

December 2025, Volume 49, Number 1

MEET JOSIE PFISTER

(We welcome Josie to our staff in Children's Ministries. She has graciously agreed to provide the following information about herself.)

BACKGROUND: (Where from, education, etc.) I was born in Bluffton and spent most of my childhood in Berne. I was homeschooled and studied music briefly at Taylor University. I enjoyed growing up on Fryback Lake, where I spent many summer days on the boat and many winter days ice skating! I grew up working on my family's crop farm. I did everything from sweeping the shop to driving tractors/semi-truck. Recently, I spent three months in Alaska volunteering at Solid Rock Bible Camp. This was an amazing experience. At camp, I was a counselor, lifeguard, and worship leader. I have also been teaching piano privately for four years and I currently have 25 weekly students.

FAMILY: My parents are Chris and Shari Pfister. I am the youngest of five. I am blessed to have a very big extended family. Many of my relatives live close to Berne!

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO GO INTO CHRISTIAN SERVICE?: It is very meaningful and fulfilling work. I have enjoyed volunteering with the children's ministry in the past.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR FREE TIME?: My main hobbies are playing the piano and guitar. My other hobbies often change—I like to find new things to try. In the past few months, I've gone rock climbing, hiking, white river rafting, horseback riding, and ice skating. In October, I got to ride in a stunt plane! I also enjoy movie nights at home, or just relaxing with my family and friends.

FAVORITES:

SONG: I'll Fly Away - Gray Havens

FOOD: Soup

TV SHOW OR MOVIE: Anne of Green Gables

BOOK OF THE BIBLE: Gospel of Luke

VERSE: Isaiah 40:30-31

PLACE TO VISIT: Coffee shops

FIRST JOB: Working on my family's farm.

PRIZED POSSESSION: My piano.

BEST GIFT YOU EVER RECEIVED: Rollerblades

BEST GIFT YOU EVER GAVE: A watch to my mom when I graduated high school.

update

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE FOR AN EPITAPH?: I hope that the relationships I have with people will result in a deeper understanding and belief in God. I also would like to be remembered as someone who did much with their life regardless of inhibition or fear.

WHAT WOULD YOU APPRECIATE PRAYER FOR?: Please pray that God would guide me and be present in my every-day life.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY TO THE PEOPLE OF FIRST MENNONITE?: Thank you for the opportunity to have a part in your children and grandchildren's lives! I am so thankful to be a part of this church. May God bless you.†

CANNER TIME

It is the time of year to sharpen your knives and get ready to fill cans as the MCC Meat Canner will be coming back to Berne on Friday, January 23 and Saturday, January 24, 2026. We will be doing cutting and grinding at 5:30 a.m. both days. We plan to wrap up Friday around 7:00 a.m. and around mid-afternoon on Saturday. If you haven't attended, we will be at the east end of the Family Life Center using the Red Room and canner room. All ages are welcome. We will have a job for everyone! †

CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

(Editor's Note: Several members of our fellowship have kindly consented to share some of their memories of the Christmas season)

Jen Meyer: When I think back to Christmas as a kid, one memory that rises to the top is Christmas Eve sleepovers at Grandma and Grandpa's house. My sisters and I stayed the whole night. I remember the way her living room felt—quiet, warm, and full of anticipation. One of my favorite parts was helping Grandpa fill the stockings. He always used the same things: apples, oranges, candy bars, and peanuts still in their shells. It felt like such a grown-up thing at the time, carefully tucking each item into place.

Christmas morning always came early. My sisters and I would wake up to the sound of Grandma moving around the kitchen making ham and eggs for breakfast. Before long, the aunts, uncles, and cousins would come through the door, everyone ready for Christmas breakfast. The house got louder with each arrival.

Before we ever opened a present, we all sang "Happy Birthday" to Jesus. I believe that small moment

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FOX TALES

Now that both of our children (and, more importantly, grandchildren) reside in Indianapolis, my wife and I have put a lot of miles on our car going back and forth to Indy. We take SR 218 out of Berne to I-69 and head south to the big city.

Along the journey our trip is marked by several places (sign posts if you will) that have special meaning to me.

The first is the corner of state roads 218 and 116. There on a fence by the stone quarry I once saw a kingfisher¹.

A mile before you get to I-69 is the house that my friend Larry used to live in. He moved some 20 years ago, but I still honk whenever I drive by.

