

LIFE TOGETHER



St. Jacobs Mennonite Church

www.sjmc.on.ca

Fall 2025

Pastor's Pen  **Mark Diller Harder**

Anabaptist Renewal at 500

In the broader Mennonite world, this year has been all about the 500 Anniversary of Anabaptism. On January 21st, 1525, a small group of Christians in Zurich gathered secretly for worship. They renounced baptism as infants and George Blaurock, Feliz Manz and Conrad Grebel baptised each other in an experience of voluntary baptism as adults. This decision implied a transformation of life in the way of Jesus, including the rejection of violence. It began the Anabaptist movement that continues today around the whole world.

As a congregation, we have had lots of connections to this Anniversary. Many of you purchased the new Anabaptist Community Bible. This excellent resource is the Common English Translation of the Bible, 'seamlessly interwoven with the rich tapestry of the Anabaptist movement.' There are historical Anabaptist quotes and information, guides from academic scholarship, along with lots of current commentary that came from the community of believers interacting with Scripture. SJMC was one of hundreds of congregations that had people sit together for Bible studies on passages and offer our insights – a true priesthood of all believers.

In January, we joined in with congregations around North America for an 8-week winter worship series on 'Anabaptism at 500: Services of Renewal.' This included an opening service with our K-W perimeter cluster at Breslau Mennonite Church. I appreciated the four Sundays of materials sent out by Menno Media. They framed these Sundays of worship in terms of renewal. There was a full sharing of our history, which included the highlights of a rich identity and theology that continues to sustain us, but also acknowledged the undersides and tensions of our history. One whole Sunday was dedicated to 'Renewal Through Repentance.' We also asked lots of questions about what it means for the church today to gather as the people of God and try to be faithful to the God who has called us. As part of the worship series, we gathered for renewal at the Lord's Table.



This Spring and Summer, many of us were able to connect to the broader Mennonite Church. In this edition of Life Together, we will hear stories from Janet Bauman and the Cain family about the 500th anniversary celebrations that happened right at the birthplace of Anabaptism in Zurich. We are grateful for the stories they can share first hand of being with over 3000 contemporary Anabaptists from around the world. The Mennonite Church Canada Gathering was also hosted right here in Kitchener-Waterloo this July. We had a large group of youth and sponsors attend the Youth Gathering at University of Waterloo, and several adults take part in the Gathering at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, including several offering leadership in various ways. We were reminded again of being a part of a larger global family of faith, that despite so much diversity, still holds a set of common values and convictions as we all try to follow the way of Jesus.

Jeremy Bergen, Conrad Grebel professor, offers some helpful perspectives on how to think about this Anniversary in the July 2025 Canadian Mennonite. In the impulse to celebrate, he wants to 'caution us not to think of this story as primarily about us, Mennonites, or our birth story.' He goes on: 'Rather, I would frame what happened in 1525 as just one small episode in the ongoing 2,000-year story of the church – repentance, renewal, reform. The anniversary is an opportunity for us to reflect on these themes not because "we" got it right back then, but because the church is always called to repentance and renewal.' (p.16). This anniversary then is more about today and looking at how God's spirit is moving in our world and church now, and how we might be called, again and again, to root ourselves in Word and

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Writers & Contributors



Brent Horst • Editor



Mark Diller Harder



Lisa Carr Pries



The Cain Family

Editorial

In this issue, we wrap up our focus on Anabaptism at 500. Mark summarizes this year of acknowledging this anniversary well in his Pastor's Pen. We hear first-hand accounts from Sarah Cain, Mathieu Cain (with Patrick and Ruth), Janet Bauman and Lisa Carr-Pries. It's been a good year of remembering, pondering and honest reflection of the roots of our faith history. I trust you have been impacted positively and ready to move forward! I'd be glad to hear from some of you as you look to the next 500 years! What's next for the Anabaptist Mennonite Church? What will they write about us 500 years from now? Think about these questions, write some thoughts down and please send to me.

I trust you all had a good summer and start this fall of new beginnings with vigor and hope. May our life together be blessed and may we continue to love God and love others. See you in 2026!

Brent

Thank You!

