

# LIFE TOGETHER



St. Jacobs Mennonite Church

[www.sjmc.on.ca](http://www.sjmc.on.ca)

Spring 2025

## Pastor's Pen Janet Bauman

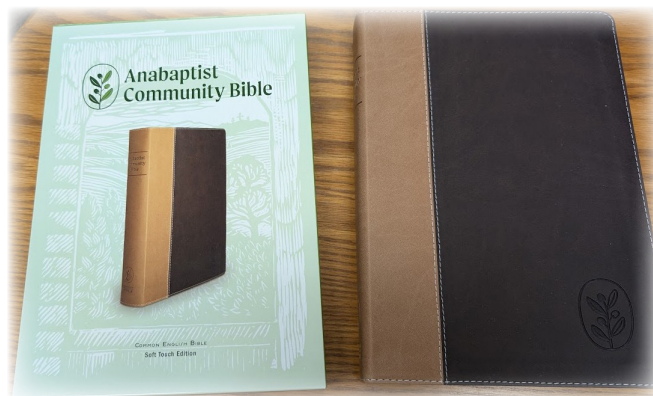
Back in the winter our worship series, *Anabaptism at 500*, commemorated the history of our Anabaptist heritage that began with the first adult baptisms in Europe by a group of young radicals in Switzerland in 1525. One thing that impressed us during that series was the role bible studies played in the movement. The early Anabaptists, with recent access to the bible in their own languages, saw it as the only authority for life. They met in small groups to study the bible searching for what it did and did not say about things like fasting, baptism and other church practices. Even after the authorities mandated that radical bible study groups be closed down, they continued to meet in secret. Many Anabaptists carried small pocket-sized commentaries, arranged by topic, with bible verses for all kinds of situations in life. And court records show that many of the Anabaptists who were put on trial, quoted scripture in their defense.

Those stories got me thinking about our use of the bible in 2025. So during Lent, I challenged myself to read the gospel of Luke and invited people from the church to join me in a 6-week bible study on the stories from Luke that we were using for worship.

There were usually 12-15 of us around a table. We were decidedly "low tech"-- pens, paper and a whiteboard. We started each evening by inviting the Spirit to speak to us through the text. We read the text out loud, with a variety of translations to compare. And then we jumped in and wrestled with it! We tried to take the approach that even something troubling or puzzling was worth exploring.

Most of these stories were parables, and so the first night we explored the nature of Jesus' parables. There is usually a shock or surprise in every parable that leaves you pondering. The parables are rooted in what is going on. They offer commentary on what Jesus sees going on around him, and how he sees himself and what he is doing.

One thing I found particularly helpful in understanding the parables comes from Jewish scholar Amy-Jill Levine, an expert in the gospels, and Jesus' Jewish heritage. She notes that the parables of Jesus are packed with patterns and images from the language of the prophets. Levine



explains that while Jesus did express the teachings of his tradition in new ways, more often, his parables "tease us into recognizing what we've already known...by reframing our vision. The point is less that they reveal something new than that they tap into our memories, our values, and our deepest longings, and so they resurrect what is very old, and very wise, and very precious. And often very unsettling" (From an article called, "What the Prodigal Son Story Doesn't Mean").

This helped me to see how important the scriptures were to Jesus, and how he used them. For followers of Jesus the New Testament is our primary source material about him. And to understand him even better in his Jewish context we read the Hebrew scriptures, or Old Testament. These are the scriptures that shaped him, that he wrestled with, and that he interpreted.

It is true that engaging with the bible is a cross-cultural experience, much like encountering another culture through travel. I loved the challenge of finding a way each week to take a deep dive into the culture of the bible with the people who joined me around the table. We noted our gut feelings, impressions and reactions to the text. We raised questions. We noted what felt familiar and what seemed strange. We focused on the verbs to see how they shaped our reading. We imagined what it could look like as a drama. We imagined what it might have been like to be in that scene. We placed ourselves in the roles of different characters, trying on roles we don't usually connect with. Inevitably, though we are distant from each other by centuries, we found people in the texts we could relate to. It seems there are feelings, experiences and truths that transcend time and place.

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**Brent Horst • Editor**



**Janet Bauman**



**Leah Boehm**



**Kristen & Don Penner**

## Editorial

Spring is here and hopefully you are enjoying it. It is often a time of hope and renewal. I hope this issue doesn't bring you down. A couple of articles may be hard to read but are included as part of our focus on Anabaptism at 500. The letter of Anna Janz to her son who she left behind and the transcript of part of the trial of Elisabeth Derks show the remarkable faith of these two Anabaptist women and the costs of staying firm in their faith when persecuted. It was an extraordinary time and almost unbelievable events when realizing our religious freedoms today.

Janet's Pastor's Pen fleshes out some thoughts about life in Jesus' time, from a bible study of Luke. I've included excerpts from Levi Bender's sermon during his internship at SJMC. Some excellent thoughts and insights, Levi.

