

Menno-Life



First Mennonite Church • Bluffton, Ohio • Vol. 64, No. 9 • September 2017

Our nursery is a busy place these days. Enjoying a snack are clockwise from bottom left: Evan Blount, Isaac Miller, Everett Miller, Ethan Rivera, Vivian Miller, Madelyn King and Milena King. (Alison King photo)



Making the most out of friction

When I finally bought a good bicycle I chose one to serve my purposes. I chose a mountain bike with 29-inch wheels and tires with aggressive tread. Why? Because I mostly intended to ride on dirt paths in rough terrain in sometimes wet conditions, etc. Among the various reasons for my particular choice was that I wanted friction! In some situations friction was my friend. Riding on a primitive path in a wooded area near a dam in wet conditions, I was glad for friction because I was able to ascend a steep, slick, leaf-strewn path because the knobby tires gave me excellent traction -- friction. I pedaled up the slope without a great deal of difficulty and friction was one of the reasons for my success.

Friction is - in the physical world - so often our friend. So, narrower tires with aggressive tread on our cars in winter give us more friction -- traction -- on snowy roads than wide tires with smoother tread. Special soles on my hiking boots give me more friction on my path than street shoes and make my footing more secure. It is important when wanting the best out of challenges in living that we make the most out of friction.

In an analogous way, we also do well to make the most out of friction in our communal endeavors. One theme in transitional work is “The point of friction in our current situation is often the next most creative opportunity.” What can this mean?

If we think of our relational and communal lives, rub points or points of friction will always arise from time to time. Initially our typical reaction is only to view such frictions or tensions as blockages or as resistance. What if we could view frictions or rub points as points of revelation?

What if we believed that such frictions or rub points can reveal to us areas where we need to make adjustments -- to make the most out of friction -- to give us the opportunity to adjust our response to friction to serve our primary purposes?

For example, as FMC acknowledged in our recent annual meeting together, one possible rub point in our communal life might be declining numbers. In our meeting, I noted that initially this rub point seemed mostly perceived as a blockage or a resistance to our fulfillment. On the other hand, some beginning notes of creative response did emerge as a few remarks were made about not needing so many on commissions for example. It seems that intuitively we know that such challenges, such rub points, must not only be acknowledged as frictions, but also viewed as opportunities -- opportunities to respond with our deepest creativity so our next adjustment will make the most out of friction.

At First Mennonite, we can view each new rub point or friction not only as a challenge, but also as an opportunity for our next best creative opportunity. I can already see hints of this in a variety of areas of life at FMC. But this is not yet our first thought. We, like many, may attempt to avoid frictions or rub points, or to overpower them by unilateral approaches which lack creativity. We have yet to be thankful for newly experienced frictions which allow us to grow into new creative approaches which enhance our communal life in new and delightful ways. We do seem to acknowledge that frictions and rub points are inevitable, but we have yet to value them as pathways to what is better. If we were to grow into a kind of maturity in making the most out of friction we might begin to search for rub points so we can discover creative opportunities to engage in kingdom work together with more satisfaction and a greater sense of faithfulness in discipleship.

I would suggest that FMC already has much of the capacity needed to approach the future with such a perspective. Even bringing forward the possibilities when friction is acknowledged can seem to heighten tension, to increase friction. But the practiced discipline of finding rub points and identifying them also heightens the creative responses. This can be a satisfying approach to changes around us as we can sense a growing level of control in our responses at least, and find these responses to be focused on creativity as we make adjustments to new realities. In other words, we can begin to realize a growing satisfaction that we are making the most out of friction. May the Spirit guide us in doing this.

-- George O'Reilly

Dates to remember

September 3 – Fall quarter begins

September 4 – Labor Day, church office closed

September 10 – Church/College student potluck, noon, FH

September 10 – Brazo en Brazo Fiesta Familiar, 4-7 p.m., Lima Mennonite Church

September 12 – Church staff retreat, office closed

September 16 – Open house reception for family of Willadene Keeney, 1-4 p.m., FH

September 20 – Menno-Life deadline

September 26-30 – Photography sessions for church directory



We've enjoyed a wide variety of music this summer. Ellie, Benjamin and Laura Hartzler provided violin/piano music during worship on August 21. Micah kept his mom company on the piano bench.

Fall quarter of Christian education begins

Sunday school classes meet from 9:15–10:15 a.m.

Coffee Time

Each Sunday morning beginning at 9 a.m., all are welcome to gather for coffee and conversation in the fellowship hall.

