

# SING!

College Mennonite Church

July/August 2016



## Where Migrants Travail

Reflections on Our U.S.-Mexico Border Service/Learning Trip

In this issue:

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His story was the story that many in our community fear. After living in the U.S. for 25 years and raising four children as a single parent, a late-night traffic stop led to his deportation. As several youth and I shared a meal with this man, we were touched by the way his selfless love for his children made it possible for the oldest to be in college and inspired the younger ones to prefer reading and science to video games. We were also touched by the injustice that causes this man to be separated from his children, with the timing of their reunion unknown.

Migration is something from which we can no longer hide, because we know where to find it. It exists on the tops of freight train cars that travel north through Central America. It exists in the harsh desert where it is difficult for anything to live. It exists in the *maquiladoras*—factories in Mexican border towns owned

by U.S. companies that take advantage of cheap labor. It exists in restaurant kitchens across the U.S. It exists in the strawberry fields of Michigan. It exists at CMC. It exists in our biblical heroes. Migration is and will be a human reality, and everyone in this reality should be treated as a child of God. Anything less is sin.

In Douglas and Agua Prieta, we learned a new appreciation for the struggles of migrants. In Puerto Peñasco, we were privileged to build a house with a family that had already migrated, and our work gave them a more suitable home. (See p. 4 for reflections from the youth and photos from their June 17-25 trip.)

As we continue grafting others into our lives and opening ourselves to being grafted into the lives of others, may the Holy Spirit fill us with patience, hospitality, and love.  
—Daniel Yoder



# Sing!

We worship together

## EVERY SUNDAY

**9:15 a.m. – Songs for Gathering**

**9:25 a.m. – Off-site Worship**

**Radio:** WGCS 91.1 FM: the Globe

**Online:** [www.collegemennonite.org](http://www.collegemennonite.org)

**Greencroft Communities:** Ch. 13

**9:30 a.m. – Worship service**

interpretation in Spanish and, on request, American Sign Language

**11 a.m. – Fellowship and Christian education classes for all ages**

## Pastoral Team

Phil Waite, pastoral team leader

Gwen Gustafson-Zook, outreach & worship

Marty Lehman, administration

Daniel Yoder, Christian formation – youth

Pamela Yoder, pastoral care

Talashia Keim Yoder, family ministry

## Ministry Coordinators

Claudia Granados, Hispanic ministries

Sheila S. Yoder, Deaf ministries

*College Mennonite Church is a member of Mennonite Church USA, an Anabaptist community of believers.*

*To learn more go to:*

*[www.collegemennonite.org](http://www.collegemennonite.org)*

*[www.mennoniteusa.org](http://www.mennoniteusa.org)*



Alix Lozano, pastor in residence from Colombia, visits with CMCers.

## This Month in Worship

For our summer “Grafted In” worship theme, we have engaged in stories. Stories of exclusion and inclusion. Stories of making space and honoring tradition. Stories of ethnicity and community. Stories of dividing walls and the hostilities that erect those walls. Stories of violence and peace. We have heard stories from Goshen, from Fort Myers, Fla., and from Colombia. Echoing in the background has been the recurring voice of the writer of Ephesians:

*“For [Christ] is our peace; [who] has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.”*

Our final stretch of worship this summer invites us to take what we have heard and to explore our own stories of grafting with candor and honesty:

- ◆ How have I experienced grafting in or having others grafted into my family of faith?
- ◆ When and how have I helped the grafting process within the body of Christ?
- ◆ When have I hindered the grafting process?

Having honored our stories, we are then invited to take one step further and ask: As a part of the household of God, how might I be used for good in the grafting process? The Ephesians passage that has served as our touchstone throughout this grafting exploration is actually preceded by a foundational truth that is both challenging and freeing:

*“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

This month in worship we are invited to gather as a community to honor the One who created us, to hear each other’s stories, and to dare to explore how God might use our lives to extend the peace that Christ has already set in motion.

—Gwen Gustafson-Zook

# Catching the Spirit

CMC Joins Four Congregations for Annual Bible School



The saying “It takes a village to raise a child” is aptly demonstrated each year through our week of Bible school—“our” being the village of five Mennonite churches: Assembly, Berkey Avenue, Eighth Street, Faith, and College.

Each year a group of dedicated volunteers, representing each of these congregations, gathers to put into action the Deuteronomy 11 text: “Fix these words of mine [God] in your hearts and minds.” This is the goal of Bible school—to teach God’s commandments and principles to our children. In Bible school we teach through drama, songs, stories, crafts, and relationships.

This year the planning committee worked with two changes of space. First, we rejoice that our younger children needed to “Come and See” in a larger room due to an increase in numbers. Also, due to sanctuary renovations, worship with the older children was conducted in the Genesis room in the basement. The planning committee wondered how it would work to “Catch the Spirit” (theme for older children) in this new space. We are happy to report the Spirit was active, moving, and inspiring in this informal space—so much so that we may use this space next year. Praise be to God.

