

Menno-Life



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On a recent Sunday morning, FMC bicyclists complied with the trustees' request that bikes be parked in the rack rather than in the front lawn. We may need another rack!

So what? Now what?

During our summer worship series, "Bridges Among Us," the Spirit moved, as the Spirit will, in some unpredictable and even disturbing ways. So what? Now what? On Tuesday, September 19, about 20 people gathered to continue the conversations engaged in this series about how we might live into the radical welcome to which we've been called.

We began our conversation with some observations. One was that we at FMC have talked about most of these issues through the years, but there was something powerful about addressing them together. This both highlighted the intersections and commonalities between the conversations and challenged us with how much work there is to do.

It didn't take long before the observations turned to specific topics and offering ideas as to things we might do in relation to them. Regarding immigration, there were several questions: What would it mean to be a sanctuary congregation today? How do we prepare/position ourselves to do so? How would undocumented people hear about us? How do we process this as a congregation? There were other thoughts and questions related to racism: How might we deepen our understanding of racism? Maybe we should hold an anti-racism training here. Perhaps racism could be the topic of an intergenerational study. Around the issue of white privilege, there were other questions: How might we become sensitized to issues of white privilege? And how might we leverage our privilege on behalf of others? Still other suggestions included attending Saturday afternoon mass at St. Mary's to create interdenominational connections and brainstorming ways we could support people with mental health issues and their families.

Then came what I observed as a turning point in our conversation. Someone asked, "How do we discern what to leave undone in order to begin something new?" The questions that followed were: What are our local issues? Can we do what we're already doing with these issues in mind and do them even better? What gift is needed now? What is our capacity to give? How do we move ahead in ways that include and involve our children?

So what? Now what? This conversation did not end with a five step plan for action. It ended noting that there is a lot of work for us to do, and that an important part of that work yet needs to happen within us. We will continue to educate and prepare ourselves. We will continue to listen and explore together. We will continue to discern together.

In the Bible we have recorded many conversations between Jesus and a whole variety of people. These conversations changed things! They certainly changed people. I'd say that they continue to change people. Harrison Owen, in "Open Space Technology: A User's Guide" writes, "In times of turbulent change, conversation qualifies as real work and is essential for powerful, profitable action." May God continue to engage us in conversation, and to move among us as we engage one another.

-- Wanda Stopher

Dates to remember

Oct. 1 -- World Communion Day

Oct. 1-November 5 – Mirror of the Martyrs exhibit, Sauder Visual Arts Center, Bluffton University, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 1-5 p.m.; Sunday, 1-6 p.m. (See event schedule at <http://www.bluffton.edu/arts/mirror/>)

Oct. 12 – Mennonite Women, Anita Hooley, fellowship hall, 7 p.m. (**note change in date**)

Oct. 22 – Great Day of Singing, 4 p.m., Yoder Recital Hall

Oct. 29 – Rake 'n' Run, SHYF/JHYF

Rake 'n' Run October 29

Do you need your yard raked? Each youth group will be participating in a "Rake 'n' Run" in October. The youth will come rake your yard but they don't expect any payment or reward!

To see dates and to sign up, please see the sign-up sheet located in the fellowship hall or contact Shannon Thiebeau at 419-773-9446 or fmc.shannon@bluffton.

Attending FMC's university student potluck on September 3 were clockwise from front left, Sydney Cobb, RaeLee Hightower, Emily Griffioen, Irena Xhari, Ethan Zaerr, Kayla McSword, Jenny Dorsey, Michael Short, and Emma Cobb.



Two FMC women begin a three-year journey together

JP Schumacher has enrolled in Journey, a three-year program to develop leaders who are centered in Jesus Christ for ministries in local churches and communities. Gloria Hernandez Bucher is serving as JP's mentor in Journey, which is sponsored by AMBS, in partnership with Central District and Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conferences.



Participants need not live in Elkhart, as Journey is very distance-friendly and requires only one or two visits to campus each year, and takes just 2½ to 3 years to complete.

JP and Gloria recently attended the fall gathering of participants at the Amigo Center in Sturgis, MI.

