

First Threshings

First Mennonite Church

Ash Street & Grand Avenue

Hillsboro, KS 67063

620-947-5662/www.fmchillsboro.com

Susan Jantzen, Pastor (pastor@fmchillsboro.com)

Hank Unruh, Youth Pastor (youthpastor@fmchillsboro.com)

Doug Miller, Ministries Council Moderator (doug@tabor.edu)

Becky Gage, Secretary (secretary@fmchillsboro.com)

If we do not die to ourselves,
we cannot live to God, and he
that does not live to God is dead.

Christ died to save us, not
from suffering but from
ourselves; not from injustice, far
less from justice, but from being
unjust. He died that we might live
– but live as He lives, by dying as
He died, who died to Himself that
He might live unto God.

George MacDonald (1824-1905)

Jesus is the Host

This fall, we will embark on a new Wednesday night adventure. While Eydie and Verda will be available occasionally as cooks, they have invited us to move to a new system: rotating cooks for our Wednesday evening meal.

This is not a foreign idea, but it is one that we will need to get used to! Good meals, thriftily prepared, have been a part of the furniture here at First Mennonite. At least *that one meal* during the week was a done deal. And always yummy.

In our new venture, we will have various groups prepare the meal – perhaps a Sunday School class, one of the six committees each taking their turn (☺), all those under 40, or all those with brown eyes. Whatever the configuration, we will either be assigned or go the sign-up-on-the-white-board way. So, let's begin to think about this now. July and August, our schedule should be set so we can get on our way with this adventure.

Our Wednesday evening communion discussion has spoken repeatedly about eating together as a church family. The underlying theme of Elsie Rempel's booklet, *Come, Lord Jesus, Be our Host*, is that, however we configure who cooks, who serves and who eats in the church, it is Jesus who invites. Jesus is the host. It is Jesus' extravagant hospitality to all that we are seeking in our own bumbling way to echo, to recreate, to make real on earth.

So, let's make this Wednesday evening adventure what it really is – a chance to cook together, laugh together, make mistakes in the kitchen together and yes, eat together as a people who are gathered in Jesus' name, called to Jesus' way, and transformed through the power of Jesus who promised to be with us when we are together. Let's ring the dinner bell!

We welcome you, Lord Jesus, as our host.

Pastor Susan

April 2016

There was no Ministries Council meeting in March. The next meeting is Thursday, April 21, at 7:00 p.m.

2016 Easter Memories

Another Holy Week has come and gone – and it was, again, very spiritually moving – both lowering and, of course, ultimately uplifting.

Our Palm Sunday service portrayed the excitement of Jesus being cheered by the crowds thronging the streets as he entered Jerusalem on a donkey: children and some adults stood at the altar while others were in the pews, all waving palm fronds on cue, energetically or gracefully, as the Spirit led.

Our Maundy Thursday commemoration saw about forty of us in the fellowship hall: we sat in a circle, in the center of which was a table with plates of bread (pieces of crispy pizza crust), pitchers of grape juice, plates, napkins and glasses. To demonstrate servanthood we each, in turn, picked up a set of items and served the person to our left, waiting until everyone had been served before eating and drinking. The two songs we sang were *Holy Spirit, Come with Power*, and *O Master Let Me Walk with Thee*. The service ended solemnly with us going into the dimly-lit sanctuary and, in silence, watching as various decorative items were removed, one by one, leaving the basic worship items in place. We filed out singly, as the Spirit led.



Our Good Friday walk with Jesus and his disciples was, once again, guided by truly excellent tableaux arrayed around the fellowship hall: palm fronds, stones (symbolizing Jesus' forgiveness of the woman caught in adultery), broken bread, 30 silver coins, courtyard brazier, Garden of Gethsemane, crown of thorns, nails, cross and tomb. We were invited to sit and contemplate each in turn, then to write a note to ourselves to reinforce the experience. The ambience was augmented by Pastor Susan softly playing Easter hymns and other appropriate pieces on the sanctuary piano.



Sunday morning, we awoke to the moon shining on three inches of fresh snow: while this provided a heavenly scene, it meant moving the sunrise service to the sanctuary rather than holding it at Kleibers' lake. Bible readings were Ezekiel 36:24-28 and Psalm 30, and Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20 and John 21:1-13. Three people gave "resurrection" testimonies: a mother whose five-year old asked enough questions to understand the meaning of Easter, and then promptly asked Jesus into his heart; a father who, together with his son, experienced "new life" after the son was delivered from a

catastrophic fire, and a young woman for whom longer days and the fresh colors and smells of spring are spirit-lifting. Interposed were the releasing of helium balloons to symbolize resurrection, and the raising of the Easter banner.