On I-69 near mile marker 269 is where I once had a flat tire, and semi drivers made a game of seeing how close they could be to me when they drove by. At Exit 245 is a truck stop where one of my Taylor professors bought me a hot cider when we were returning from a lecture.

And Exit 210 is where my wife and I often stop for ice cream when returning home (everyone travels better with a little ice cream in their tummy).

These are all signposts on my journey to Indy and passing each one reminds me of some aspect of my life.

But I also have a list of major signposts in my life—the day I was born, when I graduated from school, the day I was married, the birth of my children, and maybe even the time I spent editing this newsletter.

Looking out the window of my car birds come and go, people move, and ice cream melts. And yes, even the thoughts and stories I put on these pages will turn to dust.

The day will come when I shuffle off this mortal coil and all of these dates that I celebrated will mean nothing. That is, all but one. The one decision that will have eternal consequences come the great judgment day will be my love and allegiance to my Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Thanks to the grace of God you do not have to be a Christian for a certain number of years in order to get tenured into Heaven. God longs for us to turn to Him, and by so doing we set up the most important signpost in our lives. The sign that points us into the loving arms of our Lord and Savior.—tef

¹ “Everyone...who has ever seen (a kingfisher) will remember where they saw it.” National Geographic November 2009, p. 83. †



AMONG OUR PEOPLE

Matvii, son of Andri and Inna Savelievi, facing surgery at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis.

Miriam Stauffer, daughter of **John and Renelle Stauffer**, was born on December 9. She was in the NICU at Dupont Hospital for observation.

Mark Sprunger had gall bladder surgery at Adams Memorial.

Twyla Sprunger was at Parkview for tests and observation.

Dick Smitley is recovering from a broken kneecap.

Carol Neuenschwander remains in therapy at Swiss Village.

Lora Sprunger is continuing with her immunotherapy through the end of the year.

Suanne Sprunger requests prayer for strength as she continues treatments.

Max Kline, son of **Kurt and Katie**, is recovering following an appendectomy on December 12. †

(“Christmas Memories” continued from page 1)

made us all pause to remember why we had gathered together. Only after that did the wrapping paper fly.

Looking back now, it wasn't the gifts that made those mornings special—it was Grandma in the kitchen, the crowded rooms, the stockings we filled the night before, and the feeling of being surrounded by people who loved so imperfectly.

Kevin McGeath: The year is 1991, I am eight years old, and it is Christmas. As was the tradition, even though we lived a mere five minutes away, we stayed over at Grandma and Grandpa's house on Christmas Eve in order to wake up at their house on Christmas morning—a tradition we all enjoyed. Every Christmas my sister and I received gifts we needed, wanted and one “splurge” gift from Mom. That year did not disappoint as I ripped open the paper and gazed upon an RC car set. Excitement gripped my face to the point where I was even amenable to taking a nice picture or two for whoever wanted one.

Over the next several months, excitement turned to annoyance at this toy that was supposed to satisfy my every longing. Little did I know, but these RC tracks did not work very well, and eventually the toy made its way to the place where all forgotten toys end up—the closet. Never to be played with again and eventually thrown away. Such is the case with so many gifts that we receive. Great hope is turned either to great annoyance because it was not as wonderful as advertised, or we simply grow tired of it and want something new and different.

(continued on next page)

Looking back at Christmases through the years, with a little more wisdom, a little better perspective, and a whole lot more gray in my beard than should be fair, the gift that “never made the list”, was the gift I would most long for today. All the family under one roof spending the night at the grandparent’s house. My grandfather passed away this year at the age of 90. He is the one I credit most in life for modeling the faith that I so deeply treasure today, and one key element in making all those Christmases what they were. Though he was always more than generous in his gifting to me, some of the gifts that have endured have been lessons in trusting and submitting to God’s plan, loving and serving my wife and family well, humbly serving in my church, and having character as a man. He lived a life marked by service to others, and put his hope in the One that gave us the greatest gift of all, and the reason why we celebrate this season. It has been these gifts that have never disappointed, never put in the proverbial closet and eventually thrown out, and I thank him for it.

