

# The Messenger

December 2021 • Volume 83, No. 12



**EIGHTH STREET  
MENNONITE CHURCH**

A congregation of Mennonite Church USA



Eighth Street Mennonite Church is a Christian community, rooted in Anabaptism, that welcomes diversity and is devoted to worshipping God and to extending God's love to the congregation, to Goshen, and to the world.

## ***"There's a Wild Hope in the Wind"***

### About Our Advent Theme Hymn

by Janeen Bertsche Johnson

Each Sunday during Advent, we will be singing a hauntingly beautiful new song, "*There's a Wild Hope in the Wind*" (#828 VT). The composer, Lora Braun, came to AMBS as a young adult just after participating in a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Youth Discovery Team which brought young people from North America and Zambia together into a music group. She soon started a music group at AMBS that sang African music for chapels and other occasions. Lora was a bright, energetic, and compassionate woman, devoted to healing the brokenness she witnessed in the world.

After graduating from seminary in 1998, Lora served with MCC in Lesotho, Southern Africa, where she taught elementary school. Then she returned to Manitoba and became a music therapist. In 2005 she married Gerald Pauls, and they settled in Morden where Lora was very involved in music, preaching, and teaching at Morden Mennonite Church. Two sons were born in 2011 and 2014.

Laura composed "*There's a Wild Hope in the Wind*" in 2014. The original song had four verses, with this as verse 2:

*"There's a wild hope in the trees, her skin is as rough as the bark.*

*As smooth as a leaf, we can feel her belief, there's a wild hope in the trees.*

*O God in the trees, come, heal our dis-ease, be our courage and promise.*

*The future is dim, but we want to live into a wild, wild hope."*

The line "the future is dim but we want to live into a wild, wild hope" took on another layer of meaning in 2015, when Lora was diagnosed with incurable cancer. Despite the side effects of treatment, Lora and her family lived life fully. "I deal with dying by living," she said. Laura died October 22, 2020, just before the *Voices Together* hymnals arrived with her song in it. She was 49. I am so grateful that we have her song as an ongoing gift of her presence and a testimony of her hope.



Eighth Street Mennonite Church · 602 South Eighth Street · Goshen, IN 46526-4019

[8thstmennonite.org](http://8thstmennonite.org) · (574) 533-6720 · [office@8thstmennonite.org](mailto:office@8thstmennonite.org)

Pastors: Brenda Sawatzky Paetkau & Julia Gingrich

# December Shalom Gift

## *Connecting Mennonites at Eighth St. with Mennonites in Burundi*

By Lavon Welty



The Shalom Gift for December is to raise money for the cost of replacing a roof in a Mennonite congregation in the small central African country called Burundi. Through a mentoring relationship through the Journey Program between Lavon Welty and a 2018 refugee immigrant from Burundi, Charles Baraka, this need was brought to Eighth St. The church is located the Kanyosha district in the southern sector of the city of Bujumbura, the economic capital of the country.

Lavon did his alternative service in Burundi in the MCC Pax program 1961-63. That was the connection that set up the mentoring relationship with Charles Baraka who fled the country in 2012 to live in a crowded refugee camp in Malawi. In 2016 his family was chosen to come to the US but the political circumstances in the US delayed Charles and his wife and three children coming by nearly two years.

Finally in December 2018 they landed in Madison, Wisconsin—imagine arriving in the beginning of winter from sub-tropical Africa! The family had related to the Mennonite church in Burundi before leaving the country. So, after Charles made contact with Madison Mennonite Church, members reached out to them to provide them with winter clothing.

Earlier this year, violent rainy season storms that flooded some of the coastal areas along the northern edge of Lake Tanganyika blew the roof off the Bujumbura congregation's building. Charles heard of this and asked whether Lavon might find a source of funding to replace the metal roof. The estimated cost of replacement was around **\$2,000**.

*(Article continued on page 3)*

*(Article continued from page 2)*

The need was somewhat urgent—the dry season June-September would provide the best time to do the work. Gratefully, the church received a loan and the roof was replaced during the dry season. The picture in the article shows the roof project nearing completion in late September before rains began again. Worship services again take place in the space.