We get to know Kristin and Don Penner better by reading their article and perhaps some new things about our three Life and Times subjects. I am grateful to welcome Leah Boehm to Life Together. Leah coordinated the Getting to Know You article in this issue and looks forward to interviewing and writing up the stories of other members in upcoming issues. Thanks for doing this, Leah.

May you find something interesting or helpful in these pages.

*Brent*

## Thank You!

- Article and Picture Contributors
- St. Jacobs Printery
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Most significant for me was going around the table at the end of the evening to share what we saw as the good news in the story. Everyone had a unique perspective or insight to share. None of us had exactly the same encounter with the text. This sharing certainly enriched and seeded the reflections for whomever was preaching the next week! Here are some of my take-aways from this bible study experience.

- Context matters. It is so helpful to explore the history and culture of the writer, the audience and the subject of the stories.
- Genre matters. Knowing what kind of writing we are exploring and where it is in relation to other texts broadens and deepens how we read it. Exploring bigger chunks of texts helps to see bigger pictures, themes and movements.

- Life experience matters. What we bring to the text impacts what we hear. Our history, our life experiences and our current reality shapes how we hear a text and how we experience the good news.
- Application matters. The bible still speaks. It has something to say to us about how we live in our times.
- The Spirit matters. The bible is a living, breathing, dynamic text. Through the Spirit the text speaks to who I am now, and what I am experiencing. The Spirit can help it speak to someone else differently.
- Effort matters. Wrestling with the text was worth it in the end. We found ourselves blessed.

When people encounter the written Word they take a risk. They open themselves up to be transformed into people that look and sound and act like the living Word, Jesus. May it be so.

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## Hope through Despair

From January to March, we had the privilege at SJMC of having Levi Bender as our pastoral intern. Levi is in a gap year between high school and university, and this opportunity gave him a wonderful chance to test out ministry gifts and get to know the congregation better from the inside.

During his internship, Levi has been a part of weekly pastoral team meetings and other church meetings, been on some visits and joined in on various community activities, including flipping pancakes at our pancake supper and leading a young adult Meals that Matter. Levi engaged in some spiritual disciplines and contemplated his 'big question' about despair and hope in a messed-up world. This big question became the root of an excellent sermon on the topic. Levi participated in almost every aspect of worship, including worship leading, leading the congregational sharing and prayer, several children's story, a panel conversation and his first sermon, in addition to a presentation on his MCC Borderland trip to Texas. We were impressed with his maturity of thought and his comfortable public presence. We wish Levi many blessings on all his future endeavours.

- Mark Diller Harder

*Excerpts from sermon of Levi Bender, March 2, 2025.  
See Youtube for complete sermon.*

Good Morning. It is wonderful to be up at the front this morning sharing about a topic that I'm very passionate about. This sermon is the culmination of my 8-week pastoral internship. If you had told me at the start of my gap year that I would be a pastoral intern, I would be a bit surprised. I probably should not be too surprised as both my parents are pastors...

...In this sermon, I try to find a good balance of despair and hope. Not too much despair to the point where we curl up in a ball paralyzed and not too much hope to the point where we feel as if there is no work...

...Seeing this massive (border) wall right in front of me made it feel like it is so permanent. Like there is nothing to be done to solve the problems it represents. The idea that this wall could be torn down and be built into a bridge is so perfect. Tearing down a wall that represents



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## Hope through Despair ....continued.



hate, ignorance and dehumanization and replacing it with a bridge to connects us is more of what the world needs. This idea perfectly fits the mold of the Upside-Down Kingdom and Jesus' teaching of radical acceptance. The other idea that has stuck with me is that peacemakers are like grass growing in the cracks of concrete. Grass is very fragile and feels insignificant in the cracks of concrete which often feels permanent. It is easy to lay concrete over the cracks covering the grass. In the short term, concrete wins but in the long run, the grass will overcome....

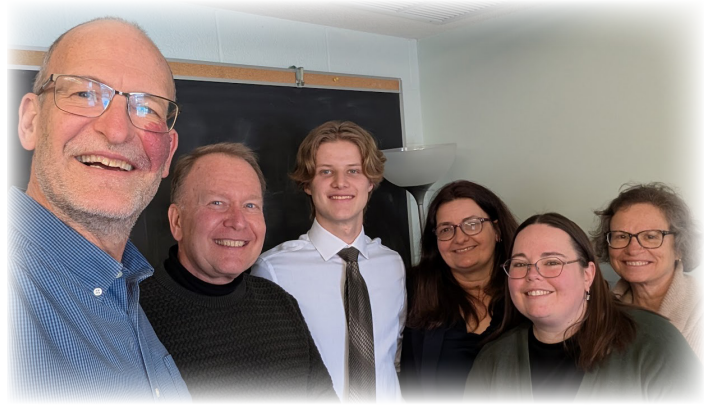
...Psalms 71 evokes the imagery of God as the Rock of Refuge. This image came up earlier in the service in my favourite hymn, My Life Flows On. "No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to this Rock I'm clinging." In the great storm we are currently trying to weather, God is our rock of refuge. He is the constant in our lives. As humans we often rely solely on ourselves. We are reminded that God has been our Hope from birth and will continue to be Hope. The rock of God is a fortress, stronger than the fortresses, walls and concrete of human making. With our grounding in God, we shall crack and transform the rocks before us...

