



August 2015

HIVELY AVENUE MENNONITE CHURCH

Happenings

Focus on the Bible coming in 2016

Charles Geiser, pastor

A few years ago a seminary administrator noted that over a period of ten years, he had observed a noticeable drop in biblical literacy among incoming seminary students. A college administrator commented that when he queried his staff, almost without exception, they responded that they did not have family devotions at home even though they all had experienced that in their childhood. A couple of years ago in a regional Central District Conference meeting as we discussed a critical issue around tables, one participant said, "I don't know what the Bible says about this but I believe that God..."

On the other hand, our "Confession of faith in a Mennonite Perspective" places a high value on the centrality of Scripture for us as people of Christian faith. It states, "We believe that all Scripture is inspired by God through the Holy Spirit for instruction in salvation and training in righteousness. We accept the Scriptures as the Word of God and as the fully reliable and trustworthy standard for Christian faith and life. Led by the Holy Spirit in the church, we interpret Scripture in harmony with Jesus Christ." This is wording about the Bible that was agreed on by representatives across the breadth of the church.

I applaud the Christian Education Commission and the Worship Commission for deciding to highlight the Bible during 2016 in our worship and study times together. We hope doing so will increase our knowledge of the biblical story and our being part of the story of God's people, as well as increase our understanding of God's will for us as the Holy Spirit infuses and inspires our study and reflection.

I have been asked to chair a committee that will plan our focus on the Bible for this next year. Representatives from each of the two commissions will be part of the committee as well as several more individuals. The committee members joining me in planning are Andrew Austin, Deb Byler (Worship Commission), Brenna Harker, Sungbhin Kim, Christa Pennington and Winifred Saner (Christian Ed. Commission). We will be interested in your feedback and counsel along the way.

I am excited about this focus for 2016 and look forward to planning with a creative group of people as well as living through this experience with you.



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Border Learning Tour participants and their hosts: Jamie Pitts, Amanda Fast, Kendra Yoder, Sueann VonGunten, Jorge Vielman, Jack Knox, Leroy Saner, Winifred Saner, Charles Geiser, Lois Dyck, Lloyd Miller, Linda Knox, Mark Claassen. Kendra, Lois and Lloyd are members of Southside Fellowship, Jack and Linda hosted the group in Douglas, Ariz. Photos by Mark Claassen and Leroy Saner.

Reflections from the Border Learning Tour

Eight members of Hively participated in a Border Learning Tour in Arizona, August 10–15. Several of these—Winifred Saner, Mark Claassen, Sueann VonGunten and Jamie Pitts—shared reflections in the worship service on Sunday, Aug. 16. Listen to these oral reflections on the Hively website: www.hivelymennonite.org/services

Hively Happenings shares more reflections. Mark Claassen and Amanda Fast share what was most compelling in the experience or where they saw God working. Jorge Vielman, because he has been on other Border Learning Tours, reflects on what had new emphasis this time and how sharing the experience with members of his congregation made a different impact. Jamie Pitts was asked to think about what is most important for our congregation to hear after this experience.

Mark Claassen

As the plane descended into Tucson, the sea of light-colored, low-sloped roofs gave witness to the dry, hot weather that awaited. Before I left, I was aware that many people try to cross the border from Mexico to the United States by walking for days in the heat. The contrast between the air conditioned terminal and the searing Arizona sun was a visceral illustration of how difficult this would be.

The next two days were spent largely in the Mexican and Arizona desert, exploring and sampling the danger that it poses. In our exploring, we discovered several abandoned items. Most likely these were left by passing migrants, perhaps because they were no longer needed; perhaps because they were too much of a burden. Each of these items were part of a story. What type of story this was, of tragedy or fulfillment, we will never know.

Yet, despite the evidence of struggle



Participants walked through the desert on their way to fill water tanks for those entering the U.S.



Refilling water tanks to assist people crossing the desert was one of the group's tasks.