JP earned a bachelor's degree education from Bluffton University. After college, she completed voluntary service, taught and traveled before marrying Tim. After the Schumacher's youngest child reached preschool age, she became MCC's regional director for NW Ohio and Michigan, and has spent the last 10 years as Bluffton University's director of the Institute of Learning in Retirement.

What drew you to exploring enrollment in Journey?

I first became interested in the Journey program after a conversation with Doug Luginbill while I was attending Builder's Retreat at Camp Friedenswald. I had shared that I had time to evaluate what I wanted out of my experience. Attending seminary was a very positive experience but I did not feel settled about going back to start another term.

I told Doug that my goals are to be better equipped/trained to help serve in the church and community. Doug then asked if I knew about the Journey program through Central District Conference and AMBS. I did not but would soon learn about this wonderful program that seems to be exactly for what I had been searching. I am very excited to have Gloria as my mentor. In the orientation weekend at Camp Amigo we just clicked. We realized we have a lot in common.

What parts of ministry are most important to you?

At this point I am most interested in hospitality ministry, visitation and a possible sermon or two along the way. I do know that the three years of study will help develop and direct me. It might change altogether!

How do you want to build on your involvement with the church and/or other organizations?

I want to use these three years to help me decided where I am best used in the church and the community. I lean toward visitation and organization.

What course do you begin with?

The course I am taking now is "The Mission of God and the church's mission."

Gloria received a Master of Divinity degree from Lexington Theological Seminary (KY) and was ordained in 1992. She served a 15-year pastorate in Carlock, IL, and a three-year position in the Disciples Women's office in Indianapolis before retiring. She came out of retirement in 2014 to serve First Mennonite Church as a halftime interim.

How did you get involved in Journey?

Shortly after Doug Luginbill became Central District Conference pastor, he invited me to become a mentor but I declined for various reasons. Recently he again invited me to serve as a mentor and after looking at the program guide, I decided this is a way I can serve. It is also an opportunity to do for someone else, what was done for me. When he shared that JP was considering the program, it was easy to say yes.

How will you draw on your pastoral experience in mentoring JP?

Listening, sharing feedback, and providing affirmation and encouragement are strengths that will serve me well in guiding JP in her journey. And I am looking forward to learning from JP as I share the Journey lessons along with her.

What does it mean to you to serve as a mentor?

Being invited to serve as a mentor is both a great responsibility and an honor which I take seriously. Being a mentor is a wonderful opportunity to share and serve, knowing that First Mennonite, as well as the wider church will benefit from JP's ministry now and in the future.

"Circles of Sisterhood" author to speak to Mennonite Women

Anita Hooley Yoder, author of "Circles of Sisterhood," will speak to Mennonite Women at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 12 in the fellowship hall (**NOTE CHANGE OF DATE**). "Circles of Sisterhood" is the historical book celebrating the 100-year anniversary of Mennonite Women. Autographed copies of the book will be available at a cost of \$25, a discount of \$5 from the cover price. To help celebrate the centennial, FMC has invited women from area Mennonite churches to attend.

Betty Shelly will lead devotions from the chapter, "Give" in the devotional, *Live Your Call*. Focusing on Jesus' need to pass on the gifts and teaching necessary for his disciples to continue his ministry, author Anna Liechty Sawatzky writes, "Sharing power is a transformative action, it is the intentional act of giving up some of one's own power in order that someone else might have it. We sometimes call this servant leadership."

Judy Buller, Judy Diller and Jane Weaver will provide refreshments.

Getting to know...Tara Miller

I am the youngest of three children of a Church of the Brethren pastor. I earned a bachelor of arts in microbiology from Miami University in 2008. Before children, I greatly enjoyed to knit whenever I could. I still knit; it's just hard to find time these days. A worthy trade though for now! I have been married to Kyle Miller for almost 10 years and have 3-year-old twins, Everett and Isaac, a 2-year-old daughter, Vivian, and a black toy poodle named Emma.

MPS: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up and why?

TM: As a child I was most deeply passionate about children. I babysat, volunteered in nursery, and wondered about future children. I always knew I wanted to be a stay at home mom and during school, I gravitated toward health fields that involved helping and serving people.