...As caring individuals, we can feel second-hand suffering. We hear the groans of creation under the stress of human-caused climate change, and we suffer. We hear the cries of the oppressed and we suffer. Our suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope. In these times it is imperative for us to show our character and lead by example. Our characters can be beacons of God's love and hope and the hope that it brings...

...I have done my best to inspire hope in this sermon. It will not change the world but hopefully it can help us see the light in dark times.

*(Levi ended his sermon with this prayer, first presented by Cardinal Dearden in 1979 and quoted by Pope Francis in 2015.)*

Levi's Support Group



### ***Prophets of a Future Not Our Own***

*It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.*

*The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.*

*We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.*

*No statement says all that could be said.*

*No prayer fully expresses our faith.*

*No confession brings perfection.*

*No pastoral visit brings wholeness.*

*No program accomplishes the Church's mission.*

*No set of goals and objectives includes everything.*

*This is what we are about.*

*We plant the seeds that one day will grow.*

*We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.*

*We lay foundations that will need further development.*

*We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.*

*We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.*

*This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.*

*It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an*

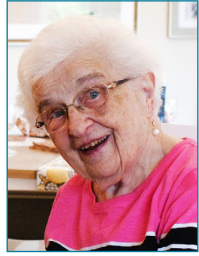
*opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.*

*We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.*

*We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.*

*We are prophets of a future not our own.*

# Life & Times



**Leeta Horst, 96**

*Retired. Early jobs were in retail (Reichard's, Floradale Store) Farmer in Ontario and Quebec, Stone Crock/Meats & Cheese; Chesley Lake Camp Manager*

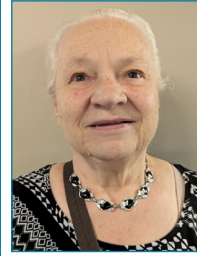
Childhood Home: Floradale, Ontario  
Present Home: Parkwood Mennonite Home



**Calvin Martin, 64**

*Working in the shop at Bridgeland Terminals after 35 years of driving truck.*

Childhood Home: Farm North of Floradale, ON  
Present Home: Elmira, ON



**Leah Boehm, 85**

*Retired. Worked as a RPN in Longterm care for 13 years, 8 on overnight shift. Plan to attend my third Quilt for Survivors retreat this year.*

Childhood Home: Benjamin Road, Waterloo  
Present Home: Kitchener

## Some of my favourite smells, sounds, tastes:

- Taste of caramel popcorn
- Fried eggs
- Cherry pie

- Fresh cut grass • Fresh cinnamon buns
- Ham & scalloped potatoes
- Kids playing & laughing
- Birds singing after a rain

- Smells of Spring maple syrup boiling
- Birds singing, children playing
- Baking bread • Soup simmering
- Music • Live theatre

## Some things you may not know about me:

- As a child, I planted asparagus and sold it door to door in Floradale
- I played first base in baseball at school and swing bowling as an adult
- Managed Homestead Lunch at Wagner's Corners in early 1950's
- Lived in Quebec for 15 years and hosted many people, especially during Montreal Expo 1967

- Had two broken wrists at the same time as a child
- Drove truck for 35 years
- Volunteered with MCC Meat Canner for 6 years
- First language was Pennsylvania Dutch

- Worked after grade 8 in many homes, helped mom bake bread for market
- Got high school diploma from Rockway Mennonite Collegiate at age 22. Got RPN certificate from Conestoga College at age 50.
- Graduated from Ontario Mennonite Bible School. Spend a month in Nigeria.
- Farmed 25 years, raising top quality Landrace pigs with international sales

## Personality traits others would say I have:

- Still have very neat handwriting • Generous with volunteering time (quilting, food preparation, etc.) • Musical (Sang with sister, Mel and others; played Hawaiian guitar)

- Good sense of humour • Friendly smile
- Can be blunt at times
- Hard worker
- Worry too much

- Generous, Kind
- Determined, Active
- Hospitable • Creative
- Open-minded

## My interests include:

- Reading and journaling
- Quilting and other fabric arts
- Visiting with those who come see me
- Looking at pictures on Facebook
- Watching church online, joining family Zoom calls, using email

- Camping
- Biking
- Sports
- Travelling
- Birds

- Sewing, knitting, baking
- Traveled to Europe 4 times visiting relatives
- Meeting with other Alzheimer's widows
- Taught Sunday School and VBS
- Worked on committees
- Piecing quilt tops for Quilts for Survivors

