



# The Vine

March 2015

*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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## **Only One Winter Night**

Donna Nelson Evans

As you read this the tulips and daffodils are pushing up leaves, a sure sign and hope for spring. A month has passed since Kajsa Herrstrom and I participated in, along with 104 other box dwellers, C-U at Home's One Winter Night annual fundraiser. We all slept outside in fridge boxes to raise awareness of the homelessness crisis in our community. All said and done, the \$150,000 goal of this organization was graciously met with \$157,885.12! The goal of \$2000 for Kajsa and I was also met, far and beyond, with a total of \$4,667.63! Thank you to all who supported this effort. The generosity of this church never ceases to amaze me.

I did get my wish from this experience, wanting to know what it might be like to be a person without an address who also might have to sleep outside on the street. And to put it bluntly, I found it to be miserable. My tolerance for cold, hard concrete and constant noise is low. Very low. I did feel secure, however, that I would not be harmed because C-U at Home security for the event was very good. This sense of security would probably be absent if I were truly homeless.

Sleep was not available to me the whole night and the hours passed very slowly. But I had hope. I was OK. I knew that this would all be over at 6:00am. At 6:30am a hot breakfast would be served for all the volunteers. At 7:00am my husband would pick me up

and by 7:30 I would be in our warm house and then a warm bed. I could sleep, undisturbed, for as long as I wanted. What a luxury.

Homelessness is a terrible, terrible problem. There are an estimated 1000 homeless men, women and children in Champaign-Urbana and an insufficient number of shelter beds to accommodate them. The resources of the State of Illinois have been dwindling and some of the agencies that serve the homeless are feeling the pinch. In some cases it's a blow, such as the March 12th closing of the Salvation Army's Stepping Stone Men's Shelter in Champaign. This closing will displace 20+ men.

In light of these things I ask that you remember the people without an address. The Times Center, C-U at Home, Austin's Place and The Salvation Army are a few of the places that rely on donations to do their work with homeless folk, trying to operate 365 days a year, 24/7.

I am very grateful for the opportunity I had and again, I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your generosity.





# Mennonite Arts Weekend – 2016

Jan Sabey

We call a group of whales a pod. We call a group of cows a herd. We call a gathering of instrumental musicians an orchestra. What do we call a gathering of artists? Well, if you were in Cincinnati, OH on the weekend of February 5-6, you might have found such a gathering and called it the Mennonite Arts Weekend (MAW). This event began 20 years ago and is organized and put into motion by the Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship every two years. The arts weekend features Mennonite-affiliated artists who gather to give presentations, show or perform their art, and meet with some (predominantly) Mennonite folk who are art enthusiasts.

This year Tom and Kathy Anderson, Sheryl Nisley-Nagele, and I (Jan Sabey) headed east (an easy 4 hour drive mostly on I-74) to attend MAW 2016. Sheryl and Ken Nisley-Nagele and their family were members of Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship before they came to C-U, so they are the ones who informed us of this event.

The venue for MAW was the Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church, which had facilities particularly friendly for a weekend of workshops, performances, worship and the displaying of visual arts all focused on the theme of Transformation: Reseeing, Reshaping, Renewing.

The MAW began on Friday evening with a “teaser” from each of the featured artists, intended to encourage the approximately 175 attendees to come to their specific, 75-minute presentations on Saturday. Among the artists sharing their works were a poet, a radio journalist, a string trio, a potter, a stained glass artist, a digital artist, a collage and worship design artist, a puppeteer, a singer/storyteller/peace activist, and a theologian. After these lively introductions to the artists, we enjoyed great hymn singing accompanied and guided by some gifted Mennonite musicians.

On Saturday, we had decisions to make as we chose which of 11 presentations and/or workshops we would attend. First I went to a session presented by Kris Shenk who showed slides and told stories behind several of her works that were displayed in the gallery. She talked about the difference be-

tween worship art and worship visuals and told some ways that she was able to include her congregation in contributing to worship art. For example, for one piece on display, she had asked members to give her old pairs of shoes.

For session two, I attended a presentation by baritone, Anthony Brown, well-known among many Mennonites but a new name and treasure to me. He shared some of his faith journey in story and song, including anecdotes about his efforts to assist in peace-making in Northern Ireland during the years of great violence.