MPS: What is one accomplishment people might not know about that makes you proud?

TM: I am genuinely the most proud of myself for breast feeding my twins exclusively. They were born premature and could not traditionally feed for the first 4.5 months but I was able to push through many obstacles and teach them how to nurse in the end. By far the hardest thing I have ever done in my life next to also raising them.

MPS: What has been your favorite road trip or vacation?

TM: When I was 14, my aunt and uncle took me to live in France for a month with their now grown up foreign exchange student, Véronique, and her four children. It greatly changed and affected me to this day. It very much prepared my heart for a husband with a wide view of the world.

MPS: How would you describe your favorite meal?

TM: Kyle and I lived in Okinawa for almost three years so now I crave curry and Japanese fare. Most days, I crave to sit in a ramen house smelling giant pots of broth simmer while slurping noodles with chopsticks. For only another 100 Yen, they will plop more noodles in your broth bowl! I am very homesick somedays for Japan.

MPS: Three apps on your phone you can't live without?

TM: Three apps on my phone I need the most would be Facebook so my stay at home life feels a bit bigger and more connected, my running app that runs me through sprinting intervals, and then probably a tie for third between Pinterest for crafting and mom inspiration and the amazon app for all the things I forget to buy and need! Like yesterday!

MPS: Tell us about the most inspirational thing you have experienced.

TM: The most inspirational thing that I have experienced was having the twins at the same time my sister had my niece, Mary. I had spent 5.5 years of infertility to then finally be pregnant with identical twin boys while my sister had 4 pregnancy losses and was pregnant with Mary. After a long road of heart ache for both of us, 3 babies were born 10 days apart. My mom likes to tell people God told



Tara with Vivian and Isaac.

her I was going to have twins. She cracked a double yolk egg the morning of my procedure. God was very patient with a very angry heart. That experience taught me the most about God's character as well as my own. I am thankful for a God that is patient and continues to reveal himself. God surprised us with Vivian, too -- the baby we never knew we needed.

MPS: What church/denomination did you grow up in? What initially drew you to FMC?

TM: I grew up in the Church of the Brethren. Peace has always been deeply rooted in me to the point where entering the mainstream world was a shock that peace was such a hard concept. After Kyle's time in the military, we needed a faith community that felt strongly about peace and the separation of church and state. Kyle still likes to tease me because I can be a bit of a sheltered optimist. What do you mean everyone doesn't want to just get along and love?

MPS: What is one thing you are passionate about?

TM: It is my age and stage, but I am most passionate about children. I love to read about things that make children thrive, like schools that have radically changed curriculums to include more free play. I wish all children could be as loved and supported as the children of our church. In the future we have the desire to adopt and/or foster.

MPS: What is a hard-learned lesson from your life?

TM: The hardest earned and learned lesson of my life is to rest in the moments. Life will always move fast, and most of the time faster than I want it to, so enjoy the age and stage and rest, even a moment longer, with them.

SHYF and JHYF kick off fall activities, plan busy year

SHYF and JHYF Kick-Off started the new school year off with bang! Larry and Judy Diller hosted the group at their home, where they played silly games, ate s'mores and hot dogs roasted over a



campfire, enjoyed fellowshiping with each other and welcomed the new sixth graders into the youth group family. Thank you, Larry and Judy!

The youth are excited for the year ahead with service projects like sanitizing the church nursery, work camp and winter retreats at Camp Friedenswald, Bible study and growing in faith together.

A tradition of the SHYF is to make care packages for last year's graduates. The youth packed boxes with goodies and decorated them with silly pictures and notes.

We miss the ones who have graduated and are starting the next adventure in life, but are thinking of and praying for them in this exciting season. Please keep Levi Schumacher, Antony Kingsley, Isaac Andreas, Douglas Nester and Tad Steiner in your thoughts and prayers and ask for blessings to abound in their lives.

Patrick Estell, Christopher Harnish, Annalise Nisly, Grace Paquin, and Ellie Nickel play a game at the youth kick off.