

LIFE TOGETHER



St. Jacobs Mennonite Church

www.sjmc.on.ca

Spring 2022

Pastor's Pen  Kevin Derksen

Rhythms of Resilience

How are you doing in this spring of 2022, as we live in the latter days of a pandemic that refuses to go away? How are your mental, emotional and spiritual reserves? Have you been able to find healthy rhythms of life that have worked for you during this challenging time?

Healthy rhythms are so important because they help us find a balance between our various needs. I think it's interesting that in musical rhythms, the rests are just as important as the notes that get played. This is an insight we can learn from – there are times for work and times for play, times for socializing and times for solitude, times for giving it our all and times for rest and letting go. We see this in scripture too, particularly in the sabbath tradition that developed from God's own rest on the seventh day of creation (Genesis 2:1-3). If we don't have healthy rhythms of work and rest, giving and receiving, we can easily find ourselves tired, empty and flat.

The difficult thing over these past couple of years, of course, is that many of our familiar life rhythms have been interrupted. We haven't been able to do all of the activities we enjoy or spend time with the people that are important to us. Some of this is starting to change, but many parts of our lives still look different than they used to. Finding the right balance is hard.

I think a big learning from the pandemic experience is that we can become depleted even if we're not very busy. For most of us, the pandemic was a time of limited and reduced activity. We didn't and couldn't do much. And yet we know that this was also a time of significant strain on mental and emotional health. Living in the midst of a long-term unfolding crisis is exhausting.

A big part of this has to do with navigating an extended period of uncertainty. We've all had to make constant decisions, discernments and course corrections as the situation around us has changed. The loss of so much face-to-face contact with people removed many of the rewarding aspects of relationships from the hard work of maintaining them through a difficult time. Much that used to give us energy has been complicated or impossible. As I heard someone comment recently: "Never has it taken so much time and energy to do so little!"



I think this remains the case even as we move into a "new normal" in the months and maybe even years ahead. Much of the pandemic is behind us, but the world in which we live has changed. I've heard someone describe our situation in terms of the "reverse culture shock" that people experience returning home after spending time abroad. We get back to our previous life, but things are not exactly the way we remember them. Home has changed, we have changed, and what we left may not feel right anymore.

I suspect we may need to establish some new rhythms of health that reflect our changed realities. Some features of pandemic life will remain with us longer term, and some of the unique stresses we have experienced over the past couple of years may not disappear so quickly either. There are challenges here, alongside opportunities for learning and growth. Many of us came face to face with our limitations in very real ways during the pandemic. But we also discovered an active and engaged God who remained at work through all our restrictions, divisions and frustrations. May this God continue to sustain us in life-giving rhythms wherever we are.

Maintaining healthy rhythms of life and work is always an important task, and all the more during periods of crisis or challenge. I asked a number of my pastoral colleagues what they learned about caring for themselves and establishing healthy rhythms over the past couple of years. Here are some of their experiences and suggestions as we carry on:

- Personal self-care practices are so important – figure out what is life-giving for you. Exercise and time spent outdoors is always good. Many people enjoyed taking more regular walks during the pandemic.
- Prioritize time to pray, meditate and listen. Some people have appreciated meeting with a Spiritual Director to help them pay attention to where God has been in their experience.

Continued on Page 3

Writers & Contributors



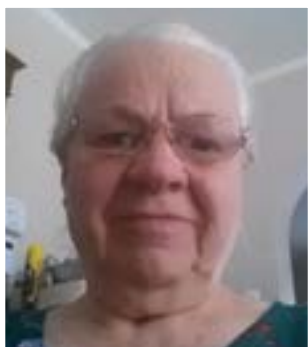
Brent Horst • Editor



Kevin Derksen



Elmer Sauder



Leah Boehm



Sue Shantz

Editorial

There are a few changes in this issue. We had a great response to our survey. Thank you for your feedback. See my article Survey Says for more details but the main result is that Life Together will continue with a few changes.

I'm sorry to say that Marilyn Wideman has decided to end her role of Graphics Design and Layout. She has done a fantastic job over the last 8 years. Thanks to Sue Shantz, we have a Getting to Know You interview with the Cain family. Some of you know them from Zoom worship response over the past two years or recent in-person worship services. Now we all know a bit more about them.

