

LIFE TOGETHER



St. Jacobs Mennonite Church

www.sjmc.on.ca

Fall 2021

Pastor's Pen

Mark Diller Harder

Come to the Water



Our worship theme this past summer was 'Come to the Water.' It was a rich series that had us enter the waters of all sorts of Biblical stories, texts that came alive in new ways by paying attention to the very presence of water. We examined themes of the river, danger, searching, healing, living water, storms, crossing and depth. Each Sunday a member of the congregation shared a water story about their relationship to a particular body of water. (see Brent's article for more details on these and how to find them on our website)

I loved this theme and I love water! Especially in summer, I enjoy spending time camping near water, and swimming and canoeing. But this year I discovered a whole new water activity. In early May I purchased a kayak. There is a whole story of trying to find a kayak during a pandemic. After pre-ordering in February, getting caught in supply chain issues, and being graciously upgraded, I ended up with a 14 foot touring Christmas-coloured Paluski Kayak (one of us loves the colour!). I could now explore waters on my own and get up close and personal to all sorts of rivers and lakes.

Continued on page 3

Pictured above: Mark in his "Christmas-coloured" kayak on the water at Laurel Creek Conservation Area, summer 2021

Editorial

Writers & Contributors:



Mark Diller Harder, Page 1, 3



Janet Bauman, Pages 4, 5



Poem by the late
Floyd Buehler, Page 7



Aki Ninomiya, Page 9

Water Stories

During the summer worship series entitled “Come to the Water”, there were many stories about water shared by members of our community.

Elmer Sauder (July 25) spoke fondly about Mazinaw Lake at Bon Echo Provincial Park, particularly the beauty and freshness of its water. Levi Bender (August 15) talked about the water at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp and how much he enjoyed activities on that water. In his sermon (July 11) Wolfgang Koehler shared some events which he found miraculous on his canoe trip down the South Nahanni River in the Northwest Territories with his dad. Sue Brubacher (July 11) and Barb Freeman (July 18) described how they find being close to water a spiritual experience and enjoy its effect. Hannah and Emma Bender (August 22) talked about being baptized in the Saugeen River, along with their brother Max. Orvie Martin (August 8) shared about growing up along the Conestoga River and the many activities and value of that river in his life.

If you missed these stories, I encourage you to find them on our church website at www.sjmc.on.ca under “VIDEOS”, where worship videos are listed by date. The sermons from this summer’s water series are also worth reading or listening to and can be found on the “SERMONS” page of the website.

“Come to the Water” was a great series that explored many aspects of water in the Biblical Story and in our lives today. My own experience with water is varied, as I’m sure your own is as well, and you can continue reading more on page 8 of this issue.

Brent

Q: Do you have any ideas for future articles or content?

If so please email me at lifetogether@sjmc.on.ca or call me at 519-664-3374

Your Editorial Team



Brent Horst
Editor



Marilyn Wideman
Graphic Design & Layout

Thank You To:

Article and Image Contributors

St. Jacobs Printery, printing

Pauline Martin, distribution

www.sjmc.on.ca
lifetogether@sjmc.on.ca

Continued from page 1

As the summer progressed, the kayak became a kind of metaphor of faith. So what did I discover?

■ My inaugural trip was testing out the kayak the day I purchased it along the Grand River from Glen Morris to Paris. In early Spring, this is a fast-moving river with lots of rocks and rapids. It felt on the edge of danger. There were spots that might have capsized a canoe. But the kayak dipped and swayed and sailed right through. I began to trust this new water vessel – that it could handle tougher waters. Is there a lesson here on how we can trust God to accompany us through the trials of life?

■ I bought a Conservation Area pass and explored many of the local bodies of water by kayak – Laurel Creek, Guelph Lake, Rockwood, Conestoga Lake, and Luther Marsh. There is so much beauty right in our local area, and waters teeming with life. Our waters are a source of life. I marvelled at God's creation and what you notice when you pay attention.

