



NOVEMBER 2022 | VOLUME 69 | NO 5

MENNO-LIFE
FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER



Row 1 (left to right): Jeff Boehr (pastor), Carrie Mast, Lynda Nyce, Lynn Miller, and Gerald Mast

Row 2 (left to right): Ellie Nickel, Kay Neff and Lance Polingyouma (guests from Hopi Peach Academic Center), Ray Person, and Doug Luginbill

Row 3 (left to right): Kathy Dickson, Lavon Welty, Jackie Wyse-Rhodes, Mark Suderman, and Ntathi Phetihu

Row 4 (left to right): Phyllis Bixler, Louise Matthews, Matthew Yoder (message with Doug Luginbill and Jeff Boehr), and Mitch Kingsley

Row 5 (left to right): Darryl Nester, Paul Neufeld Weaver, George Lehman, Elizabeth Kelly Chris Moser (message with Elizabeth Kelly), and Shelby Cluts

Row 6 (left to right): Rich and Gloria Bucher, Imani Jones (guest Director of the Department of Chaplaincy and CPE), and Phil Yoder (pastor)

Not pictured: Katie Kuntz-Wineland (guest as LGBTQ+ speaker)

The Many Faces of Worship

A key element of the Christian Formation Circle includes the weekly worship services, which consist of music, prayer, scripture, the message, time for reflection, and so much more. One positive that I feel was revealed throughout the period waiting for a new lead pastor was sharing our gifts with one another, specifically our sermon message that we hear each week. Pictured are the many faces of those who shared the sermon message throughout the past year! Also, a special thanks to all those who help plan and lead worship throughout the year, including Jeff Boehr as the former Pastor of Pastoral Care and Mark Suderman as the former Interim Church Administrator, and the numerous others who share their gifts, time, and faith to support First Mennonite's Christian Formation.

Rollercoaster Spirituality

BY PHIL YODER

I love rollercoasters - and have since I rode my first one as a 6-year-old. My love for them today is rooted in my childhood, and my excitement for them today remains just as passionate. I have had a recurring dream most of my life (and still do today) of trying to get to Hershey Park on time. In this dream, I am never able to successfully arrive at the park. Clearly, this love for rollercoasters is on an unconscious level. So, I started asking myself, "Is there something deeply meaningful or spiritual about rollercoasters?" The following is a reflection on what rollercoasters might mean to me now in this time of transition into the role of a pastor.



Choosing to ride

New life experiences begin with a yes. Every rollercoaster ride begins with the initial decision to get in line for the ride. Sometimes, the ride is so scary looking that even the line itself is too intimidating to enter into. Even just considering getting on the ride can be overwhelming. Phobias of heights, motion sickness, and high speeds are real. Will I, at the very least, get in line?

Getting on the rollercoaster

Rollercoasters are monstrous these days. It's not uncommon for people to back out of getting on the rollercoaster at the last second. The fear of new experiences is real. "Who knows what is going to happen?" "Who knows what turns are up ahead?" "What does an inversion or loop feel like?" You have to get on it to find out, or you will always be looking from the outside.

Riding tightly gripped

The first time on a ride, people often tightly grip the handlebars. The anxiety and fear of riding can make the rider hold on more tightly. As a result, the ride can be very jarring. As a kid, I remember the first time riding "The Great Bear", a rollercoaster that looked so scary that I chose to close my eyes and hold on tight. As a result, I was thrown around in my seat and was unable to adjust each part of the ride. When a turn or hill comes, will you loosen your grip and allow the ride to take you on the journey? Or will you hold on tightly and get tossed around?

Gravity's work

At the beginning of a rollercoaster (and a new job), the large highs and lows of the hills can feel completely overwhelming. At one moment, you are at the top of them, hundreds of feet in the air. At the next moment, you are at the bottom. Like rollercoasters, new beginnings always have the biggest swing from high to low: high moments of success and connection, and low moments of failure and disconnection. If you are anything like me, the swings from high to low can happen quickly. Usually, overtime, the extreme feelings are not so big. In the latter half of the ride, the hills are smaller, and don't seem so scary. It just takes time.