Leah Boehm shares a project that she felt called to join, and Elmer Sauder shares some musings by the river. I mentioned that Doris Kramer did over 60 interviews for Life Together over 20 years. I have included the index of some of these articles in this issue. These more recent issues are available online on the sjmc.on.ca website and older issues are available in the SJMC library.

I have added a new feature called the SJMC Family Crossword. In honour of cousin Mark Brubacher's Printery taking on a new role in the layout of LT, I decided to start with his family: The Raymond and Emma Brubacher Family. That gives you two answers already and I hope you enjoy filling the rest out. Ask around if you get stumped!

Here's to our continued Life Together; may it be a blessing to you in 2022 and beyond.

Brent

Thank You!

- Article and Picture Contributors
 - St. Jacobs Printery
- Marilyn Wideman - Life and Times Layout
 - Pauline Martin - Distribution

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Rhythms of Resilience Continued

- Invest in life-giving relationships in whatever ways are possible. Meet or call a friend, chat with a neighbour, reach out and make a connection!
- Find a project “beyond yourself” to participate in. This is can be really helpful for individuals and for communities, as it changes our frame of reference and offers a common purpose to rally behind.
- Share the load as much as you can – don’t carry it all alone. Work together with others and be open to giving and receiving help.
- Celebrate the gifts of resilience that can emerge through difficult times. Take note and give thanks for how you or your community has risen to a particular challenge along the way.
- Learn to hold things lightly, let things go and remain flexible. Pay attention to where the Spirit is moving and be ready to follow!

Life Together has been published for over 20 years. Marcia Shantz, Vaughn Bender and Larry Shantz created it from June 2002 to the end of 2014. That team was very industrious with some issues filling 24 pages and producing six issues some years. Since 2015 Marilyn Wideman and I have put together two to three issues per year, with 12-16 pages each. Since Marilyn decided it’s time to focus on other things, it seemed like a good time to survey our readers. During the pandemic the pastors started their newsletter, usually each week, that covers current events and provides photos of recent activities. There is also a lot of good information on the SJMC website, so if Life Together is still needed, what’s its main purpose? So, I asked you.



Readers speak!

I received 69 responses which is phenomenal! You spoke loudly and your feedback is very much appreciated. 91% of respondents would like to see LT continue and over half of you would prefer to have a hard copy to hold in your hands. Several noted that LT’s role is a little different than before since the pastors’ newsletter has been added, but you still see value in also receiving LT.

Many couldn’t pick a favourite feature of LT but of those of you who did preferred getting to know your community members. “Getting to Know You”, “Life and Times” and “Children’s Challenge” all feature new and existing members of our community and you love reading those. “Pastor’s Pen” and general articles are also appreciated, after you check out the photos included. We haven’t had regular columns from our Ministry areas in the last number of years and it doesn’t sound like you’re looking for that in the future either.

Although most of you would still read the digital version of Life Together, over half of you would prefer to have the printed version. Over 63% of you read it cover to cover and another 35% read over half of it. The majority are comfortable with 12-16 pages printed 3-4 times per year.

Several of you took time to acknowledge the work involved with creating LT regularly and expressed gratitude for its availability. Some mentioned the high quality of layout and paper.

Thanks so much for your feedback. I have made some decisions based on your responses:

1. We will publish Life Together 3-4 times a year and continue its high quality of graphics and paper.
2. In addition to the digital version available on the website, we will print hard copies. We won’t put copies in all the church mailboxes but will provide printed copies upon request.
3. We will continue to share stories of people in our community, events and news that impact our life together. We will make “Getting to Know You” a regular feature again and continue the “Life and Times” feature as well as the “Pastor’s Pen” lead article. We will add some photos that haven’t been shared in the weekly pastor’s newsletter.

I am so grateful for Marilyn Wideman’s contribution to LT over the past 8 years. Her ability to take the raw content that I source and make it look so good always amazed me. The St. Jacobs Printery will take over the graphic design and layout at this point. I will continue in the Editor role. Andrea Horst does final proofreading and hopefully many others will provide articles, other writings, and photos. I hope to find someone to take the lead for the Getting to Know You feature after Doris Kramer did it so well for so many years. Anyone interested?

If you have a story to tell, a story you think should be told or other suggestions to make LT better, don’t hesitate to let me know. I look forward to our continued Life Together!

Life & Times



Mary Metzger

Managed a flock of sheep and raised lambs for commercial market. Worked part time at Stone Crock.

