



NOT JUST EITHER/OR

BY PHIL YODER



This lent season, we have been exploring how we are shaped. Our lives are an ongoing process of shaping. We are shaped in a physical sense as our bodies grow and develop and age. And we are also shaped in a spiritual sense through our experiences in life.

When our lent planning team gathered in January, we discussed how we are shaped spiritually by our experiences in life, and how God has been a part of that journey. A theme started to rise in the conversation - it's not that we are shaped by just the good things that happen in life, but also the painful.

This theme was expanded as we looked through the scripture for the lent season. We began to consider how we are shaped not just by the things we are certain of, but also the things that take great risk. Not just by what we believe, but also what we don't know. Not just by what we thirst for, but also what we are drowning in. Not just by the spaces where the light shines, but also the darkness. Not just by perfection, but also in wholeness. Not just by our worship, but also in our indifference. We are shaped by it all.

Our lives are filled with moments of joy and of pain - and while it would be great to magically get rid of all the pain, we can't. What we are actually called to, is love. It is love within a community that helps tend to the pain that we each experience. It is in care for each other that the holy spirit moves and shapes us.

As we continue to explore these aspects of our lives that shape us, I pray that what is deepend in each of us is our capacity to love and care for each other in the "both." Both in the pain and joy, belief and doubt, and light and dark.

BABY YODA(R) IS COMING

PASTOR PHIL'S PLAN FOR PARENT LEAVE

ONCE THE BABY HAS ARRIVED, PASTOR PHIL IS PLANNING TO TAKE 5 WEEKS OF PARENTAL LEAVE, WITH THE FIRST 3 WEEKS AT FULL-TIME STATUS AND THE LAST 2 WEEKS AT HALF-TIME STATUS. WHEN PHIL BEGINS PARENTAL LEAVE, MARK SUDERMAN WILL STEP BACK INTO THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR ROLE. MARK'S PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES WILL BE TENDING TO WORSHIP PLANNING, ASSISTING WITH BULLETIN DEVELOPMENT, AND PROVIDING OFFICE COVERAGE FROM APPROXIMATELY 9AM – 11:50 AM, MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY. WHILE PHIL IS OFF THESE 5 WEEKS, CARRIE WILL ASSUME PRIMARY PASTORAL CARE RESPONSIBILITIES. YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO REFER TO THE PASTORAL CARE TEAM LIST, AS WELL. FROM APRIL 6 - 20, TRUSTY SCHUMACHER WILL ALSO BE OUT OF THE OFFICE. GLORIA HERNANDEZ BUCHER AND ALICIA DEMARCO WILL BE OFFERING COVERAGE AT THE DESK.

ALL THE GOOD THINGS

BY CARRIE MAST

Compacted... Screaming... Coping... Overlapping... Stressful... (Agonized Ugh)... Organized... Anxious... Frustrating!



What is this list describing? Even if you don't know what all of these words have in common, by the time you reach the end of the list, you are guaranteed to feel, well, anxious!

These words are straight from the mouths of FMC senior high youth describing how they feel about their schedules and activities. Based on those responses, one might be surprised that anyone came to SHY group that evening, but eight of them did. Track, musical rehearsals, club volleyball, homework, swim, and work are some of the activities occupying their time these days. Yet, when I offer to limit our scheduled youth group activities, they are adamant that they want to meet each week. That unwavering desire to be together weekly is the thread of hope I cling to.

Perhaps unsurprising is that the last word on the list, "frustrating", actually belonged to me. I find I'm not alone in my scheduling woes when I connect with other youth group organizers at Winter Camps and the AMBS Pastors and Leaders Week. Somewhere between the days of yore when I was in high school and now, life shifted. There are no sacred Wednesday evenings set aside for youth groups to gather. Club sports and other organized sports teams for all ages happen every day of the week, including Sundays – even Sunday mornings.

When we are not intentional in shaping our home liturgies, we fall into the routines formed by our activities and schedules. We might feel like we're victims of our "good" activities, chained to calendar items that just keep appearing. Are we considering how we are impacted? Do we need to consider doing less? Are we listening to our own bodies and minds? Are we listening to each other and our children?

Reviewing our calendars as though they are a list of our home liturgies can help us identify our priorities and determine if these align with what we say our priorities are. A liturgical audit can reveal gaps and show us where our lives are pointing. When we intentionally choose (and limit) our activities to ensure they are pointing toward lives focused on love for God and God's kingdom, our youths' responses to their schedules might sound something more like: Meaningful... Joyful... Unafraid... Courageous... Content... (Peaceful Sigh)... Hopeful...

And I would be celebrating.



