



The Vine

July 2014

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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Many Ways to Pray Retreat, Breeze Cabin, Cooks Mill, IL

June 7, 2014

O Thunder

Booming, cracking, moving, grumbling,
Warning us of rain and quick flashes of light.
Evidence of life cycles and creation,
Sounding like God's power.
Speak when we are dry.

Bless, O God,

my uncertainties.
May they
teach me to listen, to learn, to grow roots
so that I may have firm ground beneath my feet.
Bless to me my questions.

--Tammie Bouseman

O dust of the trail,

Providing padding beneath my feet.
You mute the thud of my footfall
Diverting the absorbed shockwaves
In ripples down past rocks stranded in glacial loam.
You transform death into the promise of life.
Deliver me from striving strides
Bring stillness to my steps.

--Mary Biddle

O Mulch

Shredded threads of hardwood bark,
Surrounding plants with tender care,
Pungent with the scent of earth,
Conveying water to thirsty roots.
You are the guardian of life.
Come, lay down your quilt of love;
Nourish us through your rich abundance.

O Prayer

Connecting us with our God
Through thought or word or act or pause,
Bringing awareness of all beyond ourselves,
Restoring our focus on the one who's in control.
You are the means of access we can choose
To tether us to the one who is waiting patiently
For the chance to say, "I love you."

--Sheree Flannigan

Celtic Blessing

Bless to me, O God,
this shelter of green.
Bless to me, O God,
these silent river ripples.
Bless to me, O God,
a reflection of sky.



Bless to me, O God - Your hallowed space.

Thou Evermore of Evermore,
Mother of these whispering leaves
Mother of the smell of earth
Mother of the dancing dragonfly

Bless to me, O God - Your hallowed ground.

Bless to me, O God,
This sacred shelter.
Bless to me, O God,
The memories of years,
Bless to me, O God,
The whisper of women.

Bless to me, O God - Your hallowed hand.

Thou Evermore of Evermore,
Father of the flickering bird
Father of the rising wind
Father of the distant thunder

Bless to me, O God - Your hallowed power.

O thou King of Kings, thou Lord of Lords, thou Singer of Song,
Bless to me thy name.

--Marcia E. Nelson

O Ocean

Spreading across the horizon
you fill my morning view.
Racing to the shore in broken, uneven waves
accompanied by your gentle roar.
Retreating to the bed that cradles your waters.
Your constant to and fro motion provides comfort.

Yes, you are always there to meet me.

--Martha Moore

Bless to me, O God, a heart that knows your joy.
Bless to me, O God, patience to feel your presence.
Bless to me, O God, the comfort of your never ending love.
O gracious God,
Bless to me your peace.

O Evening

With setting sun glowing pink behind the clouds
When deer come out to nibble in the fields
and friends and families make one last round
before they hurry home in cars with headlights on.
You are the ending of this ordinary day
And the promise of yet another.
Each day different and yet the same,
filled with your gifts to us
if we would but see.

--Mary Krick



O Kaskaskia,

ever changing,
sometimes small and shallow and oh so still,
today overflowing with brown water flowing swiftly by.
Teach me to know and welcome you however you appear;
teach me to be neither disappointed nor afraid.

O Hummingbird,

stopping by in search of something
whirring wings a-buzzing
Were you looking for sweets
or a pretty flower?
Or did you just stop by to affirm the day?

O Dragonfly,

Looking like a helicopter
flitting here and there;
Unexpected and then gone,
hovering just a moment.
Teach me to keep my eyes wide open
so I don't miss you when you come near.

--Debra Sutter



My Version of the Shortened Lord's Prayer

Spirit, Mother, Father, Guide,
Your name and presence are precious to me
You are of my world and I am grateful each day for the
bounty you bring into my life.





Please forgive me when I bring even the slightest harm, sadness, unhappiness or hurt to others or to creatures of the earth.

Forgive me, too, when I think or project hurtful thoughts. Know that I try very hard to forgive others who have brought unhappiness or harm to me, and know that I work daily to let go of past injustices done to me.

I pray that You will hold me in the light and will not punish me for sins that I have unwittingly committed. Amen

Bless to me my sweet Callie cat.

May she continue to be healthy, alert and playful so that she can live a long and comfortable life with me. Bless to me my sweet Callie cat.

Bless, O God,

This circle of wise, wonderful women.
May we learn from You and from each other and may we support one another and pray together so that we can nurture, enjoy and laugh together for many years to come.
Bless, O God, this circle of women.

--Bev Hertle

O Mosquito,

Persistent companion on my walk
Buzzing by my ear so insistent
More invisible than visible—
You are relentless in your desire
To kiss my flesh.

Mighty midget, honor my vulnerability,
Even as you circle close.

Bless, O Nurturer,

Bless to me my sorting and discarding.
May it clarify my priorities.
May it lighten my ongoing tasks.
May it aid the environment and others,
Creating more space for loving.
Bless to me my unburdening.

--Janet Elaine Guthrie

Bless you, O God, the great composer,

Bless to me the gift of music.

May it enter my fingers and my ears.

May it infuse my arms and my mouth.