- Article and Picture Contributors
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Janet Bauman



Leah Boehm

Spirit, and become the church and people God is calling us to now. In the same issue, César García, general secretary of Mennonite World Conference, calls us to a broad vision beyond our own denomination or understanding of the truth: 'As we commemorate the first 500 years, let's repent from any attitude of false superiority. Let's look for the renewal the Holy Spirit gives, which always includes

others in perfect love. Let's celebrate our strengths as a church while recognizing our weaknesses, too. Let's remember our forebears' faithful witness while acknowledging the Holy Spirit's work in other churches before and beyond ours.' (p. 18) May this Anniversary year be one that renews all of us to walk in the way of Jesus, guided by the Holy Spirit.

Special Events @ SJMC



Sunday Weiner Roast



Beyond Housing Fundraiser



June 15 Picnic



June 15 Worship



Summer Hockey



Summer Campfire at Martin's

Life & Times



Doris Bean, 66

I am retired and spend a lot of time with my grandchildren, visiting or babysitting. We babysit our son's daughter when he is on shift as a firefighter.

Childhood Home: Curitiba, Parana, Brasil
Present Home: Waterloo Ontario, Canada



Vaughn Bender, 59

Manage approvals, design, operation of residential development projects, mixed use commercial and office sites.

Childhood Home: Farm at Punkeydoodle's Corner
Present Home: Conestogo, ON



Ashlinn O'Marra, 52

Presently an elementary teacher at Floradale Public School (same school for the past 25 years)

Childhood Home: Elmira, Ontario
Present Home: Elmira, Ontario

Some of my favourite smells, sounds, tastes:

- I loved the smell of my Mother's Saturday morning baking • I love to hear the giggles of joy from my young grandchildren.
- The smell of Spring

- Smell of hay and fresh cut grass • Smell of a diesel tractor on hot dusty field • Call of a loon
- Giggle of a grandchild • Taste of a first coffee
- Taste of pretzels

- Laughter of our sons, Sean and Rowan
- Smells of summer-basil, lemons and forests
- The fresh air the first time I can open house windows in the spring • Hearing Peter, Sean and Rowan on their instruments • Homemade coconut cream pie • Christmas turkey

Some things you may not know about me:

- I loved to do gymnastics as a youngster, and for a few years travelled around Ontario as a gymnastics judge for mostly high school competitions.
- At age 12 was paid to fold pizza boxes at 'Pizza Haven'. Boxes were piled up by size along the long hall in back and used throughout the week.

- Many connections to electrical work – pun intended
- Crossed paths with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican and Queen Elizabeth in Ottawa
- First FT job out of university on Parliament Hill – Ottawa for an MP
- Became a Grandpa in 2025

- I'm learning to play traditional Irish fiddle music
- Also learning how to lift weights
- I don't like heights!
- I'm new to a local badminton league

Personality traits others would say I have:

- Generous
- I am mostly extroverted but really value quiet and alone time.
- Loyal – once a friend, always a friend.

- Determined
- Loyal
- Problem-solver
- unapologetic (per Sheri)
- Hard-working
- Thoughtful

- Caring
- Thoughtful
- Hard-working
- Organized
- Stubborn

My interests include:

- Going for long walks • Love travelling - Switerland is one of my favourites • Love to read • Love both cooking and baking recipes my mother made • Love the mountains

- Volunteer with Elmira Community Living
- Cottage projects • Kids home reno projects
- Anything involving me on a tractor
- Pick up hockey with Harold Martin ice time group • Maple Leafs... but waning

- Hiking with my family and friends
- Swimming long distances
- Exercising outside-cycling, canoeing, walking, backyard badminton
- Reading • Baking

Some favourite lifetime memories:

- Cottage time with extended family as I grew up • The birth of my children and now many years later the birth of my grandchildren
- Arriving in Canada on a cold and snowy February as a five-year-old

- Ponies, pets, milking cows and life as a farm kid • Minor hockey teams and tournaments
- High school days, motorcycles and pick-up trucks • University years in Ottawa • Married and our first Ottawa apartment • 3 grown children and now a grandchild

- Births of our two sons
- Our wedding
- Family trips (France, Italy, Algonquin Park, Nova Scotia, Virginia, Ottawa, Disney)
- 10 years of yearly cabin rental on Oxtongue Lake

Where I like to play or ponder:

- In the woods
- In the mountains
- Summers on the back deck surrounded by ALL the things we planted in the past 38 yrs

- On the lawn tractor
- On the cottage dock
- Around the campfire with high school friends

- Our backyard lawn and deck
- Out in nature

Some items on my "Bucket List":

- Being an OMA at the top of the list- achieved! • Seeing Icebergs, puffins and whales in Newfoundland • Taking my kids and grandkids on a once in a lifetime trip (perhaps Disney cruise?). Waiting until all have arrived and are old enough to enjoy.

