesome meals are provided. Contact Lawrence Matthews if you are able to serve the week of February 1-5. Visit First Mennonite online for more information on the Detroit project: <http://fmcbluffton.org/service-to-others/>



At left, Lawrence Matthews, Barb Schrag, MDS Volunteer Development Team Leader, and Brett Troyer, MDS Project Logistics Coordinator, stand in front of MDS' partner church, Community Christian Fellowship Ministries. In photo at right, Lawrence and Heaven, one of his new friends. Heaven and her mother, Larcheri, joined the MDS volunteers one evening for dinner. After the meal Larcheri shared her flood story with the volunteers. (Lawrence Matthews photos)

Leave or stay? Many Syrian families face that question as international humanitarian assistance dwindles and the patchwork of resources they used to rely on wears thin. Your gift of money helps Mennonite Central Committee continue to provide food, water, rent assistance and winter supplies so families that decide to stay in the region can survive the cold weather ahead. Please give online at mcc.org/syria-iraq; by phone at 1-888-563-4676; or by check, sent to MCC U.S., P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501. -- MCC

2015 was hard for the cause of Peace..can you help make 2016 better?

Christian Peacemaker teams are taking action: walking with Palestinian kindergarten kids through Israeli military tear gas to get to school...accompanying Colombian farmers as they nonviolently resist corporate pressure to take their land...documenting Turkish bombings of Kurdish villages in Iraq...training North American churches to undo Colonialism as we work in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples....

Peacemaking requires action: either partnering with front-lines peacemakers as Christian Peacemakers field workers do every day, or donating to support that work. To support CPT, you may send a check to CPT, PO Box 6508; Chicago IL 60680-6508 or donate online at <http://cpt.org/donate>.