## Some favourite lifetime memories:

- Spending time with my father (papa), Bishop Reuben Dettwiler • My sister Fern and I helping pluck and prepare chickens for Guelph market • My future husband Mel biking to Floradale to see me. We married in 1948.
- Trips to Europe, Australia and much of North America • Raising five children on a farm in Quebec • Singing with Mel

- Getting married
- Birth of our children
- Trips to British Columbia and Newfoundland
- Meeting interesting people over my many years of driving truck

- Train to Pennsylvania at age 5
- Trip to Hungary and Germany one year after marriage
- John and my wedding day
- Our children growing up
- Becoming an Aunt at age 7
- Listening to my dad's stories about his great grandfather

## Where I like to play or ponder:

- While quilting
- In my relaxing chair
- Listening to gospel music

- Front porch in the Summer
- In front of a campfire
- Trails in the forest

- Watch grandchildren play water polo and lacrosse
- Spend time in my craft room
- Word games on my phone
- Cooking and baking

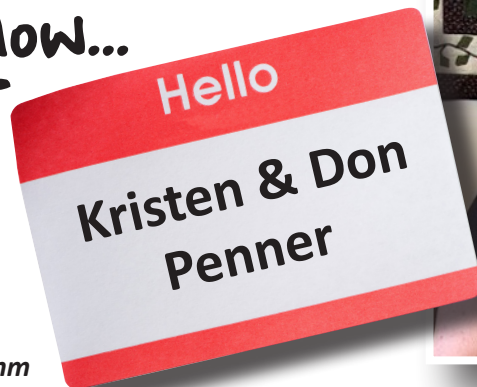
## Some items on my "Bucket List":

- Continuing to enjoy my family, including 30 great grandchildren
- Having enough strength to enjoy the day

- Travel to New Zealand or Australia
- River Cruise in Europe
- Drive a race car on a racetrack

- Visit Alaska or Australia
- Cruising in Ontario and beyond
- Entertain nieces and nephews

# Getting to Know...



with Leah Boehm



## Place of birth

**Kristen:** Orville, Ohio, USA

**Don:** St. Catharines, Ontario

## Family and siblings

**Kristen:** My dad, Jim Reusser, was the pastor at Salem Mennonite Church when I was born. Our family enjoyed the beautiful parsonage property there, filled with oak trees and a large garden. The farmland bordering the property was an inspiration for my older brother, Mark, to study agriculture. My younger brother John was just 3 years old when we moved to Kitchener, Ontario where my dad took on the pastorate at Stirling Avenue Mennonite, my mother's home church.

My mother was an elementary school teacher, who later took on the role of Christian Education Minister for the Mennonite Church of Ontario & Quebec (precursor to MCEC). She also became an ordained pastor along with my dad at Mannheim Mennonite Church. My family lived in the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church parsonage for my growing up years. There were certainly pros and cons to living right beside the church.

**Don:** My mother & father were born in Ukraine, in the former Soviet Union, coming to Canada as toddlers in 1925. They grew up in large families in southern Manitoba, met in Winnipeg as young adults, and married in Vineland Ontario, where they established their home. Their first child was tragically a stillborn girl. In time, another girl was born, then came me, and then our younger brother. We greatly enjoyed living between two fruit farms in Vineland Station. Dad worked at the General Motors factory in St. Catharines, and mom was our stay-at-home caregiver.

## Education-schools attended

**Kristen:** I attended school at Shepherd, Courtland, and Cameron Heights. I have wonderful memories of high school band trips to Europe, Pennsylvania, Kiwanis

Festival, and Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) convocation for yearly performances of Pomp and Circumstance (on repeat).

After high school, I studied honors music at WLU – a great place to saturate myself in piano, flute, choirs, orchestra, etc. Finally, I did a year at the University of Toronto to receive a Bachelor of Education.

**Don:** For grades 1-8, I attended a 4-room, 2-grades-per-room school called Rittenhouse. That school is now demolished. For high school (grades 9-12) I attended Eden Christian College in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It was run by the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Ontario. That school has also since been demolished. Grade 13 was at the public high school in Beamsville (also recently demolished). Kind of sad to have these markers of one's childhood and youth removed from the landscape.

For post-secondary education, I went to the University of Waterloo through Conrad Grebel College, achieving a BA in Religious Studies. After a year pumping gas at the corner of Ottawa & Weber streets, I went to Waterloo Lutheran Seminary for one year, and then to Anabaptist Mennonite Bible Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana for the next three years.

## Faith formation

**Kristen:** Seeds of faith were planted in me at an early age. My parents spent time praying with us and sharing about our faith. Silver Lake Mennonite Camp was a key place to further this journey. As a camper, being away from home forced me to rely on God's presence and strength, even in the times that I felt left out of my cabin group. The inevitable low point in the middle of each camp was always followed by new friendships and great joy by the end of the week. God always answered those prayers. God has been there for me/us ever since in the good times and the hard times, including 2 birth traumas in the family and a CF diagnosis, several moves to new churches and communities, and some difficult parent care.