May it nurture my heart and bring joy to my soul so that I have the courage to enter the song.

Bless to me the gift of music.

O Symphony,

with rhythm that challenges and confounds,
with volume that whispers and shouts,
with melody that soars and plummets,
with intonation that soothes and disturbs;
you hear our feeble attempts at harmony and love us still,
dissonances and all.

--Cindy Breeze





FIRST MENNONITE FALL RETREAT: CAMP MENNO HAVEN

by Cindy Breeze (and Others)

Our Fall Retreat, August 29-31, 2014, with the theme, "Creating Space," will be held at our denomination's Camp Menno Haven in Tiskilwa, Illinois. Pastor Janet recently referred to Camp as our "beloved Camp Menno Haven," and for many in our congregation Menno Haven is most certainly that! However, there are also many in our church who have not yet experienced Camp, and as a way to give you more information and to whet your appetite for what you will experience at our Fall Retreat, I asked a number of seasoned campers or family members of campers to reflect on two questions: **Why is Camp Menno Haven important to you? What do you like about Camp Menno Haven?**

Caden Green: There are lots of trails to hike at Camp. There are a lot of fun things to do. The camp is big, so even with a lot of people there it doesn't seem crowded.

Rebecca Bare: I find Camp is a place to get away from the busyness of the world. It is a retreat where you can get back to nature if you wish, or hang around the dining hall and chat with friends. There are no phones, television, cell phones, tablets, iPods, or other daily distractions. In addition, if you are lucky, you are not responsible for making meals or cleaning up after them! I find Camp a great place to get back to God through enjoying God's creation, singing songs, and fellowshiping with others.

Jonathan Gibson: I like the campfires. You can swim and climb the climbing wall or do other things – there are lots of choices. It's a great wide open space and you are sure to see deer. There are great trails. You can have alone time or do fun things with friends. They have lots of great games to play on the lawn – I like "9 square in the air". The fishing is okay. The people who run MH are really nice.

Mary Biddle: Camp Menno Haven is the site of many special memories for me.

Playing a game at a FMC retreat in which I had to give my team a message by moving my rear end around on the floor to spell out words. I remember thinking, "I can't believe I'm doing this!" It was an awesome way to break down barriers that might have kept us from being "real" with each other

Learning about First Fruits giving and living from one of our FMC retreats where Lynn Miller was our guest speaker. I am still inspired and challenged by his presentations.

Sharing snacks and playing board games in the evening with FMCers of all ages.

Getting to know other women from other congregations when I was a delegate to a Conference gathering at Camp Menno Haven. I have later run into those same women over the years and recall that Camp was the place that helped me become acclimated to the new experience of being Mennonite.

Seeing my sons sing and dance with cabin mates and counselors at many final campfires when I picked them up after a week at Camp.

Hearing my sons talk non-stop for days (actually, all year long) about how awesome their camp experience was.

Hearing both sons tell at their baptisms about how important Menno Haven was to their faith formation.

Playing long, laugh-filled games of volleyball as a sponsor during a JYF retreat at Camp Menno Haven.

Volunteering, along with the Moyer family, to build a bridge at Camp during spring break and then, on the spur of the moment, deciding to stay an extra night. We were the only people at the Camp the next morning – Easter - and were able to experience a hike to the wooden cross on the campgrounds.

Feeling proud and grateful to hear Sawyer speak so fondly of his experiences as Menno Haven staff this summer.

Sarah Sutter: Why is Menno Haven special to me? To begin with I'd like to say that I could write a whole essay on this topic. But I'll try to keep this fairly brief :)

Menno Haven, for the 11 consecutive years I spent time as either a camper or staffer, was a place of constancy for me. Each summer I knew I would return - there was never a question, after that first week following 3rd grade, that I would spend at least a week at camp. *(Note: This is the first summer in 12 years that Sarah is not able to be at camp.)* At the end of one summer I wrote a note reminding myself just how important Menno Haven was to me and why I was going to work there the following summer. I don't remember my exact words but I know I mentioned a few of these things:

(continued on the last page)





Ask Ms. Menno

Dear Ms. Menno

I was pleased to read in a recent Vine how you dealt with Still Concerned Mennonite. That person’s questions were clearly frivolous and therefore probably not those of a real, actual Mennonite. I am totally not that person. But I do have a Biblical question for you. I know you did not write the Bible, but I feel sure you would have an opinion that would help me deepen my faith, being a serious person, like me, and in no way a frivolous Mennonite. In First Samuel 18: 20-24, King Saul sends the future King David out to collect 200 foreskins from the Philistines, hoping that will irritate the Philistines enough to kill David. But David doesn’t just circumcise them; he kills them first. I am thinking it would have been difficult to hold them down still alive and do the deed, but as a Mennonite that abhors violence, do you think David should have considered this action first? And was it sexist to go only after the men?

