

The Messenger

July 2019



The Little Red Wagon

One of my fondest childhood memories is of our red Radio Flyer. My brother and I would haul dirt, gravel, weeds, grass clippings and anything else we could think of, including each other, in that little red wagon with the painted black aluminum t-handle and white walled wheels. There were plenty of hills and curves in those Shenandoah Valley byways on the east edge of Appalachia, and our little red wagon could take them all. Going uphill was always harder but going down was way more dangerous, especially if there happened to be a dog-leg or switch-back at the bottom of the hill as there often was.

At first it would be kind of nice to let gravity do some of the work after toiling uphill for what felt like hours. But with a big load on board the wagon would soon start trying to overtake the driver. Once or twice the wagon and gravity took over. If the payload was dirt or yard waste you could just jump clear and watch the show. But if the cargo was your brother, all you could do was hang on with all your might, pick your feet up as high as you could while trying to match pace, and pray hard. After all, you might be the one in the wagon next time.

When I hear my farmer friends bemoaning on social media some new legislation limiting the use of chemical application or food labeling I think of that little red wagon. All the farmers I know have a vested interest in maintaining the food-bearing capability of the soil for future generations. They also feel keenly the responsibility of providing healthy food for the world's population. Most of today's market pressure and legislation is aimed at just that: progress toward a more secure, sustainable and healthy food system for our country and world. The thing is, we're always learning more about what makes for a healthy planet and healthy food and food systems. This learning curve we're on is a bit like a hill in some corner of the Shenandoah Valley. And it's the farmers who are always in front, pulling that wagon.

(Cont. on page 2)

Vision: Healing & Hope

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

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Pastor Matthew Yoder

Even on the dangerous downhill side of rapid climate change, with a wagon load of the world's population, far be it from the farmers I know to simply let go of that aluminum t-handle and jump out of the way.

We should absolutely be applying our new knowledge about the effects of carbon emissions and global warming on weather patterns to our local, national and global food systems. We should also be applying our new knowledge about cancer, agricultural chemical application, and genetic modification to our food production and distribution methods. But we must not overlook those in front of the wagon in the process. Those who work the actual soil and grow the actual food and fuel are actual people who often live on a razor's edge between inches of rain and degrees of heat. So buy local, organic, non-GMO and fair trade (in that order) whenever possible. But remember the ones who are out in front of this wagon we're in.

What would it look like to take care, economically and legislatively, of those who are taking care of us? That's a question best put to your farmer friend or neighbor. Ask them what they think a healthy and secure food system would look like. Ask questions like "how," "why," and "what's the policy on that?" and then listen. And listen. And listen some more. Like every generation before us, we are living in a world that has never existed before; now, perhaps, more than ever before. It is incumbent upon us all to learn what we can, share what we know, and work together to figure out how to live well in this world that has been gifted to us by a loving Creator God and the conscientiousness of past generations.

Pastor Matthew



July 2019

Sunday, July 7, 2019

The Mighty Acts of God
“Come Closer”

Speaker: Phil Birkey

Scripture: 1 Kings 18:20-39

Sunday, July 14, 2019

The Mighty Acts of God
“Wind, Earth, Fire, Silence”

Pastor Matthew Yoder

Scripture: 1 Kings 19:1-15

Sunday, July 21, 2019

Reporting Sunday
Reflections on Conference
Scripture: John 20:19-23

Sunday, July 28, 2019

The Mighty Acts of God
“Naboth’s Vineyard”
Guest Speaker: Gerald Mast
Scripture: 1 Kings 21:1-21



A Note from Mary Raber-dated May 9, 2019 Odessa, Ukraine

Dear Grace Mennonite friends, Christ is risen!

Many thanks to you for your generous and timely support. I'm very grateful and humbled.

By now it's definitely spring, although the weather is still chilly. I love to hear the frogs singing in the pond behind Odessa seminary but so far this year they've been quiet. I've been assured that they'll start up singing when the weather gets warmer, which is taking longer this year.

We have about a month left in the academic year. I'm finished teaching, although I'll probably be doing some intensive work with Master's students working on their theses. I'm working hard on the translation of an immense Russian Bible commentary into English. It's the work of the post-soviet generation of Bible scholars, and the hope is that it will make exciting reading for the rest of the world when the translation is done. The trouble is that I can't physically work on it for more than a couple of hours a day, so it's slow going.

Thank you for helping this, and other things to happen. It makes me happy to remember visiting you last November.

With Peace, *Mary Raber-Mennonite Mission Network*

My Coins Count partners at Grace Mennonite Church,

Thank you for your support of MCC water projects and Sunshine through the Black Swamp Benefit 2019. My Coins Count collected \$7,430.44 from our church coin jugs. This year, Grace Mennonite Church collected a jug total of \$125.62. Last year, Grace Mennonite Church collected a jug total of \$118.62.

Thank you for your ministry!

The LORD bless you.

Ryan Nafziger



Thank you for your donation to Mennonite Central Committee which will be used to help those who are suffering around the world. Items: 12/31/2018 and 2/15/2019 - 24 Blankets and 127 Hygiene kits.



