

Menno-Life



First Mennonite Church • Bluffton, Ohio • Vol. 63, No. 3 • March 2016

This is an example of what you're missing by passing up Morning Prayers on Tuesday mornings at FMC. Following the 7 a.m. prayer service, participants gather in the fellowship hall for breakfast. Thanks to Lynn Miller for baking cinnamon rolls and cranberry bread for a recent breakfast.



Oh the irony!

Sometimes God lets you enjoy the worship service and you can leave church feeling joyful and bright, like all is right with the world. And sometimes when you're in worship, God clobbers you with an irony bar and knocks you down with a healthy dose of conviction.

Let me explain: One time I was sitting in a church service when a certain individual entered the sanctuary and sat down in the pew in front of me. This person was not a friend of mine. I wouldn't even consider him an acquaintance but he was hardly a stranger. This particular individual was my enemy. Have you ever had your blood boil just at the *presence* of someone? That's how I felt in my pew that day. How dare my enemy come into *my* space and sit right in front of me? As I sat there fuming, God whacked me over the head with the irony bar. How ironic was it that the pastor would talk about loving our enemies and embracing those who we disagreed with?

"Very funny, God," I thought, "I bet you are dying of laughter right now as I have to contemplate this whole, 'love your enemy' thing while my enemy is literally right in front of me."

On the flip side, my enemy had to sit through a church service where his views and opinions would not be affirmed. God's irony strikes again!

Then, God rudely ordered me to get off my high horse.

Here at First Mennonite, we talk a lot about welcoming the people on the fringes, but how well do we live it out? We are great at saying “Yes! Let’s take care of the sick, the hungry, and the stranger!” Yes, these people are certainly on the fringes of our society, but sometimes our enemies (or at least people we disagree with) are the fringes. Sometimes, these people are the ones who we grew up in Sunday school with, the ones who we serve with on different commissions, or the ones who sit on the other side of the sanctuary. Just because we don’t like someone because of what they believe doesn’t mean that they aren’t welcome in the Kingdom of God! Diversity of opinions and views are great; it keeps us from becoming the yes-men of church leaders. Opposing voices aren’t always a bad because they challenge our beliefs so we can either change or reinforce those beliefs. Look at the early church and even Jesus’ disciples – they argued all the time! Different viewpoints are essential in a church, even if we have trouble loving the people who own those voices. Dissonance in the church is an opportunity for grace and forgiveness to be extended, and the Lord knows we all could use a little more grace.

-- Shannon Thiebeau

Temporary coverage plan during Steve Yoder’s absence

As you know, on February 2, 2016, Pastor Steve Yoder was hospitalized at Cleveland Clinic. Soon thereafter, it became clear that Steve would not likely be returning to ministry in the near future. At that point, Wanda Stopher began, in conversation with congregational leaders, to form a coverage plan in Steve’s absence. This coverage plan is a temporary arrangement with a finite timeframe in mind. It was developed to cover a four month period, and is planned to be in effect through the end of May 2016. The plan was developed in an effort to provide Steve and Janet the space and time for his health situation and treatment to unfold. It also creates space for us as a congregation to begin to think about next steps. Steve and Janet have been informed and had input all along the way.

This temporary coverage plan was developed using Steve’s job description and in conversation with the Commission Chairs to whom Steve related. Staff Relations Committee was also consulted. The plan covers Steve’s responsibilities in the areas of Nurture, Worship, Christian Education, Trustees, and Pastoral Care. Part of the coverage needed is behind the scenes, and other parts are more obvious and public. More public coverage includes retired or former pastors or deacons leading the Pastoral Prayer in worship. There will also be a number of preachers from the congregation filling the pulpit in the next couple of months.

During this time, Wanda will coordinate pastoral care with the assistance of Ruth Naylor. Please don’t hesitate to call either of them. If you have any questions or concerns about any coverage, or if you’d like to see the entire plan, please see Wanda.

Finally, many of you have asked, “How can we help?” In addition to helping cover tasks, council has approved providing funds to assist Steve and Janet with expenses in Cleveland. Contributions can be made to the Benevolent Fund designated for Steve and Janet.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support!

Among our neighbors and friends

Happy birthday to:

Darrel Yoder, 93, March 5

Burton Yost, 88, March 5

Mary Boyer, 92, March 8

Gene Caskey, 82, March 12

Corrinne Boehr, 85, March 23

Linda Suter, 85, March 28

Happy anniversary to:

Sharon and Carlin Carpenter, 55, March 25

In our prayers...

Gregg Luginbuhl returned home on Wednesday. Prayers for clarity regarding next steps were answered. His dialysis has been regulated addressing his pain and he has begun a new chemotherapy. Please continue to remember Gregg and Karen and their family in your prayers.