Reflections from the Border Learning Tour (continued)

and hardship, there were elements of hope in many places we visited. Businesses like Café Justo are starting to give people new opportunities. Programs like this make immigration to the United States unnecessary by allowing people to earn a living wage in the place they call home. Café Justo was started with a loan of just \$20,000, which was paid back in 5 years. In contrast, the cost of the existing border fence was more than \$20,000 per 100 illegal immigrants currently in the US. And even though only a small number people are being touched by these programs, the numbers are growing, and the concepts are being proven.

We were all touched by the generous hospitality shown by the people we came to know in Douglas and Agua Prieta. Their willingness to teach and help others was a blessing to all they came in contact with. And with the light shining from individuals like this, one cannot help but see a small break in all the darkness.

Amanda Fast

In reflecting on my experience on the Border Learning Tour last week, I have many different emotions. They vary from close to despair, to joy and a feeling of hope. Seeing

the border wall in person and then learning throughout the week how it divides, keeping families apart, how it is nearly impossible to cross and the dangers that there are for those who do try. It was difficult to hear and imagine that many who attempt to cross the desert actually never make it. It was difficult seeing immigrants being deported. These incidents brought feelings of despair for me.

And yet, it was so good to learn of the many organizations, churches and individuals who work together in support of the migrants who are attempting to improve their lives and provide for their families. It was encouraging to meet and dine together in Ada's home with her children. We also were able to join in with another extended family the next day and help with work in their garden. The Café Justo (Coffee) project is making a positive impact on both sides of the border. These projects and efforts and others like these bring hope for a more loving, peace-filled and just world.

Jorge Vielman

We visited a family of four in Agua Prieta, and while the family was introducing themselves I heard the names of Josue and Daniel, the two names of my children. It was shock to me later hearing their stories



Each day they were in Douglas, participants prayed at the wall separating Mexico and the U.S.



The group gardened at Douglu Prieta Trabajan, an organization that assists poor neighborhoods.

Reflections from Border Learning Tour (continued)

about the dream they have for the future. They live in a poor housing community and have a few resources. It will be difficult to accomplish their dream. This is an example of many children from Central America that want to accomplish the American dream. They are leaving their homes not only because of poverty, violence and gang recruitment, but for a better future. The new urgency for us is to learn to know them and welcome them. Their culture fits with the words from the parable of Jesus: “When you welcome someone in my name you welcome me.” Matthew 25:31-46

I feel like I was with a family member on a trip where we agree in many things. For example, I did not have to work hard to convince others that the wall that we visited and the treatment the newcomers received when they get to the court system are wrong and unjust. We also found out that if authorities find out that assisting those who are risking their lives and safety in crossing the border by providing water, food or first aid is a crime. I also found out that most of the participants were knowledgeable of the immigration issues and some already are working with new immigrants such as teaching English and visiting them. I feel

like now most participants have a better understanding of the complexity of border and immigration issues.

Jamie Pitts

The recent trip to the US-Mexico border challenges our congregation to further education and solidarity with Latino migrants. We need further education to determine how migrants in our community are affected by what goes on at the border. Are there people in our community suffering from the after effects of abuse by the coyotes or the border patrol? Are there people who have lost loved ones in the crossing? And what are the economic and socio-political reasons that bring migrants from their homelands to Elkhart County? How can we serve these migrants—how can we help them integrate here, how can we speak out on their behalf and make their voices heard, how can we help them return home if possible and desired, what can we learn from them?

The service and advocacy organizations we encountered at the border are answering these questions in a spirit of faith, hope, and love. May God grant us the same spirit to do the work before us.

Preschool is looking for help

The preschool is looking for extra helping hands on the first few days of school to help take children to the bathroom, unload supplies from back packs, and help get children acclimated to our building and playground. Volunteers are needed at the following times:

Tuesday, Sept 8:

1 morning helper (8:40–11:25 am)

Wednesday, Sept 9:

3 morning helpers (8:40–11:25 am)

1 lunch helper (11:15 am–12:30 pm)

2 afternoon helpers (12:25–3 pm)

Friday, Sept 11:

2 morning helpers

1 lunch helper

2 afternoon helpers

Monday, Sept 14:

1 morning helper

1 afternoon helper

If things are going well, we may be able to release you early. If you are available to help, please call the preschool office (294-4022) or send a message to Mrs. Hay at preschool@hivelymennonite.org.