Member Spotlight

Annalise and Elizabeth Nisly

New member *Annalise Mei Nisly* is the daughter of Lamar and Deborah Nisly. Annalise was born in China in 2001 and is now an incoming senior at Bluffton High School. Annalise has been a member of Grace MYF for the past 5 years. At BHS she has participated in plays and musicals. Annalise enjoys gymnastics, and during high school, she became interested in ceramics. She has studied ceramics for two years and is currently participating in the Summer Mud ceramics program at Bluffton University. This spring she had a ceramics piece submitted to the Governor's Art Show. Other special interests for Annalise include traveling. She returned to China in 2012, and another special experience was a trip to Europe in the summer of 2018. Annalise enjoys visiting her brother, Jonathan, in Washington, DC. She, also, has one sister, Elizabeth, a senior at EMU. In the fall of 2020 Annalise hopes to attend Goshen College with an interest in Environmental and Marine Sciences.



Elizabeth Nisly is spending the summer living in Agua Prieta, in the Mexican state of Sonora, as part of an internship with Frontera de Cristo. Frontera de Cristo is a border ministry of the Presbyterian church working to assist migrants at the U.S. border between Agua Prieta and its sister city, Douglas, Arizona. The organization has, also, worked in collaboration with MCC during its Borderlands Learning Tours. Elizabeth is planning and leading ESL programming for children of asylum seekers waiting at the U.S. border. In the fall Elizabeth will begin her senior year as a Spanish and Writing double major with a minor in TESOL at Eastern Mennonite University.

Thank you so much Annalise and Elizabeth for sharing with us!

“News Among Our Members & Friends”

HAPPENINGS IN AND AROUND GRACE.....BY SHIRLEY SOMMER

Sunday, June 2nd –This Sunday was the last day to celebrate the Easter season. The sermon was titled, “New Beginnings” with scripture reading Luke 24: 44-53. Being the last day after Easter before Pentecost, we go to scriptures designated for Ascension Day. The verses are sub-titled, “**Jesus** appears to the Disciples.” They were frightened when he spoke to them. He told them he had bones with flesh over them, hands and feet with scars and even ate a piece of fish to prove he wasn’t a ghost. After blessing them, he then was taken up into heaven. The disciples returned to Jerusalem and continued to praise **God**.

The send song just completed the sermon, titled “The Lord Lift You Up.”

Sunday, June 9th –Pentecost Sunday ...Scripture was Acts 2:1-21. It was the story of the Pentecost coming to Jerusalem with a loud sound of a violent wind, things that look as many tongues of fire, and lots of different languages spoken by many people. People were all confused and made fun of the disciples and the crowd. **Peter** then explained it all to them how **God** will appear to all of us the last days and everyone who calls on the **Lord** will be saved.

Again, all the hymns we sang were about the “Holy Spirit” and the words just affirmed what **Pastor Matthew** spoke about.

Sunday, June 16th –Trinity Sunday (Wood, Fruit, Rock, Sand) was the sermon title. Scripture that **Pastor Matthew** had was Luke 6:39-49 with the sub-title as “Judging Others.” The **Lord** used three parables to explain his message. First, a speck in an eye, one is to help another with it but remove yours first then help the other person. Second, a fruit on a good tree is recognized by the fruit it produces and the **Lord** states that a good tree brings the good out of a person. Third, the **Lord** wants you to hear his words and put them in good practice. If you don’t follow – you’ll be like the person who built a house on the sand, flood came and washed it away instead of building on rocks for a good foundation.

The sending hymn fit in perfect with the message, “I saw a tree by the riverside.”

During the Adult Sunday School hour, we met in the sanctuary to hear the story of the “Wheelhouse Ministries” in Lima. They shared about how and what volunteers do at the shop and how people can get a bike for themselves. The person that wants a bike has to help fix the bike (old and new bikes come in) and I believe they pay a little something for it. This shop is very needed in the Lima area and welcome bikes to the shop. Our church helps financially to support this outreach. Volunteers are needed and will be taught how to work and repair bikes.

Sunday, June 23—Today we had a guest speaker, **Justin Kantner** along with his wife, **Elya**. They are from the Bluffton area and home for a while after being in Paraguay for three years. **Justin** is working with the tribes fitting them with glasses to read and see a lot better along with sharing about the love of **God** and who he is. They work with SIM Mission, an international mission organization. **Justin’s** scripture reading was 2 Corinthians 4. It was a favorite of his and feels it says exactly what they have been doing with the different group of tribes in the area. He shared stories of two groups, **Ache** (worry tribe) or a cannibal tribe. They have now accepted the “light of **God**” and only six groups left of this certain tribe in the world. A lot of people in the area of accepted **Jesus** and even have small churches in their villages. Another tribe, **Mbya** (has a lot of suicides committed) in the ages of 12 to 20 years old. **Justin** mentioned that these people (some of them) now want the “light” like the **Ache** tribe has. He said slowly the message of **God** is happening but needs more “light” to share the love of the **Lord**. They feel glasses are the “light” that will help these people.

We, as a church, support **Justin & Elya** financially and a small token in return was presented to us a hand-carved nativity ornament from a village person in Paraguay. The hymn that followed “Longing for light” just completed the message.