A Sister Church in Honduras

BY LINDA MILLER

In 1999 while I was working with a Medical/Dental team in eastern Honduras, Lynn was helping with cleanup after Hurricane Mitch around San Pedro Sula, Honduras. He met Ovidio Flores, a Mennonite church leader from Honduras. Ovidio suggested that First Mennonite church in Bluffton should get involved with Mennonite Central Committee's Connecting People project.

So after returning home and some discussions, a group from Bluffton visited Honduras and a church, Iglesias Evangelica Menonita in Colonia Lopez, near San Pedro Sula. The group of seven from FMC and 3 from Grace Mennonite Church made the trip in February 2000.



God bless the Mennonite Church in Bluffton! Thank you for your offerings. This photo is of provisions to give to sisters and brothers who have few resources in the community of Davis and Lopez. They are basic grains like beans rice large sugar flour and others.

In 2005 three persons from Colonia Lopez visited Bluffton to help us celebrate our 100th anniversary.

Over the years we have maintained yearly contact with a gift for their Benevolent Fund. They use the funds for persons in need in the community.

In early years communication was difficult because mail delivery was not reliable. Now with the internet and Facebook it is easy. A number of the members and the church are on Facebook. The church Facebook is: Iglesia Menonita Fuente de Agua Viva. The pastor is Elvin Villalobos and his wife is Bety.

Check out their page and even join in some of their worship.



From L to R: Former FMC Pastor John Schrock, Linda Miller, and Pastor Elven Villalobos. Linda presented a wall hanging from FMC during a trip to Colonia Lopez in 2004.

Continued from previous page

After the group returned, the congregation at FMC agreed to enter a Sister Church relationship. Since that time more than 50 people from FMC have visited the church in Honduras. The last official trip was in 2011 when Louise Wideman and a lady from Salem Mennonite joined us.

YOUTH FUNDRAISING AUCTION

APRIL 30, 2023
Fellowship Hall
4- 6 pm

Come join us! Refreshments available!
Can't join us? Donations of goods & services prior to the auction welcome.



- handcrafted wooden hall tree by Chris Moser
- wooden tray and carved whale by Paul Dyck
- Oscar Velasquez winter scene painting of FMC



Going, Going, Sold!

Menno-Hof Trip

By Shelby Cluts

On a very rainy, windy March 25, twenty-six people from FMC traveled to Shipshewana, Indiana on an intergenerational trip. The ages of the participants ranged from 5 to 70 somethings! The first stop was the Blue Gate Restaurant for a lunch in a private room served family style. We had chicken, meat-loaf, mashed potatoes, noodles, dressing, green beans, salad, homemade bread with apple butter or peanut butter fluff, and several choices of homemade pie. Our server was excellent and the conversation flowed. We even had a little time to check out the gift store and bakery that was in the restaurant.

We then went to Menno-Hof for a tour. Several people had been there before but many of us hadn't. It was a delightful museum with several rooms of displays where you could listen to a narrator as various items lit up. These rooms started with the birth of Christ and then continued through the development of the Christian church, the Reformation, the evolution of the Anabaptists until Anabaptist migrations began to the Americas. There were also some items to look at and read about. Then a larger room with various stations where you could look at and read about various aspects of Anabaptist beliefs and culture. In this room there was even a play-set where younger children could play with their parents still in the same room. It was a museum for all ages and everyone enjoyed the experience. After checking out the gift shop at the museum we headed back to Bluffton!

Look for more trips planned by the Intergenerational Trip ministry in the future! Also, if you have suggestions or would like help planning something just let the contact for this ministry, Shelby Cluts, know!



This was the first room on the tour, where we watched an introductory video



Lunch at the Blue Gate Restaurant

Friday Game Night

Game night cont....



Game Night FTW....Families enjoyed a fun filled night of games, laughter and good snacks. Join us next time for another round....



Mentoring - Talked about the Mentoring program and looked at church directories to see who might be a good mentor for us!



Marshmallows - We made some snacks together using marshmallows!

Martyrs - Gerald Mast presented the story of 1 martyr from the Martyr's Mirror and what we can learn from the martyrs.



Minute To Win It - teams competed in a variety of Minute To Win It challenges.



JHY: Mentors, Martyrs, Minute-To-Win-It, & Marshmallows

Bluffton High School Spanish Class



Spanish 3 classes from Bluffton High School were tasked with reenacting 'pasajes de la vida' or life passages. Such life passages were birthdays, baptism, weddings, and funerals. Students acted out these celebrations while using their Spanish skills and specific language usage. Many students chose to use First Mennonite's sanctuary as a way to make it more realistic and enjoyable.