So if you are reading this, and it is not yet Christmas, may I encourage you to stop and take a moment of quiet reflection. Amidst all the hustle and bustle, the gift wrapping and giving, the meal planning and eating, the busyness of programs and events, to take the time to think about those in your life, past and present, that make life truly a gift to you. What qualities do they possess? What do you treasure about them, and then be intentional. Give them the gift of telling them so. Then strive to be these things to someone else, be it, family, friend, neighbor, or someone you identify that needs it most. Lastly, go to the Father, and thank Him for these good gifts in your life. Thank the Son for giving up the riches of Heaven to be made poverty for us so that we could receive the riches of salvation, and thank the Holy Spirit for so graciously drawing you in to receive that free gift.

“And now, O lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in You.”
Psalms 39:7

Merry Christmas, church family, and thank you all for your many kindnesses to us. †

NOTES OF APPRECIATION

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the cards, the prayers and concerns for me during my recent foot/ankle surgery. It's been a long road I've traveled but God is so good!. He has taught me patience during this time. I'm so thankful to be part of a loving, caring and praying church.

Lori Sprunger

Your constant commitment to serve in God's "mission" that the whole world hears the good news, is particularly evident at Mission Festival time. We thank you for making it possible for us to continue in that mission that the people of Papua New Guinea can hear the truth about Jesus and understand God's love for them. God's word in their heart language speaks volumes and whispers encouragement as seen in these words from someone reading in their own language, "This is what we have been waiting for! I can read

this by myself!" Here are a few "Thank yous" from Bible translation teams that we pass on to all of you at First Mennonite.

Onobasulu team: "Wisō nafulu" or "Thank you very much!"

Bwaidoka mentor: "Thank you so much for all your help."

Madi mentor: "(We) Appreciate the help with this!"

Diodio mentor: "Thank you so much..."

"Tenkyu tru!", Dan & Arlene

Patricia and I are deeply grateful for your generosity and partnership in God's work in our part of the world. The fruit has been extraordinary (details we cannot share publicly), but we believe you would be amazed at what God is doing.

This year we trained many new coaches and church-planting leaders, and Patricia led multiple Business-as-Mission training programs. Through these efforts, thousands of lives are being transformed, and your giving is multiplying far beyond what any of us could imagine—impacting a region very close to God's heart.

Thank you again for your kindness and for the Missions Festival offerings. We believe God's hand is on First Mennonite, and He will continue to bless you in unique and powerful ways.

Loren & Patricia

We are so grateful to God for you and for your generous gift as you partner with us in our ministries with Wycliffe Bible Translators. Your Mission Festival giving is a representation of your love for the Lord and for us, as are your other gifts and faithful prayers.

Chuck and Carole Fennig

On behalf of the entire Agape Respite Care team and the families we serve, I want to express our deep gratitude for your generous donation of \$7,000.

Your support is a vote of confidence in our work and directly helps us in our mission to provide family support services and care for persons who have physical and intellectual disabilities to enable them to remain in the community.

We would like to send an invite to visit our web page: agaperespite.org and to see updates on our Facebook page from time to time: Agape Respite Care, Inc.

We are grateful for your continued support and we wish many blessings in return upon you. Thank you once again for your incredible kindness and commitment to our mission.

--Sherrie Kizer, Executive Director †

Update is the publication of the First Mennonite Church, Berne, Indiana. It is published once a month to keep our people informed about the news and events in the church.

Senior Pastor..... Jeff Linthicum

Editor EmeritusTom Fox

Among Our People.....Jim Schwartz

Address Service Requested

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
JANUARY 2026 				1 	2	3
4 10AM: "Encouragement" - Pastor Jeff Linthicum 7:00PM: Revelation 6 - Dr. Kent Lehman Offering	5	6 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	7 7PM: Genesis 38 Pastor Jim Schwartz	8	9	10
11 10AM: "The Kingdom" - Pastor Jeff Linthicum (Psalm 51:17 and Matthew 5:3) 7:00PM: Revelation 7 - Dr. Kent Lehman Offering	12	13 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	14 7PM: Genesis 39 Pastor Jim Schwartz	15	16	17
18 10AM: "Be Comforted" - Pastor Jeff Linthicum (Psalm 126:5-6 and Matthew 5:4) 7:00PM: Revelation 8 - Dr. Kent Lehman Offering	19	20 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	21 7PM: Genesis 40 Dave Keim	22	23 MCC Meat Canner	24 MCC Meat Canner
25 10AM: "Our Inheritance" - Pastor Jeff Linthicum (Psalm 37i:11 and Matthew 5:5) 7:00PM: Revelation 9 - Dr. Kent Lehman Offering	26	27 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	28 7PM: Genesis 41 Pastor Jim Schwartz	29	30	31