Other News Items Involving Our Church Families:

--**Don & Ruby Basinger** have moved to the Hilty Memorial Home. New address is Apt. 303, Pandora, Ohio 45877.

--**Pastor Matthew & family** are gone from June 20th thru July 7th. They attended the Central District Conf. in Wisconsin; (June 20th – 23rd); then to Camp Friedenswald from June 24th-June 28th, being Camp Pastor; and then to Menno Conf. at Kansas City from July 2nd – 6th. We wish them safe traveling here and there. If any Pastoral care is needed, contact a Shepherding Team member: **Tim Byers, Jeanette Weaver, Rachel Friesen, and Wendell Badertscher.**

--Last week of May, a tornado hit a part of Dayton in the northern part of town. Lots of homes, buildings, and businesses were damaged and located east of the Huber Mennonite Church, in the Northridge neighborhood. **Jon Hilty and Tim Luginbill** went down on a Saturday with **MDS** to help what they could. As of just a week or so ago, **Keith and I** went by and homes have blue tarps on the roofs for coverage but still a very big mess for everyone living there and will take some time. (It hit just off the Interstate 75 that we drive on and go by the neighborhood where the damage was to visit Heidi's family in Cincinnati.)

--On June 15th, "My Coins Count" (a large plastic jug that holds the money) was taken to the MCC Relief Sale held at the Archbold High School this year. We had a total of **\$120.59**. **Ivan and Rachel** were in charge of this collection plus they took baked goods up for people to buy or auctioned off. Quite a group of our members went to the sale and some helped out in booths to sale food and etc. A THANK YOU to all who took the time to bake and make things for the sale. It was very much appreciated.

--We had six young people who attended the High School retreat at Camp Friedenswald, June 10th to 15th. **Sophia Smucker, Jackson Steinmetz, Seth Andress, Caitlyn Renner, Madelyn Renner and Lexi Renner.** I'm sure they had a good time even though it rained several days.

--Congratulations to **Jackson Steinmetz** receiving a gold letter from Northwest Conf. Scholar Athletics because of his grade point average 3.0 to 4.0 during his track season as a Senior. He also ran at the Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium in Columbus representing Bluffton H.S. in May. He came in 12th in the 3200 race out of 17 runners with the time of 9:56.43. The winning runner's time was 9:25.74. We wish you the best next year at Goshen College in your track contests!

--Pandora Community Bible School begins **July 7- 11**, held at Pandora Missionary Church, **6:30 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.** This is for 5 year olds by July 11th and those completed 6th grade can still attend. Welcome, children!!!

--**Joel & Teri Steinmetz** left on June 15th for Honduras to spend a week with their daughter, **Jill**. **She** is working there and will be done with her service on July 13th and then return to Bluffton. **Joel and Teri** wanted to see the area, meet her "away" family, attended the church they attended, and whatever else in the community. Hearing **Teri** speak about it, they had a nice time and were treated very well.

--Again for the month of June, we have some **Prayer Concerns**. Remember the family of **Betty Kantner** who died on June 18th. There was only a private burial for her which she requested. **Guy Verhoff** had some health issues while visiting **Roland and SaraBeth** in Arkansas, June 10th-15th. Got checked over and back to work but got some medicine to help the situation. May **God** give these people peace during these times with their families.



on the calendar...

July 7-11 VBS-Pandora Missionary Church 6:30 pm-8:45 pm

Sunday, July 28-All Church Brunch

Sunday, August 11-Mudhens Outing! 4:05 pm

Sunday, August 18-Church retreat at Frank's Pond- worship to include communion and baptisms.



Matthew & Shawna Yoder	July 1, 2006	Tim & Chris McCarthy	July 19, 1986
Laura & Robbie Rucki	July 8, 2018	Josh & Steph Meyer	July 28, 2012
Rod & Carolyn McDaniel	July 9, 1966	Arman & Sue Habegger	July 30, 1994
Ross & Anna Kauffman	July 13, 2013	Jeremy & Amber Amstutz	July 31, 2015
Tom & Joyce Schumacher	July 18, 1970	Jared & Amy Byers	July 31, 2010



July Birthdays



Sophia Watson	July 2, 2011	T.J. Diller	July 15, 1983
Joan Kempf	July 3, 1950	Dwight Baumgartner	July 16, 1927
Ted Cunningham	July 5, 1937	Jeremy Amstutz	July 17, 1992
Henry Spangler	July 5, 2013	Benjamin Watson	July 17, 2013
Royce Spangler	July 5, 2013	Owen Lugibihl	July 18, 1994
Andrew Suter	July 7, 2005	Joan Diller	July 23, 1932
Cora Baumgartner	July 8, 2001	Jovia Kempf	July 23, 2016
Jason Augsburg	July 9, 1987	Emilie Dorman	July 28, 2000
Marathana Prothro	July 9, 1981	Nora Kauffman	July 29, 2016
Mike Schroeder	July 10, 1989	Becca Hanefeld	July 31
Josh Sprunger	July 13, 1985	Brantley Meyer	July 31, 2017

Deadline for the next Messenger is July 29, 2019