■ I took several trips (by both kayak and canoe) down the Grand River as it winds its way through our Region, the longest from Conestoga to the Freeport Bridge in Kitchener. I was struck again by how well this region has kept the area natural. You almost forget you are near a twin city. I appreciated again that we are a part of this rich watershed, that connects us all. I was also aware of how the Grand connects us to Six Nations and its treaties, many of us living within six miles of its banks. The path to reconciliation may wind just as much as the Grand, but I pray it keeps moving forward.

■ One morning on our camping vacation, Rachel dropped me off at the end of an access road into Lake Temagami. I kayaked to the Old Growth Forest hike on Temagami Island. The kayak, and its 2 storage hatches, made possible my first ever solo backcountry overnight as I made my way back to Finlayson Provincial Park. It was unnerving, stimulating, and tranquil all at once. When you are alone in the wilderness, you recognize your vulnerability and trust that you are held by the divine. We each have experiences in life where we stand alone before God's grace.

This summer the kayak gave me a new form of access and a new appreciation of the power, beauty, depth and meaning of water.

Come to the Water!



Mark on the Grand River near Glen Morris, spring 2021

Introducing... SJMC's New Peace, Justice and Social Concerns Working Group

Janet Bauman



People at SJMC care about and actively engage in a variety of peace, justice and social concerns (PJSC) in our community and the wider world. Some people do hands-on, front-line work. Some do research, education, and advocacy work. Some are involved in partnerships with church and community groups.

Some do this through their paid work, and many do this through their volunteer work. Many offer prayer and financial support to organizations engaged in this kind of work. It is a way to put faith into practice and respond to God's call to be disciples of Jesus, a strong emphasis in our Anabaptist/Mennonite faith heritage.

It is also a way to put hands and feet to our congregational vision, which states, "We seek to celebrate and listen to the Living God; empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a welcoming, caring community of faith centered in Jesus Christ; and to demonstrate God's love in our neighbourhoods and the world."

There is a rich variety at SJMC of passions, interests,

connections, wisdom, and hands-on experience when it comes to PJSC including: Indigenous reconciliation, poverty, hunger and housing needs, conflict resolution, creation care and the climate crisis, racial injustice, refugee resettlement and diversity, equity and inclusion. Already we are supporting the efforts of a Refugee Sponsorship Committee that is hard at work to welcome and settle a refugee family originally from Syria.

But how do we identify and highlight other, ongoing PJSC concerns as they arise locally and globally? How do we respond to ideas and passions from within the congregation? How do we learn and raise awareness about new concerns, and ongoing needs? How do we focus our best energies and intentions?

These questions led to the forming of an ad hoc PJSC Working Group at SJMC in the spring of 2021, that relates to the Leadership Council as needed. It is open to anyone in the congregation. Its intentions include: engaging with the PJSC passions, wisdom and experience of those in the congregation, and with

immediate needs as they arise, raising awareness and facilitating learning in our church community, and initiating practical, hands-on acts of love and service in response.

The PSJC Working Group met twice over the late spring and summer, did some exciting brainstorming, and facilitated a couple of actions. Minutes from those meetings are available by contacting one of the pastors. Actions included:

- displaying a climate justice banner on the church property, and encouraging more creation care initiatives individually and collectively
- delivering meals to Indigenous land defenders at 1492 Landback Lane at Six Nations (*pictured left*)
- holding a Zoom meeting with Joanne Jones, a woman of both Indigenous and Mennonite ancestry who works with the Food Sovereignty Collective Waterloo Region. This was an opportunity to listen, learn, begin to build relationships, and respond to invitations to support this network's efforts. We can help with: weeding and harvesting their garden, preserving produce through canning, drying and freezing, donating to their 24/7 pantry, donating produce or space on your land to grow food, and becoming a health advocate.

Stay tuned for more opportunities to engage!

Another interest of the PJSC Working Group has been exploring ways to make our church green space (south of the paved parking lot) more of an inviting and useful community space. If you have ideas please share them!

Early Dutch Anabaptist Menno Simons from whom we, as Mennonites, take our denominational name, wrote the poem included on the right. Many of us may know it in a slightly shorter version.