- Time with grandchildren
- Travel across western Canada
- Woodwork and antique projects
- Restore a classic car

- Canoe trip in Northern Ontario (would need to be a guided one!) • Learn more about gardening • Future trips- riverboat cruise, Rocky Mountaineer to see the Rockies, Iceland, Denmark, back to Ireland
- Go on a yoga retreat



ANABAPTISM at FIVE HUNDRED

My experience at MWC's General Council Meetings, 100-year Celebration, and Anabaptism at 500 in Zurich Switzerland

By Sarah Cain

About 500 people including Executive Committee, General Council delegates, commission members, network members, YABs (Young Anabaptists) delegates, and guests attended the general council meetings in Germany. Every morning and evening, we had a time of worship before people broke up into other meeting areas. For example, our four commissions (Peace, Faith and Life, Deacons, and Mission) and our networks (Service, Mission, Education and Peace) met separately from the General Council. The General Council met together to discuss and pass proposed changes to the MWC constitution by consensus.

Most of my time after the morning worship was spent in the finance office accepting payments and paying expense reimbursements for those from countries that are difficult to send money to. I also answered emails, in addition to completing some of my day-to-day work from a distance.

Mennonite World Conference's new tagline "Following Jesus, Living out Unity, Building Peace" was occasionally put to the test during the meetings in terms of unity. There were a couple of times where cultural differences caused some friction or misunderstandings. Thankfully in the two instances that this occurred, issues were clarified/resolved privately, and public apologies were made.

The 100-year anniversary of MWC was a rich time of celebration. César García (general secretary)'s sermon started out with this paragraph:

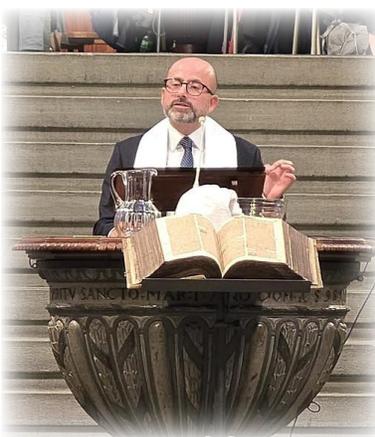
"Difficult times arising from a recent global pandemic. Challenging times stemming from the violence in Ukraine. Testing times marked by a rise in nationalism across various societies. And painful times when political leaders exploit poverty and nationalism to further their agendas of exclusion, war, and the consolidation of power. The year? 1925."

It's very interesting that the circumstances surrounding the need to create Mennonite World Conference in 1925 mirror struggles happening today.

César went on to describe how MWC came to be:

"In that context, a group of Mennonites left oppressive conditions in Russia and set out on a pilgrimage to Zurich, bearing a message from the All-Russian

Conference of Mennonites, written as a letter to be presented at the first global gathering of the Mennonite World Conference. In this message, the delegation from what is now Ukraine expressed these aspirations: "We welcome the idea of establishing a Mennonite World Union, whose unanimous expression should be a meeting of representatives of all Mennonites in the world." According to that delegation, creating a global, diverse Mennonite organization would enhance the church, especially among the dispersed smaller groups. It could facilitate funding for church-based schools, encourage mission activities, assist the needy and suffering, address migration challenges, and establish a global directory."



César García - General Secretary

If you would like to learn more about MWC's history, you can find it in "Mennonite World Conference, 1925-2000: From Euro-American Conference to Worldwide Communion," The Mennonite Quarterly Review (Jan. 2003) by John A. Lapp and Ed van Straten.

César continued his sermon talking about the Israelites on a journey after their exile in biblical times and Jesus' followers after his death and resurrection. He mentioned unity and oneness over 20 times. A good reminder in these times of division.

