



The Vine



June 2013

Becoming a community through which God's healing and hope can flow to the world

First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana



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Jubilee Reunion Weekend – Everything You Ever Wanted to Know and Then Some

from the Jubilee Reunion Celebration Committee: Martha Moore, Cindy Breeze, Tammie Bouseman, Earl Kellogg, and Cynthia Nafziger

First Mennonite Church's 50th Anniversary Reunion Celebration is quickly approaching – **JULY 26-28, 2013**. The weekend will be full of activities for all ages as we celebrate the past, the present, and the future of our congregation. A few things to note:

- The reunion is for all current FMC attendees as well as former participants.
- Special children and youth activities are being planned throughout the weekend and will serve as this year's replacement of Vacation Bible School.
- Online registration for current and former participants is now available (www.fmc-cu.org) and due by July 2. Paper registrations are available in the church office.

- Read about opportunities for Jubilee gifting to our sister church and area Mennonite conferences on the FMC webpage.
- An active 50th Anniversary History Committee is working on a variety of information gathering activities for the reunion weekend.

The Jubilee Reunion Celebration Committee is happy to share the following information about what is planned for the weekend. If there are questions about any aspect of the weekend, please contact one of the committee members (listed above).

FRIDAY, July 26: Connecting through Service

Throughout the day, those who sign up on their registration form (16 years and older) may continue the work on the Habitat for Humanity house that FMC is building as part of our Jubilee emphasis.

The Vine is the newsletter of First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana and provides a space for congregational participants to share their personal perspectives with the community of faith.

FRIDAY, July 26: Connecting with Today's FMC

7:00 p.m., at FMC

A creative presentation about FMC now and our vision for the future will be featured. Activities are planned for children from preschool through fifth grade, and childcare will be provided for very young children. An ice cream social follows.

SATURDAY, July 27: Connecting through Fellowship

9:00 a.m., at Earl and Jan Kellogg's home

Current and former FMC pastors and spouses meet for brunch.

11:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m., pavilion at Lake of the Woods, Mahomet, Illinois

Picnic lunch (main course provided by FMC; current attendees bring side dishes), program, creative children and youth activities, intergenerational events, and free time.

SATURDAY, July 27: Celebrating through Music

7:00 p.m., at FMC

Evening of music-making: hymn sing through FMC's five decades, special guest performances, and a jamming finale. Childcare for children will be provided if needed. Refreshments will follow.

Registration for the Jubilee Reunion Week - for both current and past FMCers - is due on July 2. Online registration can be found at www.fmc-cu.org/ For paper registrations, contact Rhonda Gibson.

Needed: FMC host families for reunion weekend guests. Contact Trish Combs if you can serve in this way.

SUNDAY, July 28: Celebrating through Worship

9:00 a.m., at I-Hotel, Champaign, Illinois

Breakfast will be provided (donations welcome).

10:15 a.m., at I-Hotel, Champaign, Illinois

Worshipping together will be the official final reunion weekend activity. If interested, sign up on the registration sheet to participate in the Jubilee Choir. Childcare for young children will be provided.

The weekend promises to be full of wonderful activities, meeting old and new friends, and celebrating together the 50 years of God's faithfulness to First Mennonite Church. Don't miss it!

"Look up! Look around! Watch as they gather; watch as they approach. Sons and daughters coming from great distances. When you see them coming you'll smile - big smiles! Your heart will swell and yes, burst! All those people returning for the reunion."

- from Isaiah 60 (The Message)

The Top 15 Reasons to Attend the Jubilee Reunion Weekend

(Submitted by FMCers)

15. To introduce old FMC friends to new FMC family members.
14. To feast on ice cream, desserts, picnic food, and breakfast.
13. To hear – if you are a current participant – how FMC came into being.
12. To hear – if you are a former participant – what FMC is up to these days.
11. To automatically be eligible, as a reunion participant, for the drawing of a fabulous, once-in-a-life-time prize. (Just kidding!)
10. To hear sermons from **all eight** of FMC's former and current pastors. (Also just kidding!)
9. To get together with friends who knew you when you didn't have any gray hair.
8. To see how well everyone has aged.
7. To meet the children of the children you used to teach in Sunday School.
6. To reminisce with FMC folks who worked the midnight donut-making shift at the Mennonite Relief Sale in Peoria for a number of years.
5. To see yourself on screen as a child star in one of FMC's musical.
4. To be reminded about why FMC has been or now is so special and enriching to your life.