**Don:** Growing up our family attended the Vineland United Mennonite Church. As part of the Baby Boomer generation, Sunday School classes were large. They were taught by loving committed volunteers. There were also weekly kids' club programming (boys separate from girls). When I entered grade nine, I attended "Young Peoples" – a Friday night youth program also run by our church. Thursday nights was another night out for church choir practice. In grade 12, I joined a class for weekly catechism instruction held Sunday afternoons and taught by our pastor. Baptism followed in June.

In my late teens our congregation went through a difficult experience culminating in the "voting out" of our pastor. We did not handle conflict well. This became a reason "to count the cost" later in life when I was pondering the call to becoming a pastor.

During my early 20s, I worked at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp for 3 summers teaching the Quest (faith) Program. A fourth summer followed which was part of a year-round onsite experience as Assistant Director. Camp was a great place to test Christian values in the context of 24-hour living in community, seven days a week. It was exciting to see Bible stories become alive and relevant at camp. So did the power of God's love to heal and transform. For me, it was at Silver Lake where a call to become a pastor crystalized.

## Meeting and getting married

**Kristen & Don:** We met at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, where we both served on staff. Don was the Quest leader and Kristen was the Counsellor in Leadership Training instructor. We dated for four years, became engaged, then went through a difficult break up. That experience became a time of listening for God, seeking the Spirit's help to process the loss, and some deeper issues it surfaced.

Following our broken engagement in March, we spent the next few months apart. In fall, Kristen returned to teaching in Fort Erie, and Don left for seminary in Elkhart, Indiana. As winter approached, we began exchanging letters sharing about things we were learning and experiencing – insights about ourselves gained through counselling, study, and prayer.

Next followed a secret summer of dating (we didn't want our families to get hurt again if we weren't getting back together). That fall, Don went back to Elkhart, and Kristen back to teaching at NCC. There were more letters, and then an Easter rendezvous to talk about whether we were feeling called to wed. A couple of weeks later, Kristen drove 8+ hours to Elkhart to propose. After a week to pray and ponder, the following weekend Don drove the 8 hours to Fort Erie to accept 😊. With *much joy* we began our married life on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1985, the service being conducted at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church.

## Our children

**Kristen & Don:** We have 3 amazing children. Kim and Dylan have 2 boys (8 and 6 years old). Angela and Ted have 2 boys (7 and 5). And Sarah and Cody have 1 daughter (3). We are so delighted to have our children and grandchildren nearby. We also love time spent at our cottage together in the summers.

## Careers—hobbies

**Kristen:** I taught high school instrumental and vocal music for 3 years at Niagara Christian College, near Fort Erie, Ontario. During that time, I enjoyed preparing for school concerts and coaching a girls' trio that toured Brethren in Christ Churches in Ontario and Pennsylvania. When Don and I got engaged (the second time), I took a position as vocal music teacher at United Mennonite Education Institute in Leamington, Ontario for a year. During this time Don finished his seminary training in Elkhart, Indiana, which included a practicum for him in teaching religious studies also at UMEI.

When our 3 daughters were born, I switched gears to private piano and flute teaching and have enjoyed teaching privately ever since, while I enjoy outdoor hikes, making music and reading.

**Don:** Upon graduating from seminary, my first employment as a pastor was at Niagara United Mennonite Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake. We were there for 4 years, me serving largely in youth ministry, but also assisting the lead pastor in the needs of a very large and busy congregation. From Niagara, we went to Hawkesville Mennonite (just west of St. Jacobs) for 11 years. Then to Wanner Mennonite in Cambridge for 10.5 years, closing out my career at Shantz Mennonite serving 10 years there.

Family time has been the main focus of our off-work hours, and now since retiring, I have also found joy in long walks and baking buns (Zwiebach).

## Choosing SJMC as our home church

**Kristen & Don:** We became members at SJMC this past February (2025), choosing to do so because of the church's commitment to Biblical teachings, its music, its community of committed believers, and for the willingness of its members to be vulnerable with one another as they learn and grow together in their faith.

SJMC is blessed to have Kristen and Don as part of our congregation, and we are thankful they have chosen to join and participate in our life together in so many wonderful ways.

# *The Interrogation: Elisabeth Dirks, 1549\**

**Background:** Elisabeth Dirks was born into an aristocratic family in East Friesland, Netherlands, in the early sixteenth century. She was educated in a convent school, where she learned to read Dutch and Latin and came to own a Latin New Testament. She joined an Anabaptist group in Leeuwarden [lay-oo-var-den] and was appointed to serve it as the first known Anabaptist deaconess. Elisabeth was arrested on January 15, 1549. Leeuwarden city officials were trying to discover the connections that made up the network of Anabaptist subversives. The officers found a Latin New Testament in Elisabeth's house.