*Childhood Home: 40 Young St. St. Jacobs
Present Home: 32 Robin Dr. Elmira, Ontario
Age: 84 Surname: Heer*



Marilyn Wideman

Retired 2019 from career in marketing, graphic design, and brand development with Mercedes Corp/ St. Jacobs Country.

*Childhood Home: 'farm at Wagner's Corner' Ontario. Present Home: Elmira, Ontario
Age: 63 Surname: Wideman*



Tim Bauman

Presently working at Systematix Inc as a mechanical designer.

*Childhood Home: Lobsinger Line, Ontario
Present Home: St. Jacobs, Ontario
Age: 62*

Some of my favourite smells, sounds, tastes:

- lilacs
- chirping birds
- cardinals
- roasting turkey
- apple dumplings
- church bells

- smell of bread baking
- air-dried laundry
- forest & campfire
- orchestra
- when phone rings and it's, "Hi Mom!"
- homemade caramel corn, fresh pesto

- smell of fresh baked cinnamon buns
- sound of birds singing in the spring
- taste of canned pork sausage

Some things you may not know about me:

- attended Rockway, Gr 9,10
- worked 2 yrs at Bank of Nova Scotia, Hollinger Hardware
- married at age 20
- moved to West Montrose farm in '71
- my 4 kids & I gathered eggs at commercial farm, 7 days/wk, for 15 years

- do occasional freelance work from home
- graduated Goshen
- cycled & walked more kms in 2021 than driven (over 5,500)
- have done layout for LT newsletter since 2016, but am stepping away. Who's next ? :-)
- cycle with 'The Oscars'

- attended a two room school house for grades one and two
- was married in Colorado at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp

Personality traits others would say I have:

- accepting
- friendly
- good listener
- willing
- fun-loving
- kind

- trustworthy
- resilient
- generous
- creative
- adventurous

- honest
- hard working
- competitive
- patient
- creative
- dependable

My interests include:

- played recreational ringette 40 yrs
- cross-county skiing with neighbours
- family trips
- permanent trailer at Chesley Lake
- quilting and knotting at SJMC
- volunteering

- friend walks (and finding great refreshment stops!)
- curling
- cycling
- cross-country ski
- food / cooking from scratch
- reading
- trips to Nova Scotia and elsewhere

- travel
- watching Blue Jays and Maple Leafs
- camping
- reading
- home renovations

Some favourite lifetime memories:

- playing records on Grandma Sully's gramophone
- Grandma Heer's Christmas dinner
- uncles playing pump organ, accordion
- dad taking me fishing on banks of Conestoga River, skating at village rink
- my soul friend Leona networking at bank (1955); we & our spouses were forever friends

- cycle trips with friends in NS, PQ, Europe
- 4 months in Haiti
- a farm childhood
- art/study in Florence; backpacking Europe
- dude ranch & hike camp work in Rockies
- experiencing motherhood; trips to/from NS to explore, visit Lydia and her fiance
- big family Christmas Dinner days

- summer holidays on my grandparents' farm
- travelling to the east coast in 1969 – stopped in a park to listen to the moon landing
- getting married
- birth of our children
- building a cedar strip canoe

Other vocations I might have chosen or would choose:

- an Early Childhood Education Teacher

- drafting, architecture or landscape design related

- presently a mechanical designer

Where I like to play or ponder:

- care for my vegetable, flower gardens
- play with grandchildren, visit neighbours
- in my lazyboy; eyes closed in meditation

- solo bike rides
- outdoors in natural setting
- my sketchbook

- while camping, specifically Algonquin Park
- while walking

Some items on my "bucket list":

- I skated Rideau canal and skated until 80
- longed to go to England to learn about outdoor sheep farming practises
- now content with any opportunity that comes my way

- keep active outdoors (am inspired by my friends!)
- complete unfinished projects
- organize my photos
- spend time with extended family again

- travel on the Rocky Mountaineer train to Vancouver
- travel to Australia and New Zealand



It's a long story. In 1826 my great, great grandfather walked the long journey from Pennsylvania to Ontario, purchased land west of Three Bridges, settled there and built a sawmill by the river shore. Later he built a wool mill closer to Hawkesville, the foundation of which can still be seen as you drive along the river road. He became the first deacon of our church.

They lived peacefully alongside the Natives in the area and often traded things like sugar and flour for venison. They were neighbours caring for each other.