"May the light of Jesus shine continually to drive away all darkness. May Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting, find His light ever burning in our hearts – He who gives His light to all creation, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever, Amen."



The culmination of Easter week was the joyful worship of Christ's resurrection at our 10 o'clock service with a sanctuary full of worshipers.



Very many thanks to everyone (adults and children alike) who planned and brought to life all our Easter worship experiences!



April Events

- 3 4:00 p.m. *My Strength, My Song* performed by the Tabor College Concert Choir directed by Dr. Bradley Vogel: HMBC.
- 5 8:00 p.m. **Worship Committee meeting.**
- 6 6:15 p.m. **supper; youth activities start at 7:00; adult Bible study *Collected Thoughts* led by Keith Harder, starts at 7:00.**
- 7 7:00 p.m. **Stewardship Committee meeting.**
- 8-9 Kansas Mennonite Relief Sale, Hutchinson.
- 9 4:00-5:30 Guest Violin Duo Recital by Hannah Murray & Emily Bishop: Bethel College Chapel.
- 10 4:00 p.m. *The Tale of Three Trees* performed by the Tabor College Concerto Bella Voce directed by Dr. Jen Stephenson: HMBC.
- 11 ***Pastor Susan's sabbatical begins.***
- 13 6:15 **Supper; youth activities and adult Bible study, *Collected Thoughts* led by Keith Harder, start at 7:00.**
Last regular Wed. evening activities until fall.
- 17 4:00-5:30 Women's Choral Concert: Bethel College Mennonite Church.
- 20 **Supper at 6:15; HiFY Variety Show at 7:00 p.m.**
- 21 7:00 p.m. **Ministries Council meeting.**

**Pastor Marv Zehr will be in the office:
April 12-14, 19-21, 26-28
9:00 a.m. – noon**

Kansas Mennonite Men's Chorus concerts:

April 3 at 2:30 p.m. Bethel College Mennonite Church
April 10 at 2:30 p.m. Hesston Mennonite Church
April 17 at 7:00 p.m. Bethany College Presser Hall
April 24 at 7:00 p.m. Central Community Church,
Wichita, KS

A Very Special Reunion in California

Sylvia Abrahams is a warm-hearted soul whose strong Christian faith has allowed her to maintain a positive attitude in spite of having had to endure heart-breaking experiences all her life: churlish, indeed, must be the one who isn't pleasantly affected by her bright smile and congenial laugh. I was interested to hear about her recent trip to Los Angeles to see her brother, Bill Bartel.

"For several years I have been wishing I could see Bill. He has dementia very bad and I didn't know if he would know me, but I wanted to see him anyway. I had mentioned it to Bev and Darrold (Klein: her elder daughter and son-in-law) and Bev called a few weeks ago and wanted to know if I was still interested, 'We can go if you can go,' she told me. Ray and I had wanted to do this trip, and go by train, so this was a fulfillment of that dream."

On Tuesday, February 23, Darrold's sister-in-law drove Kleins and Sylvia to the Newton station in time to catch the 2:55 a.m. westbound train. It was running late so the engineer wanted to make up for lost time: the Newton passengers were hurried aboard, the whistle was blown and they were off. Sylvia was seated at the back of the train where she had plenty of room for her wheelchair and, at first, she didn't like the fact that she was traveling backwards. After a while, she realized it was an advantage: "When people pointed things out, I got to see them, otherwise I'd have missed them," she smiled. Darrold had brought a map of the route, and Sylvia found that to be very helpful for figuring out where they were going. "I was on the lower level," she explained, "but he and Bev went upstairs then they'd come back down to sit with me. At mealtimes, they brought me the menu so I could pick something to eat and they brought the food to me." Sylvia laughed good-naturedly as she said, "There were several Amish families traveling together and they had this *huge* ice chest in the storage area with all kinds of food that they kept going to!" But her smile became rueful as she said, "What I *really* wanted to see was Arizona but it was night both times we went through." She and Ray had visited Arizona many years before and she was anxious to see some of the sights she remembered, especially the red rocks of the Sedona area. But she got much enjoyment from

the people she visited with on the train. She is so amiable and outgoing that people gravitate to her. "You intermingle with yellow, black, red and white," was how she put it. She enjoyed them all, especially a young Mexican. "We got to talking. He was very friendly; he had been working for his uncle in Garden City who is a baker and he showed me a whole box of Mexican pastries that he was taking to his grandmother. That's what made it so interesting on the train. Then, when we got off in L.A., a lady (I'd been visiting with) said, 'I will pray for you and your brother; I am a minister!' You sit here in Hillsboro and you don't get that. Everybody was so friendly and helpful." And she added, "My goodness, the train takes you through different parts of the country from what you are used to seeing, like, going through the cities, not the fancy part of town at all."

