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REFLECTIONS – SARAH UNRAU

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Different Types of Love

To me there is something so appealing and central to my personal faith in the verses of 1 Corinthians 13 and 1 John 4: 7-21. Maybe those verses are a bit cliché, but cliché for a reason I suppose - there is obviously a timeless wisdom in these passages on the subject of love. Based on this, I have decided to engage the youth in discussions which I have labelled "Different Types of Love".

These different types of love refer to the genres of love such as Agape which is a deep and unconditional love and Eros which is a romantic love. It also refers to the various relationships we can have whether they are friendly, sexual, straight, gay, spiritual etc.

Planning for this, I was anticipating some of these topics to be sensitive or even controversial for some kids. At the forefront of my thoughts was the topic of homosexuality as fits into the Christian journey.

So we talked about it. We looked at the verses.

What transpired was that these youth embraced agape love so fluidly towards the subject that there was almost a non-issue. Some did not even understand why there was a controversy to begin with. They were so willing to set aside differences to welcome all peoples

into their lives. I asked the kids what they thought about NPMC and if they thought it was a place of acceptance. There was a unanimous nodding of heads and affirmations made that they thought that indeed, Nutana was a place of acceptance. Many of these kids are not connected to our church beyond youth. It is heartwarming to know that they view Nutana as place of welcoming and safety which is affirmed by the statements in our bulletins: *"Nutana Park Mennonite Church welcomes into fellowship and membership all persons who confess faith in Jesus Christ, without regard to their race, ethnic background, gender, age, sexual orientation, income, education, ability, and other factors that give rise to discrimination and marginalization."*

This view of acceptance is working within the youth every time they meet. They reach out to those who are new or shy or maybe unlike themselves. There is so much hatred and prejudice and diversity in the world, in our society, in our schools and even in our churches but our NPMC youth make me hopeful for the future possibilities of Agape in these social groups.

continued on page 2...

CHURCH Family News

Joys

For the peace and joy of the Christmas season and all who contributed to the celebration.

The generosity of our congregation toward the Venture Club program.

Betty Brown's needlework talent.

New grandparents **Marian & Lynn Driedger** on the birth of granddaughter Calissa Elisabeth.

Those among us who contribute to worship beyond Nutana Park.

Our opportunities to worship with St. Martin's United Church.

Cross Walk

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Mennonite Church**

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*Photographs, articles,
funeral tributes, and recipes
are welcome for submission
to Cross Walk.*

*Please give Lori
suggestions of other items
to be included in Cross
Walk.*

**Articles for the next
Cross Walk are due on
April 7th.**



The dedication of Henri with parents
Karen Leis & Joel Driedger

Photo courtesy of Merna Ediger

Sadnesses

Alan & Trudy Reese who mourn the death of Alan's father.

Ag Peters, Marlene & Dave Froese, Edith & Armin Krahn, Garry & Glenis Koop and Olive Epp who mourn the death of Mary Koop.

Frank and Betty Bailey on the death of Howard Janzen.

Fred and Betty Wieler on the death of Dora Friesen.

Sarah & Abram Loewen and Helen & John Siemens on the death of Marie Loewen.

Family and friends of Susie Kasper.

Inez Kinzel on the death of Esther Friesen.

Verner & Anne Friesen on the death of Irvin Friesen.

The family of Judy Funk.

REFLECTIONS - continued from page 1

Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. [Love] Doesn't force itself on others. Doesn't keep score of the sins of others. [Love] Always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end.

-Excerpts from 1 Cor. 13:3-7, The MSG

I have enjoyed the opportunity to participate with the Board of Deacons and staff in a facilitated strategic planning experience over the past few months. It has been exciting to give intentional thought to who we are as a congregation within our church, our local community, the province as well as nationally and internationally.

We were provided with some valuable reading which together with the surveys from the congregation gave us meaningful direction for our strategic planning day. One of the articles that was most poignant for me was entitled: Gospel-Driven Communities: Being a church with the Biblical Vision of Justice. It presented the perfect alignment of my faith journey and social work practice. This article focused on the importance of gathering and sending. “Gathering is the nurture, the preparation, the celebration, the education, the discernment. It’s about nourishing faith, nourishing the community, about remembering our story, sharing prayer, and being prepared for the second part of the drama called sending. Sending . . . conversely is the work outlined and given a vocabulary by language like solidarity, advocacy, compassion, and forgiveness in its many forms.” Gathering is coming together to worship and learn sending takes us out into the community to act and to support each other with daily joys and concerns.

Two of the questions in the survey asked: What difference does NPMC make in the broader local community? What difference do we make in the world? The questions solicited responses with comments speaking specifically to service opportunities, the engagement of neighborhood children and families, compassion for the less fortunate and hopes to promote peace and harmony in the community in which we live as well as to support immigrant and refugee groups and our Mennonite organizations.