Burton Yost was hospitalized at St. Rita's Medical Center mid-week and at time of printing, remained there.

Wanda Pannabecker, who recently fell and broke her left humerus. She welcomes your prayers, cards and visits.

Gratitude...

Thank you so much for all the visits, cards and prayers. I am doing well and hope to return home in a few weeks. I appreciate all the friendly support! -- Ernie Porzelius

Mel and I are grateful for the many expressions of caring and support during my recent surgery. Each one was felt as a hug and blessing. -- Barb and Mel Stettler

Congregational vote affirms Welcoming and Policy Statements

The Welcoming and Policy Statements were affirmed by a vote of 170 to 26 (with two abstentions). Thank you to all who contributed to this process through feedback, discussion, and prayer.

CDC delegates needed

This summer's Central District Conference annual meeting will be June 23-25 at Columbus Mennonite Church, with the theme of *Abounding in Love ... Abiding in Grace*. We can send up to 18 delegates, as well as a high school age youth delegate. If you are interested in serving as a delegate, please notify the church office (fmc@bluffton.edu or 419-358-5766). If you want to learn more about the CDC annual meeting, ask Darryl Nester or Kendra Nickel.

Mennonite Women

Would you like to lessen worry in your life? "Consider the Lily: Worry and Creativity," is the theme of the Mennonite Women meeting, Monday, March 14, at 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Esther Yoder Strahan will be our speaker for the evening. Gloria Hernandez Bucher will lead our devotions, taken from April Yamasaki's devotional, *Spark! Igniting your God-Given Creativity*. Mary Anne Moser and Jenny Moser will provide our refreshments.

SHYF/JHYF updates

February was a time of slowing down for the youth groups. After the hype of all of the retreats in January, the JHYF and SHYF are settling down into their regular routines

The Jr. High group has been discussing the "War and Welfare" section out of the Grapple Curriculum "Hope in a Hopeless World." In our latest meeting we talked about how we can help those who seem to have made bad choices without being judgmental or condoning their bad decisions.

SHYF will be diving back into their study on world religions next month, but have been learning about peace and nonviolence in Sunday school with the MCC Thermostat curriculum. Our latest topic of "Security" has us asking questions about how we can be secure though God's protection and empowerment when our government thinks we need to be surrounded by weapons to be safe.

SHYF also hosted a babysitting fundraiser at the church to raise money for our SWAP service trip.

The SHYF and JHYF also had a combined Valentine's party. There was food, games, fun, and we were even able to Skype Ana Neufeld Weaver from Guatemala for a short time! The youth were excited to see her and include her in the fun. We can't wait until she returns!

Tour to Switzerland, Austria, France and Germany scheduled for fall 2016

Have you ever traveled to Switzerland? Come along and see the beautiful scenery in Switzerland, Austria, southern France and southern Germany. To see the mountains, rivers and lakes, Brown Swiss cows, the neat towns and villages with their swept cobblestones and window boxes with multi-colored flowers is breath-taking. You'll see many names that are familiar in the Bluffton/Pandora area on store fronts, trucks, machinery, street names and grave stones.

Gloria and I enjoyed it so much we are going again Sept. 21-Oct. 1, 2016. Experienced tour leader Wilmer Martin and I developed an itinerary that includes:

- Breathtaking mountain vistas as we drive (and ride a cogwheel train) in the Swiss Alps
- Touring and shopping in quaint towns and world-class cities
- Worshipping with locals at the world's oldest Mennonite Church
- Reflecting at meaningful historic sites like Dachau Concentration Camp, Trachselwald Castle and Neuschwanstein Castle

Please feel free to email or phone me for more information. You can reach me at 419-358-0505 or richardwbucher@yahoo.com. You can also contact TourMagination at office@tourmagination.com or 1-800-565-0451. See tour details at www.tourmagination.com.

– Richard Bucher

Landon Cluts credits FMC with shaping his values, desire to serve others

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Interviewed by Sophie Marcum

Landon graduated from Bluffton High School in 2014. We caught up with him in between his time spent in research labs, Raising Cane's, and textbooks.

Where are you attending school and what are you studying?

I'm at Ohio State University studying Neuroscience with a minor in Clinical Psychology and Individual Difference. I am also taking the pre-med track.

What led you to this field of study?

My interactions with neurological disorders and injuries, love of science, and desire to do service all led me to try to become a physician.

What extra-curriculars are you involved in? What are you most looking forward to doing within these organizations/activities?