Then governments came up with other ideas. Natives must be cured of their beliefs and practices. Churches tried to convert them to Christianity. Settlers claimed the best land for their own purposes of financial gain, while Natives believed the land was a gift for all. Natives were pushed out of the area onto reserves, their children stolen and forced to live in residential schools, punished if caught speaking their language, and suffered many other abuses at the hands of those running the schools.

Gradually those schools were closed, perhaps hoping that no one would ever discover how deeply these children were scarred, or how many died and were buried in unmarked graves. Many who survived the residential school system suffer from the trauma experienced while in school away from family, language, culture, and community.

In the summer of 2021 when the bodies of 215 children were discovered on former residential school property, many people raised alarm at the tragedy. The story of a little girl's new orange shirt taken away from her when she entered the school gave meaning to the colour orange. Many began to wear orange shirts.

A fire was lit on the grounds of the office of "The healing of the seven generations" on Frederick Street in Kitchener, and volunteers kept it burning 24 hours a day, seven days a week until the weather got too cold for fire keepers to spend the night. September 30 was declared orange shirt day. Hundreds gathered and marched from the office to Victoria Park to listen to speakers in remembrance of lives lost and respect for those still living with trauma.

Vanessa Genier, a young mother of five, in Timmins, ON, on hearing of the uncovered bodies, felt she must do something. Why not a healing quilt? She got together with friends, and they decided to make 216 blocks -- one for each child plus one. By sewing these into quilts they could make 18 quilts. Soon someone offered to quilt them on her long-arm quilting machine.

A project was born because one woman sensed a need. More people got interested and offered their help. She started a Facebook page*, and interest grew. CBC invited her for an

interview and news of the project spread across the country. Quilt blocks, tops, backings, and fabric started to appear in the mail.

They now have a studio where three long-arm quilters work, and volunteers come to piece and bind. Requests for the healing quilts come in faster than they can be completed and sent out. They are sent out in the order that the requests come in with no choice of pattern or colour for the recipient. They are now a registered non-profit organization and have applied for charitable status.

As of last contact there have been 1323 healing quilts sent to survivors and they have requests for over 600 more. Seeing the pictures of recipients and the joy with which their gift is received is heartwarming to say the least.

When I heard about this, I felt that this is something to which I could and would contribute. I started with leftover patches from other projects and made more till I had the required number for the specified size. My friend hand-quilted it and the batting was given by another friend, but binding was up to me.

This is a small gift of my time, and in my heart I hope and pray it will bring some comfort and joy to someone who has suffered due to decision makers in our past.

*Search "Quilts for Survivors" in Facebook for more information.



Musings beside the Conestoga/Conestogo River

Elmer Sauder

Conestogo or Conestoga...which is correct? Funk and Wagnall's Dictionary says the Conestoga wagon is a style of covered wagon, originally made at Conestoga, a village in Eastern Pennsylvania. And so, the debate continues; Conestogo or Conestoga?

On a lazy, hazy day in July, I needed to put in some time in our village of St. Jacobs waiting for someone. A nice gentle breeze was blowing as I was sitting at a picnic table overlooking the Conestogo (or Conestoga) River watching the traffic pass over the bridge. Soon I was lost in daydreaming while still seeing things and hearing sounds.

I could hardly believe the number of vehicles using the bridge. It was a Thursday (market day) which probably explained the increase in traffic flow. Questions formed in my mind when I saw several large tractors on the bridge at the same time. Can the bridge support all that weight? I saw buses, transport, and livestock trucks, cars of all sizes and colours, motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians cross the bridge. I thought of the Scriptures referring to "rushing to and fro". Busy, busy, the wheels of commerce must keep turning and churning.

But right in front of me, the Conestogo or Conestoga River keeps flowing on. Do the rocks in the river really have ears as was suggested in a recent sermon? I saw the blue heron watching his chance to snatch a fish. One must die in order for the other to live. Yes, Jesus died in order that I may live. The butterflies also hover over the river. Look at that bright yellow finch adding its colour to the scene. Gazing across the river I see a lot of green but never have I realized the many shades of green in trees, shrubs, and bushes. These varying shades present a cooling effect on this hot July day. On the other side of the river, I notice two trees broken down perhaps by the power of the wind, rain or lightning.

