



# The Vine



Oct/Nov 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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Compiled by: Dan Schreiber

### From the Pastor's Desk

When do you pick up the phone and call or text a pastor? Pastor Michael and I have noticed a wide range of habits and inclinations with respect to updating us on happenings in your lives.

If you tend to hold back or feel uncertain about our role as pastoral caregivers in supporting you and your family and friends, then this column is for you. Here are some applicable situations:

*Before going to the hospital for a planned surgery -- or from the emergency room if a sudden illness or accident has occurred.* We make every effort to visit and pray with you while you are at the hospital. If the surgery or medical testing is taking place out of town, we try to visit you at home ahead of time. We also check in while you continue your recovery at home.

*When difficult medical news is received or you are in limbo waiting for test results.* This gives us an opportunity to talk and pray, sometimes over the phone, sometimes in person; we will also be holding you and your loved ones in prayer in the waiting and uncertainty.

*When you or someone you love is affected by depression or mental illness or addiction.* These burdens are heavy and appropriate professional care is essential; we encourage and can help facilitate such care. Spiritual accompaniment for the person and their loved ones is also vitally important.

*When someone is dying or there is a death in the family.* We visit those dying to offer spiritual comfort; anointing with oil may be given. We welcome your memories of loved ones who have died and we offer support in your grief. We will accompany the family to the funeral home to offer counsel and help coordinate planning. It is our custom at FMC to make sure the congregation is informed as soon as possible of deaths that have occurred and the services that are planned. When the funeral or memorial service is held at our church, many of us are, of course, involved in ensuring a meaningful Christian expression of hope and hospitality.

*When a baby is born.* We would like to visit and pray a blessing on the child at the hospital or shortly after the child comes home. Various types of congregational support are available to the

*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.

family; we consider together what will be most helpful. Announcing the birth and welcoming the child with a rose on the communion table and then scheduling a child dedication and blessing are joyful tasks of welcoming a new child into our church family.

*When you or someone you know faces a difficult decision or is in need of spiritual help.* A clarifying conversation and ongoing prayer support can be important first steps. Sometimes we recommend a structured discernment process. If you are part of a small group, that circle of support can be tapped as well.

*Other situations where the resources of faith and compassionate listening are needed.*

During crises and transitions, both joyful and sorrowful, we lean on the nurture and fellowship of our dear friends in the body of Christ. As we covenant together when new members join FMC: “[We promise] to bear each others’ burdens, to assist in times of need, to share our gifts and possessions, to forgive as Christ has forgiven us, to support each other in joy and sorrow, and in all things to work for the common good, thus making known Christ’s presence among us to the glory of God.” Your pastors, along with the elders, help facilitate this promise through prayer, presence, listening, and speaking.

While I take the lead with pastoral care, Pastor Michael is also available to meet with you. Do not hesitate to contact either of us as the need arises.

It may prove helpful to enter our cell numbers in your phone contacts. Janet: 217.840.3314. Michael: 501.269.6369.

Your servant in Christ,

Pastor Janet (soon-to-be Guthrie)

## Library News

by Rosalee Otto

The library committee is in a Thanksgiving state of mind. We're thankful for:

Your enthusiastic support of our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual book sale; you brought and bought lots of books. (Note to whoever brought books AFTER the sale and left them in the Coffee and Conversation room: Could you please store them in your home until our next sale?) The proceeds (\$218.33) were nearly identical to last year's proceeds of \$218.47, exceeding our expectations.

Emily Gibson's fine leadership in our book discussion of The Book Thief. A copy is in the library if you haven't yet read this amazing book.

Newly purchased books available for checkout. You will notice a focus on environmental issues as well as a variety of other books.

Donations of the following books and CDs:

- Dakota: A Spiritual Geography by Kathleen Norris, from Allyson Van Buren and Joel Krehbiel
- Pieces: A Year in Poems and Quilts by Anna Grossnickle Hines, from the Gibson family
- A Walk Through the Forest by The Asia Foundation, from Merianne O'Grady
- “Creation Chronicles” and “Pearl Diver”, from Julie Niest and George Hardebeck
- “Fish Eyes: Hilarious and Human. The Gospel Through the Eyes of Peter and Andrew” performed by Ted Schwartz and Company, from the Gibson family

And finally, we're thankful for those who value the library. Many of you are checking out, reading, and talking about our books, and that's encouraging to us.

