

November 2025, Volume 48, Number 12

SERVING AS HANDS FOR THE GOSPEL

Our church has a long history of supporting missions, both in the United States and around the world. Much of this can be traced back to the early work of Rev. S.F. Sprunger and the Women's Missionary Society that was formed in 1887.

Since 1954 one of the highlights of our church calendar has been our annual Mission Festival.

This year was no exception as our congregation was able to raise \$270,913.53 for missions, exceeding our goal of \$250,000.

Finances are an important part of missions, and prayer is an even more vital part of spreading the Gospel. But how do we continue to get future generations involved?

One way is to get all ages of the church involved in the work of missions. This can be short-term mission trips, writing to missionaries, and highlighting their work by having them speak when they pass through Berne.

But one of the best ways is to give people something to do that makes them feel like they are a part of the ongoing work of the church.

This was accomplished again in 2025 by the MCC school kit project. This allowed people of all ages to have a hand in helping others by packing school kits to go to help those in need in South Sudan. For the second year in a row we packed 2,000 kits.

Stations were set up in the Family Life Center, and work went smoothly as approximately 240 people were able to complete the task in under 90 minutes.

Continuing the previous tradition of making Christmas bundles, this allows our congregation to stay connected to missions through a multigenerational activity while introducing a new generation to the task of helping others.

This event serves the dual purpose of showing people in South Sudan that God loves and cares for them and continuing to nurture the importance of missions in our congregation.

update

COMFORTER BASH

Six members of our congregation journeyed to Pleasant View Church in Goshen, Indiana on Saturday, November 8, to take part in the MCC Comforter Bash.

These events are held throughout North America as a way to bring people together to help knot comforters to be used by MCC as needed throughout the world.

Over two days approximately 400 Mennonites of all flavors (and some non-Mennonites) volunteered to help complete 430 comforters.

Thank you to Brandi McGeath for helping to coordinate the response from our congregation.

HANDEL'S *MESSIAH*

Christmas is fast approaching, and there is no better way to welcome in the season than to attend Mennonite Choral Society's annual rendition of Handel's *Messiah*. This year *Messiah* will be presented on Saturday, December 6, at 7:00 p.m. and a shortened version on Sunday, December 7, at 3:00 p.m.

This year's soloists include: Dr. Lisa Moore, soprano, Marion, Indiana; Cassandra Petrie, alto, Fort Wayne, Indiana; Theodore Hicks, tenor, Anderson, Indiana; and Mark Stachofsky, bass, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

They will be joined by Mike Wilson, piano; Dr. Scott Lehman, organ; Josh Granger, trumpet; Cole Hyman, timpani; and Ada Conner, cello; all under the direction of Brent Hyman.

If you cannot attend the presentation in person. WFWA 39 (Fort Wayne PBS station) will be airing a recording of the 2024 Handel's *Messiah* from our church. The program is set for Wednesday, December 24, at 8:00 p.m.

Be it in person or sitting in the comfort of your home, plan to welcome the advent season by making this event part of your holiday celebration.



FOX TALES

Since I retired from my job as a probation officer I have filled up my days with a variety of other activities. One of those roles is serving as a substitute teacher as needed in the high school and middle school settings.

By far the most interesting, and most challenging, are the middle school students. They can love you one moment and be totally irritated with you the next.

Their emotions are on full display as they navigate all that they are going through emotionally, socially, and physically.

Thus, I was not surprised when on one particular day a student greeted me with, "Mr. Fox, you are my second favorite substitute teacher." I thanked him and the class got underway.

But much like a small pebble in your shoe, I just could not ignore it. Toward the end of the class as the students were working at their assigned tasks I found myself standing next to the student's desk. I casually asked him, "Who is your favorite substitute teacher?" He scrunched up his nose, thought for a bit and said he did not know.

Thus, he had been flattering me with faint praise. The words had sounded nice, but there was no thought behind it.

And I wonder if I do not approach God the same way at times, rushing through my daily tasks without taking the time to slow down and appreciate what He has done for me—a quick prayer at meals, a cursory look at a devotional, hurrying on to the next task without pausing to listen for what God would have me do.

I have the best of intentions. I want God to like me. But at times I get caught up in the busyness of everyday life and lose focus on what is important in life.

Ultimately my self-esteem does not rest on if some junior high student thinks I am a great person or not. It is, however, much more important that I turn my attention to be in tune with God's plans and not what is next on my daily schedule.

Ten years from now that student will not remember I was ever in his class. But in ten years I want to be having an even closer walk with God, and I must remember it is up to me because God is not moving away from me. It is my choice as to how much of God I want to let into my life.
-tef



AMONG OUR PEOPLE

Matvii, son of Andrey and Inna Saveliev, remains in Riley Hospital for Children, Indianapolis.

Carol Neuenschwander is recovering at Swiss Village following a recent hospitalization for an infection.

Brittany Tang fell and broke her leg.

Bob Garringer had an outpatient procedure.

Joe Meyer is back home after being hospitalized due to pneumonia.

Iris Sprunger was hospitalized due to an illness.

Alvin Lehman had an outpatient heart procedure.

Kyle Yoder is back home following a recent hospitalization following a heart attack.

Sharon Neuenschwander had an outpatient procedure.

Roger VonGunten is at the Adams Memorial Hospital for tests.

Pray for continuing strength for **Carol Lerdal**.

Annie Humphry is dealing with pain from bruised ribs.