Conestogo/Conestoga River, you have flowed for a long time. You have seen and heard much. You have provided much enjoyment for fishing, swimming, boating, photography, hiking, sightseeing, to mention a few. The bridge above you carries the cargo of commerce but you flow ever on. It reminds me of the hymn with the words, My Life Flows On!!!

I'm jolted out of my reverie. Thirty minutes have passed. My waiting time is over. Back to business.

Getting to Know...



Sue Shantz

On a wintery Sunday afternoon in late March, in the Lakeshore area of Waterloo, I was welcomed into the home of the Cain family, along with their two very sociable cats, Fluffy and Frankie.

Mathieu and Sarah, along with their children, Patrick (10) and Ruth (7) started watching our recorded worship services soon after the start of the pandemic. With changes and transitions happening at the church they were attending, and with their children being the only children attending on a regular basis, it felt like a good time to make a switch. A friend, Laura Wallace Jarvis, invited them to SJMC. It's a tricky thing to start "attending" a new church virtually during a pandemic. As they watched the services, they would see, almost on a weekly basis, another person they knew through various connections. Sarah commented that the first few weeks of watching the services the sermons were on things she was questioning, and it felt like a confirmation that they had made the right choice. After several months they felt comfortable reaching out to the pastors and started participating in the Worship Response time, with their children joining the Children's Virtual Sunday School. Patrick and Ruth settled in immediately, and Worship Response was a good setting for Mathieu and Sarah to meet some of the SJMC folks, and for us to get to know each other. They have appreciated how approachable the services have been for the family - the multi-generational involvements, sermons that are relatable to everyday life, and issues that have been addressed on a more multi-cultural level. Mathieu especially noted the series on racism. They have willingly contributed to our worship with creative presentations for Advent candle lighting, scripture readings and children's time. The children also enjoyed being part of the virtual Christmas pageants these past two Christmases.

It was also during this time that Sarah's mom was dealing with a cancer diagnosis, a very difficult time for them to be so far away from her parents. Her mother's death in July 2021 was a tremendous loss for Sarah and her family. On one of their visits to Sault Ste. Marie during her mom's illness, Sarah and her mom sat on the couch together and recorded a virtual song for one of our services -- a poignant image that will remain with me.

Mathieu was born and grew up in the capital of Angola (Luanda), along with a younger sister. Angola is located on the southwest coast of Africa. His parents, originally from Ontario, moved

there in the early 80's to work for an NGO contributing to the capacity of communities to provide for their basic needs (specifically in human settlements), about five years after Angola had achieved independence from Portugal. His growing up there was shadowed by the civil war that lasted until after he'd left for university. Socialism, the effects of the Cold War, and South Africa's fight against apartheid dominated the 80's, and the 90's brought in the first democratic elections and western materialism. He was one of the few white children where they lived and so he was very easy to keep track of because someone always knew where he was. He attended an Angolan creche (nursery school) run by Italian nuns, speaking the traditional national language of that area. He could have continued in the Angolan education system but because of the civil war, a lot of the government funding was diverted to the military which severely impacted the quality of their education system. His parents were able to enroll him in a French school run by a French oil company, primarily for the children of the oil company employees, but the school was required to enroll a certain number of non-French children. It was a closed-off and close-minded culture and he did not enjoy his years there from primary to Grade 10, where he was viewed as an outsider because he was not French. After Grade 10 the school expected you to go to France



to finish off your French schooling. His parents considered sending him back to Canada to complete high school, but he had never been taught in English and at that point he was fluent in 4 languages – Portuguese, English, French and Spanish. A friend recommended an International United World College in the tiny traditional mountain kingdom of eSwatini (previously Swaziland), part of a movement of colleges established after World War II promoting peace, understanding, justice, and cooperation – an international multi-cultural system. It was very much in line with the development work his parents were involved with. It was also where Nelson Mandela had sent his grandchildren as well as the children of anti-apartheid leaders. There was a lot of focus on community service with students putting in 150 hours in a year! Mathieu loved it and had his hours completed in the first term. Going to this school was like paradise, up in the rural mountains, not in the big city, a completely different environment. He enrolled in everything; every single sport, joined every team, every trip and still managed to get the sleep he needed! He just soaked in the academics, and it never felt like a chore – their approach was much more hands-on and interactive and critical thinking was encouraged.