The "Anabaptism at 500: The Courage to Love" full day celebration in Zurich started bright and early, welcoming over 3,500 people. This is unofficially based on the number of maps and programs given out. Given that many couples shared, I would expect the number to be quite a bit higher. Equipped with name badges, our buses left Germany at 5am. While Mathieu and the kids wandered historical sites in the city and watched some of the international choirs, I helped at the donation/information booth. It was lovely to see former staff who told stories of past assemblies. We also answered questions from random local people curious about what was going on. Mathieu and the kids met up with me for lunch, at the end of my shift. A logistical hiccup was that event location maps distributed in Schwabisch Gmund to MWC delegates did not indicate lunch locations, making it particularly challenging for international guests. Consequently, many staff were enlisted last minute to assist in giving directions.

After lunch, we went on the historic tour together. It was so good to see where Anabaptist history took place and to

learn more about it. The plaque noting where Felix Manz was drowned was particularly powerful as the information banner showed a drawing from the time, so you could imagine the scene.

At the allotted time, large crowds began to gather around the Großmünster church where the main worship service was taking place. As the plaza was completely packed, we decided to forgo the in-person location and walk to the English livestream one instead. There were also livestream locations in German and French. Apparently, all of these were packed by the end and many of our European brothers and sisters decided to let the tourists take the spots and decided to livestream on phones at local pubs.

Just as one plays the “who do you recognise” at the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale, two rows behind us we caught up with a fellow Grebelite we had last run into over 17 years ago while we were working in Nicaragua. We also got to see Janet three rows back! It’s so funny the connections you make even when in a completely different part of the world.

The service was very meaningful, and the decision was made to have current and former MWC officers (president, vice-president, treasurer, and general secretary) lead. The service was planned over many months with



MWC footwashing.

every revision being prayerfully looked over by many eyes. The decision to use white stoles for key MWC leaders was made because in many contexts, if you only wear a suit or a dress, it gives the idea of a business meeting, not a spiritual service. While some MWC churches around the world use the reverend collar and some use robes, a stole seemed to be an item that would be accepted by all. If you look closely when you watch the livestream, you can see that one side has the lamb symbol, similar to what is on the old Hymnal and one side has a cross, dove, and foot washing basin and towel.

During the church service, there were greetings from various ecumenical guests and celebrations of our journey to reconciliation with the Catholic church, Lutheran World Federation, and World Communion of Reformed Churches. Anne-Cathy Graber, Faith and Life Commission member, was selected to be the speaker during the Catholic presentation as she recently represented MWC at the Catholic Synod last year. Larry Miller (former MWC General Secretary) spoke about the reconciliation with the Lutheran World Federation as he was very involved during that time. Foot washing with César and Setri Nyomi (WCRC interim General Secretary) was a very meaningful symbol of reconciliation with the reformed churches. I hope everyone takes the opportunity to watch the livestream.

After the service, we rounded everyone up on the buses and made it back to Schönblick (retreat centre in Germany) by around midnight, ready to go home early the next day.

Other staff continued on for the Global Youth Summit. This event was for young Anabaptists ages 18-30 with some exceptions going up to age 35. This was the first time the Global Youth Summit had occurred in between official Assemblies. The decision was made as every 6-7 years is a large gap in the years of a young person and they felt it was important to meet more regularly. While I did not stay for this event, it sounds like it was a very meaningful, spirit-led event.



Sarah at work during the conference.



Ruth fills in at the donation table.

Recordings and other information about the event are available on MWC's website:

Livestream and information: <https://mwc-cmm.org/en/zurich-lives-tream/>

Choir performances: <https://mwc-cmm.org/en/resources/anabaptism500-musical-ensembles/>

More information on the 100-year event: <https://mwc-cmm.org/en/stories/the-courage-to-love/>

Interviews: <https://mwc-cmm.org/en/resources/zurich-2025-the-courage-to-love-interview-highlights/>

Information about Global Youth Summit:

<https://mwc-cmm.org/en/yabs-committee/gys/>

<https://mwc-cmm.org/en/stories/young-anabaptists-eager-to-encounter-the-global-family/>

Reconciliations:

Reformed churches: <https://mwc-cmm.org/en/resources/restoring-our-family-to-wholeness-seeking-a-common-witness/>

Information about LWF and Catholic trilateral dialogue on baptism:

<https://mwc-cmm.org/en/resources/resources-regarding-baptism-report/>

Healing Memories LWF and MWC reconciliation report:

<https://mwc-cmm.org/en/resources/healing-memories-reconciling-christ/>

Anne-Cathy Graber's at the Vatican's 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod in October 2024:

<https://mwc-cmm.org/en/stories/holy-spirit-works-through-catholic-synod/>

MWC map and statistics:

<https://mwc-cmm.org/en/membership-map-and-statistics/>

History of MWC:

<https://mwc-cmm.org/en/resources/history-mwc/>



Family view of Anabaptism at 500 events in Switzerland

By Mathieu Cain with Patrick and Ruth

This was our first collective visit to Europe since we became parents, and the children's first conscious air trip, none of us having yet been to Germany. Our suitcases brimming with conference materials, our cross-Atlantic flight was in the company of Sarah's co-worker. We estimated that the connecting flight from Zurich to Stuttgart was predominantly made up of Mennonite World Conference delegates and staff converging from around the world.

Upon arrival at the Schönblick Conference Centre (aptly translated as "Beautiful View" in German) on the edge of the town of Schwäbisch Gmünd (about an hour East of Stuttgart, Germany), Sarah hit the ground running and wouldn't emerge from her admin duties for the next four or five 12+ hour days.

While we all for the most part attended joint meals, as well as morning and evening worship together with all of the MWC world delegates, the kids and I were largely left to our own devices: either to explore the conference centre grounds, or the natural environment and local town.

Patrick particularly recalls enjoying the long hours spent exploring the black-forest that abutted the conference centre, including counting 44 hand size orange slugs during the very first early morning MWC Creation-Care walk he and I joined. He also delighted in the creative wooden marble ramps running along the forest trails. Ruth fondly recalls joining in on the kids' Sunday School class in a German town church. While the church was small and completely in German, she says the kids were friendly and completely outnumbered SJMC's numbers.

For my part, besides MWC calling on me from time to time for small impromptu translation help in Portuguese, Spanish or French, I enjoyed joining in the snaking international and intergenerational procession of Siyahamba's "Marching in the Light of God", witnessing the opening historical remarks paralleling current political events with those of the birth of MWC 100 years ago, and sitting in on baptismal thoughts from Tom Yoder Neufeld.



Forest trail toadstool rest stop.

While both boasted narrow mazes of cobblestone streets and were littered with fountains of all shapes and sizes, the German town of Schwäbisch Gmünd's lush greenery, and a myriad of property hedges contrasted with Zurich, Switzerland's, very urban concrete buildings and bridges. Wherever we went exuded history and a view to the long-term, whether it be the attention put into making parks and natural areas creative and accessible to children, or the prevalence of solar arrays along the steep metal or clay tile roofs. Several of the MWC delegates I spoke to, particularly from African origin, noted the contrasts with their own humble dwellings, and how they hoped to bring back richer perspectives and considerations, along with any networking they were able to profit from; some hoping to use these as steppingstones towards building their own enterprises and futures. We were ever mindful of the privilege we had to be there and soak everything in when others with arguably more justification could not. Nevertheless, the memories, particularly for the kids, were great.



The Courage to Love: Reflections from Zurich and Germany

By Lisa Carr-Pries

In May I had the profound privilege as vice-President Mennonite World Conference (MWC) to be part of two historic gatherings in Europe—one in Germany marking the 100th anniversary of MWC, and the other in Zurich, Switzerland, commemorating 500 years since the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement. Both occasions were milestones in our shared journey as a global Anabaptist family, and both invited us into deep reflection on what it means to live faithfully as disciples of Jesus today.

The theme that carried us through was “The Courage to Love.” That phrase may sound simple at first, but in Zurich I was reminded of just how radical and world-changing it really is.

“For God’s sake, do something courageous”

At the commemoration service on May 29th in Zurich, MWC General Secretary César García preached a sermon that I continue to carry with me. He reminded us that Ulrich Zwingli, the reformer in Zurich at the time of the Reformation, once wrote in a letter: “For God’s sake, do something courageous.” Zwingli himself faced threats to his life and the safety of his city. His words ring across the centuries and force us to ask: What does courage mean for us, here and now?

For the Anabaptists of the 16th century, courage often meant suffering rejection, persecution, even martyrdom. But César pointed us back to Jesus, who redefines courage. Jesus did not ignore or deny violence. He did not seek revenge. Instead, he proclaimed transformation—the transformation of the oppressor, the hope of reconciliation, the possibility of forgiveness and new beginnings.