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

Suanne Sprunger requests prayer for strength as she continues treatments.

NOTES OF APPRECIATION

Thank you for making the 2025 Northern Indiana MCC Comforter Bash a great success! We knotted a total of 475 comforters thanks to the help of 400 volunteers on Friday and Saturday. MCC is grateful for your part in providing warmth and hope to people around the world.

Yujin Kim, Communications Associate
MCC East Coast and Great Lakes

Thank you for the generous gift from the Mission Festival this year. Your ongoing support continues to be an encouragement and blessing. In our partnership with you we are continually reminded that missions means all of us doing our part. In recent months we have been so aware of your care for Suanne and I. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you.

Tim and Suanne

Dear Das Marit Farmer's Market,

We truly appreciate you thinking of LifeWise SA and for partnering with us. Your donation helps over 480 students hear the Gospel on a weekly basis. You are playing a part in these kids—many unchurched—experience Jesus and start their faith. The next generation is being changed.

LifeWise SA Team

(Note: Das Märit gives a donation to various community organizations each year from any profits.)

HOME GOING

Ed Charles Prentiss, 84, passed away on Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025, in Fort Wayne.

He was born Oct. 8, 1941, in Sommerville, Massachusetts, the eldest child of Richard M. and Helen (Cowan) Prentiss and was raised on Swaggertown Road in Glenville, New York. He graduated from Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake High School, class of 1959.

He married Diane K. Garrison, and they had two children, Garry E. Prentiss and Darlene K. (Prentiss) Bower.

He proudly served in the National Guard. Entrepreneurial by nature, he owned businesses his entire life, starting with Prentiss Sheet Metal in Burnt Hills, New York.

Moving the family to Buchanan, Tennessee, he designed and built his dream home with Diane and later completed it with Lynette May. Eventually moving to Fort Walton Beach, Florida, he was a loyal and trusted employee to several companies while owning investment properties.

He married Shirley Miller in 2002, and they eventually resettled in her hometown of Berne, where they became active members of our church. They later also became residents of Swiss Village, where he thrived.

He loved helping others, and he was so proud of his work building a custom treehouse for a friend. His best days included garage sale scouting, playing pool and playing cards with friends.

He leaves behind his daughter, Darlene (Rod) Prentiss Bower; son, Garry E. Prentiss; stepchildren, Janelle Miller; Vicki (Gary) Luebke; and Brad Hines; grandchildren, Evan Bickford; DeWitt (Brittany) Noxon; and Kris (Ashley) Luebke; great-grandson, Noel Luebke; sisters, Roberta Sarrutto; and Barbara Tiedemann; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Shirley (Miller) Prentiss; sister, Helen Ann Coon; brother, Richard (Barbara) Prentiss; brothers-in law, Gregory Tiedemann; and Patsy Sarrutto; and previous spouses, Diane Condit; and Lynette May.

A celebration of his life was held on November 15 at Swiss Village.



MENNONITE MOMENTS

At first, no collections were taken in Sunday School or church services except upon rare occasions. The church was sustained solely by a property tax levied upon its adult members. No one under 21 was allowed to give money for its support but they could give money for missions. In 1921, taxation brought in \$14,900 for the church and parsonage. And the next year, the tax was lowered.

Rev. Cornelius H. Suckau received an honorary doctorate degree from Wheaton College in 1938. After that, he wore a swallow-tailed coat when he preached. People remember how deftly he “flipped” his tails whenever he sat down.

In the early days, people spelled their names any way they felt like. Luginbill has been found to have at least 15 different spellings.

Our early ministers read High German from the Lutheran Bible but preached in the Emmental Swiss dialect. There appears to be scores of Swiss dialects which usually differ from valley to valley and town to town. These dialects developed during the Middle Ages.

Our early church felt middle names were pretentious. However, middle initials were sometimes added in order to differentiate between persons with similar names. In Sam Lehman's early church records, there were seven Christian Neuenschwanders and ten Barbara Lehmans.

When Rev. David Baumgartner came here he first lived with his son Christian, along the Wabash, one mile northwest of present day Vera Cruz. This location is now part of Ouabache State Park. In 1853 he wrote a letter which stated, “And when one has to seek cows or cattle, one is in danger of becoming lost in the forest. It was necessary to make use of a compass.”

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

Penultimate issue as Editor.....Tom Fox

Among Our People.....Jim Schwartz



First Mennonite Church

566 W. Main Street * P.O. Box 111 * Berne, IN 46711

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE

Paid

Berne, Indiana
Permit No. 53

Address Service Requested

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
DECEMBER 2025 						
	1	2 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	3 7PM: Genesis 34	4 □	5	6 7PM: Handel's Messiah
7 10AM: "Peace" - Pastor Jeff Linthicum 3PM: Handel's Messiah NO EVENING SERVICE Offering	8	9 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	10 7PM: Genesis 35-36	11	12	13
14 10AM: "Joy" - Pastor Jeff Linthicum 5-8PM - "Night in Bethlehem" Offering for Conference Pastor	15	16 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	17 7PM: Genesis 37	18	19	20
21 10AM: "Love" - Pastor Jeff Linthicum 6PM: Caroling at Swiss Village Offering	22	23 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	24 Christmas Eve Service CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED AT NOON	25 	26 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	27
28 10AM: Necrology Service NO EVENING SERVICE Offering	29	30 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	31  New Year's Eve NO WEDNESDAY EVENING ACTIVITIES CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED AT NOON			