Also, we say a big “Thank you” to all who helped clean toys on August 18 and 19.

Hively Preschool is designated drop-off center

Cereal producer MOM Brands has teamed up with TerraCycle, the recycling organization with which our preschool works, to become the first company to open nationwide public drop-off locations for cereal bag waste. Hively Avenue Preschool is one of these designated drop-off locations.

The preschool collects much more than cereal bags for TerraCycle, but this step is a great way to get Hively’s preschool “on the map” and to encourage more recycling.

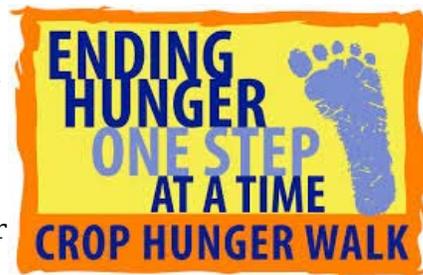


CROP Hunger Walk: Oct 4

This year the CROP Walk is on Sunday, October 4. Because our Hively retreat is the same weekend, the walkers will need to leave right after lunch so they can get to Island Park by the 2:00 pm starting time.

The CROP Walk benefits the hungry globally and also locally—25% goes to Church Community Services. It is also possible to designate your contribution to go to MCC.

There are long walks intended to represent the distance some folks in the world need to walk to get their daily water.



We walk in solidarity with them. There are shorter walks for those who physically can’t or shouldn’t walk the longer distance. And everyone can participate by sponsoring a walker.

In the next weeks we will have opportunity to get an envelope from Rosalie Grove to collect sponsorships if we intend to walk, or we will be able to sponsor a walker. Walkers: tear off the top yellow copy to hand in at the Walk as your registration. Return the envelope to Rosalie as soon as you have finished collecting your funds. Sponsors: please consider paying by check or sponsoring online (crophungerwalk.org) instead of using cash—a security measure.

Thanks so much for your great support in past years! For the size of our church, we rank pretty highly in contributions. There will be prizes this year for various categories.

Let Your Voice for Peace Be Heard: Let us not remain “the quiet in the land”

Four concerned Hively members—Charles Geiser, Sueann VonGunten and Virgil and Louise Claassen, joined about seven others from Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties in front of Representative Jackie Walorski’s office in Mishawaka at noon on Wednesday, August 26. We demonstrated our desire for our elected representative to support diplomacy in regard to Iran’s nuclear program. We held signs stating, “Stop a War with Iran!” and “Defend Diplomacy.”

Walorski was not at her office, but we all signed our names on the registry, letting Walorski know that we had been there. A representative of the Democratic Committee, who organized the event, left a sheaf of papers with more than 1,500 signatures asking Walorski to support diplomacy.

As we were meeting at Walorski’s office, others were gathered in front of Senator Joe Donnelly’s office to thank him for supporting the Proposed Iran Nuclear Agreement. Our representatives do respond to the kind of messages they receive.

It is not too late for you to have your voice heard. Please call Senator Donnelly to thank him for his statement of support for diplomacy. Contact Jackie Walorski to ask her to support the Proposed Nuclear Agreement. A quick and easy way to do that is to call the Washington switchboard: 1-866-220-0044 and ask for the office of Joe Donnelly or Jackie Walorski. Your call will be transferred and you will be able to express your concern.

A word of gratitude for our pastor, Charles Geiser, who alerted us to the event via email and participated in it. How fortunate we are, here at Hively, for a pastor who leads in such actions as well so many other situations! Praise God! Alaba a Dios!

— Louise Claassen

Announcements

An exhibit on the suffering of Ukrainian Mennonites, “Women in the Mennonite Exodus from Ukraine: Paintings by Ray Dirks,” is in the Goshen College Library Gallery. A public reception will be held Sunday, Aug. 30, 3-5 pm and a public showing of the film about the exodus, “And When They Shall Ask,” will be on Wednesday, Sept. 9 at College Mennonite Church, 6:30-8:30 pm. The free exhibit will continue until October 16.