Any money raised beyond \$2,000 to repay the loan will be sent to MCC which maintains a small program in peacebuilding and agriculture in the country. MCC is currently recruiting personnel to go to Burundi to strengthen their peace building efforts. Charles himself hopes to return to Burundi to again personally lead a ministry he began before he needed to leave, Amahoro Ministries for Communities, which continues even in his absence to build bridges of relationships between the Watutsi and Bahutu, the two predominant tribes in the country that have long been in conflict with each other. Additional information on this project can be found in the following links:

[MCC in Burundi.pdf](#) A brief description of MCC's agriculture program is attached copied from the Fall 2021 issue of A Common Place, an MCC quarterly publication. Avocados are being cultivated for sale in the country and eventually for export.

[2021 Dec Shalom gift description-pictorial.pdf](#) More pictures of the roof replacement project.

[Mennonite church Burundi.pdf](#). A report written by a church leader providing information on the Christian church in Burundi including Mennonites. Included are comments on the roof project.

Connecting Eighth St. with Mennonites in Burundi and the Bujumbura congregation—will you help?



### **Attention Medicare Recipients**

The annual Open Enrollment Program begins October 15 and goes until December 7.

This is a good time to review your Medicare Part D drug plan or your Medicare Advantage plan. Sometimes Drug plan premiums go up, sometimes they go down, your medication requirements may change, so maybe a review is in order. Jim Bare is still a volunteer for the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and would be happy to review your program with you.

You may call him directly or call the Elkhart County Council on Aging  
(574-295-1820) for an appointment.

# From the Church Library

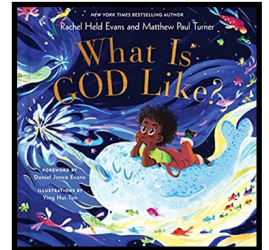
By Eileen Saner

Cherish the season with the little ones in your life by reading Christmas picture books now on display in the library. Two cookbooks produced by Eighth Street Church women are on display.

The [October 29 issue of Anabaptist World](#) has a wealth of book recommendations, many of them already in our church library.

Evans, Rachel Held, Matthew Paul Turner, and YingHui Tan. ***What Is God Like?*** First ed. New York: Convergent Books, 2021.

“This picture book ... features a diverse cast of characters including various skin colors and physical abilities modeling the wonder of God.”



Larry, Susannah, and Kat Armas. ***Leaving Silence : Sexualized Violence, the Bible, and Standing with Survivors.*** Harrisonburg, Virginia: Herald Press, 2021.

The [AW cover article](#) is an interview with Susannah Larry. She explains how some of the Bible’s most difficult texts can serve as a healing witness.

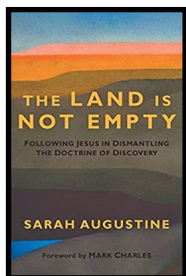
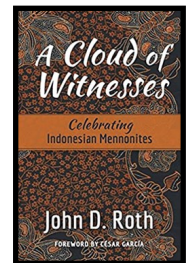
Nyce, Dorothy Yoder. ***Decades of Feminist Writing.*** Goshen, IN: Dorothy Yoder Nyce, 2020. (p. 15)

“Yoder Nyce contributes a strong Anabaptist voice to the story of women shaping religious history and sacred thought.”

Roth, John D. ***A Cloud of Witnesses : Celebrating Indonesian Mennonites.***

Harrisonburg, Virginia: Herald Press, 2021. (p. 14)

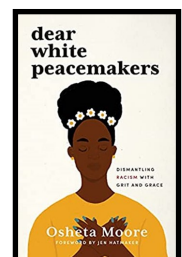
Learn about the host churches of Mennonite World Conference 2022 whether or not you are able to attend.



Augustine, Sarah. ***The Land Is Not Empty : Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery.*** Harrisonburg, Virginia: Herald Press, 2021. (p. 17)A leader in the Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery Coalition shares deeply from her own native roots and passion to seek justice for indigenous peoples.

Moore, Osheta, and Jen Hatmaker. ***Dear White Peacemakers : Dismantling Racism with Grit and Grace.*** Harrisonburg, Virginia: Herald Press, 2021.

[Extended review](#) on p. 41 of *Anabaptist World* issue.