Thanks again to the many volunteers who made this week possible and for the flexible space provided by CMC. —Sheila S. Yoder, Bible School planning committee



# “This Is Holy Ground”

## MYF Reflections on Their Service/Learning Trip

In late June, 18 CMC youth and adults travelled to the U.S.-Mexico border for a week of learning about immigration and the issues that cause people to leave their homes and migrate to the U.S. by crossing the border. During these eight days, they heard from migrants and from border guards. They helped deliver

water in the desert, and they prayed at the border fence. In the last two days, they worked with a family in Mexico to build a small house. It was a time of deep learning for all participants, youth and the accompanying adults.

Here they share some of their stories:

### Water in the Desert

On one of our days in Douglas we went with a group called CRREDA, which provides a group home for recovering addicts. One of CRREDA’s ministries is to leave water at different sites in the desert for migrants trying to cross the border. After we filled up the barrels with water, I gave everyone a paper crane that Jonah and I had made. These cranes became a symbol of hope for me, so I told everyone to leave the crane either at the barrel in the desert or when we got to the wall. Then we began our trip into the desert. We walked about a half-mile. I had a sprained ankle, but I still walked, with other people in the group helping me navigate my way through the ditches. We prayed at the wall and began our journey back. My ankle was bothering me and my fellow MYFers were worried, so they rotated carrying me back. This experience showed me God in all the people who helped me and the youth of our church.

—Savannah Friesen

### Café Justo

Many farmers were making good money selling coffee to the United States. A middleman would buy the coffee and sell it to corporations. But then the price went down, and farmers weren’t able to make money. In response to this, Café Justo was formed. At the beginning they paid farmers three times the amount as other buyers, simply by cutting out the middleman. Fourteen years ago the co-op started with 20 families in one community; now it serves over 100 families in four communities. Café Justo y Mas is a coffee shop in Agua Prieta that opened while we were there. It supports the community by giving jobs to recovering addicts from CRREDA and the opportunity to get back on their feet. We were also blessed to share a wonderful meal with them during our stay.

—Jonah Hochstetler

## Praying at the Border

While in Douglas, we stayed with Jack and Linda Knox. They live nine blocks from the U.S.-Mexico border, and each day we had the opportunity to walk to the “fence” together. We always began with holding hands in a circle and singing a song we learned from Jack and Linda, entitled “This is holy ground.” After the closing note, we would all move to find a spot along the border to pray. It was an amazing way to begin a day of learning.

—Melissa Bailey

## Border Patrol

Part of the learning experience of our trip was hearing both “sides” of the story. This included talking with border patrol officers on and off the record. For the safety of the officers, we were asked not to use their names.

On Sunday night we ate dinner with a border patrol officer, and after dinner we had an open discussion. The officer shared stories of drug busts and catching and caring for migrants as well as statistical information like the total miles that the border patrol watches and the number of officers.

On Monday morning the group went on a tour of the border patrol station. We were shown other rooms by the two officers. The tour was also followed up with a discussion, although less could be told on behalf of the government. It was a good learning experience for both parties and we are thankful for the opportunity.

—Madison Swartzendruber

## Building with a Family

The final four days of the trip we went to Puerto Peñasco, Sonora, Mexico, and built a house with and for the Contreras Castro family. Mario, Lucina, and their four children—Maria, Litzzy, Martha, and Omar—are a family full of love to share despite their economic hardships. We worked together, played together, and saw the light of Christ’s love reflected in each other. We were an answer to prayer for them for material resources, and they were an answer to prayer for us for the relational and spiritual resources they shared with us.

—Daniel Yoder

*photos by Elsie Koop Liechty and others*



# Welcoming a New Member



## Stephanie Yoder Shares Her Faith Journey



*On Sunday, May 29, Stephanie Yoder joined College Mennonite Church. Before her baptism in the memorial garden, she shared her faith statement:*

My faith journey started as a young child. I grew up in southeastern Pennsylvania, attending Plains Mennonite Church since my birth. I've always been a Mennonite, and if you look at my family tree, you will see I'm probably as Mennonite as one can be. When I was young, I enjoyed going to church and Sunday school—seeing my friends and learning Bible stories. My faith was strengthened at my school and I was happy. My faith grew, and I made a commitment to follow Christ.

As I entered high school, my faith journey changed. As friends moved away, church became more of a responsibility than a joy. I struggled with being involved in a youth group that was small but busy. And then, as might be typical in the Mennonite church, the topic of baptism was presented to our youth group. I watched many friends get baptized, but was strong in my decision that my baptism would be a special event, when I was ready to make the commitment. I did not want to get baptized with my friends but wanted to follow the Anabaptist idea of making a firm decision to join the church through baptism when I was certain it was what I wanted.

After high school, I came to Indiana to attend Goshen College, still not baptized. I was still disillusioned with church, although I still really appreciated the Mennonite

faith. When Justin and I started dating, I began attending CMC with him most Sunday mornings. I cannot say that we have been here every Sunday. In fact, for a few years we did not come all that often. However, we started attending more often when CMC began the Deaf Ministries program. After being heavily involved in this ministry for a few years, I felt like Justin and I needed to come back to church so that we could entertain a more active, conscious spiritual life. As I continue to meet and interact with people here, I realize how many ties people here have with my friends and family at home. This has made me feel more comfortable and at home here at CMC. It truly is “a small world after all.” I have also enjoyed attending the Wednesday night activities, as they provide a wonderful way to meet more people in the church.