They found a motel that was quite close to the private home where Bill is living along with six other residents who need care. He doesn't talk – and Sylvia regrets that the Ukrainian family looking after him speak only limited English so he doesn't get as much mental stimulation as she would prefer, but he is well cared for and seems happy. She tried to connect with him by telling him stories about their growing-up years – "romping in the hayloft, and things they did at school" – but he didn't respond. Not, that is, until a couple of days later when he reached out to her, smiled and clasped her hand, and she knew he was recognizing her, and then he sang two songs with them. "It's interesting," Sylvia acknowledged, "how his memory worked in that way. He used to play the organ in our old church."

During the five days they were there they also spent time with Bill's family, and a highlight was being driven to the ocean and to fruit country. Sylvia was animated as she described the "absolutely gorgeous" foliage – red buds and red roses and the jewel-like colors of the Bird of Paradise flowers that were growing between the roads. "I enjoyed that so much – and of course the palm trees are so stately – *beautiful* – and the lemon and orange trees."

As she was saying goodbye to Bill, Sylvia said to him, "Wouldn't it be fun if we could take our trip to Heaven together?" And he said "Yes". That he obviously understood her, and responded appropriately, pleased her very much.

So, the three of them climbed back on the train for their 31-hour ride home. Sylvia's younger daughter, Dawn, was waiting for them at the Newton station, "And this time," Sylvia said with a wide grin, "they couldn't take off in a hurry because our baggage was 'waaay up in the front: they had marked it for Newton but they had put it in with the luggage for Chicago!"

“I don’t fit ethnically into any category: I’m MGM, Multi-Generational Mix.”

Getting to know Jason Klanderud

What a thoroughly delightful fellow Jason is! He has a ready smile and laugh, and has a zest for life; he enjoys being around people and admits to being a storyteller which he certainly is. Right from the start, his life has been unique – and, to set the scene, as it were, he began by telling me about his parents, his heritage.

“My parents were married in ’75: my mother is African American from Sidney, Ohio and my dad is of Scandinavian descent from Minneapolis, Minnesota. That plays into my story because I don’t fit ethnically into any category: I’m MGM, Multi-Generational Mix. MGM is really a new kind of understanding in this country.

“My parents met in my mom’s church. My dad was actually just passing through, going to welding school in a town near where my mom lived. On his way he stopped at Vernon and stayed with a pastor south of my mom’s home church. This pastor had a daughter and my dad sensed that he was trying to get him to stay, to get them fixed up, so Dad said he already had a girlfriend. ‘What’s her name?’ the pastor asked him. Well, Dad didn’t have a girlfriend so he pulled a name out of the air and said, ‘Judy Brown’.

“The pastor was speaking at my mom’s church and asked my dad if he wanted to go along. So, here he was, sitting in the front row listening and my mom is sitting a few rows back, and she just gets a sense that she needed to talk to this guy. ‘If you don’t talk to him,’ she told herself, ‘you aren’t going to see him again.’ My mom is a very straightforward person so she goes up and introduces herself. He asked her her name and she said, ‘Judy Brown.’” Jason laughed. “He was stupefied – but he didn’t tell her that story until after they were married. Anyway, she invited him over for dinner that day. That was in ’74 and they got married in ’75, and I was born in ’76. What’s interesting, there’s, like, this other component to it: my dad’s ethnic background is Scandinavian – Swedish-Norwegian. His ancestors who came over here four generations ago – in those days, that was considered an interracial marriage so they were shunned. They came from a town in Norway called Klanderud and decided to come to Minnesota because there’s a town called Klanderud in Minnesota; the name means *First Farmers*, and anyone in the world with this last name has an ancestral link to this town. I want to go there some day. I Googled our name and there’s only one Jason Klanderud, and that’s me!

“My mother’s dad is African American but she’s mixed with a lot of things because her mother was

native American from five tribes: Seminole, Cherokee, Maumee, Shawnee and Miami. They were consolidated as tribes (when they were forced on to reservations). That plays into my story, too, because that’s why I’m MGM.