3. To make a joyful noise while singing to the Lord.

2. Because God is likely to make an appearance.

1. To celebrate, celebrate, celebrate!

JUBILEE HYMN

One of the ways First Mennonite's Jubilee year is being celebrated is through the creation of a new hymn to commemorate our history and witness through five decades. David Wright and Cindy Breeze have collaborated on the hymn and will introduce it to the congregation this summer.

Inside this simple place by David Wright

1) Inside this simple place,
a cloud of voices sings.
The love of God, it echoes here.
The walls with witness ring

Refrain:
Come join God's long and loving psalm
your deepest hope release.
Praise God the Maker, Spirit, Son
whose song and way is peace.

2) Within this broken place,
when wounded we might come,
then Jesus joins our brokenness,
our silence as his home.

3) And in this loving place
some hear the Spirit's word
and leave to wander paths of peace
and live the hymn they've heard.

4) Beyond this sacred place,
unfolds the sacred world
where God's own breath sustains and dwells
and bids Creation sing.

Letter to the editor

Dear Editor: What happened to "Ms Menno?" Will she be returning to The Vine? If not, I fear I shall have to cancel my subscription. She heightened The Vine to top-picks level for Mennonite writing & literature.

—"Ruth"

Dear "Ruth":

Unfortunately, you cannot cancel your subscription because you do not have one. The only way you can get out of getting The Vine is if you hire a carpenter to nail a board over your church mail box. I can suggest many fine Mennonite carpenters who would be happy to do this, but even then, you might find one slipped under your door late at night.

As to the absence of Ms. Menno last month, you of all people, "Ruth," should know that Mennonites are nothing if not humble, and that the danger of pride in top-notch writing prevents Ms. Menno from being published every month. Also, the Vine already had exactly 8 pages of content in May, and the last thing we want to do is invoke the wrath of parents by failing to print cute pictures of their kids.

But you'll be happy to see that Ms. Menno returns this month, mostly because Ms. Menno finally had a few actual questions sent in from readers, instead of the usual made-up ones that I send her. Let's hope the quality is down this month, so she doesn't get all full of herself.

In Christ,

The Editor

Illinois Mennonite Conference gathering April 20, 2013 (Bruce Miller, delegate)

Morning worship featured Reba Place's Praise Team and their pastor, Charlette Lehman. Two quotes from the sermon that stuck in my head: "Allelu. (pause) I need you." and "Do people sense from us a living relationship with God?"

Business:

Eight "Conference Minister Liaisons" were introduced. This is the second year of an experiment in having a group of pastors in the conference available to help congregations in their specialties and in ways that don't require the authority of The Conference Minister. (See <http://illinoismennonite.com/page9/index.html>.)

A congregational move of note: Grace Community Church is becoming part of the New Life Chicago network, merged with one of its congregations, and is now New Life Community Church, a bilingual congregation (with children, which GCCers missed). The pastor, Eduardo Huerta, was the first graduate of Chicago Mennonite Learning Center.

We divided into 3-4 person clusters to discuss the Four Affirmations that IMC congregations share. These have been found to make conversations between and within congregations easier. (See the sidebar.) MCUSA has picked up this collection and is publicizing it.

Workshops:

Afternoon workshops ranged from interpersonal peacemaking to liturgical art to Rehoboth Place's you-pick berry farm. I attended a skype conversation with Cindy and Darryl Byler (MCC in Jordan) run by Roy Jimenez (former IMC Moderator, now with MCC - Great Lakes).

The population of Jordan is 6.5 million Jordanians. In addition, there are about one million recent refugees (Syrian, Iranian, and Palestinian). Lavish hospitality is a bedouin tradition, but this is a strain. Most Syrian refugees are scattered, rather than living in big refugee camps. Many large families live in small apartments in cities. The competition for jobs fuels resentments among the native Jordanians.

MCC partners with the Roman Catholic "Caritas Jordan", which has a good record for respecting human dignity and the concerns of locals. C.J. is efficient and employs many refugee volunteers. 20% of MCC aid to refugees in Jordan goes to poor Jordanians.

A big concern Darryl noted is a U.S. Senate resolution supporting Israel if they attack Iran. MCC workers in the Middle East expect retaliation against America and Americans if it happens.

What can we do for refugees? Best thing: be hospitable to the ones here. Refugee and school kits are much appreciated.

(See <http://www.mcc.org/stories/news/bound-hospitality>.)

The assembly ended with a worship service which the Markham congregation lead.

Quite a few other presentations and conversations happen at conference gatherings. They are good ways to get peeks at what the wider church (other congregations in our conferences and MCUSA) is up to.