Floating through a rollercoaster

In order to experience floating through a ride, you have to let go of the handle bars. You have to be familiar with the layout (and the anxieties and fears that come with it) and allow yourself to be pulled through the ride. It does not mean it isn't scary or doesn't make you anxious, but it means that you have prioritized something else other than fear. You have to prioritize trust. Trust you will make it down the first hill, and the second, and the third. Trust that, as you float out of your seat, that the harness will keep you in the cart (which, in my opinion, is the best part of rollercoasters). Trust that eventually the large hills will come to an end, and you will in fact come to a steady stop. This takes time. You have to have ridden the rollercoaster many times to start floating. You have to have ridden many rollercoasters in order to be less scared of new ones. Getting to the space of floating simply takes time and experience.

To me, floating through a rollercoaster, feels very similar to experiencing moments of grace. It's like feeling full of the spirit, full of creativity, or full of connection with others.

But in order to get to floating through a rollercoaster, you need to have gotten in line, have gotten on the ride, have let go of a tight grip on the handle bars, have become familiar with the large ups and downs, and begin to trust - trust that there is grace there for you the whole time.

Some rollercoasters are terrible

And you need to know when to stop riding them. Probably, back pain and nausea are good enough indicators to stop anything in life. However, you do not know this without trying it out.

May you trust that God is with you for the ride. May God bless you, and be with you as you continue whatever stage of rollercoaster riding you are on. May you feel God's grace meeting you on whatever rollercoaster you are riding.

TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA COORDINATOR

JOB DESCRIPTION

Hours

Up to 10 hours per week. This job requires flexibility which includes availability for routine staff meetings, Sunday worship, and special events. Remote access and completion of tasks may also be utilized to fulfill job duties.

Supervisor

Lead Pastor; responsibility may be delegated to another staff person from time to time.

Salary

\$10,000 annually

Benefits

Refer to the First Mennonite Church Personnel Policy Manual (on file in the church office).

Duties

- Ensure sound, video, and live stream for Sunday worship services.
- Develop and manage social media platforms. Coordinate with pastors on online posts and presence. Assist with the development and weekly maintenance of the website. Monitor engagement analytics and make adjustments accordingly.
- Research, make recommendations, and purchase technology. Set up new equipment, assist staff with technology and software. Troubleshoot technology issues.
- Attend weekly worship planning and staff meetings to report on and coordinate church activities.
- Coordinate video streaming/recording for funerals, elective Sunday School classes, and special events.
- Assist members/guests with their technology needs for presentations, including duplicating recordings of events for individuals.
- Participate in and occasionally lead the worship service preparation meeting on Sunday mornings.
- Collaborate with staff in print media, including bulletin and program development.

AROUND FMC: CDC Sacred Listening



Pastor Phil, on behalf of the congregation, receives a wire Bonsai tree from the CDC Sacred Listening team.



Gerald Mast enjoying lunch with Quin Spelman, Kylie Shenk, Avila Spelman, Emma Shenk & Junia Spelman



The Taizé Service held at the church. We enjoyed beautiful music, meditation, prayer and fellowship. Other activities included: Candle lighting, Legos, The Thankful tree, The prayer swirl, and a group mural.

SUBMITTED

BY LOUISE MATTHEWS

10/24/2022

6:06

I woke up without an alarm clock;
it was 6:06am.

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow...”
My mind went immediately to the dedication anthem
found on page 606 in a previous Mennonite Hymnal,
[now on page 70 in Voices Together
but still remembered as 606.]

What an inspiring way to start my day:

Praise God from whom ...

at 6:06

The Ohio Innocence Tour: Abolition of the death penalty

BY JAN WIEBE

First Mennonite Church was a co-sponsor of The Ohio Innocence Tour that stopped in Lima on October 11th. The purpose of the tour was to heighten awareness of the movement to repeal the death penalty and to support the bipartisan bills before Ohio's House and Senate. Three death row exonerees (two from Ohio) spoke about their wrongful convictions. Kwame Ajamu, Derrick Jamison and Ray Krone are just four among hundreds of people across the United States who have been found innocent while on death row. Kwame spent 28 years in prison based on the coerced eyewitness testimony of a 13-year-old boy who recanted decades later. Jamison was exonerated after a federal judge requested a new trial for Jamison, and it was discovered that the prosecutor withheld key evidence from the trial. He was released from prison exactly 20 years from the day he entered. After Ray Krone had served more than ten years in prison, DNA testing proved his innocence.

The event was held at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Lima, with around 120 in attendance, including over 30 from FMC. Sister Alice Gerdeman from Ohioans to Stop Executions explained the current legislative situation in Ohio, and attendees wrote postcards to their Ohio representatives. Pastor Phil Yoder closed the evening with prayer.

