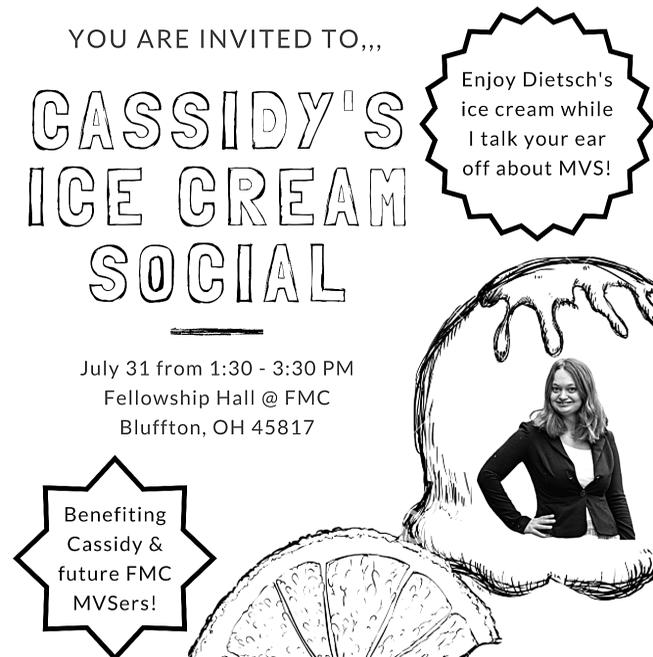


# Mennonite Voluntary Service

## Update from Cassidy Bush



**Join Cassidy Bush for a fundraiser ice cream social this Sunday July 31 from 1:30-3:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Enjoy Dietsch's ice cream and a sundae bar while supporting Cassidy and future Mennonite Voluntary Service experiences with your financial support. Cassidy will share some information about her upcoming year in San Francisco.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Volunteer Crews Needed:** Various improvement projects are in the works for the church! We need help cleaning carpet and painting in the church, and we are looking for teams to assist in preparation of welcoming Pastor Phil & Chaska Yoder in August, including cleaning their rental house, unloading the moving truck, and of course, making food! Check the Fellowship Hall for sign-up sheets!

**Did you miss the Directory photoshoot?** Don Burriss will set up for a make up session which will be held on August 31, 2022 here at the church. Contact the office to make an appointment.

# Piggy Bank Backstory

BY SARA SCHAFFER



The piggy bank began with a boy, a pig and an important need in the world. In the 1910s, the Chapman family lived in White Cloud, Kan. They heard William Danner of the American Leprosy Association speak about helping children who had leprosy. Mrs. Chapman set a goal to donate \$250 to the cause. When she was \$ 25 short, her son, Wilbur, bought a piglet to sell and earn the rest of the money. After selling the pig named Pete, Wilbur, sent Danner with the \$25. Danner shared word of the generosity through church pamphlets. The association decided to make banks in the shape of a pig to send to Sunday school groups for donations. That event created the piggy bank. The pig was immortalized in the book, "Charlotte's Web." Author E. B . White Chapman. You can visit the monument honoring the boy and his pig in White Cloud.



Submitted by Dave Moser



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## MENNO-LIFE

FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER

## Life Story

BY PHYLLIS BIXLER

I was baptized in a General Conference Mennonite church in Kidron, Ohio, a Mennonite-Amish community. I graduated from Bluffton College and during summers did Mennonite Voluntary Service in Gulfport, Mississippi and MCC headquarters in Akron, Pennsylvania. I taught English two years at Bethel College in Kansas and another two at Bluffton. Thus, I lived about the first third of my life within the Mennonite tent.

After those first 30 years, I wandered widely in the wilderness for about 40 years as a university professor in California, Kansas, and Missouri. During that time I experienced retreats within a community of Benedictine Sisters, in a Trappist Monastery, and gatherings of Buddhist meditators. I sang in the choirs of a high liturgical Episcopal and a Unitarian church. I enjoyed weekly communion in a Disciples church and many hours of silent worship with Quakers. A significant number of my years in the wilderness found me Sunday mornings at home.

In 2011, a 50th year Bluffton College reunion reminded me how much of who I became and still am was shaped here. And so I moved into a villa at Maple Crest.



I am grateful to have found here in Bluffton one of likely a minority of Mennonite congregations within which I can feel at home. I do not want to be part of a church in which my lgbqt+ friends would not be welcome. A church which ignores its responsibilities to groups suffering social prejudice, political and economic injustice.

I want a church with a strong horizontal dimension, one which encourages leadership from a wide variety of its members rather than one or two charismatic individuals. A church which does not require specific credal beliefs but rather a commitment to a communal following of Jesus' life and teaching; a church which is open to a variety of worship and spiritual experiences.

It is good to have found a church like this back home.

# FMC members explore Mennonite migrations in Europe

title page

BY GERALD MAST

Five FMC members joined a group of eighteen Bluffton University alumni and friends on May 12-23 for a travel adventure that followed Mennonite migrations in Europe, with a focus on Switzerland, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Gerald Mast served as the Anabaptist history guide and other FMC participants included George Lehman, Mona Reichenbach, and Mitch and Ann Kingsley.

We began our tour in Zurich, Switzerland, birthplace of the Anabaptist movement, and spent time exploring the nearby canton and city of Bern, the ancestral homeland of many Swiss Mennonites, including those who settled in the Bluffton/Pandora area. We hiked to the Anabaptist cave where early Anabaptists hid from authorities and gathered for clandestine worship.

