



December 2016

HIVELY AVENUE MENNONITE CHURCH

Happenings

Continue in the grace of God

Charles Geiser, pastor

Monday evening as we were reading the Bible together at church, as has happened Monday evenings throughout the year, I realized that for those who have met week after week, we will have spent about fifty hours reading the Bible together. That equals more than two twenty-four hour days! This has been a good exercise for our “Year of the Bible” focus. The group that meets to read now tends to be smaller than earlier in the year, but it has been encouraging and inspiring to hear of those who can’t or don’t join the reading group but read on their own.

Activities such as reading the Bible in community or gathering for prayers during Advent and Lent usually do not draw large groups but I believe they are, nevertheless, important to do. This isn’t about everybody doing the same thing at the same time, but recognizing the importance of people participating and serving in different ways and at different times that feeds into the understanding that this is what Hively does. It is not just about what a few individuals may be doing but, rather, when each of us is involved in the way we are called, Hively is doing this or that. Thus, I say, that Hively participates in the annual peace pilgrimage, and Hively goes to Church Community Services to fill soup bags, and Hively has a sister church, and Hively gathers for Monday evening Bible reading, and Hively meets for worship at 9:30 on Sunday mornings. That statement doesn’t reflect that everyone does, but that as a community of faith, this is what we do.

Our sense of community goes beyond the things that we do and includes who we are for each other. We care for each other as expressed in different ways. “We weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice.” We bless and dedicate our babies. We nurture spiritual understanding and growth in our children. We try to be attentive to and respond to particular needs that surface. We gather in smaller church families or groups for mutual support, sharing and prayer. We worship God together.

As I write, 1 Corinthians 12 comes to mind, which is full of church body language. “There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone ... Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” That is Hively! And there is much grace found here.

As Paul and Barnabas told the people as they left the synagogue in Antioch (Acts 13), so I say in this, my last Hively newsletter submission, “[I urge you] to continue in the grace of God,” and may the peace of Christ be with you.



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Dear Hively Family

What a gift these past six and a half years have been for Charlie and me as we have learned to know and love you as our church family. Charlie has been able to express his feelings to you each month and I'm glad to have this opportunity now, to let you know how much you each mean to me.

When we first joined Hively in August 2010, I remember being excited to get to know everyone and to share together in our faith journey. I didn't know what shape it would take but I felt confident that God was very present at Hively and that I would be blessed and stretched through it all. I certainly have been. I am thankful to have been welcomed into your lives, to share in the good and bad times, to worship in meaningful ways and grow spiritually. I'm thankful for the fun we've had together, times of prayer in the early morning or bible reading on Monday nights, sermons and Sunday School, the many meals and potlucks, deep sharing in various small groups over the years, and being creative together through weekly visuals or the creation of special banners. I am so thankful for having you as my church family when I was sick with cancer or when I had difficulties and needed prayer and someone to share it with. You were there for me in clear, tangible ways without judgment but instead with love

and prayer. I thank you for that. You have modeled for me what it means to be a community of faith—to show up at critical times, listen more than talk, accept differences as healthy rather than being threatening, and the absolute essentialness of keeping Christ at the center of all we do.

I love you all and will miss seeing you regularly as I do now. But I go with a heart filled with friends who will remain in it and in my prayers. I pray blessings on you as you choose a new pastor or pastoral team. I pray that each person live fully into who you are meant to be in this hurting world. I pray that Hively continue to be a beacon of Christ's love and passion for justice. I thank you for all you have given to Charlie and me through your love and friendship through the years and I will treasure it always.

With love and prayers of thanksgiving,
Terri



Thanksgiving Day celebration

In the Thanksgiving Day service at Hively Sophia Austin shared very personally about challenges in her life and how gratitude requires us to be vulnerable. She said, "The thing is, as the Church we are called to a radical life, soft underbelly exposed. We are not on our own, we CANNOT be on our own, and we SHOULD not be on our own. Gratitude says 'I am not alone.' "

Jake Hess, holding six-week-old Asa, reflected on the joy of the love and nurture in their family. "I am grateful for moments when heaven feels frivolous because the current

moment is so marvelous," he said.