By Kevin King
BH Spanish teacher

Photo cred: Carrie Mast

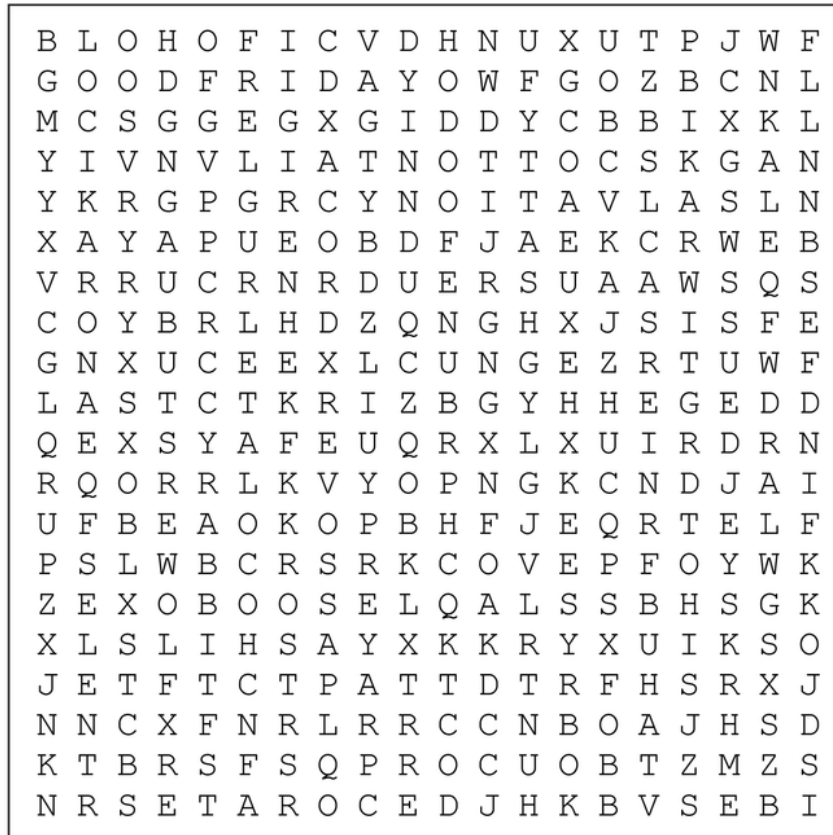


Several students attend First Mennonite. It was a fun way to venture from the classroom and we would like to thank you for allowing us use of this space.

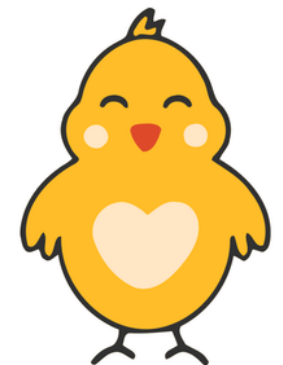
FMC Youth include John Paul Yoder, Ethan Nickel and Ben Hartzler



Easter Word Search



- | | | |
|------------|------------|--------------|
| BUNNY | EGGS | LENT |
| CARROTS | FIND | MIRACLE |
| CHOCOLATE | FLOWERS | PASSOVER |
| COTTONTAIL | GOODFRIDAY | PRAYER |
| CROSS | HIDE | RABBIT |
| DECORATE | HOLY | RESURRECTION |
| EASTER | HUNT | RISEN |
| EGGHUNT | JESUS | SALVATION |



Camp Friedenswald

SUMMER 2023

- June 11-16: High School Camp (GRADES 9-12)
- June 18-23: Primary & Pre-Jr Camp (GRADES 2-4)
- June 25-30: Junior High Camp (GRADES 7-8)
- July 2-7: Junior Camp (GRADES 5-6)
- July 10-14: Family Camp 1
- July 17-21: Family Camp 2
- July 24-28: Family Camp 3

CAMP FRIEDENSWALD

Camp Friedenswald

2023 PROGRAM

2023 CALENDAR

- JANUARY**
 - 6-8 HIGH SCHOOL WINTER CAMP
 - 13-15 . . . JUNIOR HIGH WINTER CAMP
- FEBRUARY**
 - 3-5 WINTER GETAWAY
 - 17-19 . . . FAMILY WINTER CAMP
- MARCH**
 - 31-APRIL 1 GRAND CAMP
- JUNE**
 - 11-16 HIGH SCHOOL CAMP
 - 18-23 PRIMARY & PRE-JR CAMP
 - 25-30 JUNIOR HIGH CAMP
- JULY**
 - 2-7 JUNIOR CAMP
 - 10-14 FAMILY CAMP I
 - 15-16 BUILDERS WEEKEND
 - 17-21 FAMILY CAMP II
 - 24-28 FAMILY CAMP III
- SEPTEMBER**
 - 15-17 WOMEN'S RETREAT
- OCTOBER**
 - 14-16 RESTORATION RETREAT

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CAMP FRIEDENSWALD
the peaceful woods