*“True evangelical faith is of such a nature
it cannot lie dormant, but spreads itself out in
all kinds of righteousness and fruits of love;*

it dies to flesh and blood;

it destroys all lusts and forbidden desires;

it seeks, serves and fears God in its inmost soul;

it clothes the naked;

it feeds the hungry;

it comforts the sorrowful;

it shelters the destitute;

it aids and consoles the sad;

it does good to those who do it harm;

it serves those that harm it;

it prays for those who persecute it;

*it teaches, admonishes and judges us with the Word
of the Lord;*

it seeks those who are lost;

it binds up what is wounded;

it heals the sick;

it saves what is strong (sound);

it becomes all things to all people.

*The persecution, suffering and anguish
that come to it for the sake of the Lord's truth
have become a glorious joy and comfort to it.”*

Menno Simons, 1539

Let's continue to put hands and feet on our faith. Everyone is welcome to attend PJSC meetings, share ideas and engage in projects of service as they are able. For this new initiative, taken even in the midst of pandemic isolation, we say a hearty “thanks be to God!”

Peace, Justice and Social Concerns Working Group



Above: Sue, Lucy, Liz were among those who volunteered at the Food Sovereignty Collective garden recently; Peggy joined in the drumming on National Day for Truth & Reconciliation
Below: Aki was one of several people who delivered food to Six Nations landback defenders





Sundown

I saw the sun go down tonight; a great ball of flame rolling gently down behind the hill at the back of the neighbours farm—a blob of red-hot slag seemingly pulled into the earth by that mysterious force, gravity. It went down silently, as though, having spent all its energies in rising to its zenith, it fought a losing battle to stay there, and finally tired and red from exertion, it gave up and slowly dropped from sight.

But as I looked up above the horizon I saw a brilliant display of colour. It seemed as though the sun, having given up all hope of lighting the earth with its own rays, now concentrated all its efforts on focusing its beams in a magnificent fusion and diffusion of colour on the mass of boiling clouds overhead—stranded there when the day left, much as foam is stranded high on the beach when the tide goes out. And as the colours faded into a faint glow along the horizon, the birds returned to their nest and loved ones and as they returned they mourned for the king of the day as he passed away into oblivion. They say, however that as he disappears from our sight, he appears to others living beyond our familiar hills and valleys to light another horizon and bless another world with day.

I watched the sun setting this evening. It caused the houses and trees to cast a long shadow across the grain. As it drifted down, the grain-stocks added their own lengthening shadows until, just before it gave its last light to the earth for the day, it caused every pebble, stubble, blade and stalk to cast a shadow behind it as a prelude to the darkness that was to cover, shortly, the entire land.

Now the little night animals began to prowl and a multitude of night sounds began to replace the noise of the day. Crickets began their familiar serenades. At the millpond the frogs began their incessant squeaking, croaking, and grunting and an occasional bull-frog added his deep, weird “garoomph”. Muskrats splashed as they dived for prey and deep in the pine forest a lone fox crept stealthily toward an unsuspecting rabbit. A silent owl dived for his prey out in the field. All was well.

Sundown has come. I care not whether it is he, she, old, young, middle age. The reaper makes no distinction at sundown. The old are, it seems, the symbol of sundown. The hoary head stooped in its last stooping, the hands waving the last farewell, the son of the earth sinking gently to his last sleep. “He shall have no pleasure in time, in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened. And the doors shall be shut in the streets when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird and all the daughters of music shall be brought low.” Ah, sundown has come.

Fond memories arise and transport us to the time when he was a guide, a light, a protection. Now have come the last rays of his day. They say, however, that as he disappears from our sight, he appears on another horizon in a new day, not however, to bless a new day or to light the pathway of another people, but to bask in a light far greater than his own; the light of the great Son, the Creator of all.

Poem by the late Floyd Buehler in a letter to Irma 65 years ago in the early stages of their budding relationship. Photo: Su Buehler

My own experience with water is varied, as I'm sure your own is as well. One of the most impactful memory of water was when I almost drowned as a child. My brother and I were playing in our rowboat on the river in front of our house and I ended up in the water. He pulled me out quickly, but it was an impactful experience. I still recall the elation of realizing that I was alive and well, after a close call, even as we headed up to the house to tell our parents. Our boat was heading downstream on its own, so we sort of had to tell them! As I recall, I don't think we got any lecture since it was obvious we knew that this was a close call that wouldn't happen again.

