

# Menno-Life



First Mennonite Church • Bluffton, Ohio • Vol. 65, No. 9 • September 2018

## Gratitude and Thanksgiving

Do you remember June 17? It was the last Sunday we worshipped together in the sanctuary at FMC before beginning the renovation! Each week since then we've had a brief update in the bulletin on the progress made on our Flooring to Flourishing Project. Each Sunday we parked in the same lot but found our places in a very different space. Each Sunday we settled in, joined our hearts together, and worshipped together. I'm remembering all of these with gratitude.

- I'm so grateful for the hospitality the school and school personnel have provided, and for the convenience of meeting literally across the street from the church.
- I'm thankful for all those who provided leadership along the way in bringing this project to completion. Mark Suderman's contribution began with his leadership of the Flooring Committee that made the initial recommendation. Then when asked to oversee the project and coordinate contractors, he graciously agreed. Dave Moser has represented Trustees and provided an important link with Trustees throughout the project. And Jerry Tripp's leadership coordinating the pew removal and renewal, bookrack installation, and return to the sanctuary gave direction to the physical efforts of many in the congregation.



- Thanks to many providing specific support. Thanks to all our sound technicians for their diligence and patience as they worked in the cafetorium throughout the summer. Chris Gott coordinated the disconnection and reconnection of the sound board in the sanctuary and Bob Suter saw to it that the speakers were disconnected allowing us to find the wires to reconnect the sound upon our return. Bret Stopher focused effort on book rack installation and pew renewal. Mick Hardy cleaned all the upholstery on chairs and pews.
- Too many individuals to name contributed physical labor in various stages of pew removal, cleaning, and changing light bulbs. But the efforts are no less counted and valued.
- Financial contributions, of course, were an important element in making this all possible. Thanks to everyone who contributed financially.
- I'm grateful to all the contractors who met deadlines and worked together. I'm grateful for the safety of all the workers throughout the summer.
- I'm aware and particularly grateful for the extra efforts made by all the FMC staff to serve the congregation with joy during uncertain and changing times.
- Thanks to all and everyone who made adjustments, exercised patience, or offered an encouraging word along the way.
- Finally, thanks be to God for dreams and energy to pursue them. Thanks be to God for such a lovely space to worship and facility in which to gather and to share with our community. Yes! Thanks be to God! May this indeed be a place where "even the sparrow finds a home and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O Lord of hosts, our King and our God."

*~ Psalm 84:3*

*~ Pastor Wanda*

## **Important dates to remember**

September 2 – First Sunday of "We Make the Road by Walking"

September 3 – Labor Day, church office closed

September 8 – FMC commissions' workshop, Grace Mennonite Church, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. **(Everyone is welcome to attend – even if not a commission member)**

September 9 – Youth fundraiser meal, FH, fellowship worship

September 9 – Congregational meeting, FH, 12:30 p.m.

September 10 – Mennonite Women, kick-off birthday party for centennial, 7 p.m., FH

September 12 – Pastor at MMH, 2:30 p.m.

September 23 – Installation of Carrie Mast as interim children and youth ministry director, during worship

September 27 – Pastor at MC, 2:30 p.m.

September 27 – PAX team presentations, potluck (see schedule on next page)

September 30 – All-church potluck to welcome university students, noon, FH

## **Opportunities to join conversations on how we'll "...make the road..."**

As we begin our year of "We Make the Road by Walking," by Brian McLaren, there are several opportunities to join a Sunday school class or learning circle for conversation partners to see where this journey will take us. All are welcome at any of these options.

### **Three Adult Sunday School opportunities:**

- Faith and Life Class -- parlor
- Freudige Class – 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, room 303
- Faithful Living – basement, room 104/105

### **Learning Circle Opportunities:**

- Sunday evenings in the fellowship hall, 5:20 p.m. with a light supper and book discussion at 6:05 p.m. Hosted by Walt Paquin.
- Sunday evenings, first and third of the month beginning Sept. 16 at Maple Crest in the family room, 6:30-7:45 p.m. Hosted by Rich and Gloria Bucher.
- Sunday evenings, first and third of the month starting Oct. 7 at 4:30-6 p.m. for the first meeting. Group may decide to change the time. RSVP appreciated but not necessary. Contact Theda or church office for address. Hosted by Theda Good in her home.
- Worship planning circle meets on Wednesdays from 5-6 p.m. Focus is on preparation and planning for worship two weeks in advance. Hosted by Pastor Wanda.

- **FMC Mennonite Women ready to begin year of celebrating 100<sup>th</sup>**

- Mennonite Women of First Mennonite Church will spend the upcoming year celebrating a centennial of meeting as a group. A kick-off birthday party will be held at 7 p.m. Monday, Sept. 10.
- All are invited to attend for a look back at the groups and activities that have met over the past 100 years. Come to see items from the archives and information from the historical records and enjoy birthday cake!
- Throughout the rest of the year, meetings will use the MW USA devotional guide: "Live Your Call: Embracing God's Mission." Each meeting will include some additional glimpses into activities and projects from the past 100 years, a look at how the groups have evolved and changed over the years, and a look into the future at new projects and activities that could arise. ~ Lori Nester

## **Congregation to welcome university students with potluck Sept. 30**

Sharing a meal together is one way our church family provides hospitality and fellowship. We will hold a potluck at noon in the fellowship hall following the worship service on Sunday, Sept. 30 to welcome Bluffton University students.

