

March 2022

**Hutterthal
Mennonite
Church**

Connection!

Making a CONNECTION with one another

RURAL INSIGHTS: REFLECTIONS FROM PASTOR RANDALL

Seeking God's Ways

When I memorized Isaiah 55:8-9 as a young child in my childhood bible church's AWANA program, I pictured God telling the ancient people of Israel as my parents often told me that I would understand their commands better when I was older. With years of living and development come wisdom, discernment, and experience that enable us to live life in far more prudent ways than when we are young. Interestingly, as I think of this text in Isaiah now, I don't think right away of God speaking as a parent but of God speaking as Jesus the Christ, the Messiah. I think of the sermon on the mount and the four other sermons of the book of Matthew that Jesus gave. I think of Jesus washing his disciples' feet, and I think of God coming as a helpless baby to the young unmarried couple of Joseph and Mary. I think of God touching the unclean leper and inviting the hated tax collector to a meal.

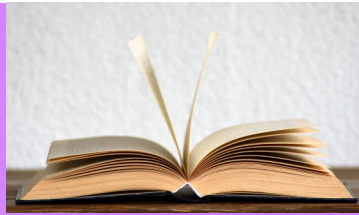
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REFLECTIONS FROM PASTOR RANDALL CONT.

I think of a God who destroys all of our pretense and assumption when we think that we know the best way, the right way, the logical way, or the only way. As soon as we attempt to box God in, God blows apart our boxes and escapes our grasp like the bitterly cold wind of these blustery winter days chilling us to the bone and reminding us how fragile and dependent that we really are.

In this 2022 Lenten season starting on March 6, we will spend 7 Sundays leading up to Easter, exploring the alternatives to our “best ways.” Will you join me this Lenten season as we journey to the cross and resurrection, asking God to reveal the ways of the kingdom that began with Jesus in Palestine so many years ago?



HMC LIBRARY REVIEW

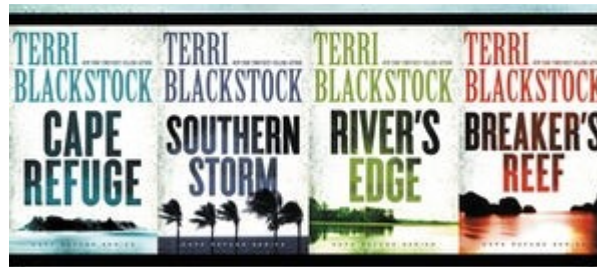
Submitted by: Rebecca Hofer

Cape Refuge Series by Terri Blackstock

The Cape Refuge series is a suspense series that follows the events and the people in a small fictional island town off the coast of Georgia. The little community hinges around Hanover House and its occupants. Hanover House is a type of halfway house run by a Christian family, the Owens. If you read the entire four books, you'll come to know the Owen's Jonathan, Morgan, and Blair, and their close friend the Cape Refuge Chief of Police Matthew Cade as they solve murders, grow in their faith, and face challenges that bring them closer together. The first book titled, Cape Refuge, begins with the shocking news of the deaths of two prominent towns folk. The whole community is shocked and scared to learn of the murders. Accusations and tempers run wild as new characters emerge.

Each book presents a new case or cases to be solved while still developing the Hanover House characters. Terri Blackstock does an excellent job weaving in real-life scenarios and difficult topics. She didn't shy away from hard topics that Christians face today. Instead, she gave readers a chance to see what might go on in the minds of others as they face these types of difficult challenges.

I enjoy reading Christian suspense novels and thanks to a close friend have come to discover Terri's books. If you decide to read these books, I recommend starting at the beginning. The HMC library has all four books in the series. The books are as follows: 1.) Cape Refuge, 2.) Southern Storm, 3.) River's Edge, and 4.) Breaker's Reef. I do not have a favorite book out of the series but instead would say that I enjoyed the collection as a connected and beautifully woven together storyline.





HYMN OF THE MONTH

Chosen by: Mary Rensink
submitted by Suzanne Koerner

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Mary Rensink chose the hymn, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” as her favorite hymn. The hymn was written as a poem in 1855 by Joseph Scriven to comfort his mother. He suffered from depression, especially later in life. Perhaps losing two fiancées to death shortly before marriage contributed to his state of mind. Scriven, at one time, tried to devote his whole life to Christian service. He published the poem anonymously, but it was accidentally discovered around the time of his death. The words were put to music by Charles Crozat Converse in 1868.

Mary said, “I grew up in a difficult family life. Therefore, I had few friends and was a lonely child. So the song we sang in church, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” became my favorite. Singing the words and knowing that Jesus would always be there for me, that He would always be my friend and savior, made it special for me. All the words and verses in this song gave me comfort, hope, and love.”

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy-laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.

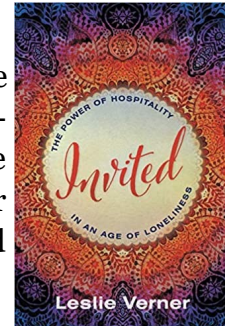


WINTER BIBLE STUDY

Submitted by: Suzanne Koerner

Winter Bible Study, 2022

Invited. The Power of Hospitality in an Age of Loneliness, is the book written by Leslie Verner that we have been reading and discussing for our winter Bible study. At the time of this writing we have studied seven of the ten chapters from the comfort of our homes via zoom meetings. Pastor Randall, Brigitta Hofer, and Les Rensink have all teamed up to lead the discussions.