During the current lame duck session, Ohio lawmakers have the opportunity to abolish the death penalty and become the 24th state to cut ties with capital punishment. The death penalty is racist, costly, and arbitrary. The system carries with it the inherent risk of executing an innocent person.



Ten Thousand Villages Trunk Sale

FMC will host a holiday themed "Ten Thousand Villages trunk sale" again this year, on December 11, immediately after worship. Come to explore a variety of holiday themed items, coffees, teas, jewelry, and more! Sample some new teas available at the store as you shop learn more about the artisans who create items being sold. Ten Thousand Villages got their start through the work of Edna Ruth Byler who traveled around the United States and Canada, with artisan products for sale from the trunk of her car. Holiday sales at First Mennonite in the early 1970s led to the inspiration to create a thrift store, that would generate revenue to provide ongoing funding for the purchase of artisan crafts that could then be sold locally.



Today, Ten Thousand Villages impacts tens of thousands of people – artisans and their families – who without the work and investment we provide, would likely remain caught in a cycle of poverty. Instead, sustainable development practices are growing financial stability and igniting social change.

Ten Thousand Villages currently works with artisans in more than 25 countries, more than 75 artisan partner groups, which involves more than 20,000 artisans.

Leaders in the Fair Trade movement, 60% of the artisans are women, providing a crucial equitable path to improving possibilities for their families, without falling prey to predatory practices. To learn more about the Maker to Market mission of Ten Thousand Villages - <https://www.tenthousandvillages.com/about-us#maker-to-market>

Discovering the village that raised me as a child

BY FRED STEINER

Someone told me the trouble with retirement is that you never get a day off. For me, in exploring this curious time of life, comes a feeling of satisfaction.

Here's another way of looking at it.

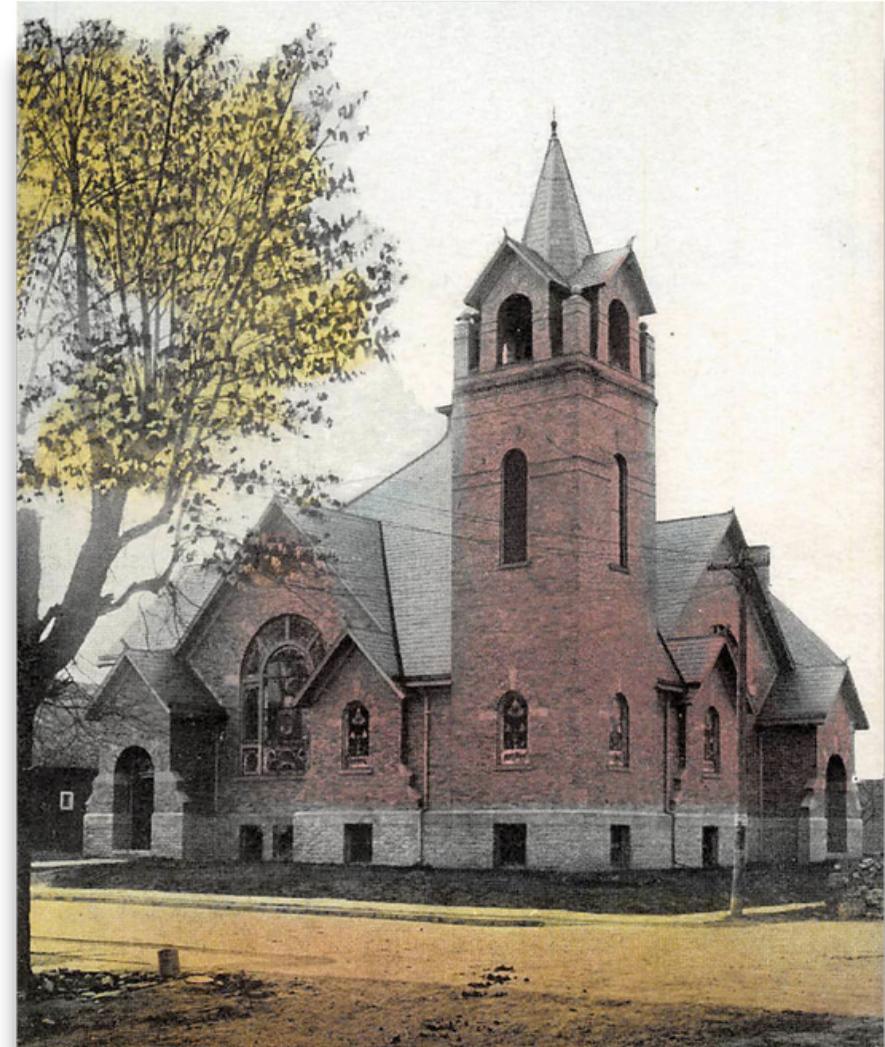
You've watched the movie featuring an archeologist, who in his retirement, stumbles upon the apparent holy grail. When asked to explain his thoughts upon his discovery, a five-syllable noun comes from his lips: "illumination."