The Center for Healing and Hope provides urgent medical care to people who are without a medical home with clinic locations in Goshen and in Elkhart at Grace Lutheran Church. Please read their summer newsletter to find out about the mission and opportunities to volunteer: www.chhclinics.org/Summer2015newsletter

Join Michiana Mennonite Economic Development Associates for a dinner and program on Thurs., Sept. 17, 2015, at 6:30 pm, at Belmont Mennonite Church in Elkhart. Pastors Ray Bair and Russell Jensen will present on “Defeating the Cycle of Poverty among the Youth of the Belmont Neighborhood,” sharing about the Youth Stewards ministry. Dinner will be provided by Belmont Mennonite Church. Please RSVP by Fri., Sept. 11, to info@michianameda.org or 574-355-3607. Cost is \$5 for students, \$15 for Michiana MEDA members, and \$20 for others, payable at the door.

Job and the Mystery of Suffering, a Bible short course, will be held on six Monday evenings in September and October on the campus of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart. Safwat Marzouk, PhD, assistant professor of Old Testament, will teach the course, which meets Monday evenings, Sept. 21 to Oct. 26. For information and to register, visit www.ams.edu/churchleadershipcenter.

Personally speaking

One weekend in July the Bohn family had a reunion at Camp Friedenswald. This included Hively members **Doris Bohn** and **Harold and Kate Hartman** and their children and grandchildren. There were at least 67 that gathered for a great time together.

John and Rhonda Landgraf traveled to Basel, Switzerland, to visit their son and daughter-in-law, Chance and Sara Johnson-Powell, and their three children. They also traveled to Austria, Germany and France. They floated down the Rhine River when it was hot and got lots of exercise walking everywhere. "It was a very special time!" they reported.

Margaret and Walter recently hosted friends and their families from Geneva, Switzerland, and Winnipeg, Manitoba. Their son, Alex, successfully defended his PhD dissertation, and Margaret and Walter traveled to Winnipeg to celebrate with him. On that visit, Margaret was able to share time with all seven of her sisters. One of the joys of attending Mennonite World Conference was when their daughter, Natasha, and her family joined them.

Joseph Kotva ended his Voluntary Service assignment in San Francisco, Calif., in summer and now is a graduate student in physics at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. His new address is 404-C Misty Wood Way, Catonsville, MD 21228.

Megan and Nathan Erwin have moved to Bloomington, Ind., where Megan is in a master's program in

public administration at Indiana University. Their new address is 415 S Grant St #2, Bloomington, IN 47401.

Sara Klassen, daughter of **Tyler and Mary Klassen**, returned in July from Cambodia, where she served with MCC's Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program. This fall she is teaching the Khmer language class at Goshen College for the Study Service Trimester group going to Cambodia next year.

Greetings from Pastor Manuel Caicedo

After all of this time of having shared in a supernatural way in Hively and Miami, we have returned to the challenging, daily tasks of our beloved Sahagún with thanksgiving and much love for you for your generous hospitality.

We learned many things while with you, and we hope as a community to multiply all that was learned. We are in a new time, the church continues to grow and expand outwards, and it is natural that the challenges grow as well. A common challenge is to serve in the middle of shortcomings and limitations, not only materially but doctrinally. And so I take on the greatest challenge of my ministry: to foment within the missional process in this area the growth of an Anabaptist current. This challenge that we sense is even greater than our basic necessities as families of faith immersed in the twisted world of the [misguided] evangelical thinking, and so to gratify God in his calling.

Greetings to all in the great congregation of saints of Hively!!

Hively calendar

September 2
Presentation by Dr. Amberly Burger on end-of-life issues, 7 pm

September 3
Hively Preschool back-to-school open house, 7 pm

September 8, 9
First days of school for Hively Preschool

September 20
Peace Sunday
Andre Gingerich Stoner, speaker

September 25-26
MCC Relief Sale

September 25-27
Women's retreat at Camp Friedenswald

October 3
Hively retreat at Camp Friedenswald

October 4
CROP Hunger Walk

October 10
Preschool Chicken Barbecue

October 16-18
Men's retreat at Camp Friedenswald