I remember my own baptism, not in a river but in a baptismal pool in a church in Montreal, QC. Some may say the "shock" I felt as I was immersed by the water was from its cold temperature, but I've always felt that it was more spiritual than that. I believe God touched me with His Holy Spirit on that day. My baptism was an important step on my own faith journey.

When we were on one of our trips biking across Canada, five of us were cycling from Vancouver to Calgary. After ten tough days through the Rockies, we were on our last long day. As we travelled out of Banff towards Calgary, we found the heat difficult and the rise in elevation surprising. By the time we reached the first signs of Calgary we were almost all out of our water. We decided to take the first exit but it turned out to be more industrial

than a good spot to find water and washrooms. Finally, we tried an RV camper business called The Field of Dreams to see if they would let us use their washroom and fill our water bottles. Instead, they welcomed us into their air-conditioned showroom which included a "beverage nirvana". We left there refreshed and ready to complete our 168-kilometre day! This was one time we realized the necessity of water and not taking it for granted. We were thankful to be led there and for their hospitality.

I remember using water to build a backyard rink for our children, many canoe, rowboat and other boat rides, and of course swimming in many bodies of water. Finally, I'll mention our water feature in our backyard (pictured below). It is a continuous fountain of water, rippling through and over a well-worn rock. The look and sound of it is very calming and refreshing. It's also a favourite of colourful finches, other birds and sometimes even a pair of cardinals!

Water plays a critical part of our lives and often connects us to God. I hope you enjoyed the worship series on water and that one or more of these water stories resonated with you. We are all blessed by those involved with planning and presenting this series. Thanks be to God!

What is your water story? How has God used water in your faith story? Why not share it with someone close to you or send it to me to share in this newsletter?



Reflections of Life Together Throughout a Pandemic Year

What small blessings have I experienced in the past year? Aki Ninomiya

- I started to develop my Japanese cooking skills by learning from YouTube and practice. My menu now includes several dozen recipes which I enjoy cooking. Last September I began my own “Meals on Wheels” project, cooking a Japanese meal for two persons every Wednesday—for a Japanese Canadian resident at Parkwood and our son, Timothy, who misses having a Japanese meal. Last week there was a note included in the return obento bag that said, “I see God with obento” (obento means lunchbox) which gave me great joy knowing how much the meal was appreciated.
- This is the first time in my life that I’ve had time to enjoy gardening on a very small scale with herbs and flowers.
- The pandemic has given me opportunity to get to know some church members better through ZOOM. Technology has developed so rapidly. Thanks to ZOOM, I officiated for a wedding in Japan and attended a funeral!



As the Covid-19 pandemic continued in 2021, worship and many other activities remained online including Sunday School (pictured left), guest speakers, sharing time, SJMC Women’s group meetup (below)

View more images of SJMC life together on the following pages





2021 began to allow opportunities for socially distanced activities
Top: September's Community Connections weekend included a hymn singing at the Weber farm and small group gatherings
Above left: Erma and Alice deliver comforters made by SJMC's Women's group and friends
Above right: Junior Youth activities at Bloomingdale Mennonite Church
Left: SJMC Team 'The Oscars' ride a 75 km route for 'Outspokin' for Affordable Housing, June 2021
Below: Refugee committee (Linda, Karen, Marcy, Beth, Kevin) and volunteers ready an apartment for the recently arrived Mohammad and Fatin Shahadeh family





Top: SJMC men's 'Tim Horton's coffee group' meetup outdoors at SJMC
 Left: Ruth and Maynard unpack the new 'Voices Together' hymnal
 Above: Larry, Lance, and Trevor work at video creation and live streaming of services



Above: SJMC Youth and others about to embark on Ride for Refuge, October 2, 2021, raising funds for Compass Refugee Centre

Life & Times



Rachel Willms

*Special Education
Teacher*

*Childhood Home: St. Jacobs, Ontario
Present Home: Waterloo, Ontario
Age: 51
Surname: Brubacher*