After graduation the idea was to come to Canada for university. He completed his high school in 2000, and because of their system he finished in December and had to wait nine months until he could start university in Canada – kind of like a gap year, and he returned to Angola during that time. Early on during that gap year he came to Waterloo for an interview with the School of Architecture at University of Waterloo (to which he was accepted). He figured he should check into a residence while he was here and was told that Conrad Grebel University College had the best residence, known for having lots of food, all you can eat. He thought that was amazing; he was a hungry kid! He headed straight to Grebel and managed to get an interview, though they hadn't started the process yet, and because of his background was accepted on the spot! He had a place in residence before he had been accepted to U. of W. In the meantime, he questioned his choice of programs and ended up choosing Environmental Civil Engineering and lasted a year. Suffering from reverse culture shock and the need for a broader international perspective, he transitioned into the Environmental Studies Faculty to Environment and Resource Studies, where he got into mapping.

Sarah was born in K-W and has a younger brother who currently lives in Newfoundland. She experienced a number of moves in her growing-up years. At age two the family moved to Saskatchewan where her parents both attended Grad School. When she was ten, they moved back to Waterloo for her mom's internship and also wanting to be closer to her mom and dad's families. Then at sixteen her mom got a permanent position as a psychologist in Sault Ste. Marie and her father began a position there at the Canadian Forestry Centre. When asked how the experience

of frequent moves impacted her, she responded that it made her family closer because you didn't always have friends. She didn't like moving and it was hard to leave friends behind. It was difficult being the new person because everyone knew each other from kindergarten and being an introvert added to the challenge of forging new friendships. With time, she did develop some good friends.

Sarah started at U. of W. in the fall of 2002 (a year later than Mathieu) in the Biology faculty specializing in Ecology and Environmental Biology and in residence at Grebel. Both of them were in the Co-op Program but on opposite streams so their paths didn't cross until their streams converged and they finally met. One night they happened to sit at the same table at supper, which Mathieu doesn't remember, and Sarah recalls him going on and on about "Angola this and Angola that" and thinking he was kind of cute and that she might be in one of his classes. The next day in a Peace & Conflict Studies class her friends wanted to sit at the back, but she was having trouble hearing and seeing the board. Then she noticed Mathieu sitting further up and went to introduce herself and asked if she could sit beside him. Sarah saw him as a potential friend, but for Mathieu it was "love at second sight"! ☺ They're not sure when they actually started dating, spending time getting to know each other amidst student life and studies. As their relationship developed, Sarah told her family about Mathieu and discovered that the previous year, through a connection with another student, Sarah's grandparents and aunt and uncle had driven Mathieu and his bike to St. Catharines for his co-op placement. What a small world, and they thought he was a great guy! Nice endorsement for Mathieu! (This is a shortened version of a fun story).

After they were engaged, they visited Angola so Sarah could meet his family and see where Mathieu grew up. This was Sarah's first overseas trip, and it was also a bit of a test to see if they could live overseas longer term. Sarah found the experience quite challenging.

They married toward the end of their studies in December of 2006 in St. Catharines where they both had family. After graduation Mathieu got a 6-month internship with CIDA/CARE on a watershed management project in northern Nicaragua and Sarah was able to join him and do some volunteer work. On their return, Sarah got an internship with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada working in a fungus lab in London and they quickly became involved at Valleyview Mennonite Church where Mark DH's brother and wife, Kendall and Charlene, had recently begun a pastorate and they became good friends. Following the internship, they returned to Waterloo and Sarah went to Laurier to do her Bachelor of Education, which for a variety of reasons, did not go as planned and she dropped out. This was a very difficult time for her as her career plan had been to teach science at the grades 7 and 8 level.

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO



Conrad Grebel
University College

Mathieu had been doing some consulting trips, continuing to work internationally, including trips to Angola. He then found a more permanent job closer to home for an engineering consulting company focused on environmental remediation doing Geographic Information Systems Mapping.

As Sarah discerned next steps, a friend of hers suggested that she apply to cover her maternity leave at the Mennonite World Conference office at 50 Kent Ave. During that time Sarah became pregnant with Patrick. The two of them continued covering each others' maternity leaves until her friend made the decision to remain at home after the third child, at which point it became a permanent position for Sarah, following time spent at home with Ruth.

(At this point in the interview, Frankie left his comfortable place on Patrick's lap and meandered over in my direction. He promptly jumped onto the chair and began to check me out. He licked my finger, smelled my pen and literally put his face in front of mine and then proceeded to lay down beside me and rested one paw on my leg. He won my heart!)

