

Menno-Life



First Mennonite Church • Bluffton, Ohio • Vol. 63, No. 6 • June 2016

God is our refuge and strength

Wanda Stopher

We are all incredibly saddened by the death of Pastor Steve. We have already missed his gentle presence and wise leadership these past four months. Our hearts break for Janet and their family. We had hoped and prayed for a different resolution.

We have already begun the work of grieving, remembering, and giving thanks. Not surprisingly, each one will approach grief a bit differently, working in unique ways and according to different timeframes. We will, therefore, be patient with one another and ourselves. We will remember God who created us and who has called us to be God's people. We will open up spaces for grieving and for God's healing among us. We will find our way through our grief and sadness together.

"God is our refuge and strength, our help in times of terror and trouble." As I enter the stairwell at the parking lot entrance, I often catch myself singing these words, the opening verse of Psalm 46.

The song echoes in the stairwell and in my heart. I am comforted.

Thank you!

Over the past four months many people have helped to fill in, cover tasks, and minister in Steve's absence. It is with deep gratitude that I extend my appreciation to each and every one.

* Thank you to Kevin Cluts and Nurture Commission and to Suzie Gratz and First Night planners for carrying on when Steve could no longer attend meetings.

* Thanks to Mark Weidner and Louise Matthews and the College Relations Committee for carrying through on plans for the special worship emphasis.

* Thank you to Shannon Thiebeau and Carrie Mast for planning worship and leading the youth for Youth Sunday.

* Thank you to Judy Diller for scheduling pastoral prayers and to all who have or will soon lead them: Lavon Welty, Mark Weidner, Doug Luginbill, Gloria Hernandez-Bucher, Ray Person, Elizabeth Kelly, Shannon Thiebeau, Burton Yost, Don Pannabecker and Gerald Mast.

* Thank you to those who have filled the pulpit, or will soon, Carrie Mast, Ray Person, Tig Intagliata, Perry Bush, Rich Bucher, Shannon Thiebeau, Lynn Miller.

* Thanks to those led Tuesday morning prayers, Doug Luginbill, Lynn Miller, Mark Weidner, Steve Harnish.

* Thank you to Mary Ina and the Christian Education Commission for helping identify tasks that needed attention and for filling in the gaps.

* Thank you, Shelby Cluts and Deacons; John Mackey and Trustees; Steve Harnish and Worship Commission; Bill Suter and Stewardship Commission; and Wendy Chappell-Dick and Mission, Peace and Service Commission, for carrying on faithfully.

* Thank you, Ruth Naylor, for assisting with pastoral care and for coverage.

* Thank you, Lavon Welty, for continued pastoral care and visits to Steve and Janet.

* Thank you, Louise Matthews, Rich Bucher, and Gloria Hernandez Bucher for leading the monthly FMC groups that meet at Mennonite Home and Maple Crest.

* Thanks to all who picked up additional tasks without being asked.

* Thank you to Willis Sommer for additional time and attention to financial and staff needs.

* And thank you to all of the staff, Mary Pannabecker Steiner, Mark Suderman, Shannon Thiebeau, Mick Hardy for picking up additional responsibilities during this time.

It is with good will and generosity, and with deep gratitude that we are a community of faith, that we can depend on one another to share together in times of need. As we continue on this journey, may it always be with deep gratitude for one another.

Thank you,
Pastor Wanda

Memorial service for Pastor Steven Yoder June 6

A memorial service for Steve will be held Monday, June 6 at 11 a.m. at First Mennonite Church, Pastors Wanda Stopher and Lavon Welty officiating. A private burial will be in Maple Grove Cemetery, Bluffton, at a later date. Visitation will be Sunday, June 5 from 2-6 p.m. at Chiles-Laman Funeral & Cremation Services.

All are invited to a fellowship meal at FMC on Monday, following the service. ***Please note: The fellowship meal will be a congregational potluck. Sandwiches and beverages will be provided; the congregation is asked to bring side dishes, salads, fruit and desserts.***

Happy birthday to:

Mary Ann Kooker, 86, June 1
Esther Brauen, 86, June 2
Margaret Tiessen, 85, June 11
Eileen Kehler, 83, June 12
Joan Dailey, 87, June 13

Anne Buller, 91, June 14
Marilyn Diller, 85, June 21
Elnore Yost, 89, June 23
Lawrence Burkhalter, 96, June 30

Happy anniversary to:

Ron and Phyllis Friesen, 55, June 2
Margaret and Richard Weaver, 73, June 8
Mary and Darrel Yoder, 66, June 10
Joyce and Don Hostetler, 56, June 11

Change of address:

Margaret Tiessen has moved to Leamington, Ontario, to be near her family. Her new address is: Chartwell Leamington Retirement Residence, 1 Henry Ave., Leamington, ON, Canada N8H 5P1.



Visiting with FMC's Maple Crest residents

On the fourth Thursday of each month, one of our pastors visits with our church members living at Maple Crest. Their discussions range from theological to current events to church concerns. Wanda Stopher visited with (clockwise from Wanda) Luther Shetler, Geneva Shetler, Joanne Niswander, Elnore Yost, Burton Yost and Annie Balmer on May 26.

Mennonite Women end year of exploring creativity; plan for next year

This past year Mennonite Women has followed the devotional book, "Spark: Igniting Your God Given Creativity," by April Yamasaki, commissioned by Mennonite Women USA and Canada. We have discovered the joy of being created in God's image and learned ways to nurture our own creative spirits.

We thank all those who have participated, either by preparing devotions, sharing their inspirations, providing refreshments or attending and learning. Many MCC kits were assembled and Comforters knotted.