**Abby (Abigail)
Becks**

*Manager of Counselling at
Carizon Family and
Community Services in
Kitchener, previously a
mental health therapist
with this team (I hold a
Masters of Social Work)*

*Childhood Home: St. Jacobs, Ontario
Present Home: Elmira, Ontario
Age: 35 Surname: Horst*



Earl Martin

*Enjoying retirement after
44 years of trucking*

*Childhood Home: RR#4 Elmira, Ontario
Present Home: Waterloo, Ontario
Age: 81*

Some of my favourite smells, sounds, tastes:

- smell of a fall forest trail ■ sound and smell of campfire ■ smell of freshly baked bread
- taste of fresh strawberry pie ■ the sound of a room filled with 4 part harmony
- the sound of children playing and laughing

- sound and smell of fall leaves ■ sound of an orchestra warming up ■ smell and taste of fresh baked bread ■ smell of the church on potluck day ■ 4 part harmony in the sanctuary ■ fresh cut grass

- hay drying and coffee brewing ■ Dare's cookie plant yeast baking ■ sound of John Deere tractor ■ sound of loons and waves reaching shoreline ■ spicy food, sauerkraut with pork ■ chocolate cake with date filling

Some things you may not know about me:

- taught business English to people in the European Commission, Brussels, Belgium
- visited families in the Gaza, Palestine and heard their stories
- delivered the KW Record in 8th grade
- took a motorcycle trip around the island of Taiwan

- travelled Ont & USA with Roller Derby team for 7 yrs; last skated in exciting tie-breaker game in Salt Lake City & won! ■ bicycled with my Dad from Vancouver to St Jacobs over several summers (*missed a stretch in Saskatchewan due to starting new job, completion TBD*) ■ ate the most roasted caterpillars of anyone in our group in Africa (13) ■ completed 2 Tough Mudder obstacle courses and 2 half marathons

- worked at Bauman tile at 15 years old
- volunteered at Out of the Cold
- drove 3 million miles with 18 and 30 wheelers
- prepared and served food at St. John's Kitchen

Personality traits others would say I have:

- loyal ■ helpful ■ warm ■ procrastinator
- sentimental ■ optimistic

- driven ■ kind ■ good listener
- funny ■ helpful

- quiet ■ considerate ■ friendly ■ steady
- kind ■ helpful

My interests include:

- camping ■ learning to play guitar (slowly!)
- reading ■ daily forest walks ■ playing board and card games ■ listening to music

- piano/music ■ cycling/spinning
- hiking ■ cooking and baking

- bicycle riding and hiking ■ travel
- paddle boarding and fishing
- crokinole ■ gardening

Some favourite lifetime memories:

- biking around St.Jacobs as a kid with friends ■ playing in Rockway mass orchestra/choir; making music together ■ travelling and teaching English in South East Asia ■ playing games with my kids & extended family
- cottaging with the "runcibles" (annually for 40 yrs) ■ family holidays at Chesley Lake and Summerhouse Park

- watching the sunset at Montreal River on a bike trip
- my husband proposing at Cup and Saucer trail
- my last roller derby game
- birth of my two children
- Mennonite World Conference in Zimbabwe

- family time in Mexico (2008 and 2019)
- hiking and cross country skiing in Colorado
- motorcycle trip to Alaska
- fishing trip to Lake St. Joseph
- yearly family cottage time
- cruise trips to Caribbean

Other vocations I might have chosen or would choose:

- dietician ■ mail carrier

- enjoying retirement after 44 years of work

Where I like to play or ponder:

- Grundy Lake Provincial Park
- Laurel Creek trails ■ Thrift shops

- on my bicycle ■ on a hike, alone or with others

- outdoors ■ on my bicycle
- sitting on the deck

Some items on my "bucket list":

- learn how to play the guitar ■ camp across Canada ■ make tie blankets for my kids, nieces and nephews out of my saved memory fabrics ■ hike all of the Bruce Trail

- travel (Greece, Ireland, Scotland)
- more bicycle trips (Canada, Europe)

- work at staying healthy
- quality time with family
- travel ■ gardening