After a lunch and singing break, we scattered again for session three. This time I went to Dan Charles’ presentation. Dan, a farm and food feature journalist for NPR, named his presentation: “Journalists don’t call themselves artists. Should they?” Then he proceeded to compare and contrast the process of writing a news story and a short story or novel. He raised the question of the roles of creativity and decision making in both journalism and creative writing. There was some lively discussion and questions during this session. He did not try to convince us one way or the other but raised some interesting points about the “art” of journalism and the journeyman’s work of a writer.

For session four, I went to hear Zachary Nafziger, a stained glass artist. He showed slides and talked about his first efforts with stained glass and how he gradually grew in his art. He also spoke about the trial-and-error aspect of his work, and the playful “just-because-he-wanted-to-try-it” process. I was struck by his statement that he considered himself to be an artist of light and that the glass was his medium.

Late Saturday afternoon, we had some unstructured time to mingle with all of the artists and shop among the many books, art pieces, and CD’s that were available for sale. After a delicious catered buffet dinner, the long day ended with a worship service that featured the performing artists and more hymn singing.





On Sunday morning we enjoyed a joint worship service with the congregation of Pleasant Ridge. It was neither Mennonite nor Presbyterian but had bits and pieces of both traditions, and included a blended choir of Presbyterian members and MAW attenders.

These are some of my impressions and memories of the weekend. For more details and some great pictures, please take a look at the following website.

[www.mennoniteartsweekend.org](http://www.mennoniteartsweekend.org)

This event occurs on the first weekend of February every two years. We already have it on the 2018 calendar at the church office. I think it would be great if we had a caravan of FMC folk head to Cincinnati for the 2018 Mennonite Arts Weekend. Maybe you could pencil it into your planner now.



Close up of 4-panel piece of worship art by Kris Shenk on display at Mennonite Arts Weekend, February 2016.

Jeff Grundy, poet, at MAW 2016. He was a presenter at a previous Mennonite Arts Weekend.



A table full of hand-made pottery by Mark Nafziger. These items were on display and for purchase at the Mennonite Arts Weekend 2016.





## She Hears with Her Ears and With Her Heart

The Pastoral Support Committee (PSC) and council have completed the informal one-year evaluation for Pastor Deb. Overwhelming affirmation was expressed for her ministry at FMC. Her compassionate pastoral care for those in need, support and encouragement of our young adults, practice of joyful hospitality, exceptional listening skills, affirmation of others’ gifts, and meaningful sermons were a few of the many gifts that people see in Pastor Deb. Appreciation was expressed for her warm, approachable personality and ability to connect with people of all ages. Pastor Deb’s call to relational ministry through one-to-one and small group interactions, which she believes allows her the great privilege of witnessing firsthand how God works in the lives of others,

was strongly affirmed. Moving forward into her role on the new pastoral team, Pastor Deb is eager to pursue continuing opportunities to learn and grow as a pastor and to serve this church. The PSC and council believe that Pastor Deb’s ministry is a rich blessing to our congregation, and we wholeheartedly look forward to supporting her in her expanded role as associate pastor.

Sheree Flannigan  
PSC Chair



### From the Archives: “Commercials” by John Otto

This portion of our show is brought to you by the scent that makes Mennonites humble, *Eau de Menno*.

Has the world been saying nice things about you? Have you been getting compliments from your Episcopalian neighbors? Do you have that sweet smell of success? It’s awfully hard to be humble these days, and if your prayers have been losing out to your pride, get some *Eau de Menno*.

Have you been losing touch of your roots? *Eau de Menno* will help you and those you meet remember the hogs and chickens you left behind. Yes, just spray on a little of our discipleship perfume, and you too will be meek and contrite. A little dab behind the ear; a bit on your wrist; a little *Eau de Menno* goes a long way.

And now, to make sure you don’t spend your money on foolish things, the makers of *Eau de Menno* have developed this great new “More With Less” bottle. Yes, more money, less perfume! And if you have teenagers, get the hand five-gallon bucket economy size. *Eau de Menno*. When you’ve got to be humble!