In *Invited*, we have become aware that all of us as humans crave intimacy and community, but quite honestly with our crazy schedules, fatigue, aging, and less-than-perfect homes, we often shy away from what true hospitality can offer as hosts and guests. Our tendency to move from place to place can lure us toward individualism, independence, and the wish for privacy. Fear of taking too much of a risk, going beyond our limits and fear for safety can also cause us to question following the way of Jesus.

Throughout our study so far, many have shared stories of hospitality that have been inspiring and thought provoking. We have learned that hospitality can be organized and structured or chaotic and spontaneous. We have struggled with the question, “Is hospitality a spiritual gift and a special talent; or rather, is it a command in the Bible and a task for everyone. We have learned to not worry so much about what others are doing to be hospitable, but instead, to minister to those who are already on our “Jericho road.” How might God be calling us to get to know them better?

All are invited to join in the zoom sessions held at 7:00 each Wednesday evening through March 9.



LENTEN SERVICES

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways, my ways, says the Lord.

Isaiah 55:8

This is the theme verse for our Lent services as we explore a truth revealed to us each of the six Sundays of Lent, about the ways of God, as well as the many ways God's people get it wrong. Scriptures are often from the book of Luke and sanctuary visuals will feature items that represent that week's theme. You won't want to miss our 'special guests' that will be part of our Children's Time. Responsive readings and hymn selections are all inspired by that Sunday's scripture and theme. Our hope is that you will find encouragement to greater faithfulness as together we 'seek God's ways' during this Lenten season.



Thank you for all the get-well thoughts, prayers and cards the last months when I've been ill. It means so much to know you were thinking of me. I am continuing the hard work of healing and I look forward to joining you in worship again. *Mildred Hofer*

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A special thank you to my church family for all your thoughtfulness shown to me at Christmas and throughout the year. Your cards, letters, visits, phone calls, treats and other expressions of kindness along with your prayers mean so much to me. God bless you all. *Rosella Glanzer*



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Submitted by: Marsha Schrock

Look for dates and more information in the
April publication of the *Connection*





NEW CUSTODIAN

Submitted by: Marsha Schrock

Charlene Friesen has resigned after 20+ years of custodian service to HMC. We are grateful for her long and faithful dedication and wish her well in the future. She has passed the broom over to Jolene Thomas who has taken over custodian duties as of January 1st.



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Just a reminder to turn your clocks forward one hour

Sunday, March 13, 2022.

You can thank Benjamin Franklin for these fall and spring time changes. He came up with the idea in the summer time to help to conserve energy.



MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS

Submitted by: Joline Thomas

In Honor of Mildred Hofer's 90th Birthday March 10th.



1. In a paragraph or two share where you were born, your parents and siblings.

I was born on a farm just across the road to the south of what is now Derrick & Jessica Preheim's farm. Later we moved to the Dan Unruh farm along Hwy 44. This is where my happy childhood years were spent. When this rented farm was sold, we moved just a mile to the northwest. My parents are Jacob A. and Lydia (Kunkel) Fast. I have one older sister, Loraine Ortman, and two younger brothers, Gilbert and Curtis, who were great playmates growing up. All four of us siblings are still living and mean a lot to each other.

2. Is there a certain birthday that stands out in your mind and why?

We really did not celebrate birthdays when I was growing up.

3. Share your favorite Bible verse and tell why it is your favorite or how it has influenced you over the years.

"This is the day that the Lord hath made, I will rejoice and be glad in it." Psalm 118:24. Each day is a blessing, but there is also a responsibility in it to praise the Lord.



CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays:

- 4) Vernon P. Hofer
- 4) Shirley Hofer
- 6) Donovan Friesen
- 10) Mildred Hofer
- 11) Charlene Friesen
- 12) Rina Hofer
- 13) Todd Koerner
- 16) Savanna Timmerman
- 20) Cole Hofer
- 22) Morgan Koehler
- 24) Isabel Waltner
- 24) Bonita Hofer
- 26) Jaden Thomas
- 27) Vernon J. Hofer

Anniversaries:

- 3) Brandy Hofer & Sergio Lima
- 25) Delmer & Shirley Hofer



CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRIES

March Project: Soap or Hygiene Kits

MCC requests soap bars of all sizes and kinds to ship to hospitals and orphanages in countries where soap is expensive or difficult to obtain locally. 399 kg of soap shipped last year to *Ukraine*.

Keeping clean is an important part of remaining healthy, but families who have fled their homes because of disaster or war often struggle to afford these necessary supplies. Hygiene kits also are given through schools or Orphanages to encourage healthy habits for children. 77,240 hygiene kits shipped last year to Burkina Faso, Canada, Ecuador, Honduras, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Ukraine, the U.S., and Zambia.

NOTE: CONTACT BARBIE HOFER with questions

MCC Hygiene Kits

- 1 adult-size toothbrush (in manufacturer's pkg)
- 1 large bar bath soap (in pkg)
- 1 nail clipper (good quality)
- 1 wide tooth comb
- 1 hand towel (medium weight, dark or bright colors; approx. 16" x26")

Connection! Editor & Publisher: Morgan Koehler

**Advisory Board:
Chair- Marcia Schrock
Suzanne Koerner and Joline Thomas**

HMC Links

- Website - www.hmcfreeman.org
- “Like” Us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/hutterthalmennonitechurch

April Connection! submissions are due on Sunday, March 27th.

DATE	ATTENDANCE	INCOME
Jan. 30	45	\$ 880.00
Feb. 6.	(no Service)	
Feb. 13	54	\$3,341.00
Feb. 20	49	\$1,872.00

Connection! Published since April 2000