I was reminded of the plaque that hung in my childhood home. The teaching of Menno Simons continues to be as relevant today as it was when it was written in the 1500’s.

True evangelical faith cannot lie dormant
It clothes the naked, it feeds the hungry,
It comforts the sorrowful,
It shelters the destitute,
It does good to those who do it harm,
It binds up that which is wounded,
It has become all things to all people.

I invite you to reflect on why we gather and how we send. We are blessed with a generous, talented and committed congregation. We have great capacity to contribute to the many needs within our church and in our local and global community.



Reflections From the Board Chair – TRISH ST. ONGE

Book REVIEW

- JAKE ENS

Enn Bloomenheim
Oppjewossen
(Growing Up In
Blumenheim)



ENN BLOOMENHEIM

Jack Driedger

Book Review:

Enn Bloomenheim Oppjewossen (Growing Up In Blumenheim)

Small Mennonite villages in Saskatchewan and Manitoba are unique. The rest of the prairies were settled by homesteaders from all parts of Europe, so most communities were mixtures of Ukrainian, French, Scottish etc.

When Mennonites first came to Manitoba in the 1870s, they were granted certain privileges – the right to have their own schools in German, exemption from military service, and the right to settle in villages where they could go out to work their land without having to live on it. Finally, they were given access to large blocks of land, called Reserves, two in Manitoba, and twenty years later, two in Saskatchewan, for the exclusive settlement of Mennonites. In these villages they could live and work as their families had for many generations. Although High German was the formal written language of instruction, the common language in use in the homes and streets of the villages was Low German.

Jack Driedger's book tells the stories of life as it was in these villages during the 1930s and '40s, as seen through the eyes of a growing boy. Because it is written in Low German, this book captures the essence of village life. He creates word pictures so vivid that you can feel the heat or the cold, taste the dry dust, smell the flowers, taste the vegetables, sense the desperation of the depression, and feel the deep sense of community.

The book touches on all of the things that capture the interests of a growing boy: horse drawn, covered sleighs, the Model T, the first motorcycle, radios, watermelons, hog butchering, Christmas, fishing, hunting gophers and rabbits, and of course, school

and family life. The one element, conspicuous by its absence, is any mention of Church life.

Because the stories are set in the 20s and 30s, they also capture the changes that were coming thick and fast. Villages were forced to set up schools using English as the language of instruction. The curriculum was set by the provincial government, not by the local church. Increased mechanization uprooted generations of agricultural practices. Looming over all of this was the terrible choice between pacifism or military service for the young men.

The stories in the book are often humorous, showing the dry wit of the villagers; sometimes deeply sad, but always evocative of the life as it was then.

This book is a must read for anyone who grew up with Low German as their mother tongue. It takes a chapter or two to become familiar with the written form of Low German. Jack makes the reading easier by reading part of the book on his web page (in itself this is a measure of the enormity of the changes that have occurred in the past 70 years). I found following along as he reads, soon get you into the right groove.

Anyone who lived in one of the villages north of Saskatoon, or south Swift Current, or in the reserves in Manitoba will love this book. For the Mennonites who came to Canada later, it will take a bit more effort to read, because the Low German in this book is typical of the Old Colony Mennonites. For those who know no Low German, one of Jack's English books will have to do (there is an English version of this one).

Patty's Picks

Food and the City by Jennifer Cockrall-King believes that urban dwellers can creatively garden and eat healthier and more cheaply.

The Bartender's Tale by Ivan Doig is a fun family tale with some of the best writing I've laid eyes on in awhile.

Darling Companion (DVD) with the great Diane Keaton and Kevin Kline is a must see for all dog lovers.

The Hobbit was fun on screen with humour and amazing special effects.

Les Miserables on screen was lovely. I'd like to see the stage version sometime.

The Yellow Birds by Kevin Powers is about the experience of Iraqi veterans on the field and at home. A difficult but important read.

Patty's Ponderings

I am drawn to family memoirs. They give insight into what others have gone through growing up and make my family look pretty good. How do we survive family drama and not repeat the mistakes of previous generations?

The Distance Between Us by Reyna Grande is the Mexican Glass Castle where a young girl survives a complicated childhood to lead a successful life.

Closing Time by Joe Queenan is

another memoir about the devastating effects of alcoholism and mental illness. It shows the importance of supportive relationships outside our families.

Lucky Girl by Mei-Ling Hopgood describes an adoptee who finds her birth family in Taiwan. It is an journey of identity, cross-cultural challenges and what defines family.

May God help us create strong loving families.