Four affirmations sufficient to maintain fellowship.

- * Christ is Lord.
- * Scripture is authoritative.
- * The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective is ours.
- * We actively seek the Holy

Ask Ms. Menno



Dear Ms. Menno:

How come Mennonite ladies don't cover their heads in church? I thought I Corinthians 11 said they shouldn't pray without covering their heads – or don't Mennonite ladies pray?

—Concerned About Curls During Worship

Dear Ms. Concerned About Curls During Worship:

Of all the questions Ms. Menno has received over the months, this one obviously was written by an agent provocateur (French for "hostile questioner.") First of all, no one calls Mennonite women "ladies" anymore. Why that is I will leave to sociologists. Secondly, Mennonite women DO cover their heads in church. They cover their heads with hair. And, finally, Mennonite women do pray. And, some of the prayers will be for those persons who are more concerned about curls than God during worship.

Dear Ms. Menno:

I want to live simply like Mennonites say they do, but am really attracted by the high flying lifestyles of those with smart phones and flat screen TVs. Is there a way to reconcile or rationalize these desires?

—Rich Young Ruler Wannabe

Dear Rich Young Ruler Wannabe:

No.

Dear Ms. Menno:

Is the Vine a propaganda tool for The Man?

—Radical

Dear Radical:

Yes.

Dear Ms. Menno:

Why “Ms. Menno” instead of the Mrs. or Miss? It gets truly confusing for The Bachelor to know if you are marriage material. I’ve seen furtive glances cast in your direction on Sunday mornings. The pastors do not appreciate this diversion of attention. Can you shed light on the use of non-traditional titles such as Ms ?

The Bachelor

Dear Bachelor:

I hate to be harsh, but one tends to get that way after reading too many of these dumb questions. You can be pretty sure that it doesn’t really matter whether I’m a Mrs. Or Miss because you don’t stand a chance either way. If you’re trying to meet a woman who might be interested in marrying you, maybe a visit to your nearest bar would get better results. Look for one who is pretty much too drunk to know any better.

Habitat House 2013

By Tom Sutter

Praise be! The roof is on - - with the rain this year that is a big deal!

My sense is that the spirit at the current Habitat House build is special! People are donating their time and energy along side Kesha Johnson and her

children, and we are making friends as we work. It is so rewarding to see the progress of the build and the many accomplishments at the end of each work day.

Another special element is being able to observe both young and old workers, both experienced workers and others who are just learning and every level of skill in between, all working together for a great cause. Some of us take for granted the privilege of being able to have our own home. It is going to be wonderful to see Kesha join the ranks of homeowner.

I realize that a few of us have institutional memory from the last Habitat house, and I am grateful to be one of them. Kathy Martin and I were on the board that helped coordinate the last Habitat House our church built. My memory of that summer was that there were a lot more last-minute decisions and changes. I am impressed with the quality of the policies and assistance of the current Habitat organization. The many experienced builders in our church who have been generous with their time is also a great gift.

We are enjoying encouragement from others as well. Milo’s brought lunch for the group on June 1st; some folks have brought along friends to the work days, and Shane Cultra from Country Arbors has agreed to donate a shade tree that can be planted in the front yard at the house dedication service. I look forward to the celebration!

So come get involved. And talk to a neighbor or friend to ask them to come on a Saturday to help. People feel good about donating their talents but sometimes need the invitation. Come enjoy working with great people and watching the house take shape.





Dear FMC Family,

My time in Tuscon would not be possible without your immense generosity. Your thoughts, prayers, letters and donations are all so important. I have a rock on my bedside table from this summer that reminds me of how blessed I am to have such a supportive church family, even when I neglect to inform you of any of my adventures, joys or struggles.

These pictures are from a series of postcards I made for a work function featuring some of the more interesting jobs we deal with on a daily basis. This is a little view into my Tucson life...

My future is still up in the air so prayers for a good job search process would be appreciated.

Carrie Nelson

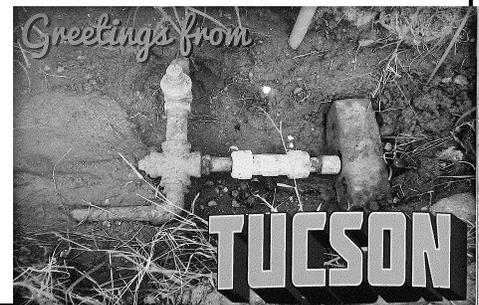


Table Building in the grade school class

