



# The Vine

August 2008

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

*First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana  
217-367-5353*

---

## From the Pastor's Desk

Ready or not, September is here!

In some ways, I'm ready. In some ways, I'm not.

Back in June, I had high hopes that the summer would produce a sense of being settled, both at church and at home. Instead, I have been reminded how elaborate and drawn-out major life transitions inevitably are.

My office is physically set up now, but there is still file clutter to manage and technology to be integrated and more importantly, many relationships to begin seriously nurturing. My furniture and household goods are moved into the house on Indiana Avenue where I will be residing, but mostly things are in chaotic piles while remodeling is completed and I find time to unpack.

Being in the midst of my own transition has made me especially sensitive to the huge influx into our community of new students and new families. This is an exhilarating yet daunting time for them

At First Mennonite Church, we have an amazing, life-giving witness to share. Personal testimonies emphasize how we become family for those far from home. New folks bless us in turn with their stories and energy. It's happened again and again over the lifetime of this congregation. Our practicing welcome and inclusion with sojourners is just one way we respond to the challenges of transition, loss, and crisis faced by everyone

I wrote this prayer several weeks ago for our worship focus on "hundredfold yield." I share it again here for our collective reflection and response:

Lord Jesus, you call us to be your disciples and to keep bearing fruit out of the good soil in which your Word has been sown. Like the mustard seed, we are small yet our potential to nurture is great. We thank you for the way you have guided this congregation for 44 years and for the witness of all who have shared their testimony in our summer worship series. We are keenly aware of the influx of persons into our community that is underway at this time. We know that among them are persons who are lonely and anxious, persons unfamiliar with the gospel, persons seeking meaning and community, and families looking for a church home. Equip us to minister to them appropriately in the power of your Spirit, extending hospitality and love, and proclaiming your peace. Amen.

With many thanks for the hospitality and love you continue to shower upon me as your new pastor,

Pastor Janet

**LifeCare Planning**

From  
The Spiritual Leadership Team

In fostering communities of healing and hope, how can we support each other in making important life decisions?

On Wednesday, September 24, Peter Dyck will lead an important discussion of decision making with respect to how we steward the quality of our lives and our legacy.

Topics to be covered include: health care decisions and quality of life, responsibility for disposition of our material resources, and funeral planning.

This session is designed to begin to think about the issues and explore options. Follow-up sessions with opportunities to work with relevant forms will be provided, if there is interest.

The Spiritual Leadership Team is pleased to offer this program in conjunction with a casual supper fellowship. The supper will begin at 5:45 and the program will run from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

**The Congregation “Closes the Gap”**

From  
Martha Moore

On the morning of July 31, 2008, the FMC congregation became the owners of the apartment building next door to the church. Over the years there have been discussions about the possibility of purchasing this property that sits between our church building and the vacant lot we owns just west of the apartment complex. Because of the generous giving of our church family, we raised almost \$75,000, 50% more than the “Close the Gap” goal of \$50,000. With the mortgage

of \$340,000 from Mennonite Mutual Aid and \$100,000 from reserves in the church treasury, the needed purchase price of \$500,000 was more than met. The additional funds from the Close the Gap drive will be added to the first mortgage payment, thus reducing the principle owed.

The eight apartments in the building have all been rented through mid August 2009 and the tenants have been notified that new owners have taken over. Dannie Otto offered to take responsibility for the building in August and has had some much needed “sprucing up” done. Windows have been washed, carpets have been cleaned, gutters are now free of debris and the yard has been weeded and raked. Thanks to many for helping with this clean up.

Beginning September 1 Professional Property Management (PPM) services will take over the management of the building. Tenants will go through PPM to pay rent or for any concerns about the building. A small committee of Dannie Otto, Clark Breeze and Thom Moore is in place to address issues that may come up with the new role of apartment ownership this first year.

The future of the property will, no doubt, be the subject of much discussion, dreaming and prayer over the next year or more. However, the fact that we have “Closed the Gap”, we know our options for doing the Lord’s work on Springfield Avenue, in whatever form that takes, have greatly increased. Thanks to all who made this step possible through prayer, wisdom and financial contributions. Now the real excitement begins as we contemplate the future!