Flashpoint and forgiveness

Patrick and I have been watching the Canadian cop TV series *Flashpoint* this winter. While we are not usually into cop shows, we've been impressed with the negotiation, and psychological aspects of the show. The Strategic Response Unit (SRU) tries to understand the background and emotional trauma of the people in crisis and make peaceful resolution with them. If that doesn't work, then they shoot them!

I keep making the application to conflicted situations at work where if I understand what residents and staff are going through in their personal lives, then it is easier to empathize and

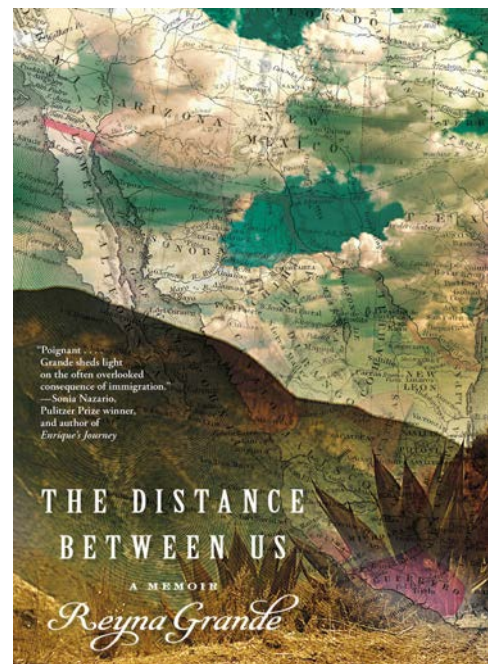
talk down their anxiety. When that doesn't work, I'm tempted to shoot them also.

Forgiveness by Paula Huston reminds me that negotiation and understanding in relationships must be undergirded with forgiveness. Ultimately, forgiveness is my letting go of my hurt in the situation and my need for a just outcome. The Lord's Prayer suggests that I must forgive if I am to be forgiven myself. This Lenten season, I'm asking for God's help with forgiveness and understanding and everything else I need to faithfully follow Christ to the cross.

Nutana Park Mennonite Church

Patty's PICKS

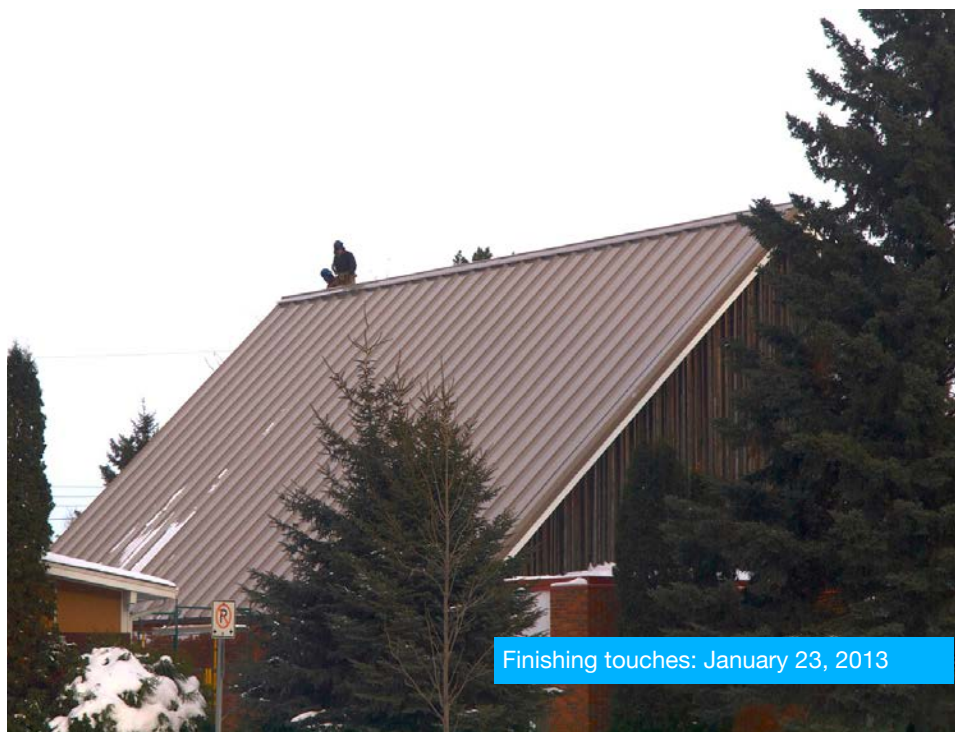
- PATTY FRIESSEN



Gallery

Our New Roof

Photos courtesy of
Howard Giles



To see more photos of
congregational life go to:
npmc.smugmug.com