**Policeman:** We've got her! We've got the teacher.

(to Elisabeth) Where is your husband, Menno Simons, the teacher?

**Narrator:** Elisabeth remained silent. The following day two policemen took her to prison. She was called up before the city council.

**Interrogator:** Elisabeth Dirks, I ask you solemnly to take the oath for testimony.

**Elisabeth:** We ought not to swear an oath, but our words should be "Yes, yes" and "No, no."

**Interrogator:** Elisabeth Dirks, do you have a husband?

**Elisabeth:** The truth is, I have no husband.

**Interrogator:** We say that you are a teacher and that you seduce many. We have been told this, and we want to know who your friends are.

**Elisabeth:** My God has commanded me to love my Lord and my God, and to honor my parents, so I will not tell you who my parents are. What I suffer for the name of Christ is a reproach to my friends.

**Interrogator:** All right, we will leave this subject alone, but we want to know who you have taught.

**Elisabeth:** Oh, no, my lords, leave me in peace about this too. Interrogate me about my faith, which I will gladly tell you about.

**Interrogator:** We shall make you so afraid that you will tell us what we ask.

**Elisabeth:** I hope through the grace of God that he will keep my tongue so that I shall not become a traitor and deliver my brothers to death.

**Interrogator:** What persons were present when you were baptized?

**Elisabeth:** Christ said, "Ask those that were present or who heard it." See John 18:21.

**Interrogator:** Now we perceive that you are a teacher, for you compare yourself to Christ.



**Elisabeth:** No, my lords, far be it from me; for I do not esteem myself above even the rubbish which is swept out from the house of the Lord.

**Interrogator:** What do you believe concerning the house of God? Do you not regard our church as the house of God?

**Elisabeth:** No, my lords, for it is written: "You are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them." See 2 Corinthians 6:16.

**Interrogator:** What do you believe concerning our Mass?

**Elisabeth:** My lords, of your Mass I think nothing at all, but I highly esteem all that accords with the Word of God.

**Interrogator:** What are your views with regard to the most awesome Holy Sacrament?

**Elisabeth:** I have never in my life read in the holy Scriptures of a holy sacrament, but of the Lord's Supper. Let me show you from the Scriptures . . .

**Interrogator:** Be silent, for the devil speaks through your mouth.

**Elisabeth:** My lords, this is a small matter because the servant is not better than her lord.

**Interrogator:** You speak from a spirit of pride.

**Elisabeth:** No, my lords, I speak with frankness.

**Interrogator:** What did the Lord say when he gave his disciples the Supper?

**Elisabeth:** What did he give them, flesh or bread?

**Interrogator:** He gave them bread.

**Elisabeth:** Didn't the Lord remain sitting there? How then could they eat the flesh of the Lord?

**Interrogator:** What are your views concerning infant baptism, seeing that you have been rebaptized?



**Elisabeth:** No, my lords, I have not been rebaptized. I have been baptized once upon my faith. It is written that baptism belongs to believers.

**Interrogator:** Are our children damned then because they are baptized?

**Elisabeth:** No, my lords. God forbid that I should judge the children.

**Interrogator:** Do you not seek your salvation in baptism?

**Elisabeth:** No, my lords, all the water in the sea could not save me, but salvation is in Christ, and he has commanded me to love God my Lord above all things and my neighbor as myself.

**Interrogator:** Have the priests power to forgive sins?

**Elisabeth:** No, my lords. How can I believe this? Christ is the only priest through whom sins are forgiven. See Hebrews 7:21.

**Interrogator:** You say that you believe everything that accords with the holy Scriptures. Do you not believe the words of James?

**Elisabeth:** Yes, my lords. Why should I not believe them?

**Interrogator:** Doesn't he say in James 5:14: "Go to the elder of the church that he may anoint you and pray over you"?

**Elisabeth:** Yes, my lords, but do you mean to say that you belong to this church?

**Interrogator:** Are you claiming that the Holy Ghost has saved you already so that you need neither confession nor sacrament?

**Elisabeth:** No, my lords. I acknowledge that I have transgressed the ordinance of the Pope which the Emperor has confirmed by decrees. But prove to me that I have transgressed in any article against my Lord and my God, and I will cry woe over me, miserable being.

**Narrator:** That was the end of the first session. Later, Elizabeth was again brought before the council and led into the torture chamber. Hans the executioner was present. The officials warned her, "We have so far dealt with you in kindness, but if you will not confess, we will resort to severity." The Procurator General then spoke:

**Procurator General:** Master Hans, seize her.

**Hans:** Oh, no, my lords; she will voluntarily confess.

**Narrator:** But she would not voluntarily confess, and so he applied the thumbscrews to her thumbs and forefingers so that the blood squirted out at the nails.