As our interview was winding down, I invited them to share a bit of their faith journey...

Sarah grew up in a Christian home and was 6 years old when she asked Jesus into her heart, with times of renewal as she got older and had more understanding. She acknowledged that some of the things that were taught have needed some unpacking. Her mother came from the Mennonite Brethren tradition and her father Free Methodist. She has had a variety of experiences in a number of different churches/denominations through the years and they both commented on how meaningful their experience was at Valleyview Mennonite Church.

Mathieu did not grow up attending church. His father had grown up in the Baptist Church and his grandparents attended a Baptist Church in St. Catharines and whenever they were back in Canada visiting his grandparents, they would always go to church with them and attend Sunday School, and so he associated S.S. with his grandparents. His parents would also send Mathieu and his sister to summer camp for a week with a number of the camps being Christian-based. He became familiar with the camp tunes and the idea of asking Jesus into your heart was a bit foreign to him because these were the only experiences he'd had and therefore didn't understand it all.

When he went to eSwatini (Swaziland), his parents arranged for some Portuguese-Swedish friends to be his guardians, someone he could contact if he needed anything. At that point he was 18 years old, at an age where he was questioning things and trying to figure out where he fit in the world. He would stay with them occasionally and attended a number of events with them, including a sunrise service, which was a special experience, set in the beautiful mountains. He credits her with being the spark that got him thinking that maybe there was more to faith than he had experienced. Because his grandparents and parents were Christian, he thought he was too, by default. His parents weren't overtly Christian and didn't really talk about it. He grew up with Bible stories, read them all, and knew missionary families in the country. For them it wasn't a personal relationship

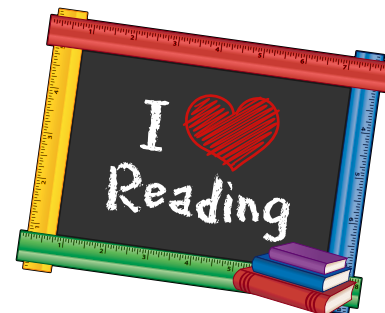
with God but provided a moral guidance to how you live your life. His best friend in Angola was a Muslim from Mali and he respected his faith and felt that all faiths have merit and some value. After he came to Waterloo and met Sarah, they began attending a Mennonite Brethren church together. He was interested in the peace emphasis and took a few of the Grebel Peace and Conflict studies courses. They would stay up late into the night talking about faith issues. They were both baptized soon after their engagement.

Sarah appreciated that he did not have stereotypical notions of male and female roles and the timing was such that when Sarah returned to full-time work, changes were happening at Mathieu's workplace and he became the home parent along with some part-time consulting work.

Patrick originally started school at Cedarbrae Public School where they got to know Melinda Metzger and connected with a number of the Sunnydale community programs and events. Patrick then moved to N A MacEachern School for French Immersion, with his sister following. During the pandemic he became very involved building with Kapla blocks (Domino structures). He loves to figure things out and build things, making the designs and using his imagination. He also has a keen interest in pursuing piano.



Ruth is an avid reader and was already reading in JK with lots of support from her dad. She played ringette in 2019 and then the pandemic happened. They both spend a lot of time outdoors. Another SJMC connection is that Charlotte and Emmalynn Martin also attend their school and Emmalynn and Ruth were in the same pod.



This interview was a delight and a big thank you to the Cain family for sharing their story with us so generously and freely. We're so happy to welcome you to SJMC. If you haven't met them yet make sure to stop and say hello and introduce yourself when you see them at church.



Getting to Know You!