“There are some significant milestones – one was the 1967 Supreme Court case *Loving vs Virginia* when the Supreme Court ruled that it’s illegal to prohibit interracial marriage.” That case started to break down ethnic exclusivity. “What my parents faced (from their friends and acquaintances) was a lot of confusion: ‘Why would you guys get married?’ ‘How do we relate to you?’ There was a lot of that in our world growing up.” He smiled and added, “Other people are confused; we aren’t!

“I was born nine years after that (Case).

“My dad was a union welder and my mom had a master’s degree in social work. We lived in Toledo, Ohio for my first year and a half then, I’m not sure why, but they decided, ‘Let’s go and see the country!’ So they bought a camper and got on the road. So, for the first six years of my life, I lived in 36 states.”

“Did they work?”

“My dad belonged to the National Union of Welders so he would go to wherever the union headquarters was in that area and check the job postings; he would call them and get on the list then we’d drive to the job and he’d work ‘til the job was done, then we’d get back on the road and drive some more. We rented apartments everywhere.” Seeing my puzzled expression he laughed again and said, “I have no idea why they decided to live like that!

“Two of my sisters were born on the road and my youngest sister was born in Kingston, New Hampshire, so we settled there in ’83 and were there for ten years. Even then, we still moved around a lot. I moved to a different school almost every year.”

While they were living in New Hampshire, he attended Hampton Academy “Which,” he said, “was number one in the nation for middle schools”. He also attended Exeter Academy for his junior high years. The quality of education was high because New Hampshire has no sales tax so people would live in New Hampshire and go to work in Boston. “I went to school with a lot of really wealthy people – like, one friend’s family spent every summer in their castle in France. Then my parents got divorced so Mom and kids moved back to Ohio and I went to high school there for four years. We moved from this really progressive east coast culture with its very high expectations of education back to Ohio, to this very rural working class area. That was culture shock!

“All of us were beginning to discover our creative talents: we are very, very artistic. All of us can sing, and my mother could afford to give us music lessons: one sister is a classically trained violinist; we can all draw. I ended up taking a lot of art classes in high school. I was fortunate in my teacher because she had her own graphic design business and she thought I had talent and was worth investing in so she took a lot of time with me.

“I graduated high school in '95 and, at that time, digital art was extremely new, about five years old. My art teacher had a computer in the classroom and it had some art programs on it. I was doing things that no one else in the school even thought to do. My senior year I created a computer animation on one. No one was doing this; nobody had a computer in their home – no internet – and I submitted it to our governor's show (which is offered every year in Ohio). It didn't win anything but it did get Honorable Mention. Also, there was a college there from Michigan that awarded me a \$17,000 scholarship.

“I took drawing in high school because I knew this was going to be something some day, then I went to the Art Institute of Pittsburg (Pennsylvania). They were one of the very few schools that had the capability and the insight to move ahead with a computer animation class. I was in the third class they did.”

“How big was the class?”

“Fifteen kids. The students that graduated the first few classes are all in Hollywood. I got my formal education there but I didn't finish college because, halfway through the program, they got a new president: the college became a money-making enterprise – many teachers left so they hired a bunch of instructors that didn't know what they were doing. I had a friend that was an instructor at the school and another was in the art department of the local TV station.

“I worked at the NBC affiliate there for about 1½ years. I was there during Y2K. Everyone was panicking: I had to come into work at 1:30 a.m. New Year's Day. Nothing's happening. I am trying to stay awake 'til 10 in the morning. Everyone kept saying, 'Y2K is a non-event!' 'Y2K is a non-event!'”

“I had done a lot of work in media production – video animations. I went from the TV station to some smaller companies around the city and ended up making local commercials around the city for an ad agency. I did a couple of commercials every week.

“I met Jess in '05 at a barbeque at a friend's house. I didn't know but I was being set up to meet her. We were in the same group of friends, but it was a large group so I'd never met her. Her

roommate knew me because I was good friends with her boyfriend.

“Jess was the most interesting person to talk to. She fascinated me. I asked her, 'How is it you understand everything I'm talking about?' And she kept asking me, 'How is it you question everything I say?' We kept circling around to talk to others but I'd always come back to her, and I told her, 'You are the most interesting person here'. I had never dated around (and I found out later when I got to know Jess that she was the same way): we were very serious people when it came to a dating relationship because we saw it as going toward marriage. Then I told myself, 'If I'm really interested in this person, I have to see it going somewhere,' but I didn't even call her for a month.”