Concerned, but not that Concerned Mennonite

Dear Concerned but not that Concerned Mennonite

You really are trying to get me fired from the only job I have, aren’t you? You think I don’t recognize your handwriting? But despite your provocations, I am going to take your question seriously and answer it in a serious way. First of all, David was not a Christian. The incident that occurred in First Samuel, in fact, occurred before God

became a Christian. Secondly, if you read the passage you cited for its content, not for its prurience, you will see that King Saul was an evil man and was trying to get rid of David because he was jealous of his popularity. Saul thought by giving David the task of collecting the foreskins of the Philistines, David would so irritate the Philistines that he would be killed. David out-foxed Saul by killing the Philistines first and then taking their foreskins. In answer to your first question, no, it would have been incredibly stupid for David to try to forcibly circumcise the Philistines while they were still alive.

If you think what David did was bad, read Genesis 34 sometime. There, the sons of Jacob, out to avenge their sister, Dinah’s, honor after she had been raped by Shechem, convinced Shechem’s male friends and relatives to voluntarily circumcise themselves in the hope of being able to marry Israelite women. Every male in the city was circumcised and then “three days later when all of them were still in pain, two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, attacked the unsuspecting city, killing every male,” Genesis 34: 25. I won’t go into what came afterwards, but it certainly wasn’t something a Mennonite who abhors violence could endorse.

As to your second question, was it sexist to go only after them men? Well, of course it was. That was a sexist, violent society. I think it’s safe to conclude that when Jesus said in Luke 10:37, “Go and do thou likewise,” he wasn’t referring to Genesis 34 or First Samuel 18.

So ends our Old Testament lesson.

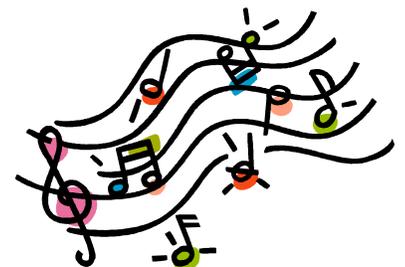
Introducing the Summer Music Outreach Group

What: a summer group practicing choir chimes, vocal music and small ensembles

When and Where: practices are at 12:30 every Sunday in July at the church

Why: to prepare good music to share with folks in nursing homes in August

Who: several people have been practicing already; we have several more rehearsals, so if you are interested in joining, talk to Deb Sutter





1. I feel good when I'm at Menno Haven - physically being outdoors all week, spiritually being connected to God and surrounded by his nature, and emotionally getting away from day to day life.
2. I meet wonderful new people at camp and deepen relationships with old friends.
3. I want to be part of making camp as special for the campers now as it was for me when I was a camper or a staff member. At Menno Haven I've had some of the most profound and some of the least profound conversations in my life. I have been covered in mud head to toe, I have jumped off a disc on top of a telephone pole, I have dealt with disposing of mice (dead and alive) found in the cabins, I have led a cabin of middle school girls through the woods in the middle of the night without a flashlight, and I have comforted homesick campers at all hours of the night. I have been amazed by God's creation of the stars, animals, storms, and trees. I have laughed, cried, taught, learned, followed, and led. I have been frustrated and exhausted, but also thoroughly impressed, amazed, and rejuvenated.

able to be a part of that community.

Cindy Breeze: Whenever I turn off the gravelly road onto the windy drive of Camp Menno Haven, I have over fifty years of memories flood over me. At age nine I began my camping experience at Menno Haven. It was the first year Camp was open for business, and my father was a guest Camp Director that week. Over the years I've witnessed the drafty, damp, discarded Army buildings of its first years replaced with sturdy cabins, clean bathhouses, a large lodge, swimming pool, and full sized gym/activity center. I've seen Camp go from a few weeks of camp sessions with barely enough campers to sustain the program to an all summer affair bursting with children and youth. What hasn't changed in all those years was the Camp's beauty provided by our Creator, the kind and generous staff persons (four of which are from FMC this summer), the thoughtful and significant faith-forming programs, and the commitment to provide an all around wonderful camping experience for people of all ages. In a nutshell, Camp Menno Haven is special to me because of the good memories it evokes and for the spiritual, social, and nature-filled significance it holds for the children, youth, and adults it serves.

I love Menno Haven and I will always be thankful that I was



Garage Sale Report

Marcia E. Nelson

To date the MYF garage sale held in June has raised \$715.45 towards the youth service trip to Canton, Ohio, a trip held last week. I say "to date" because "if you need it, we may have it" so come on by..... I am particularly pushing a new ironing board that I forgot to put out and a magnetic arthritis-relieving mattress pad whose owner I have not been able to recall and to whom I would kindly return the item, should that be necessary.

Actually, I have begun finding homes for the leftovers with the Habitat Restore, Empty Tomb, Courage Connection, a youth baseball league, an art center, the Idea Store, PACA, a couple of places seeking books, Unit 4 and even FMC to soon be recipients of your extra treasures.

This sale was certainly a collective effort. Twenty households contributed items. Kate Falk was my able co-manager and Kathy Anderson, Jasmine Schreiber, Anthony Schreiber, Berit Rasmussen, Carrie Nelson, Randy Nelson, and Alyson Dyck lifted, toted, merchandised, and sold your items. Joel Krehbiel, David Wright, and Perry Biddle hauled tables and Randy Nelson suffered through and continues to suffer the chaos. Many thanks.

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.