Adult Sunday school classes

- **Connections Class** -- studies MennoMedia's adult Bible study lessons. Membership spans a variety of ages, vocations, and backgrounds. Potluck held on first Sunday of the month.
Contact: Kevin Nickel **Location:** 3rd floor prayer room
- **Sojourners Class** -- studies MennoMedia's adult Bible study lessons. Membership is intergenerational; with newcomers and visitors always welcome. Potluck held second Sunday of every month.
Contact: Lori Nester **Location:** basement assembly room
- **Community Class** – studies variety of topics related to faith, beliefs, and religious heritage. Potluck on third Sunday of the month.
Contact: Ken Shenk **Location:** 3rd floor, room 301
- **Freudige Class** -- Baby boomers discuss topics of current interest and MennoMedia's adult Bible study lessons. Potluck held second Sunday of every month.
Contact: Mary Edmiston **Location:** 3rd Floor, room 303
- **Faith and Life Class** -- combines Bible study, social events, and outside speakers. They enjoy interesting discussions on a variety of issues. Newcomers and visitors welcome.
Contact: Carolyn Rich **Location:** Fellowship Hall
- **Young Adult Class** – studies and discusses topics including marriage, parenting and faithful living as young adults.
Contact: Greg Ring **Location:** Basement rooms 103/105
- **Faithbuilders** – intergenerational group discusses current events through adult curriculum from The Wired Word. Newcomers and visitors welcome.
Contact: Kaye Phillips **Location:** basement, across from choir room

Children and youth Sunday school classes

- PK-5th grade children gather to sing for the first 15 minutes of SS in the **elementary room 104/106**, with Judy Steiner. Then children move to their grade level rooms where they will explore stories of God's faithfulness in the SHINE curriculum.
- **Nursery – 2-year-olds**
Location: Basement room 100
- **Preschool – 3-to 4-year-olds**
Teachers: Mary Ina Hooley, Alison King, JP Schumacher
Location: Basement classroom 102
- **Early childhood – 5-year-olds-2nd grade**
Teachers: Judy Steiner, Tara Miller, and helpers
Location: Basement classroom 108
- **Elementary -- Grades 3-5**
Teachers: Carrie Mast, Laurel Neufeld-Weaver
Location: Basement classrooms 104 and 106
- **Junior high youth -- Grades 6-8**
Lessons will focus on how God restores his people in the SHINE curriculum.
Teachers: Shannon Thiebeau, Perry and Elysia Bush, Bruce Steingass
Location: 3rd floor, room 304
- **Senior high youth -- Grades 9-12**
Lessons will focus on foundations of faith in MennoMedia's Generation Why curriculum.
Teachers: Steve and Monica Harnish, Shannon Thiebeau
Location: 3rd floor, room 305

Mentoring coordinators: Amber Shelly, Lisa Shelly

Music ensemble rehearsals to begin

Note the dates, times, locations and ages for the church's music ensembles. Please consider offering your musical gifts to this important part of worship for our congregation and encourage others to join. We would gladly welcome new additions to the ensembles and will greatly enjoy the return of former members.

- Chancel Choir (adults of all ages) begins on Wednesday, September 6 at 7 p.m.
Mark Suderman, director – adult choir room
- Adult (adults of all ages) and Youth (Grades 7-12) Bells - both begin on Wednesday, September 6 at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. respectively
Ray Raeburn, director – assembly room
- Cherub Choir (3-year-olds-1st graders) begins on Wednesday, September 6 at 6 p.m.
Laura Hartzler, director – children's choir room
- Jubilate (2nd-5th graders) begins on Wednesday, September 6 at 6:30 p.m.
Laura Hartzler, director – children's choir room
- Youth Choir (7th grade and up) begins on Sunday, September 10 at 8:30 a.m.
Laura Hartzler, director – children's choir room

Parents with new choir members are welcome to stay as needed.

FMC photo directory underway

Photo sessions in the FMC fellowship hall will be: Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2-9 p.m.; Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2-9 p.m.; Thursday, Sept. 28, 2-9 p.m.; and Saturday, Sept. 30, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

You may schedule your photo appointment time online at our website: fmcbluffton.org. The link is located in the banner just beneath the photo slide show on the home page. If you need help with online sign up, Gloria Hernandez Bucher is available to assist.

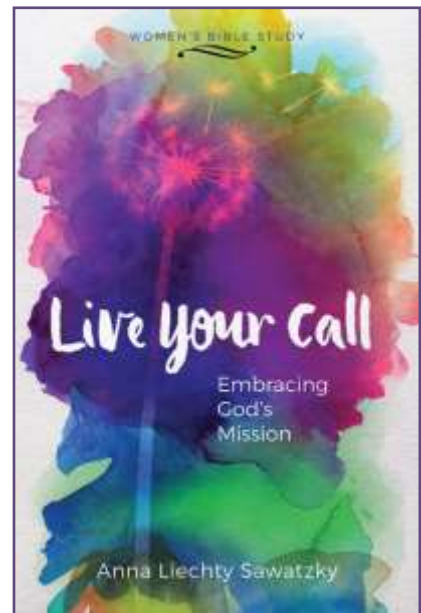
Beginning Sunday, Sept. 3, you may sign up in the fellowship hall after worship. Large families or families wishing to take multi-generation photographs will need to schedule two back-to-back sessions.