Jason laughed again and said, “Bit of background: when I was working at the TV station, a couple who were my friends had helped me get that job. I'd hang out at their house and play games. One day, two of the couple's friends had come over to play games and stuff and they met me and it's 'Wow, you're fun; I like you! You should meet my niece, she's awesome!' 'Okay, that's great', I told them. So I end up calling her and coffee turns into dinner and that turns into about three to four weeks of us talking to each other every day and night, and seeing each other. I'd always want to continue our conversation. After about a month of dating – it was around Thanksgiving – she said, 'Why don't you come over and meet my family?' Her family is a big Mennonite family – lots of cousins and other relatives – and this couple is there who'd said, 'You need to meet my niece.' And they said to Jess, 'This is the guy I told you about years ago!' That was kind of weird! We were engaged about a year after that and, a year after that, we got married.

“The whole time I knew Jess she was working on finishing her Ph.D. We bought a house in Pittsburg and a new car and a dog and that's where our son and daughter were born, Noah in '09 and Lana in '12. I had three fulltime jobs. When we bought the house I was working in the ad agency and that was when there was the big economic collapse. After that, I worked at a Methodist church; I was media director and did a lot of their design work. They were doing this big building expansion – it's a mega-church, about 1,200 people came every weekend; it had about five services. As their media director I was responsible for the media productions – projectors, slides, etc. I had to make sure all the artwork videos were there every week. At the same time, we were adding a 600-seat building. I had to make sure all the tech stuff in there worked. The new building was supposed to open in '12. I was stressed. One evening I was

eating with Jess and Noah and the waitress brings this little cake with a candle in it and puts it in front of me. Jess wasn't saying anything, she was just looking at me. I finally realized she was telling me she was pregnant. I looked at her and, stuttering mentally, I asked her, 'But how?' ('I knew how!' he smiled.) 'But when?'" He laughed at the memory.

"Lana was born one month before the building was due to open. That was the most stressful time of my life.

"After that, Jess was just focusing on finishing her degree – her degree was the third baby!

"The church that I worked at was very patriarchal – it was a little too Baptist. The culture was very much that the men decided everything. It was interesting: Jess and I would discuss gender roles a lot. Often, (which of us did what) came down to practicality: I learned how to take care of everything for the kids. Jess is better at researching articles about things like medicine issues that we might have to deal with at school, day care, etc. She's the research person, I am the executive director: I carry out orders. She's the brains; I'm the feet.

"After she got her Ph.D and we decided to move over here, we talked about what our arrangement would be. I always had the fulltime job. Now she has a fulltime position and, because I was able to transfer a lot of what I was working on (the church is still one of my clients) and to work from home, things revolve around her schedule now. So, my responsibility is to take care of everything at home. Our relationship in Pittsburg" (when she studying and looking after the kids and the house) "was stressful for her. I am so much better at multi-tasking. It drives me crazy to sit around in the office all day, so things are more suited to each of us."

Turning his thoughts to his kids, Jason continued, "Lana's an extrovert – kind of a shy extrovert. I love being around lots of people, and I have no fear of speaking to people – I just love getting up on stage. For Jess, teaching a class is okay but she doesn't like speaking in front of a big group of people. Now, being a father and having these two young children, there's always challenges that are suddenly changing, like, it's hard to know some days the scope of what fits with your child.

"Noah was vaccine-injured and has a regressive autism (it used to be called ADHD); a week after getting his vaccination he stopped talking or playing or eye-contact. He's very allergic to some things – corn syrup, food coloring, etc. It's hard to work with him but he's very contented."

On Jason's dad's side, they have an international family through marriage – Japanese, Haitian and German. "My family of origin," he elaborated, "were very good with words and artistic

communication. Just recently, Noah decided he was going to teach himself Japanese on his iPad; he asks questions on it every day and he's learning to write some of the characters; he also gets some coaching from my cousin's Japanese wife; he's a natural. He told me, 'I'm going to be a doctor of languages'."

(To be continued in the May issue of *First Threshings*.)

All submissions of interest to the FMC family are welcome and will be included, depending on timeliness and space availability. (Anonymous submissions are accepted but not preferred.) *First Threshings* is distributed the first Sunday of each month so materials should be submitted at least one week previously. Comments pro/con regarding any aspect of the newsletter are also welcome. Please address these to Pat Bartel, compiler/editor: mailslot 107 or meadowlark. bartel@gmail.com.