

Meet our NEW Members

Bill Luginbuhl: I was raised in this church and was a member until 31 years ago when I moved to Chicago. I transferred my membership to the now called Chicago Community Mennonite Church where Marilyn Kern was the Pastor. I knew Marilyn from when she was the Associate Pastor of this church. I am the third generation of my family of five who have attended this church.



Steve Baskauf: I grew up in the Church of the Brethren, but decided to become a Mennonite after serving with MCC in Swaziland. I joined Harmony Mennonite Church in Nashville but have also attended Methodist, Presbyterian, and Catholic churches over the years. Prior to retiring I was a high school chemistry and physics teacher, then biology faculty, and finally a librarian and data science specialist. For fun, I read science fiction, hike and watch birds, and write international biodiversity information standards.



Gary Howell: I was born in Bluffton and adopted as an infant. I found a biological brother at 70, when he was 80. We share the same mother and father. He came here to meet, and we spent time together here then traveled to West Virginia where he grew up. I'm very thankful for the welcoming and accepting FMC family!



Deron Martin: Hello FMC members, volunteers, attendees and community. My name is Deron Jay Martin. I was born and raised in Southern Ohio, a town called Ironton (pronounced Arn't'n lol!)

I joined the US Army right out of high school. I felt a need to serve my country but I ultimately just wanted to get out of that small town and see the world. I ended up being stationed in Fort Knox, Kentucky, Fort Greg-Adams, Virginia, Hanau, Germany and Monterey, California.

After my 4 years in the military I moved to Florida to be with my Ohio relatives. I ended up living there for 20+ years, and for 15 years I worked as a lighting designer and DJ for Universal Studios, Orlando in Entertainment. "Fun fact": I once had a walk-on in a major motion picture call "My Girl" starring Jamie Lee Curtis, Dan Aykroyd, and Macaulay Culkin! It was filmed in Florida.

Eleven years ago I met a local farmer online, and we both flew back and forth, wrote cards with hours of phone calls. We fell in love, and we decided to move me back to Ohio to make a go of it. It's been the best decision that I've ever made and we strive to make each other happy every single day. It's not always easy but with God and his son Jesus leading our path that we try to follow, how can we fail? This community has been so unbelievably supportive and we are so grateful. Now we look to a future with the FMC community to show our gratitude. We hope to be a great addition to the church. Praise God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Jim Benner: I was born in Morwood, Pa. in a country store. My birth mother had TB and died when I was 5 months old so I was adopted by a Mennonite couple across the street as my father was not able to take care of me. Fast forward to Bluffton where I met the love of my life at the college. After graduation and marriage we both accepted teaching jobs in Oxford, Pa. After 1 year of teaching I accepted a job as a bank examiner with the FDIC. My first assignment was in Harrisburg, Pa. where we lived for 12 years and our family increased with 4 children. I traveled Monday through Friday 70% of the time so Sandy basically shouldered the bulk of raising the kids as I was often not home weekdays. We moved to Souderton, PA and I worked in Philadelphia where I was a review examiner for 10 years. I had to ride the train every day. After a promotion I became an Assistant Regional Director and supervised the banks in Arkansas and Mississippi and then changed to Kentucky and Tennessee for my last 5 years. After spending 35 years with FDIC I retired and we moved to DeBary, Florida where we lived for 26 years. We were in the process of settling in Florida when a tornado hit and we volunteered with MDS for 240 days combined. After retiring I volunteered with Habitat for Humanity for 15 years helping build 45 houses. After that a group of men from our church in Deland worked on projects around the church every day for a number of years. Problem with that was that we were all in our seventies or eighties and between age and death the group eventually dissolved. Now I am just tired and enjoying retirement.



Sandy Benner: I was born in Flanagan, Illinois, the oldest of eight children. After high school graduation I moved to Bloomington, Illinois to work at the home office of State Farm. I had always heard a lot about Bluffton College and had also visited there quite often so I quit my job at State Farm and enrolled at Bluffton. I graduated from Bluffton with a teaching degree, got married and taught for one year and did a lot of substituting while I was raising my children. Of course, they all wanted to come to Bluffton when they graduated from high school. Our oldest 2 daughters were even lucky enough to attend college with their uncle since my "BABY" brother was in college at the same time. After 12 years in Harrisburg we moved to Souderton, PA and attended Zion Mennonite Church where we made some great friends who also attended Bluffton. There we became active and I ended up teaching in their preschool. After college our son became the youth leader at Zion and several years later became the associate pastor. He was at Zion for 23 years. Our daughters all ended up in Ohio and we ended up with most of our grandchildren being in Ohio. In 2021 we decided it was time to stay permanently in Ohio. We consider Bluffton a great small town and are very happy with the community and also with our home at Maple Crest. It is nice being with friends and acquaintances we knew in college and even some friends from Flanagan. When raising our family we did a lot of tent camping. Even though others often made fun of us we have wonderful memories. Our hobbies are walking, biking, hiking in National Parks out west, golfing, water skiing, and snow skiing. Of course, age has changed a lot of those things. We are very happy here. For such a small community we have a wonderful downtown and the bike paths etc. make this community a great place to live.



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