We worshipped with the Mennonite congregation in Langnau—

the oldest continuously existing Mennonite church, founded in 1530. There we were pleased to meet Marianne Röthlisberger—who is a distant cousin of Kaye Phillips and who sent greetings back to Bluffton with us.

While we were in the Emmental Valley, we visited the Trachselwald Castle—where many Anabaptists were imprisoned and where the Swiss Mennonite Conference has opened a new exhibit—“Paths to Freedom”—focused on the history of the Anabaptist movement in Switzerland. We also stopped at the Haslibacher farm near Sumiswald, where we met the fifteenth generation of descendants of Hans Haslibacher—the last Anabaptist executed in the canton of Bern in 1571.



We visited a house in the Zurich suburb of Zollikon where the first Anabaptist congregation gathered for worship in January 1525.

## cathedral page

After two nights in Zurich and two nights in Bern, we worked our way north, tracing the path of Anabaptist refugees in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who fled toward more tolerant communities in France, south Germany, and the Netherlands. We were two nights in Strasbourg, where we marveled at the Strasbourg Cathedral and recalled the many different Anabaptist groups and leaders who found refuge in Strasbourg during the early years of the Reformation —including Michael Sattler, an important leader of the Swiss Anabaptists; Pilgram Marpeck, the namesake of Marbeck Center at Bluffton University; and Melchior Hoffman, who took Anabaptism to northern Germany and the Netherlands.

From Strasbourg, we made a day trip to the Alsatian city of Colmar, where we visited the Unterlinden Museum, home of the world-renowned altarpiece painting of the life and crucifixion of Jesus Christ by Renaissance artist Matthias Grünewald. During our time in the Alsace region of France we reflected on the Swiss Anabaptist congregations that found refuge there before migrating to North America and we remembered the conflicts that led to the division between the Amish and the Reistian churches in 1693.

Just as for many Anabaptist refugees, our trip north included a Rhine River boat ride, although our experience was far more relaxed—sipping beverages while admiring the many medieval castles that dominate the river banks between Bingen and Koblenz. In Cologne we visited the astonishingly tall and magnificent cathedral while also remembering the life of Anabaptist  
**We visited the immense Cologne Cathedral.**



Our country is divided by politics, race, gender, sex, religion, mental and physical abilities. Issues like access to finances, education, guns, immigration, capital punishment, science, etc. add more fuel to the fire. Even we “nice Mennonites” are becoming more polarized.

We will never agree with everyone, but one thing we can do is “BE KIND”. We need to recognize that beyond the issues are human beings with feelings and needs and the desire to be loved and understood. Kindness is something we all need and it’s something we can all give.

I designed a sign for our yard to remind people coming past our house to be kind. If it tempers the stress of one person when they go home to their family, it will be worth my effort. I’m not a big fan of yard signs, but they can be effective if not overdone. Too many signs littering the landscape too long can also have a negative effect.

I would like to invite my church family to share in this gentle reminder by placing this sign in your yard for a week or two, then passing it on to someone else. Let me know if you would like to be a part of this project. -Carolyn Rich



## leader thomas

leader Thomas von Imbroich, who led an Anabaptist congregation in the city during 1550's and authored seven beloved letters from prison to his wife and congregation—letters that became Anabaptist devotional classics included in the Swiss Mennonite prayer book *Golden Apples in Silver Bowls* as well as in *Martyrs Mirror*.

After two nights in Cologne, we continued north to Witmarsum in the Netherlands—birthplace of Menno Simons, and the name of the seminary established at Bluffton in the 1920's, as well as the name of Bluffton's student newspaper. Before reaching Witmarsum, we visited the “hidden” Mennonite church building in nearby Pingjum—where we were hosted by Flora Visser, a Dutch Mennonite pastor with oversight of the Mennonite church's activities in the region.

After showing us the “hidden” church along with a short film produced for visitors, Flora took us next door to the Reformed church of Pingjum—formerly the Catholic church where Menno first pastored following his ordination as a priest. In Witmarsum we searched for, and finally found, the monument to Menno Simons amidst a grove of trees on the edge of town, erected on the spot where a small house once stood—in which according to legend Menno first preached an Anabaptist sermon to a small gathering of dissenters and began his risky journey's as an Anabaptist leader.

We concluded our journey with two nights in Amsterdam and worship with the Amsterdam Mennonite congregation and their much larger “hidden” church. We also visited the Rijksmuseum with its large collection of art masterpieces, including the famous “Nightwatch” painting by Rembrandt—currently in process of being restored.

Our Mennonite faith heritage has been profoundly shaped by the experiences of migration—of fleeing from one country to another in search of religious freedom and well-being. But the Mennonite churches and communities we visited in Europe also reminded us of the legacy left by those who stayed—who found ways to maintain Anabaptist convictions even as they remained deeply committed to a specific place and to their neighbors who may not have shared their beliefs. Our journey reminded us of the many different choices of faith and life made throughout the centuries by ancestors whose story may become our own—as we choose to continue it with our own creativity and courage, in response to the challenges of our time and place.

**We held a brief worship service in the Anabaptist cave near Bäretswil, Switzerland.**



**A view of the Emmental valley from Trachselwald Castle.**