Plan to bring plenty of food to share and your own table service. The students will be our guests: food, drink and table service will be provided for them. Everyone is welcome!

## **2018 PAX team to present programs, share peace vision Sept. 27**

Mission, Peace and Service will host the 2018 PAX Team's visit to Bluffton. The delegation of four Japanese adults sponsored by the World Friendship Center will present several programs Thursday, Sept. 27. All are welcome to attend.

The schedule is as follows:

- 1-3 p.m. "Peace Stories from Japan" presentations at followed by discussion and light refreshments, The Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center, Bluffton University
- 6 p.m. Potluck with guests from Japan at First Mennonite Church sponsored by Mission, Peace and Service
- 7 p.m. "Living with Father" monodrama presentation by Mr. Amano at First Mennonite Church

World Friendship Center was founded in Hiroshima, Japan by Barbara Reynolds on August 7, 1965 (20 years after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima) to provide a place where people from many nations can meet, share their experiences and reflect on peace. WFC also sponsors the annual PAX program for teams to travel, sharing a vision for peace and global understanding. To learn more, visit <http://wfchiroshima.com/english/>

## FMC staff retreat: Building better teamwork, coordinating strengths

Much can be learned from studying individual strengths and learning how to build a stronger team by capitalizing on those unique qualities, as the First Mennonite staff learned at their fall retreat. Each person had completed the Strengthsfinder online assessment, which provides specific strategies for focusing on each individual's top five strengths, and enables a team to work more efficiently.



Andrea Goings, director of culture and learning at St. Rita's Medical Center and member of FMC, led the staff through its morning session. Her presentation involved some hands-on learning activities based on the Strengthsfinder results. She concluded the session by dividing the staff into teams to complete Tom Wujec's Spaghetti Marshmallow Challenge. The activity requires teams to work together in designing and building a spaghetti and marshmallow tower.



**Before...**



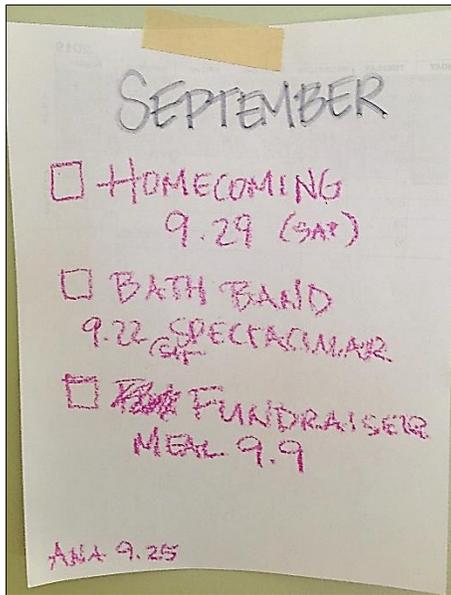
**And after!**



**The summer of 2018 at FMC was filled with typical sights and sounds of construction, conversations with strangers who quickly became friends, trips across the street to the middle school to check on details in our temporary sanctuary, finding the quickest routes through the maze in our fellowship hall, a few headaches and lots of anticipation. With nearly all of the work completed, we returned to our sanctuary in time to launch our year of walking.**

## Impromptu SHYF meeting becomes planning session for 2018-19

Listed in first photo below are 3 priorities youth from SHYF made during an impromptu meeting on August 19. Each item represents a set of activities and goals to achieve. While they are in writing, the list is a fluid one in which an emerging concern or idea may take precedence and replace one of these items. The youth have named a makeover of their meeting space their number one priority.



While working on that project, the teens also will work on connecting and engaging more with their communities – the congregation, other youth groups, Central District Conference, and the town – and support each other by attending school activities and other events each is involved with beyond the church.

During the same impromptu meeting, youth generated a list of events (below, right) for each month of the upcoming academic year and beyond.

This exercise not only organizes overall plans for the entire year but includes activities outside of church ones, to work towards the 3<sup>rd</sup> priority of supporting

each other. The congregation is also invited to these activities.

Look for monthly calendars on the SHY pillar in the Fellowship Hall for details!

### 2018-19 meeting schedule

Most Sundays at 1:30 p.m.

4th Sunday of the month immediately following worship – cooking and eating lunch together

~ Carrie Mast



## Hooley family to volunteer at Woodstock School, attend reunion

Don, Mary Ina and Sunita Hooley will travel September 13 to India for two months of volunteering at Woodstock School, 150 miles north of Delhi, 7,000 ft. in the foothills of the Himalayan Mountains where Mary Ina attended most of her 12 years of school.

They will attend Mary Ina's 45th class reunion before beginning to volunteer -- Don in the high school classes and Mary Ina and Sunita in the elementary classes. The Hooleys plan to return to Bluffton the week of Thanksgiving.

They appreciate your prayers for their safety and adjustment -- especially to the 500-foot climb up to school each morning and that their volunteering is of benefit to the students and staff at Woodstock School. More specifically, for Don's interactions with other teachers, that Mary Ina's reunion enhances relationships with classmates and that Sunita finds new friends and meaningful activities.