If there are other titles in the AW issue that you think would be of interest to Eighth Street readers, please let me know. Eileen Saner [eksaner@gmail.com](mailto:eksaner@gmail.com) Search the [library catalog](#) for other books and videos. The library is open Sunday morning 9:00 – 11:30a and during weekly church office hours.

# A Reflection from the Land Acknowledgment Team

By Janeen Bertsche Johnson

It was Potawatomi writer Robin Wall Kimmerer who first introduced me to the idea of speaking about non-human creatures with personal pronouns--"he" or "she" instead of "it." And it was local Potawatomi leaders who have suggested that one way we can offer reparations for the loss of their land in the early 1800s is to work at the restoration of the land in our region. With that background, I share some of the reflections from my recent mini-sabbatical, when I spent the first week of November at Camp Friedenswald. The focus of my reading and reflection that week was trees. (If anyone wants to read all of my reflections, email me at [bjohnson@amsb.edu](mailto:bjohnson@amsb.edu) and I'll send them to you.)

One of my favorite places on the Camp Friedenswald property is the Red Oak Preserve. In the 1980s when my uncle was camp director, he planned to sell some of the red oaks to help the camp's finances. Each oak would have brought thousands of dollars. But some naturalists who were part of camp's constituency invited the Michigan DNR in to see the area, and the DNR proclaimed it one of the top five virgin oak stands in the state of Michigan (the sign on the path now says the second-largest oak preserve in the state). Thanks to their intervention, the oaks were not harvested. A few of the ancient ones still stand today—150, 200, or more years old. It is humbling to realize that these trees witnessed the native Potawatomi people who lived around this lake with their chief Shavehead, the lake's namesake.

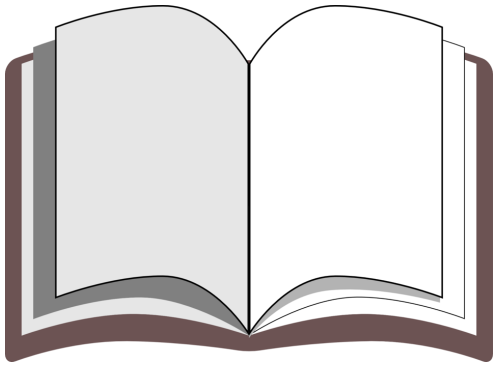


As I climbed the path through the red oak preserve, I stopped to greet my dear friends. First I sat on the trunk of grandfather oak, downed by a storm a few years ago. I noticed the rows of fungi now feeding on his bark. Twelve feet away was mother oak, my favorite tree in the forest. I leaned against her, feeling her strength, noticing the root that curved out to welcome critters into the deep crevice at the base of her trunk. I stepped off the distance between her and father oak a bit up the hill—thirty feet exactly. He is slightly larger than mother oak at the base, but not quite as accessible to people hugging him because a hickory sapling is nestled up against him. Sixty feet on up the path was grandmother oak, also downed by a storm. Her trunk's remains showed that the wind was strong enough to twist her inner fibers before flinging her upper body to the ground. Now she is a picnic table for the squirrels, who left the remains of nuts on her, and a host for many rows of shelf fungi.



I looked up, way up, to see the spread of mother and father oaks' canopies. They are not wide trees like the oaks in the savanna. The competition for sunlight kept them growing straight and so tall. But at the top, their canopies barely touched one another, as if they were exchanging a lover's caress.

When I stand beneath the oaks and look up at their towering canopies, I can't help but be moved and think of the words of Psalm 8: "Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens."



## **Book Study for January**

*by Eileen Saner for the Connections Class Planning Committee*

Beginning in January, the Connections Class will study *How to Have an Enemy: Righteous Anger and the Work of Peace* by Melissa Florer-Bixler. This book was selected to build on our study of scripture in November and to support our ongoing engagement with the community.

The book is available at Fables and online through Herald Press. Watch for more details in the Friday Announcement emails.