In preparing for baptism, I met with Marty Lehman and Tim Lichti. As we talked about what church means to me and what I value in a church, Tim talked about the church being a life-giving place. This phrase really hit home with me. Church has not always been a life-giving place for me, but I look forward to that becoming my reality here at CMC. This journey towards baptism has been a long, winding journey. It has not always been pleasant, but it has been real. And through the support of my family, friends, and now my church family here at CMC, I feel ready to make a public commitment to Christ and his church.

—Stephanie Freed Yoder



*Stephanie and her husband, Justin Yoder*

# “I’ll Never Forget the Fruits of the Spirit!”

## Learning Together at Summer Programs for Deaf Children



Growing up, I participated in Bible school at my home church every year. I sang silly songs, did lots of fun crafts, learned about the Bible, and made new friends. It was something I looked forward to every summer. This summer, I got the opportunity to relive my childhood by participating in Bible school here at CMC!

However, this time I served as an interpreter for eight Deaf children in attendance. For many of these kids, this was their first experience with Bible school. It felt like a lot of pressure to be their interpreter. I was the one who had to make a clear translation of everything going on. My goal was for these kids to have access to Jesus and the Bible stories. This included access to songs! If nothing else, I know for sure they learned the nine fruits of the Spirit. After interpreting that song into sign language at top speed every single day, it’s ingrained in **my** head forever.

Bible school may have ended, but our fun did not. The week after Bible school, eight more children joined us for the Summer Activities Program day camp on Tuesdays and Thursdays. One boy I’ve built a relationship with is named Cameron. Cameron lives with his hearing grandmother. She doesn’t sign nor does his babysitter. He is five years old, but he is unable to tell me that. At five years old, Cameron can’t communicate his age. He can’t tell me his name. He can’t tell me his favorite color. Is it because he doesn’t know those things? No, of course not. Any five-year-old will excitedly tell you their age, or that they like pink better than green, but Cameron doesn’t have that luxury. He has not had the opportunity to develop language (either sign or spoken). So my challenge has been relating to him despite that, and all the while teaching and modeling good language skills and communication.

So far I’ve learned that Cameron loves stripes. If we are painting or coloring or drawing, his always turns out

to have a stripe pattern. For better or worse, I’ve also noticed his love for frogs. One day I found a dead frog in his backpack that he had picked up off the street. Later, that same day, I watched him draw a picture of a frog during craft time.

My growing relationship with Cameron shows me that God is working in both of our lives. I am excited to continue building relationships and watching God work in these kids’ lives as they learn about God and experience the church as a positive place where they are loved and understood. —Emily Evans, Goshen College intern, American Sign Language



*The Summer Activities Program of CMC is now in its fifth year and is led by Michele Ramer and Stephanie Yoder. This one-of-a-kind ministry provides Deaf children an opportunity to learn and to communicate in sign language, but more importantly introduces them to “church” as a welcoming place and to the stories of Jesus.*

*Thank you to the many CMCers who make this ministry possible through*

*donations of time and finances. —Sheila S. Yoder, coordinator CMC Deaf Ministries*



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## “Working with the Firstfruits”



*In June Scott Litwiller, long-time CMCer, joined the church staff as the new finance director. For the past several weeks, Marie Clements, outgoing finance director, has been working with Scott, introducing him to the many intricacies of church finance at CMC. If you don't already know Scott, here's a brief introduction:*

I grew up in this congregation, attended public high school and then Goshen College, where I majored in accounting. An internship at Everence led to six years of accounting experience and 19 years of health insurance work, including individual and group claims and product planning, with a focus on Medicare supplement. I found this work always interesting. The most rewarding part of it for me was working with people from different departments who brought a wide variety of skills, leading to successful project completions.

I'm excited about working within the mission of the church, for the benefit of young and old, for work here at home and around the world. I've been impressed with the skill of our pastoral team and their ability to work well together. And that's important in a church with so many things going on each and every day.

In a recent conversation, a member of the congregation observed that we're working with the firstfruits of people's time and labor. That's powerful. I carry that with me.

—Scott Litwiller

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## Practicing “Grafting In”

On Sunday, July 3, the Weavings and Growing Roots classes met for a potluck lunch in the Gathering Rooms. It was a great combination of ages, from one-year-old Ava to those in their 70s. We introduced ourselves. We talked and laughed as we ate together and enjoyed our intergenerational fellowship.

This is one of the many wonderful things happening this month as we practice grafting in. Sunday school will start again in August, but hopefully we can continue to break bread and share stories together. Go to the bulletin board by the literature boxes to share what you have been up to this month, or to get ideas from what others have done!



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## Mark Your Calendar *(See the weekly Sunday bulletin for a full list of church activities.)*

- July 31** CMC hosts guests with Interfaith Hospitality Network
- Aug. 14** New Sunday school year begins for children
- Aug. 28** Ice cream social for Goshen College students, 8 p.m.
- Sept. 4** Hymn sing (second hour) and potluck to welcome Goshen College students

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