**Dear Ms. Menno:**

I keep hearing that "only the good die young."  
Given how many old people I see every Sunday  
morning, should I be concerned about our church?

-Whipper Snapper

**Dear Whipper Snapper:**

Really now, Whipper Snapper, you're quoting Billy Joel, a 64-year-old atheist, for your so-called "concern" that we might have too many bad people in our church? The man who divorced CHRISTIE BRINKLEY is your source for wisdom? Come on Whipper Snapper, you're not fooling me. You're really an old codger yourself – young people don't go around calling themselves "Whipper Snapper." That term is right up there with "Get off of my lawn!" And quoting Billy Joel lyrics really exposes your ruse. No one under 40 has even heard of Billy Joel or his song, "Only The Good Die Young."



So, the short answer is, "No, you should not be concerned about our church because of the number of old people in it." You should be concerned about our church because of the number of people in it who consider an atheist singer who dumped Christie Brinkley as the authority on goodness and death.

**Dear Ms. Menno:**

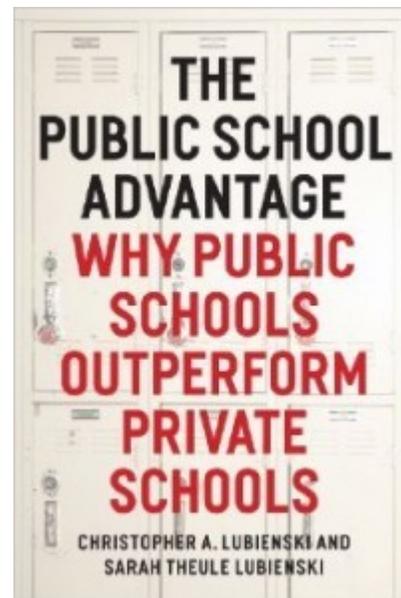
Jesus says to do unto others as you would have them do unto you, but when I do that, I get into trouble. Just the other day I offered to let my wife sit down to watch a football game with me instead of raking the yard, and boy oh boy, did I ever get in trouble. Do you think a home visit with Pastor Janet would encourage my wife to act more Christian?

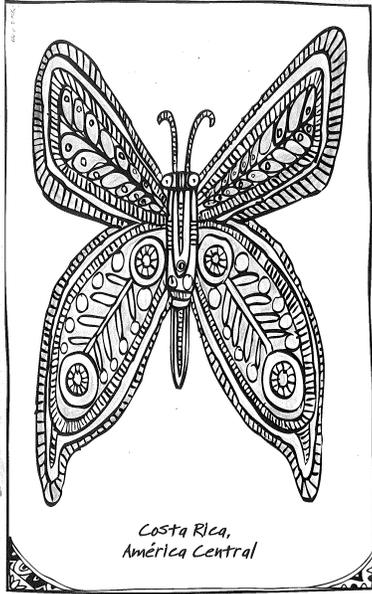
—The Golden Ruler

**Dear Golden Ruler:**

I do agree with you that your wife needs to learn to act more Christian. I don't understand why any God-fearing woman wouldn't prefer to spend some quality time with her husband watching football instead of being outside raking the yard. Did you offer to let her have her own beer? I'm not sure, though, that Pastor Janet would be the right person to counsel her. I would suggest having another member of the Spiritual Leadership Team, perhaps the Council Chairperson, Clark Breeze, talk with her. He might have a better understanding of the issues involved. In the meantime, be gentle with her. Definitely do not try to heap coals of fire on her head. That might have been okay in the first century, but it is frowned upon in modern America.

Now Available on-line, and in finer bookstores,  
by Chris and Sarah Lubienski





Dear First Menno,

Greetings by way of an obnoxiously colored butterfly from Costa Rica (picture to the right). Thank you so much for the notes Allyson brought with her on her visit. It was also nice to get the lovely pictures of fruits and veggies. They will add a touch of Illinois to the field station. The monkeys are treating me well, but I am looking forward to seeing you all in a few months.

-Liz Mallot

### **Congratulations to Hannah Wright and Sawyer Biddle!**

Hannah placed 33rd overall in the state of Illinois in cross country.

Sawyer's Monticello boys' team placed 3rd in the state.