**Elisabeth:** Oh, I cannot endure it any longer.

**Interrogator:** Confess, and we will relieve your pain.

**Elisabeth:** Help me, O Lord, your poor handmaiden! For you are a helper in time of need.

**Interrogator:** Confess, and we will relieve your pain. We told you to confess, not to cry to God the Lord!

**Narrator:** But she steadfastly adhered to God her Lord, and the Lord took away her pain so that she said to the lords:

**Elisabeth:** Ask me anything, and I shall answer you, for I no longer feel the least pain in my flesh as I did before.

**Interrogator:** Will you not yet confess?

**Elisabeth:** No, my lords.

**Narrator:** They then applied the screws to her shins, one on each shin.

**Elisabeth:** O, my lords, do not put me to shame; a man has never touched my bare body.

**Procurator General:** Miss Elisabeth, we shall not treat you dishonorably.

**Narrator:** She then fainted. They said to one another: "Perhaps she is dead." But waking up, she said:

**Elisabeth:** I am alive. I am not dead.

**Narrator:** They then took off all the screws and pleaded with her.

**Elisabeth:** Why do you plead with me like this? This is the way to deal with children.

**Narrator:** So, they obtained not one word from her that was detrimental to her brothers and sisters in the Lord or to any other person.

**Interrogator:** Will you revoke all that you have previously confessed here?

**Elisabeth:** No, my lords, but I will seal it with my death.

**Interrogator:** We will try you no more. Will you voluntarily tell us who baptized you?

**Elisabeth:** No, my lords; I have told you that I will not confess this.

**Narrator:** Sentence was then passed on Elisabeth on March 27, 1549. She was condemned to death. After five and a half months of imprisonment, she was drowned in a bag on May 29, 1549, and thus she offered up her body to God.

\* Alan Kreider and Eleanor Kreider, *Anabaptist Dramatic Readings* (Mennonite Schools Council, 2011), 40–43. Reproduced with permission from Eleanor Kreider. Source: *Martyrs Mirror*, 481–82. Comment: C. J. Dyck, "Elisabeth and Hadewijk of Friesland," in C. Arnold Snyder and Linda A. Huebert Hecht, eds., *Profiles of Anabaptist Women: Sixteenth-Century Reforming Pioneers, Studies in Women and Religion* / Études sur les femmes et la religion 3 (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996), 359–64

# Anna Jansz's Testament\*

*Anna Jansz was born in 1510 to a well-to-do family in South Holland. At the age of twenty-four, she accepted adult baptism in 1534 from Maynaart von Emden, a Münsterite Anabaptist leader who had been sent to Briel to announce the coming of the New Jerusalem in Münster. After a brief time fleeing persecution in England, she re-turned to the Netherlands with an infant son and was quickly arrested. On January 24, 1539, a day after her sentencing, Anna was executed by drowning. As she was led to her execution, Anna pleaded for someone in the crowd to care for her son, a scene depicted in a famous image in Martyrs Mirror. Anna's testament to her son, a letter she wrote while in prison, was initially printed as a pamphlet and incorporated into the first Dutch Mennonite book of martyr stories and hymns, The Sacrifice of the Lord (1562). Eventually it also appeared in the 1685 edition of the Martyrs Mirror and revised as a hymn, in the Swiss Brethren hymnbook known as the Ausbund. The song is still sung by the Amish today.*

My son, hear the instruction of your mother; open your ears to hear the words of my mouth. Behold, I go today the way of the prophets, apostles and martyrs, and drink of the cup of which they all have drank. I go, I say, the way which Christ Jesus, the eternal word of the Father, full of grace and truth, the Shepherd of the sheep, who is the Life, Himself went, and who went this way and not another, and who had to drink of this cup, even as He said: I have a cup to drink of, and a baptism to baptized with.

My son, if you desire to enter into the regions of the holy world and into the inheritance of the saints, follow after them; search the Scriptures, and it shall show you their ways. The angel who spoke to the prophet said: A holy city

has been built, and set upon a broad field, and is full of all good things; the entrance thereof is narrow, and set in a dangerous place to fall, like as if there were a fire on the right hand, and on the left deep water, and only one path between them both, even between the fire and the water. See, my son, this way has no retreats; there are no round-about or crooked little paths; whosoever departs to the right or to the left inherits death.

Therefore, my child, do not regard the great number, nor walk in their ways. But where you hear of a poor, simple, cast-off little flock, which is despised and rejected by the world, join them; for where you hear of the cross, there is Christ. Flee the shadow of this world; become united with God; fear Him alone, keep His commandments, observe all His words, write them on the table of your heart, bind them upon your forehead, speak day and night of His law and you will be a pleasant tree and a sprout in the courts of the Lord, a beloved plant growing up in Zion. Take the fear of the Lord to be your father, and wisdom shall be the mother of your understanding.

Honor the Lord in the works of your hands and let the light of the Gospel shine through you. Love your neighbor. Deal with an open, warm heart your bread to the hungry, clothe the naked, and do not tolerate having two of anything, because there are always some who lack. Whatever the Lord grants you from the sweat of your brow, above what you need, share with those who love the Lord.