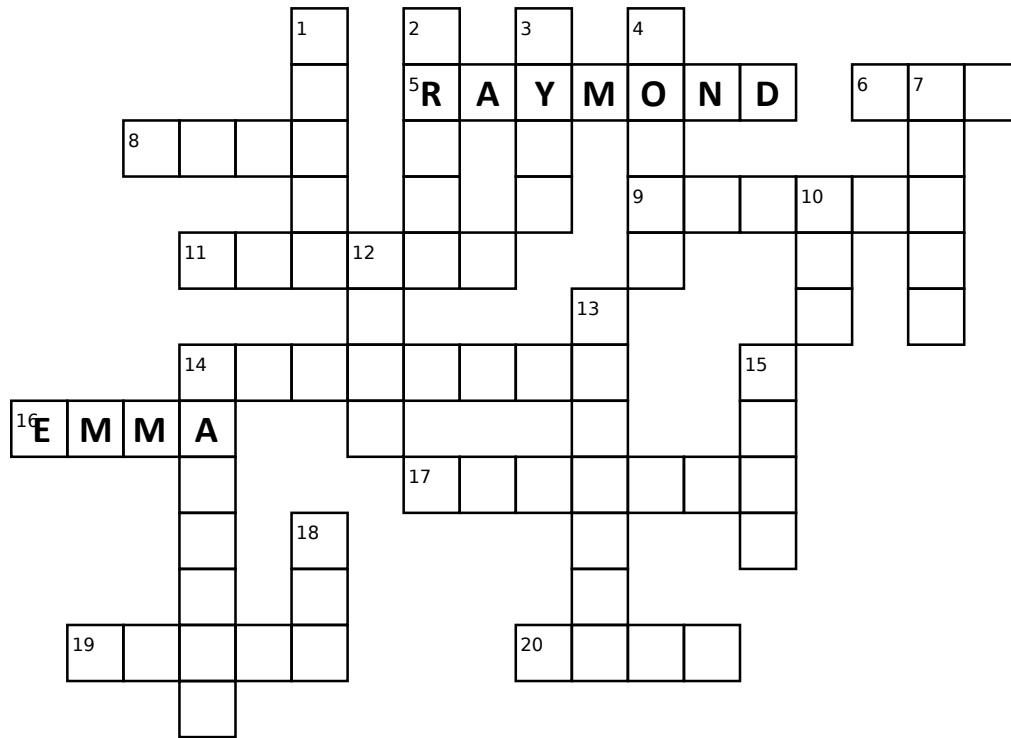


Recent Editions of Life Together with Getting to Know You interviews.

Tanya Morose & Cameron Turner Family	Spring	2012	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/spring_2012_web.pdf
Michelle Mehring	Summer	2012	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/summer_2012_web.pdf
Devin Martin & Megan Geerlinks	Fall	2012	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/Fall_2012_web.pdf
Michele Dunsford	Winter	2012	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/winter_2012_web.pdf
Ryan & Kristine Clemmer Family	Spring	2013	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/Spring2013_LT_Web.pdf
Paul & Laura Stephens	Summer	2013	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/Summer2013_web.pdf
Todd & Melissa Metzger Family	Fall	2013	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/Fall_2013_Web.pdf
Sarah Millar	Winter	2013	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/Winter2013_web.pdf
Michael Lutzmann	Fall	2014	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/Fall2014_web.pdf
David & Christine Kampen-Robinson Family	Winter	2014	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/Winter2014_web.pdf
Nathan & Angela Garland Family	Spring	2015	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/LT_Spring_2015_Web.pdf
Laura Wallace Jarvis & Micah Jarvis Family	Summer	2015	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/LT_Web_Summer2015.pdf
Zac & Melodie Klassen Family	Fall	2015	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/LT_Fall2015_Web.pdf
Scott & Melody Morton Ninomiya Family	Winter	2015	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/LT_Winter2015_Web.pdf
Karen & Stewart Sauder	Spring	2016	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/LT_Spring2016.pdf
Hubert & Amanda Chathi Family	Winter	2017	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/LT_Winter_2017.pdf
Shirley & Fred Redekop	Winter	2018	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/LT_Winter2018_Web.pdf
Pam Snyder & Brian Somerville	Spring	2018	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/LT_Spring2018_Web.pdf
Margaret & Monica Metzger	Spring	2019	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/LT_Spring2019_Web.pdf
Bruce Kleinknecht	Spring	2021	http://sjmc.on.ca/newsletters/LT_2021/LT_Spring2021_Web.pdf

Brubacher Family

Crossword Puzzle



Down:

1. oldest daughter of youngest son
2. middle son
3. husband of daughter of oldest son
4. matriarch's maiden name
7. great grandson attending SJMC
10. oldest son
12. married granddaughter SJMC member
13. wife of youngest son
14. oldest daughter
15. youngest son
18. wife of middle son

Across:

5. patriarch's first name
6. husband of oldest daughter
8. married name of youngest daughter
9. youngest daughter
11. youngest daughter of youngest son
14. middle daughter of youngest son
16. matriarch's first name
17. husband's name of youngest daughter
19. wife of oldest son
20. married name of oldest daughter

Easter Celebrations

at SJMC