“The courage to follow God’s call to love your enemy,” César said, “is not idealistic or naïve but is the only path to a new humanity.”

That is at the very heart of Anabaptism. And it is at the heart of our calling today: to break cycles of violence, to heal wounds, to mend broken relationships, to be beacons of hope.

A service of reconciliation

One of the most moving parts of the Zurich commemoration was the litanies of reconciliation with leaders from the Catholic Church, the Lutheran World Federation, and the World Communion of Reformed Churches. We confessed our painful history—the persecution of Anabaptists by other Christians—and sought forgiveness and invited each other to love, heal and be courageous in our daily lives as followers of Jesus.

As part of that worship service there was footwashing. It was a breathtaking image of humility and healing. In that moment, I felt that history itself was being transformed—that the story of brokenness and division was being rewritten into a story of grace and hope.



Inside the Grossmünster church.

To lead worship alongside former MWC President Danisa Ndlovu of Zimbabwe, and then to lead the entire congregation in praying the Lord's Prayer, was one of the most humbling and powerful moments of my ministry. The church was packed to the brim, with people even standing outside because there was no more room. It felt like a glimpse of God's reign—people from all nations, languages, and backgrounds, united in prayer.

Courage in community

These global gatherings are never just about ceremonies; they are about relationships. During the week leading up to Zurich, I joined leaders from across the globe in meetings, prayer, and shared meals. We lived into our new tagline together: Following Jesus, living out unity, building peace.

Some of the highlights were tangible symbols of that unity and peace. We planted a tree as a sign of life, peace, and rootedness—something that will remain as a memory and a witness that we were gathered together as a small part of Christ's body in 2025 in Germany. I helped lead a communion service with other MWC officers, reminding us that at Christ's table, all barriers are broken down.

Not every moment was easy. One morning service I led was not received as I had intended. That experience humbled me, and it gave me the opportunity to ask for forgiveness the next day. To my surprise, that apology opened deeper connections with my brothers and sisters. Sometimes courage means admitting when we've missed the mark and choosing the path of reconciliation.

Lessons for today

As I reflect on these experiences, I keep returning to César's question: What does it mean for us today to "do something courageous for God's sake"?

For some, courage may look like standing up for peace in a world gripped by war. For others, it might mean practicing forgiveness in a broken relationship or choosing compassion when bitterness would be easier. In our churches, courage might look like opening our doors wide, creating communities of love where all are welcomed.

And courage is not just an individual act; it is a communal way of life. It is not a technique but, as César said, "a deeply embedded practice and way of being."

The Anabaptists 500 years ago believed that following Jesus in daily life—through love, forgiveness, nonviolence, and community—was worth risking everything. Their courage to love is our inheritance.

Looking forward

As vice president of MWC, I carry these memories with me not as souvenirs from historic events but as guideposts for our journey ahead. As a global communion of 1.5 mil-

lion Anabaptists in more than 100 countries. Our contexts are diverse, but our calling is shared: to follow Jesus, to live out unity, and to build peace.

The tree we planted in Zurich will grow long after the ceremonies are over. My prayer is that it will stand as a sign of our commitment to be rooted in Christ's love and to offer that love courageously to the world.

"For God's sake, do something courageous." May those words echo not only in Zurich's history but in our own daily lives. May we, as individuals and as churches, break violence, heal wounds, mend relationships, and be beacons of hope. May we have the courage to love.



Leading with former MWC President Danisa Ndlovu of Zimbabwe.



Lisa with Cesar Garcia.





Commemorating 500 Years of Anabaptism: Friends of Grebel European Tour May 16-30, 2025

By Janet Bauman

We were a group of 31 people, all related in some way to Conrad Grebel University College (faculty, staff, former students, or parents of students). Our trip began in the Netherlands, where we explored the Anabaptist beginnings in the “Low Countries,” the leadership of Menno Simons, and how many Anabaptists later prospered in the so-called Golden Age of the Dutch Republic. From there we moved into Germany where we explored some of the roots of the Reformation and Martin Luther’s part in it and visited Weierhof, a semi-communal village in the Palatinate, home to a Mennonite congregation, extensive historical archives, homes of some of the first Anabaptists who settled there after fleeing persecution in Switzerland, and a school that has been part of a decades long exchange with Rockway Mennonite Collegiate. We also had a late afternoon boat tour on the Rhine River with lots of castles, churches and vineyards to keep photographers busy! After spending a day in Strasbourg and the Alsace region we moved onto Switzerland for the final part of our tour.

