

Summer of Stories 2023: Hebrew Prophets

Submitted by: Pastor Randall Koehler

Hopefully, as we settle into the slower parts of our summer in July, we will also spend some time with stories from the Bible like we have the past two summers that I have been at HMC. June proved to be an intensely busy month, which culminated with the biennial national convention in the first full week of July, so maybe the slowing down part of my beginning to this newsletter article is really just my longing for my own schedule and my hope for yours.

Starting on the second Sunday, July 9, we will begin walking through the stories of the less-familiar prophets of the Old Testament or Hebrew scriptures. Their names all come from the minor prophets or what is also called the Book of the Twelve. Those twelve prophets are (1)Hosea, (2)Joel, (3)Amos, (4) Obadiah, (5)Jonah, (6)Micah, (7)Nahum, (8) Habakkuk, (9)Zephaniah, (10)Haggai, (11) Zechariah, and (12)Malachi.

As I planned the rest of the Sundays of the summer before we jump back into normal Sunday School activities and worship routines, I realized that I only had 8 weeks. I needed to whittle down my list of 12 (well, really, 15 if you count the major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel). We hear the most from the major prophets in the church calendar, so they were the first to go. I knew that we had chatted about Haggai and Zechariah during our Winter Bible Study series this past year, so I removed them from the list, too. So, I'm down to ten, and I realize that probably the most familiar story from the minor prophets is Jonah and the Whale (I mean big fish).

Removing the final name proved to be the most difficult. We often hear from Malachi during the Advent season, but Hosea and Micah felt like the most familiar of the names/stories to me when I looked at the list again, so I finally decided on leaving out Hosea. Really, we are going to explore the stories of 8 less-familiar Hebrew prophets this summer and find out what God might be speaking into our lives even through their ancient words. May we listen well.

Upcoming Events at HMC

- July 3-8: MennoCon23 in Kansas City, MO
- July 16: Nathan Epp preaching
- July 22: South Dakota MCC Relief Sale

Birthdays

- 1) Brynlee Hofer
- 28) Paige Hofer
- 29) Priscilla Hofer



Anniversaries

- 8) Vernon P. & Twyla Hofer
- 8) John & Monica Clem
- 23) Shane & Amy Hofer Vetch

We would like to thank our church family for remembering us on our 90th birthday with cards, flowers, food, phone calls, visits and other expressions of kindness. We will always treasure the memories of this special occasion. God bless you for your thoughtfulness.

THANK YOU!

—Marcella & Rosella Glanzer

August submissions due by July 26!

Date	Attendance	Income
May 28	68	\$1,155.00
June 4	100	\$3,799.00
June 11	57	\$2,039.00
June 18	54	\$2,455.00
June 25	58	\$746.00
Online Giving		\$400.00

July Congregational Ministries Project:

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) Project

Please give cash donations to Joyce Hofer, treasurer, or put in the CM mailbox.

My Blind Date with a Book Part 1

Submitted by: Suzanne Koerner

When Joline Thomas stood up in church right around Valentine's Day and announced a church library promotion that involved having a blind date with a book, I was intrigued. She explained that a variety of library books had been placed in paper sacks with a descriptive word or two written on the sack. In a hurry, I grabbed a sack without looking through them. Ripping open my sack on the way home from church (I admit we had not even yet reached Highway 44) revealed the title, The Too-Busy Book by Linda Andersen. "Really?" I exclaimed, as my eyes were drawn to the sub title, "Slowing down to catch up with life." The picture on the cover was a sideways candle with a wick on both ends, one burning, the other smoking as if it had just been blown out. Was this truly blind, or did The Spirit's hand guide mine to that particular book as a dating service would pair two individuals?

I read the first 18 pages on the way home from church and after lunch that day before my Sunday nap. Admittedly, I did not pick up the book again until June. I was too busy, I guess! When I told the *Connection* committee that I wanted to write a report on it, Aprille Birkey remarked that perhaps I could look up SparkNotes if pressed for time. We all laughed!

The Too-Busy Book was written especially for women, but not to help them get more done. Conversely, it both gives permission and a pathway to slow one's life down to more fully enjoy the process of living and connect more deeply with God. It contrasts a too-busy life full of "perpetual motion leading occasionally ahead but mostly going nowhere, because it's unfocused, unharnessed energy" to a fruitful life with time to spare where one can focus on God, a genuine interest in others, and serenity. Andersen says that a too busy life happens when we "let others run our lives instead of God and his good orderly direction. Busyness leaches our energy, our money, our time, and eventually our life."

Slowing down isn't just about saying "no." That didn't appear until chapter 15! Other themes covered in this book include finding Sabbath space, living simply and lightly, learning limits, saying "yes," appreciating beauty and nature, and having permission to play now and then.

In part two next month, I will explore ways that my own personal duties could leave me pleasantly tired but not stressed. I will endeavor to consciously choose to live with more margin in my life. I will ask God to join me in looking objectively at various slices of my life: the occupational, social, spiritual, recreational, marital, and so on. I will practice consciously slowing down and let you all know how that goes. At least for one month.

Prayer Shawl Group Disbanding

Submitted by: Kathy Pullman

The Prayer Shawl group has unanimously decided to no longer make prayer shawls. Our group started in 2006 and has a good run. The Prayer Shawl group has made approximately 467 prayer shawls and baby blankets to date. We had up to eight members, and have currently five HMC members that are involved in the group. Of this group, three members no longer attend HMC or can no longer crochet or knit, so that leaves just two people.

I have contacted all five ladies and they all agreed it was time to discontinue the group. They also suggested and are in favor of donating the money that was given to us by a special offering from the HMC congregation to the Congregational Ministries June project, "Cash for the Banquet." This total is \$329.66.

There are some prayer shawls that are still available. If anyone knows of anyone in need, please contact Kathy Pullman, Sherryl Friesen, Barbie Hofer, or Edie Tschetter.



HMC Links

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

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