**Fall Session of Thursday morning Bible Study**  
FROM Cindy

The fall session of Thursday Morning Bible Study will begin a study of the Gospel of Mark on September 18, 2008. Led by Pastor Cindy, this group has been meeting for a fall and winter/spring session for over fifteen years. Although meeting continuously for that period of time,

the group has always been fluid, welcoming newcomers constantly and saying farewell to those whose life situations have changed to make their attendance impossible. The average attendance on Thursdays is between 12 and 20, and recently the group has grown to include at least 4 non-FMCers. Structured to include biblical study, the sessions also include fellowship, in-depth sharing, and praying. Child care is provided, but that must be communicated well in advance so that good arrangements can be made. All people are warmly welcome to join the study in the library, and if you have any questions, contact Cindy.

## **Central District Meeting**

### **Some Thoughts**

By Rebecca Bare

As many of you know, the Central District Conference Meeting was held in Wheaton in June. There have already been several reports on it, so I won't repeat them. I did, however, want to share some observations. The Sunday after the meeting during Sunday School, Janet Liechty read a poem that talked about the seeds of God. As I thought about this poem in conjunction with the meeting, I realized there were a few missing seeds at Wheaton. What were these missing seeds? The young and minorities. As I looked around, I realized that most of the people there were my age or older and most of them were white.

What can be done to fill in these gaps? I realize one church cannot solve all the conference's demographic problems, but we can do our share. Consider being a delegate to the next CDC meeting.

Although business sessions are not exciting, they cover only six of the 20 hours we have together in fellowship. The rest is taken

up with worship, meals together, breaks, and workshops. I see the CDC meeting as a time of reunion and of meeting new people. I challenge you, dear reader under age 40, to be a delegate to next year's meeting in Ohio.

If you have children, don't worry. There are babysitting services and children's activities.

## **Lost Sons By Judy Clemens**

Review from rebecca Bare

I recently read a book that I would like to share. It is called "Lost Sons" by Judy Clemens. There are several interesting facts about the author. She is from Goshen and attended my high school, although not in my class. Her brother, Jim, is a composer and we have sung his music at church.

"Lost Sons" is about a detective whose son, a sailor, has disappeared in Russia. The detective, Stan, tries to come to terms with the disappearance and soon discovers another lost son: Clayton Kratz, a Mennonite who disappeared in Russia in 1920. Stan finds himself delving into the mystery of this disappearance.

I found "Lost Sons" very compelling, although it was odd, at first, to read about landmarks I am familiar with. The characters are believable and the plot is suspenseful. As a reader, you get a wide variety of experiences: history, drama, good fiction, and the point of view of a non-Mennonite family living in a Mennonite community.

I would recommend this book to everyone.

**Library Committee - New Titles - April 2008**

From Marcia Nelson

**The Power of Enough: Finding Contentment by Putting Stuff in Its Place**, by Lynn Miller

(MMA, 2003) Adult Collection - ST - Mil

The author counsels that contentment is the power behind good stewardship. "Contentment gives one the ability to know when "enough is enough." In this book he helps readers think through where contentment comes from and to experience the power of putting stuff in its place. This is a quick read with study questions for group use.

**Prodigal Sons & Material Girls: How Not to Be Your Child's ATM**, by Nathan Dugan (Wiley, 2003) Adult Collection - ST - Dun

This author, an expert on family finances and the effects of mass marketing on young people, shares the numerous lessons he's learned as a long-time financial advisor, blending stories with the tools and techniques needed to teach children the real value of money. This is a look at the impact of our consumer-oriented society on our youth and a practical road map to an alternative view.

**Neglected Voices: Peace in the Old Testament**, by David A. Leiter. (Herald Press, 2007) Adult Collection - I - Lei

Church of the Brethren pastor and professor, David Leiter offers the thesis that the Old Testament contains

a systemized typology for peace, countering a traditional dilemma faced by Christians schooled in the many accounts of war and violence ascribed to God and those chosen by God in the Old Testament. Rather than dismissing these stories as irrelevant and thus discounting our spiritual heritage or accepting war and violence as dominant themes in the story of how God's people came to be, Leiter asserts an alternative view which has the potential to "help us make peace within our own context."

**Sing the Journey.** (Herald Press, 2007)

Adult Media CD - Sing

This CD conducted by Kenneth Nafziger and performed by the Story Musicians presents a selection of the hymns in our newest supplement to the hymnal. Listen and learn or sing along!