The service also featured Jonathan Geiser, Charles's and Terri's son, and Melvin Lopez, playing Andean music on charango (string instrument), quena (flute) and zampoña (pan pipes). In addition, Mary Klassen told an original story about Timber, a bear who collects cheerfulness and thankfulness.



Celebrations coming in December and January

December 18: Celebration of Thanks for Charles and Terri Geiser

We will enjoy a meal together after the Christian Ed hour. You do not need to bring food unless you have been asked by the planners to contribute a specific item. A short program will follow the meal.

December 24: Christian Eve service, 6:30 pm

Terri Geiser is planning the service; please let her know if you have music, poetry, arts/crafts or drama to share. Bring Christmas treats to share following the service.

December 25: Christmas morning service, 10:30 am (note change in start time)

We will have a special worship service on Christmas morning. There will be no Christian education classes.

December 31: New Year's Eve service, 6:30 pm

The deacons and pastor are planning this service, which will include communion and opportunity for anointing. Each deacon will share reflections on the scripture theme for 2017 (Isaiah 43:19).

January 1: New Year's Day: Worship and Christian education classes. No carry-in lunch.

January 8: Celebration of conclusion of Year of the Bible. Carry-in lunch.

January 22: World Fellowship Sunday; John Lapp, Sr. will preach.

Special music for the season

During Advent we are singing and hearing a variety of special pieces of music.

Three hymns, with hymn texts written by Adam Tice, are added to our more traditional Advent hymns. While Adam was in high school, he was a student of Trish Habegger and she selected the hymns we are singing: "Upon the Holy Mountainside," "Come, O Unexpected Jesus," and "Enchanted by Candles." Adam Tice is a graduate of Goshen College and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary and served as a pastor at Hyattsville (Maryland) Mennonite Church for five years. He and his family now live in Goshen. He has had several volumes of his hymn texts published by GIA Publications.

In addition, Advent worship leaders Walter and Margaret Sawatsky are arranging other special music, and Beth Suderman and Hillary Harder are leading an ensemble of instrumentalists for the worship service on December 11.

Pray for the church in Sahagún

Our sister church in Sahagún, Colombia, continues to seek a new place for their worship services. Currently they are worshipping in a home with limited space. This then has a ripple effect that makes a significant impact on the pastor and his family, Manuel Caicedo and Maria Elena Ruiz and their two sons.

The smaller space for worship means that fewer people are attending and thus fewer people are contributing to support for the pastor. Jobs are scarce in the community and the recent rains and flooding have added stress.

Please pray for our sisters and brothers there, for the congregation as a whole, and for Manuel and Maria Elena.

Page 1 photo: The Advent theme, "Walking in the way of God's heart" has a focus for each Sunday, including peace, harmony (represented by wind chimes), healing, restoration, radiance.

Year of the Bible evening Artful response to Scripture



On Wednesday, Nov. 30, Saejin Lee led a Year of the Bible activity in which we reflected on John 15:1-17 and then created collages that showed what was meaningful in that text. The theme of the vine, branches and bearing fruit appears in many of the collages; other themes were peace, diligence, community and abiding in God's love.



One theme of Hillary Harder's artwork was community and the love that flows out from it.



After completing our artwork, we listened to each other talk about what our pieces represent.



Joyce Odhiambo featured peace in her artwork.


Year of the Bible
READ IT STUDY IT PRAY IT LIVE IT

Emphasis on faith and mental health

“Where faith and mental health meet” is the title of our Spiritual Emphasis sessions coming in January. Our resource person will be Kevin Farmwald, coordinator of pastoral care at Oaklawn Psychiatric Center.

The deacons, who plan these sessions, believe this is a timely topic for all who want to learn more about the facts of mental health and



illness that affect us in many different ways. It is important to understand how the church can be aware of and helpful to people who are struggling with questions of how faith and mental health/illness meet.

The two evenings, January 11 and 25, will begin with a simple meal at 6 pm, followed by the presentation and discussion. Childcare will be provided.