Allow me to share some illuminating discoveries about our congregation, which I've uncovered in my retirement activities while posting local history on www.blufftonforever.com.

- Did you know that the first services reported about the congregation now known as First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, were held in the Lutheran Church building. And, the congregation was in a real sense an outpost of the original Swiss congregation, meeting in rural Bluffton.
- Have you ever wondered how First Mennonite Church congregation came to select its building site at the corner of Jackson and what eventually was called Church Street? One answer is that a livery barn stood between the future church location and Main Street. It was a convenient place to keep horses, for members using a horse and buggy to attend church.
- Thinking of the wiring of our building, while under construction, who do you suppose were the original electricians hired for that task? They were brothers, R.L. and Cleon Triplett, later of the Triplett Corp. fame.

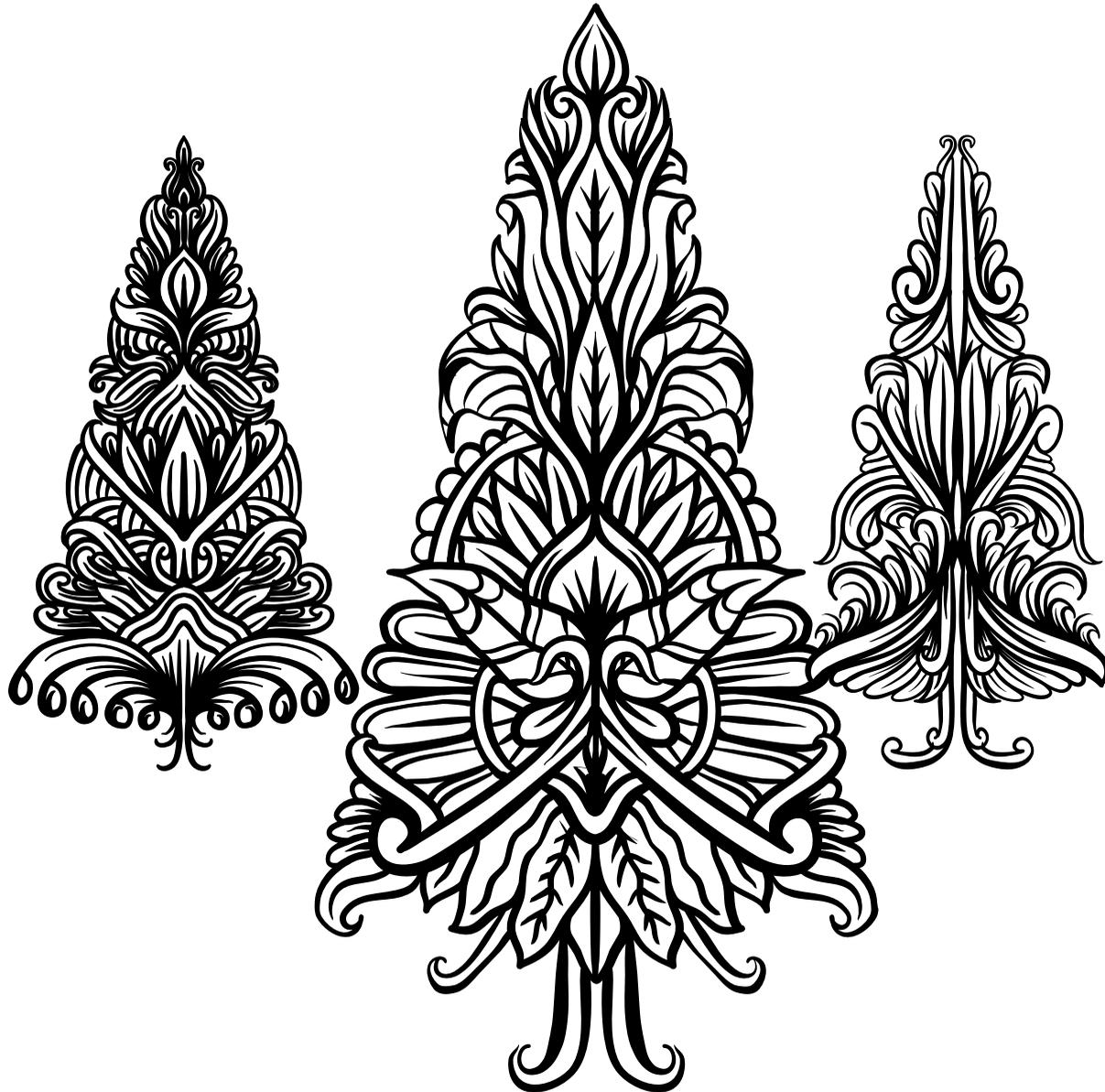
These three stories about our own congregation are part of the cannon of material posted on my Bluffton history website: www.blufftonforever.com. My focus, while pointed in the past, enables me and, I hope, my website viewers, to discover everyone's illumination of what Bluffton today is all about. So, for me, retirement permits my own enlightenment about all my questions concerning the village that it took to raise the child in me. I continue to be curious about what makes, or made this village tick in the first place.