The focus of our final meeting, a fellowship breakfast, was that our creativity is meant to continue and flourish. "Creativity shows itself in all of life. Creativity is not a passing fad or reserved for a chosen few" wrote our author. We asked ourselves, "What have we learned? How will we continue to



express our creativity - for ourselves and also to pass on to future generations?" We were encouraged to make some time for personal reflection.

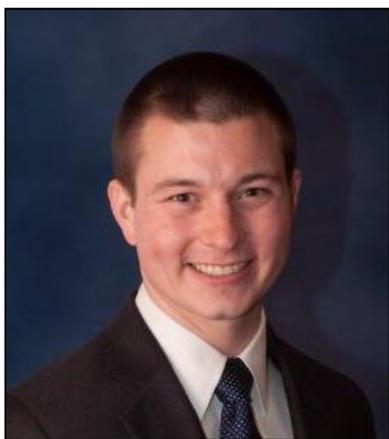
Mennonite Women will resume in the fall. Next year our theme will again follow the devotional book commissioned by Mennonite Women USA and Canada. It is titled "Faith Travels: Trusting God in Life's Transitions" by Marlene Kropf.

But until then may we reflect on this benediction from our devotional that closed our monthly meetings.

"And now may the wind of the Spirit continue to inspire you,
may Jesus walk with you from one creative step to the next,
may God the Creator enliven and encourage you
today and every day. Amen"

The executive committee: Judy Buller, Lori Nester, Mary Ina Hooley, Barb Stettler and Ginger Theis

More graduates!



Bluffton University

Jake Headings, son of Ron and Linda Headings, graduated from Bluffton University in May 2016 with a major in mathematics and minor in economics. He received honors for the dean's list and the Pi Delta Honors Society. He will be seeking employment post-graduation.

FMC's 2016 high school graduates

Elizabeth Nisly, Cassidy Bush and Amelia Althaus graduated from Bluffton High School on May 27.

Elizabeth Nisly -- Over the summer I plan to go on the youth group service trip with SWAP as well as attend Camp Friedenswald, travel with my family, work at the Mustard Seed and train for cross country. In the fall I will attend EMU to double major in Spanish and Writing Studies, as well as minor in a variety of subjects that have yet to be determined. I will be running cross country and track as an EMU Royal.



Cassidy Bush -- I am considering doing a gap year, and maybe enrolling in the Service Adventure program, and at some point I plan on attending EMU.



SHYF prepares to serve with SWAP June 27-July 2

SHYF is now focusing on their summer service trip to Harlan, KY, where they will serve with Sharing With Appalachian People. SWAP is a service and learning program of MCC/Great Lakes. It is a home repair ministry that serves low-income families in several counties of southeastern Kentucky and West Virginia. A SWAP experience includes spending time in the mountains of Appalachia, ministering to and building relationships with local residents in need while reflecting on and sharing experiences.

FMC youth participating in the trip include: Seth Andreas, Anna Biesecker-Mast, Isaac Andreas, Christopher Harnish, Antony Kingsley, Douglas Nester, Levi Schumacher, Cassidy Bush, Elizabeth Nisly. Adults who will accompany the youth are Shannon Thiebeau, Mitch Kingsley and Heather Theis.



Youth groups celebrate

SHYF and JHYF ended their year of activities with a party at Gerald and Carrie Mast's home, where they played the Trash Can Game (below) and spelled words such as "God" with their arms (left.)



Menno-Life schedule for June-December 2016

The Menno-Life will be distributed via mailboxes and e-mail on the following dates (now through (through December 2016). Note deadline for submission of items in parentheses after each date.

June 5 (complete)
July 3 (June 24)
August. 7 (July 29)
September 4 (August 26)
October 2 (September 23)
November 6 (October 28)
December 4 (November 25)

CDC Annual Meeting June 23-25

(From the May CDC Reporter)

The annual meeting of Central District Conference promises the experiences of each year -- worship, learning, singing, praying, and spending time with friends -- both new and familiar. At the same time, the upcoming gathering June 23-25, will have its own flavor, seasoned by the hosting congregation, Columbus Mennonite Church, and the setting in Columbus, Ohio.

Family Day on Thursday offers fun activities for the whole family. Then the first session will be a worship service Thursday evening, June 23. Friday through Saturday morning will be delegate sessions, more worship, a plenary session focusing on Israel/Palestine and seminars.

The special flavor for this gathering will come through the backyard picnic before the opening worship service, the CMC Music Sampler Thursday evening, and the worship services planned by a local committee. Surrounding the entire experience will be the CDC theme for this year: "Abounding in love...Abiding in grace."

Pastor Wanda Stopher will speak on "Abounding" at the 8:30 a.m. session on Saturday, June 25. FMC delegates include: Darryl and Lori Nester, Carrie and Gerald Mast, Ray Person, Pat Sheidler, Mark and Kay Weidner, Shannon Thiebeau and Wanda Stopher.

For all details of the annual meeting, visit <http://www.mcusacdc.org/annual-meeting/>. There you will find:

- Registration forms for the gathering, along with forms for childcare, Mennonite Women and Mennonite Men dinners, Pastoral Appreciation dinner, and fund-raising activities
- Reports, including items requiring action
- Maps of pertinent locations
- Information about housing and meal options
- Speakers, seminars, plenary session

Black Swamp Benefit June 17-18

Volunteers are needed to work at the Black Swamp sale and auction at the Fulton County Fairgrounds, Wauseon, on Friday evening, June 17, and Saturday morning, June 18, to sell meat and cheese, and Saturday morning to help carry auction items across the stage. There is also a need for donations of baked items such as cookies, cupcakes, bread and cakes. This is a good opportunity for families to join in on the excitement for raising funds for MCC and Sunshine Homes. If you can help, please contact John Rich.