## **Second Hour Plans for December:**

### ***Connections Class***

**December 5:** The Poor Peoples Campaign—dialogue led by Rod Hollinger-Janzen

**December 12:** No meeting (Children's Program and Congregational Meeting)

**December 19:** Advent/Christmas Hymns in the Sanctuary led by Karen Hershberger with Brian Wiebe at piano and Shirley King playing the organ

**December 26:** No meeting

### ***Seekers Class***

**December 5:** Salt and Light curriculum

**December 12:** No meeting (Children's Program and Congregational Meeting)

**December 19:** Salt and Light curriculum

**December 26:** No meeting

### ***Children's Second Hour***

**December 5:** Christmas Play rehearsal

**December 12:** Christmas Program

**December 19:** regular classes

**December 26:** No classes



# *Eighth Street Preschool News*

By Emma Dugger, Director

We have had so much to be grateful for this fall. We appreciate wonderful financial support from fundraisers and direct donations. We are thankful for all the time given from Friday helpers, parents, and the preschool board. We are blessed by gifts from our wish list and donations of new and used items by people that are moving or “spring” cleaning. There are many people that want to help, and many ways to be involved even as the pandemic continues, and we appreciate all of you.

In the last couple of months we have had two different evening events for our preschool families. In October, we had a very successful Parent Night for both our 3’s and 4’s classes. During this evening together the children got to sing, dance, read stories, show off their preschool classrooms, and decorate cookies with a parent.

In November, we had a Music Together night to give parents a first hand look at one of our new programs. We had so much fun singing and dancing with Miss Rachel. Thank you to the congregation for helping financially kick start this program!

In the coming month we are learning about the Christmas story and other cultural holiday traditions. It is always fun to hear the little voices singing Christmas songs and watching them create cards and gifts. The teachers use this time to teach about the season of giving. If you are interested in giving to the preschool you may go directly to our Amazon wish list or take an ornament off the tree in the preschool hallway and purchase that item. Thank you in advance!

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1DLSE98AEN757?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1DLSE98AEN757?ref=wl_share)

Thank you for your support from the congregation!



**Eighth Street  
Preschool**

**Rooted in the joy of learning**

# Question for 8th Streeters:

## What are the family traditions you are preparing for this season?



Thirty-three years ago I married in to the Amstutz family and with that came a big "test". I had to learn to make vereniki for the Christmas meal. Vereniki is a Russian Mennonite dish that is similar to a pierogi. The Amstutz's fill the "pocket" with dry cottage cheese, boil them and then top with a most delicious bacon gravy. In addition to the vereniki, we have ham and bacon, cucumber slaw, corn pudding, rolls and homemade chocolate pudding pie. Even when the extended Amstutz family gathered and had this meal, my own children and husband insisted that I also fix it for our immediate family as well. Many years ago just before we were married, my mother-in-law taught me to make this dish. I had to pass the vereniki test. I thought I would never get it to be as good as hers. One day I tried making it on my own at my house and didn't tell anyone what I was doing. Wouldn't you know it, Fred and Mary just happened to stop by, see me making it and stayed for dinner. I got approval and at that point, I knew I was completely accepted in to the family! I've made it every year for Christmas since then! - Portia Amstutz

In earlier years when I was pastoring a church we were unable to travel to be with extended families so we would often gather with our children and friends in our small church. Since our children have grown and have married and scattered we have been together only in small groups. Having moved to Greencroft this summer, our three sons and most of their families are traveling to Goshen and will be renting an airbnb. For the first time in many years we are looking forward to being together. —Myron & Rickey Schrag



*Last year, about 100 people (mostly from Eighth Street and AMBS) came to our woods for a "Nativity Walk" to see my collection of nativity sets. In the midst of the pandemic, it was great to see people in person and in a covid-safe manner. We had such a great time that we decided that it should be a tradition. This year, three other nativity set collectors are joining me for a "Celebration of Creches and Carols" that we will hold Dec. 10 (4:30-8:30) and Dec. 11 (12:00-4:30) in the AMBS chapel in Elkhart. Everyone is invited to come anytime during the open hours to see over 200 nativity sets and enjoy Christmas music, including Shirley Sprunger King on the seminary chapel organ! I hope that sharing my nativity set collection can be an ongoing tradition. - Janeen Bertsche Johnson*



## In the news...



*Sendoff for the Goshen College men's cross country team heading to Vancouver, Washington for the NAIA Cross Country National Championship that took place on November 19. The Maple Leafs finished in 24th place. Notice Liam Elias and Rustin Nyce (coach) from 8th Street.*



Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary has selected **Leonard Wiebe** (BDiv 1960) as one of two **2021 Alumni Ministry and Service Award** recipients. Leonard will be honored in a Zoom recognition event on **Tuesday, Dec. 7 from 6:30-7:15pm.**

Everyone is welcome to join the event at this link: <https://zoom.us/j/92493061519>. After the presentation of the award, Leonard will share reflections, and then there will be time for participants to respond.