Here we explored the sights and stories significant to the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement in Switzerland, both in Bern and Zurich, and the surrounding areas. We also worshipped with a local Mennonite congregation. Our final day was spent in Zurich, commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Anabaptist movement at events planned by Mennonite World Conference (MWC). Here we met up with many other tour groups, and had opportunities to go to workshops, panel discussions and concerts, all focused on the significance of the 500th anniversary, and what it means to be Anabaptist/Mennonite today.

A final worship service of celebration and reconciliation was held in the Grossmünster Cathedral in Zurich, the church where Swiss Reformer Ulrich Zwingli was the preaching pastor in 1525. He also met regularly and debated with a group of young reformers who wanted to push the pace of change and reform faster than he and the city officials were comfortable doing. Among those young reformers were the first ones to get re-baptized, and as a result, banished from the city. As the re-baptizing movement spread, persecution intensified and came from Reformed, Catholic and Lutheran leaders. It was signifi-



A cellar at Steinsfurt, Germany where dozens of Anabaptists were arrested.

cant and moving that at our final worship service, words and acts of reconciliation between these church leaders and Mennonite leaders took place. It was also special to see Lisa Carr-Pries, vice-president of MWC General Council, included in leading this significant service. My one disappointment was that after standing in line for nearly 2 hours, I was not able to get into the Grossmünster, and had to hustle several city blocks to watch on the livestream at another church, which quickly filled to overflowing. Later on I learned that some in our group ended up watching the whole thing on their phones back at the hotel, or in the square outside the main church because the venues were full. One noted the irony that in an age of secularization, people were lining up for hours to go to church, and many got turned away because the venues were full! Oh, that we had that kind of a problem!

Our tour guides were Troy Osborne and David Neufeld, both professors at Conrad Grebel University College. Their knowledge, background, story telling abilities, and range of observations enriched our experience immensely. I particularly appreciated the balance they brought to our learning. While we highlighted and celebrated faith-filled, inspiring, moving, courageous stories of our Anabaptist/Mennonite faith and family heritage, we also acknowledged the troubling, disturbing aspects of the movement. For example, an apocalyptic, extremist group of Anabaptists took over the city of Munster, in Germany, in the hopes of establishing an Anabaptist Kingdom. It came to a violent and bloody end. For me, it is so valuable, even though it is difficult, to acknowledge, and hopefully learn

from the shadow sides of our faith ancestors. For today, as then, we need to be mindful of the line between grass-roots, enthusiastic, passionate, radical (going back to the roots) ideals, and fanatical, extremist, authoritarian, violent applications.

Another thing I appreciated was the opportunity to be physically present—to be in touch with—the places and stories of my faith and family ancestors.

- to stand in the same pulpit where Menno Simons, as a Catholic priest, preached, and to appreciate his struggle, as he studied the bible for himself, wrestling with what he was reading, seeking to understand and finally join and lead the Anabaptists
- to tour some of the most majestic European cathedrals, and marvel at the ingenuity, engineering and skill needed over decades, and sometimes even centuries to raise these monuments of worship
- to sing in the hidden church in Pingjum, Netherlands and in a cellar in Steinsfurt Germany, where Anabaptists gathered to worship in secret, and no doubt in fear.
- to drive up into the incredibly picturesque Emmental hills in Switzerland, where my Martin ancestors have roots; to visit Hinterhutzen, a traditional Swiss farm turned Anabaptist history museum, complete with a secret room where Anabaptists hid from the authorities
- to climb narrow, winding stone steps up into so many church towers, and castle turrets, to see the cramped spaces where Anabaptists were imprisoned, deprived and sometimes tortured for their faith

- to touch archival materials, see artwork and architecture from the 1500's and beyond, carefully preserved and curated by dedicated, caring local historians, to tell the story of my people
- to walk the streets of Zurich, past the house where the first adult baptisms in Europe took place, past the spot on the Limmat River where Felix Manz was drowned for his faith, into the cathedral where Zwingli preached, and his enthusiastic young followers met with him to read the bible and debate the church reforms that were so necessary
- and for me a special moment—to sing and share communion with my fellow travelers and some other pilgrims, in a cave up in the hills, near Baretswil, Switzerland, with rain coursing down over the mouth of the cave, after a wet 2 km hike through fields and woods, pondering what it must have been like for those early Anabaptists to gather here for worship in secret to avoid persecution, imprisonment, and even death.