Alpha Epsilon Delta is the pre-med honorary here at OSU. I am the service chair of this organization and I look forward to doing service at Ark House and a free clinic here in Columbus. I'm also doing research in two labs. One of them is a cancer research lab with Dr. Carlo Croce and the other is a child development/twin fMRI lab with Dr. Petrill where we study reading and math skills over an 18-year-period. I look forward to presenting our findings at several conferences throughout the semester.

Additionally, I'm a member of the Club Swim team where I enjoy going to swim meets at other universities in the region. I am also a member of both STEP and the Honors Collegium which teach leadership skills and life planning. Lastly, I am a Neuroscience Ambassador which gives me the opportunity to interact with prospective OSU freshmen by telling them how great it is to be in Neuroscience at OSU. I do this by sharing what I have learned about the brain during a demonstration with a real human brain which they have the opportunity to hold.



Who are your role models? Tell us about them!

Outside of my family who pushed me to be where I am today and set an example for me about the importance of education, my main role models are Greg Hartzler, Dr. Charlie Campbell, and the Mennonite Church as a whole.

Greg has been my mentor and friend for many years and he has taught me a great deal about life during our numerous nights of board game playing. He pushes me to keep with my beliefs while trying to help me excel at whatever it is that I am trying to accomplish here at school.

Dr. Campbell is my adviser for Neuroscience who hired me to be an Ambassador. He has continuously helped me to get where I want to go by helping me get into research and by offering to write recommendation letters. He's unlike the other advisers who don't know your name. Instead he recognizes me and we joke and are more like colleagues than anything. When I am doing something that is not in my best interest he is not afraid to yell at me and gives advice on how to become the physician I want to be.

The Mennonite Church is where I got all of my values from. My desire to do service, love everyone, and to sing came from growing up at First Mennonite Church. I find myself missing the Mennonite community while I am here at school, but I never forget the lessons it taught me and how it shaped me to be who I am and how it influenced me to do what I am doing, which is to help people in any way that I can.

Where is the best place to eat in Columbus? What's your go-to order?

If you are on a budget, Raising Cane's. I order the Box combo, and replace the coleslaw with another piece of Texas toast (that stuff is addictive). If you want to go to a restaurant, I recommend Marcella's in the Short North for some Italian. I ordered a giant meatball the one time I went.

How do you describe Bluffton to people you meet who have never heard of it?

A five-minute drive from one side to the other, corn, and churches on every block. I'll also describe the Blaze of Lights and the craft show and all the other activities that happen around the town. Everyone generally thinks it sounds like a pretty nice place to live (and I agree with them.)

In middle school you were voted "Most Likely to Write a Bestselling Novel." If you wrote a novel, what would it be about?

As a neuroscience person, I think it would be fun to try to write a novel about what could happen in the human brain that would potentially cause someone to turn zombie-like (do not worry, it truly is impossible to be like a zombie you see in movies.)

Can you share three interesting facts you've learned in school?

1. Coffee prevents Alzheimer's.
2. Breathing increases free radicals in your body, which are bad for you in the long run.
3. Dark chocolate can counteract the free radicals that build up while you breathe.

If you could travel anywhere in the world for a week, where would you go and why?

London because of the vast amount of scientific and literary history that exists in the city. I am a massive fan of Sherlock Holmes so being able to see 221B Baker Street is a dream of mine and having the opportunity to visit some historical universities would be an experience I would never forget. Also, London is a beautiful city with famous architecture and tourist attractions.

What was the last book you read for pleasure? Tell us about it.

"Your Brain on Food" by Dr. Gary Wenk. Dr. Wenk is the head of neuroscience at OSU and an esteemed neuroscientist. This book describes the role of food, which are chemicals, which are drugs, which are food, which are chemicals, and on and on.

This book describes the neurological effects food has on the brain in detail. It describes the interaction between dark chocolate (an antioxidant) and lethal free radicals which build up due to breathing. It also has a "helpful tip on how to increase cognitive function," which you can learn more

about by watching Dr. Wenk's TED Talk (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SvkaK2AI0o>)

Who is your favorite musical artist right now?

Twenty One Pilots

If you were able to personally ask the current presidential candidates about one national issue, what topic would you inquire about and why?

I would inquire about the rising cost of higher education and how they plan to improve our public schools. Without an educated populace we cannot get ahead globally in economics, technology, etc. With teachers underfunded and unable to supply classrooms, as they are in some cases, our students cannot all be properly educated at this point in time.

Revised First Night a success



First Night returns! (Cooking team for the February 23 dinner included (from left) Jolene Oxender, Jane Weaver, Judy Diller, Cheri Slotter and Judy Buller. Below left, Greg Hartzler tries to draw Anna's attention back to her food, and (below right) Anne Buller greets Carmen Moser.