**Janeen Bertsche Johnson and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary**

**invite you to**

**“A Celebration of Creches and Carols”**

**on**

**Friday, December 10th between 4:30 and 8:30 pm**

**and**

**Saturday, December 11th between 12:00 and 4:30 pm.**

*Over 200 international nativity sets from four collections will be displayed in the seminary chapel for you to view at your own pace. Musicians (including Shirley Sprunger King on organ) will perform Christmas carols, and there will be outdoor carol sings Friday at 5:00 and 7:30 and Saturday at 2:00 and 4:00.*

*Masks are required. There is no admission cost, but donations of food items for Church Community Services or contributions for AMBS international student scholarships are invited. The public is invited.*

**Reading Camp 2022 at Chandler School**

Reading Camp for second graders at Chandler School is returning January 25 through March 17, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, 3-4 p.m. In past years, Eighth Street adults have enjoyed spending this time with a child eager to improve reading skills.

Meet with the same child both afternoons or participate only one day a week. **Masks or face shields must be worn on school property.**

Each session begins with "Book Nook", online reading activities customized for your student. It is easy and fun to use. You will need to bring a laptop or iPad for your personal device. The remainder of the hour is for books and reading games.

This United Way-sponsored program is facilitated by Sharon Sarber, Volunteer Engagement Specialist of Goshen Community Schools ([ssarber@goshenschools.org](mailto:ssarber@goshenschools.org)). Please contact her by December 10 for more information and to be paired with a student.

# ***DECEMBER***

## ***BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES***

- 1 Aaron & Karen Gerber ('12)
- 6 Peter Martin
- 6 Jonah Reichenbach
- 10 Andy Ammons
- 12 Lily Nafziger
- 13 Kathy Smoker
- 13 Joel & Stacie Short ('03)
- 14 Audra Bechtel
- 14 Paul Yoder
- 15 Steve Johnson
- 16 Stef & Nancy Miller ('72)
- 16 Leah & Sam Richardson ('00)
- 17 Charles Shenk
- 18 John Nyce
- 18 Roger & Laurie Nafziger ('76)
- 19 Tina Bohn
- 20 Linden Woodworth
- 21 Phil Rush
- 22 Kristin Neufeld
- 23 Ron Rice
- 23 Sarah Johnson
- 24 Melba Bechtel
- 24 John Bohn
- 28 Karen Miller Rush
- 28 Kent & Linda Stucky ('74)
- 29 Aaron Nafziger
- 30 Zachery Berg
- 30 Stan Shetler
- 30 Dale & Christine Way ('10)
- 30 Evan Johnson





# December



Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
						1		2		3		4	
						5:00pm Worship Commission 7:00pm Christian Education Commission							
5		6		7		8		9		10		11	
9:30am Worship 10:15am Fellowship 10:30am Second Hour 10:30am Christmas Play Rehearsal						6:15pm Fellowship Commission		6:30pm Mission & Service Commission				9:00am Christmas Play Rehearsal	
12		13		14		15		16		17		18	
9:30am Worship 10:15am Fellowship 10:30am Christmas Program 11:30am Congregational Meeting (virtual) 1:00-3:00pm Jr/Sr Youth Christmas				5:00pm Stewardship Commission 5:00pm Congregational Care Commission 7:00pm Trustee Commission		7:00pm Church Board Meeting							
19		20		21		22		23		24		25	
9:30am Worship 10:15am Fellowship 10:30am Second Hour										Christmas Eve 6:30pm Christmas Eve Service (a virtual service)		Christmas Day	
26		27		28		29		30		31			
9:30am Worship 10:15am Fellowship 10:30am Second Hour				7:30pm Preschool Board									