It was a memorable journey that leaves me with much to ponder about how our Anabaptist/Mennonite story continues to speak and inspire today. As a pastor, I am more likely now, to pause and reflect on how “Anabaptist” is my worship planning and preaching; how our peace tradition can still speak into our modern context; what unique gifts this tradition has to offer the wider Christian conversation; and how we can be inspired to be faithful disciples of Jesus in our neighbourhoods, and around the world.



Monument to Menno Simons at Witmarsum, Friesland in the Netherlands.

Getting to Know...

By Leah Boehm



Karen was born on Boomer Line to David and Elizabeth Bauman. She is the oldest of five. Two sets of twins, followed her. In her early years she had trouble enjoying babies because they needed so much time and attention. She loved wandering the farm by herself and she had a pet goat.

Eight years of elementary school were spent at Heidelberg Public School. No kindergarten was available at that time. The next three years she was a student at Elmira District Secondary School, after which she transferred to the Nurse Assistant Program at Freeport, where she stayed in residence while in training. Her interests led to more mathematical programs.

After her marriage to Tilman Metzger in 1968 she spent four and a half years working at Mutual Life. After their children were born, Karen kept part time jobs; a Chiropractor's office two to three days a week and some bookkeeping jobs but was always home Tuesday and Friday. She enjoyed the bookkeeping at local businesses including the Stockyards, Hoffman Feeds, and others.

Faith struggles began when Karen raised her hand at a revival meeting at age 10. Her family was understanding and supportive. She joined an instruction class at Hawkesville Mennonite Church and was baptized at the age of 12.

She was active in the Glen-Hawk MYF (a joint youth group of Glen Allen and Hawkesville churches). They went

once a year to Frazer Lake Camp to clean up and prepare for the season's campers. She served as secretary of the Church Council, and was the first female Chairperson of their Administrative body. Karen attended conferences, setup a library system and was Christian Education Chair. Being a good organizer, Dorothy Sittler trained Karen as treasurer of the church. Karen has now completed the final closing of those books since Hawkesville Mennonite Church has closed.

Karen has figured out that things don't always work out rosy. Some things happen by people's errors. How does one pick up the pieces following a tragedy? Their 21-year-old son died by suicide in 2002. Grief reminds in sometimes unexpected ways. It never really goes away. We think of things we could have done differently. By being open, others can be open too.

Karen has been an avid outdoors person. She loved camping with her husband and children. Once she went canoeing with her daughter in Algonquin Park. For 20 years she hiked the Bruce Trail and completed it four times for 900 kilometres in total. Karen has also done several bike tours. One was Le P'tit Train du Nord, a 200-kilometre trail north of Montreal, staying at three Bed and Breakfasts. Another bike trip was to Belgium and The Netherlands. She sold her bike after she had a stroke.

Karen loves to travel. She has been to Switzerland twice, Ireland, Peru,

Morocco, Spain, Portugal, Costa Rica and Scandinavia. She enjoys the culture and food. Beautiful quilts have been pieced for children, grandchildren and relief. In spite of it all, she said her number one interest is reading and time alone at the lakeside.

Karen's husband Tilman grew up on a farm east of Heidelberg. He and Karen met at Hawkesville Mennonite Church as teenagers and after several years of dating they married in 1968. Tilman worked at several agricultural jobs until he began to work for B & M Stockers and Feeders beside the OLEX Stockyards. He bought and sold stocker cattle to farmers to finish for market. He could judge cattle's weight within several pounds just by looking at them. Like a calculator in his brain! He also finished some of his cattle. They were corn-fed so they always ate top-notch beef. When sold, these cattle were steakhouse restaurant quality. Tilman loved gardening; a specialty was Asiatic lilies.

Tilman was not a traveller like Karen but enjoyed camping locally, to the Eastern provinces and northeastern states. Tilman became a victim of Alzheimer's disease and after home-care and long-term care, he died on June 5, 2021.

Karen joined SJMC earlier this year and we are pleased to have her as part of our church family.