**Amish Grace**, by Donald B. Kraybill, Steven M. Nolt and David L. Weaver-Zercher (Wiley, 2007) Adult Collection - MHI - Kra

This story of the Amish community's remarkable response to the Nickel Mines tragedy gives insights into who the Amish are and how they live their faith. Consideration of forgiveness: its roots, spirituality, practice and habit bring the question to "the rest of us" who also seek to more fully embody the teachings of Jesus.

**Radical Hospitality: Benedict's Way of Love**, by Father Daniel Homan and Lonni Collins Pratt. (Paraclete Press, 2002) Adult Collection PCD - Hom

The authors share monastic wisdom as well as stories from their own lives, encouraging readers to embrace the true meaning of hospitality - welcoming the stranger as a practice which contributes to the making of a heart. This is not a manual suited to the "cozy small world of our private homes and feminine nature", but a reminder to seek the sacred in every person.

**The Irresistible Revolution; Living as an Ordinary Radical**, by Shane Claiborne.

(Zondervan, 2006) Adult Collection PJ - Cla

Kathy Kelly of Voices in the Wilderness describes this book as one "written with endearing humor and astonishing courage...a young man's embrace of uncompromising commitment to Jesus teachings." Claiborne call us to "begin to be Christians again" in this book that will "comfort the disturbed, disturb the comfortable and invite believers to change the world with Christ's radical love."

**Library Committee - New Titles - May 2008**

**Real Justice**, by Ted Wachtel. (Piper's Press, 1997) Adult collection - SI - Wac  
Through true stories about face-to-face encounters between victims, offenders and community members affected by crime, the author presents a case for a new model of justice, a restorative model, REAL JUSTICE.

**Burning Bridges** (International Institute for Restorative Justice Practices, 2007) Adult collection - DVD Bur  
This 35 minute DVD documents the healing that came when a community brought restorative justice practices to a case of arson in Bucks County, PA.

**Building Peace**, by Mary Yoder Holsapple and others. (WCC Publications, 2004) Adult collection - PJ Hol  
This practical handbook provides step-by-step guidance for addressing the violence that prevails in our culture. The authors look at five sectors: educational, health, religious, media, public as they encourage readers looking for peace to work for justice.

**Brent's Journey**, by Brent Zehr. (Mahyco, 2008) Adult collection B-Zeh  
This book is a compilation of the author's blog entries and the comments of those who chose to communicate with Brent as he shared his thoughts about life and death after his cancer diagnosis in 2006 until his death in 2007. Brent asked that the blog entries be compiled to assist others facing difficult circumstances, demonstrating once again his unconquerable spirit.

**Sleep in Peace**, by Ingrid Hess. (Herald Press, 2007) Children's collection E-Hes  
Images of day's end all over the world, repeat and reassure, "God loves you, sweet child."

**Holiday Double Feature.** (Big Idea, 2004)  
Children's media DVD - Hol  
A Veggie Tale duo: "The Star of Christmas & The Toy That Saved Christmas."

**A Very Veggie Christmas** (Big Idea, 1998)  
Children's media CD - Ver  
Old favorite tunes and lesser known hits (?) such as "The 8 Polish Foods of Christmas."

**A Celebration of the Wilsons at Pastor Larry's Retirement**, December 2007, by Tom Anderson.  
Adult Media DVD - Cel  
This slide show in honor of Larry and Jane Wilson depicts their early years and pastorates in Oklahoma, Colombia, Ohio, and Illinois.

**Larry's Retirement Dinner**, filmed by Dan Schreiber. Adult Media DVD - Lar  
A recording of Larry Wilson's Retirement Dinner held December 15, 2007 in Urbana, Illinois.

**Is it Okay to Call God Mother; Considering the Feminine Face of God**, by Paul R. Smith. (Hendrickson, 1993) Adult collection I Smi  
Southern Baptist minister, Paul Smith challenges the church to biblical fidelity and justice in its worship language.

FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH  
UNDERGRADS  
--Pastor Cindy Breeze

Below you will find this year's FMC undergrads – at least as we know them at this point. We hope to add more names as students discover our Young Adult class. Please remember these students in your prayers, and if possible, also remember them with cards and notes from time to time, especially on their birthdays. Please note that Katie Woodson graduates this December in case you want to send her a special note on that occasion!