

Learning and Sharing at MennoCon23

Submitted by: Pastor Randall Koehler

Over the week of the 4th of July holiday, I was sitting in a hotel room in downtown Kansas City, considering what seminars or short learning sessions that I wanted to attend alongside the worship services, meals, and other activities that filled the time for Mennonite Church USA’s national convention. What was different about this year in particular was that the delegate assembly had been separated from the convention, so I was able to attend all that were offered. In the past, the delegates would have to go to the assembly at different times throughout the week, which would eliminate our chances of going to a seminar that was offered during the same time.

But not this year. Instead, I was able to not only attend many of the seminars, I even offered one seminar of my own about conjuring hope in rural spaces. Roy Kaufman joined me and offered the background of the Freeman area as well as wisdom from his time as a rural pastor in the USA and Canada. For my part of the presentation, I shared several tools for engaging in rural ministry spaces, and I wanted to take some space in this month’s newsletter to share a revised list of those insights. Consider and reflect upon them as members of the church community that has encouraged, affirmed, taught, and equipped me as a pastor. Feel free to reach out to me with your thoughts, additions, corrections, or questions about them:

- Stick around, listen closely, and ask curiously about spoken and unspoken concerns.
- Seek the truth deeply embedded in the communal and cultural narratives of your region.
- Speak the truths of your place’s history and its possible bearing on the present
- Seek trusting relationships with all, especially those on the margins of your community.
- Read the scriptures and pray together often.
- Honor dialogue or conversation as the welcoming, safe space for all people to share.
- Take inventory of your relationships and how you can best relate to each one
- Affirm and empower people’s gifting; it is never too late for people to begin thriving.

Upcoming Events at HMC

August 12: Ice Cream Social at Prairie Arboretum at 6:30 PM

August 17: HMC in charge of chapel at Oakview Terrace at 2:30 PM

Birthdays

- 10) Genevieve Kramer
- 10) Jarrod Kramer
- 12) Norman Hofer
- 22) Marj Hofer
- 24) Aprille Birkey
- 25) Alyssa Hofer



Anniversaries

- 3) Kenneth & Aprille Birkey
- 6) Don & Marj Hofer
- 14) Eric & Michelle Neuharth
- 18) Norman & Darlene Hofer
- 26) Donovan & Sherryl Friesen

Date	Attendance	Income
July 2	63	\$1,726.00
July 9	61	\$3,882.00
July 16	51	\$2,740.00
July 23	73	\$1,174.00
Online Giving		\$400.00

Thank you so much to everyone who supported the relief sale in some way.

THANK YOU!

Hutterthal's My Coins Count project collected \$330.82 which will purchase almost 5 desks and the Kitchen Time Savers brought in \$800.00. To God be the glory!

September Connection submissions due by August 30!

August Congregational Ministries Project:

School Kits

Please place items in the tub in the library. Contact Edie Tschetter with questions.

Connection!

Making a CONNECTION
with one another

Editor & Publisher

Aprille Birkey
Office Hours:
Thursday 9:30 AM –12 PM

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My Blind Date with a Book Part 2 - Putting It Into Practice

Submitted by: Suzanne Koerner

Last month I wrote a review on a book by Linda Anderson called “The Too-Busy Book.” It guided and motivated readers to live freely and lightly, featuring brief meditations, prayers, and guided questions. I endeavored to take a month to intentionally practice the pathways of slowing down, having more reflective and focused time to enjoy fellowship with the Lord, and enjoy the process of living. In Part 2, I am reporting on how that unfolded.

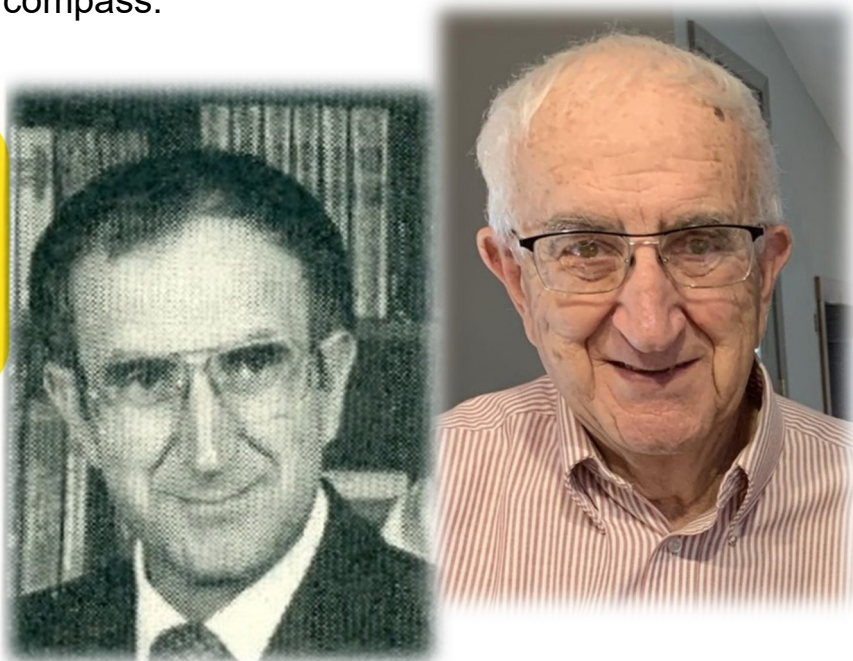
Summer for me is simultaneously a time for hard work and a less complicated schedule. Having one basic job to focus on (farming) is naturally freeing for me. Not having to juggle both coaching and food service duties as well is simple and straight forward. I find the reduction in emails, scheduling, and correspondence much less chaotic and stress-filled. Spending time with grandchildren invites a slower pace and playful spirit as well. What joy I have felt taking my grandson on a Mule ride to pick mulberries, to the bridge to throw rocks in the creek and laugh as they make a splash, and to venture under the bridge to see the rows of cliff swallow nests and watch as the baby birds grow up and eventually fly off. What pleasure ensues when I take him to watch Appa cut or bale hay. Those are days where there is no list to cross off. I am learning it is okay to not always get something done.

Going on vacation is a scheduled time for relaxing and letting go of the rat-race-pace of life. How convenient it fell within my month of reflection. For me, though, vacation can actually be seemingly more stressful than regular life. There is so little time to do all the things you want to do, and so hard to choose what will be the best things to see! Not to mention clamoring to finish up all the work before leaving the farm, and all the catch-up when you get home. We like to go to the mountains, and I live for hiking! Which trails will be the best, the prettiest, the grandest? On our 6-day vacation this July, I endeavored to savor the time away and not get so caught up in what would be the best. God led me to some beautiful places that were not even planned. On one particular trail around a lake, I was able to stop and realize I was conscious of all five senses! The rain coming down felt cool on my skin as it sharpened the deep pine forest smell. I could see the beauty of the lake as I stood on top of the dam and heard thunder, as well as the roar of the water cascading down the spillway while tasting the cool, refreshing water from my jug.

Going forward, I think life will get hectic again. I have discovered this month that I like to be busy; to be productive, to cross off things on lists, to get up early and tackle the day. But I have also learned that it isn't a contest. I don't have to win the busy award. I am learning to discover the signs of early fatigue and perpetual stress, and attempting to not get caught up in commitments that are not part of God's fruitfulness. In the words of Linda Anderson, “My list will not be my master but merely my compass.”



Join us in wishing
Norman Hofer a happy
85th birthday on
August 12!



HMC Links

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

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