O my son, let your life be conformed to the gospel, and the God of peace sanctify your soul and body, to his praise. Amen.

\* Thieleman J. van Braght, *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror*, trans. Joseph F. Sohm, 12th ed. (Herald Press, 1979), 453–54.

## Menno Simons, “True Evangelical Faith” (1539)

*In 1539, Menno set forth a basic outline for Christian ministers—but also for all believers who were committed to following Jesus in daily life. In a text titled Why I Do Not Cease Teaching and Writing, he summarized his convictions in a long sentence that has since become a favorite text among those who are part of the Anabaptist tradition.*

True evangelical faith . . . cannot lie dormant, but manifests itself in all righteousness and works of love; it dies to the flesh and blood; it destroys all forbidden lusts and desires; it seeks and serves and fears God; it clothes the naked; it feeds the hungry; it comforts the sorrowful; it shelters those that harm it; it prays for those that persecute it; it teaches, admonishes, and reproves with the Word of the Lord; it seeks that which is lost; it binds up that which is wounded; it heals that which is diseased and it saves that which is sound; it has become all things to all men.

# Special Events @ SJMC



Comforter Knotting

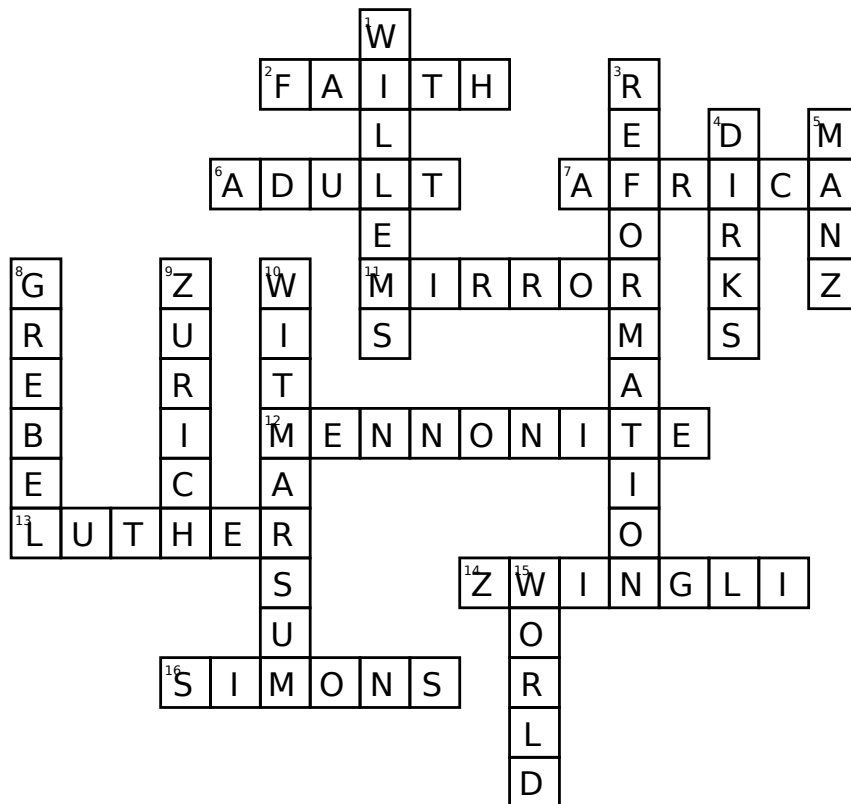


Youth Tree Planting



ANABAPTISM  
at FIVE HUNDRED

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS



Down:

1. Martyr famous for saving his captor: Dirk \_\_\_\_\_
3. Breaking away from Roman Catholicism: Protestant \_\_\_\_\_
4. Possibly first Mennonite Deaconess and early martyr: Elisabeth \_\_\_\_\_
5. Baptized in 1525: Felix \_\_\_\_\_
8. First person baptized 500 years ago: Conrad \_\_\_\_\_
9. City where first adult baptism took place January 21 2025 \_\_\_\_\_
10. Birthplace of Menno Simons \_\_\_\_\_
15. Current global community of Anabaptists: Mennonite \_\_\_\_\_ Conference

Across:

2. True Evangelical \_\_\_\_\_
6. Core belief of Anabaptists: \_\_\_\_\_ baptism
7. Continent with most Mennonites today \_\_\_\_\_
11. Book of early Anabaptism persecution: Martyrs \_\_\_\_\_
12. Name given to Anabaptists following Menno Simons \_\_\_\_\_
13. Posted ninety-five theses on the door of a German church \_\_\_\_\_
14. Early proponent of adult baptism: Ulrich \_\_\_\_\_
16. Last name of our founding "Menno" \_\_\_\_\_



# Special Events @ SJMC



Spring Worship Themes



Easter Choir



Bible Study



Wayne Bridge



Meals That Matter



Welcome New Members



Progressive Supper



Seniors Playing HEARTS