Message from Austin Roberts in Northern Ireland

I write to you from Rostrevor, a beautiful, quaint village by the sea. I live and work at a place called *An Cuan*, which is Irish for “The Harbor.” It has a double meaning: We’re a stone’s throw from the shores of Carlingford Lough, and we seek to be a place which both offers refuge and preparation for sending disciples out into the world.

My home and my workplace are wrapped into one. The building itself is historically notable, held in high regard as the location of a ministry called the Christian Renewal Center, which promoted friendship and understanding between Catholics and Protestants during the conflict in Northern Ireland between the 1960s and 1990s. As the leaders of that ministry sensed that its role was coming to a close, they sought the Lord about what to do with the building, and discerned that they ought to give it to the Irish affiliate of Youth With a Mission.

It’s an expansive building that has a wing of guest rooms. We consider offering hospitality to friends and strangers alike to be an important part of our ministry.

This whole story began during my last semester at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. I found myself wrestling with the question: How do we as Christians hold together our calling to be peacemakers and our calling to be disciples? My studies had reinforced the importance that we ought to

do both, and yet often it can seem that—both as individuals and as Christian movements—we can tend to either address the spiritual aspect of life or the humanitarian side, and only nominally acknowledge the value of the other. It became clear to me that my own understanding of peacemaking must be fundamentally grounded in intentional Christian discipleship. In other words, as I seek to address even the most practical needs, I do so with a Christian understanding of what gives life meaning and purpose as my foundation.

This is an excerpt of a message from Austin that Mennonite Mission Network shared in an email newsletter. Austin attended Hively during the time he was a student at AMBS.



Pedal Power seeks leadership

Pedal Power Community Bike Shop, run by volunteers (particularly via Mennonite Voluntary Service), served for six years out of a garage owned by Prairie Street Mennonite Church. People who kept Pedal Power open are no longer able to do so by themselves. If you or an organization you know are interested in pursuing the possibility of running Pedal Power, please contact Nick Bouwman at 630-639-6562. Thank you.

Buzzing at the Hive

Our poinsettia sale was a big success! A BIG THANK YOU to all who supported the preschool by ordering poinsettias.

Our annual preschool Christmas program is scheduled for 7 pm on Thursday, Dec. 15. (Please note that this is a change from the previously posted times of 6:30 pm and 7:30 pm) Our students are busy practicing with props and costumes for the big event! All are welcome to attend.

Class Christmas parties will be held on Friday, Dec. 16. We are planning to decorate cookies and have a gift exchange, along with a special Christmas Chapel.

For our Christmas giving project



this year, we are joining together with the church to provide paper products and personal care items for CCS.

Christmas Break begins on Dec. 19. Preschool resumes on Jan. 3.

The preschool is in need of one or two people to help us with translating information and documents into Spanish. If you are trained in this area and feel led to volunteer in this way, please contact Julee Hay by calling the preschool office at 294-4022.

— Julee Hay, director

Hively calendar

December 18

6-7:30 pm
Game night for high school, junior high and sixth grade youth
Hess home
Desserts and drinks served; no meal

January 8, 22

5:30-7:30 pm
Spaghetti and Scripture evenings for high school and junior youth

December 24

Christmas Eve service, 6:30 pm

December 25

Christmas Day service 10:30 am

December 31

New Year's Eve service, 6:30 pm

January 11, 25

Spiritual Emphasis:

Where faith and mental health meet, led by Kevin Farmwald

Year of the Bible

December 12, 19, 26

Reading the Bible together, 5 pm

January 8

Celebration of conclusion of Year of the Bible

Hively Happenings
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Preparing mixes at Church Community Services



On December 6, 15 Hively people gathered at Church Community Services to prepare mixes for the Soup of Success program. One assembly line created spice packets for potato soup mixes; the other made cookie mixes.



131 packages of Chewy Chocolate Peanut Butter cookies and 164 spice packets were assembled in an hour and a half.



Some workers donned Christmas shirts and all wore hair nets and gloves for the work night at CCS.