An Invitation from Mennonite Women

Caught up in the everyday realities of life? Are you left wondering how you fit into God's larger mission? "Live Your Call," Mennonite Women's devotional book this year, empowers and motivates women to name and share their gifts as they serve God. Author Anna Liechty Sawatzky draws deeply from stories in the Gospels to affirm and challenge women to live out their God-given calling, and to empower them to share the good news with others. Sawatzky spent nine years serving with Mennonite Mission Network in South Africa along with her husband, Joe Sawatzky.

MW invites women of all ages to the monthly meetings for learning and fellowship. MW meets the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. from September through May, except for December. Additionally, the October meeting will be held on Thursday, Oct. 12 to accommodate the speaker, who will also be speaking at Bluffton University.

Look for a detailed program in your church mailbox. This year's devotional book, "Live Your Call: Embracing God's Mission," will be available for purchase for \$10 prior to and at the first meeting in September. If you would like your own copy, there is an order sheet along with a book to view in the fellowship hall. You may also reserve a copy by contacting Joyce Hostetler at 419-369-4488 or email joyhost@wcoil.com.



Mennonite Women officers this year are: Lori Nester, Mary Anne Moser, Mary Ina Hooley and Joyce Hostetler.

SHYF and JHYF gearing up for fall activities

The SHYF hosted a Mexican haystacks fundraiser in conjunction with the annual congregational meeting on August 20. With your help, they raised \$845 to put toward the 2019 Kansas City Convention costs. Thanks so much to all for your continued support!

Junior High Youth Fellowship September schedule

Sunday, September 10: SHYF/JHYF Kick-Off and Hot Dog Roast. 6-8 p.m., Larry and Judy Diller's house (11575 Bentley Rd.) Games and food to start off the new school year!

Sunday, September 24: SHYF/JHYF potluck and service project. Fellowship hall, noon-? Bring a dish, drink, or paper product to share. After lunch, we will sanitize the toys in the nursery.

Senior High Youth Fellowship September schedule

Sunday, September 10:

SHYF/JHYF Kick-Off and Hot Dog Roast. 6-8 p.m., Larry and Judy Diller's house (11575 Bentley Rd.) Come out for some games and food to start off the new school year!

Sunday, September 17:

Time to put care packages together. SHYF room, 6-7 p.m. A

tradition for SHYF is to make care packages for the last year's graduates. We ask that each family donate an item (homemade or \$5) to fill five boxes. Some ideas include: Ramen, popcorn, candy/gum, school supplies, Easy Mac, tissues, toys, Band-Aids, etc

Sunday, September 24: SHYF/JHYF potluck and service project. Fellowship hall, noon-? Bring a dish, drink, or paper product to share. After lunch, we will sanitize the toys in the nursery.



Clockwise from left, Danielle Novak, Sophia Gott, Anna Biesecker-Mast, Ana Neufeld Weaver, Seth Andreas, Isaac Andreas, Anneliese Nisly, Jacob Biesecker-Mast. (Shannon Thiebeau photo)

MMH Fall Festival bake sale September 22-23

The Service Group of Mennonite Memorial Home will host its Fall Festival Bake Sale on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 22-23. Arrive early to get your favorite baked goods!

All proceeds from the sale will benefit the elders of MMH, Maple Crest and Willow Ridge. Please sign up in the church fellowship hall from September 10-17, indicating what baked goods you will provide. All baked goods must be delivered to the MMH lobby by 8:30 a.m. Friday, Sept. 22.

A Bakeless Bake Sale is also being held this year for those unable to provide baked goods. You may sign up for that, as well, and give your monetary donation to Marilyn Bishop by September 23. Checks should be written to the MMH Service Group.

MMH silent auction to take place during Fall Festival

The service group of Mennonite Home Communities of Ohio will hold a silent auction during the annual fall festival on Saturday, Sept. 23, at the Mennonite Memorial Home.

Bidding will begin on Monday, Sept. 18, and will close at noon on Saturday, Sept. 23. Stop by MMH to view the display of items.

Camp Friedenswald Women's Retreat September 15-17

Camp Friedenswald's Women's Retreat "Restoring our Soul: Cultivating Peace Within and Beyond" will be held September 15-17. Speaker Wilma Cender will guide participants into reflection about restoring one's self through spiritual practice.

Cender is a spiritual director, retreat leader and on the pastoral ministry team at Valparaiso, IN, Mennonite Church, where she works with faith formation and pastoral care.

Cost of the retreat is \$160 and includes five meals, two nights, and all programming. Ages 18-25 are free. Register online at friedenswald.org/retreats. For more information call 269-476-9744 or email program@friedenswald.org.