The source for the information about our congregation is from "The First Seventy-Five Years," written by Howard Raid in 1986.



1906 colorized post card of First Mennonite after it was eventually built.

"It's not what's under the tree that matters,
it's who's gathered around it."



MENNONITE
Arts WEEKEND

BETWEEN:

*Embracing
Vulnerability*

FEB 3-5, 2023
CINCINNATI, OHIO

GIRL NAMED TOM

Roseann Penner Kaufman
Talashia Keim Yoder
Daniel Shank Cruz
Anne H. Berry
Rachel Derstine
Dick Lehman

Viki Graber

Lynn Sommer
Joungmin Sur
SaeJin Lee
Jerry Holsopple
Angela Sprunger

INFO &

TICKETS:

mennoniteartsweekend.org

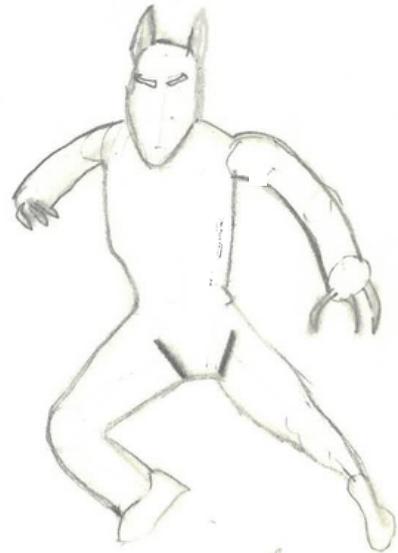


Join us for a special get away by coming to Mennonite Arts Weekend in Cincinnati on February 3-5. The weekend is for all those who love good music performances, love to sing, enjoy the fellowship of others with common interests, are artists or just appreciate the creative talents of others, or who wish to support and encourage Mennonite artists.

The theme of this year's event is *Between: Embracing Vulnerability*. Friday night features an introduction to the artist presenters/performers, an opening program with lots of singing, and a gallery displaying the work of the featured visual artists. *Girl Names Tom*, a trio of Goshen College graduates and winners of last season's *The Voice*, are this year's featured musicians.

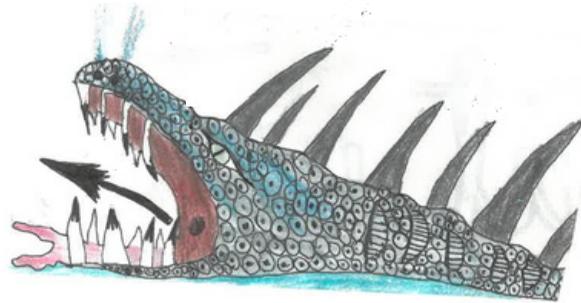
On Saturday, attendees choose interesting break-out workshops, enjoy wonderful lunch and dinner food, and gather for an evening program highlighting more from the artists. The weekend closes Sunday following a worship service led by the event organizing committee and also attended by members of the host congregation. This event is not to be missed. Come for some or all of the weekend. For more details and registration information, log on to mennoniteartsweekend.org. Early registration savings end December 1, 2022.

Artwork by the DeMarcos



Noah DeMarco

Micha DeMarco



Hannah DeMarco