

# LIFE TOGETHER



St. Jacobs Mennonite Church

www.sjmc.on.ca

Spring 2026

## Pastor's Pen Janet Bauman

Back in the winter of 2025, we commemorated the 500th anniversary of the first re-baptisms in Europe –the beginning of the Anabaptism movement–with an 8-week worship series called *Anabaptist at 500: Services of Renewal*. Several of us have written, reflected and preached on this theme over the past 15 months. It has been a rich opportunity to celebrate the gifts of our faith and cultural heritage, lament the shadow sides, and look to the future with hope. As part of this journey, we have invited the Holy Spirit to breathe new life into each of us and our church. And we have felt the wind (breath) of the Spirit!

As part of that renewal series, Kandace began a live painting, during worship to represent what we were calling for and hoping for. She began with browns and greys, painting a dry looking seed. Over the next few weeks, the painting began to change. Small cracks in the seed appeared, and tiny roots reached down into the soil. The colours changed and shifted too. There were more shades of green and yellow as small shoots grew up out of the seed, and the first leaves appeared. The final instalment of the painting was vibrant with life, new growth and shoots promising even more leaves.

It seems to me that Kandace's painting represents, so well, the work of the Spirit at SJMC through our Anabaptism at 500 call for renewal. In particular, we have seen new energy around what it means to be a peace church. With so many troubling faces of violence and injustice in our world, we invited the Spirit to help us discern how to respond. We looked to our faith heritage and the story of Jesus to root us and ground us. We listened to stories from people in our congregation who had firsthand experience living through the horrors of World War II, volunteering for



MCC during the Vietnam War and volunteering in Atlanta during the Civil Rights Movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.. What a wealth of experience and wisdom! And we are focusing our spring worship series on *Peace in our Time*. Lots of opportunities for roots and shoots, leaves and branches, vines and fruit.

Jesus often used images of growth in his teachings and stories. Soil and seeds. Wheat and weeds. Fig trees and their fruit. Vines and their branches. And he talked about tending the soil, pruning plants, and harvesting in abundance.

At SJMC, in response to the Spirit's leading we are nurturing and growing a peace witness. We have realized that there are many kinds of violence in our world. It can be discouraging and disheartening to say the least! But we have not given in to anger, bitterness, resentment, despair, hatred or fear. We have stretched our learning muscles in engaging with the stories of Jesus in scrip-

ture to ground us. We prayed and wondered and watched in awe as the Spirit tapped people on the shoulder, and peacemaking ideas sprouted. We have spoken up and spoken out in ways we have never done before, like leaves unfurling on a plant in springtime.

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# Writers & Contributors



**Brent Horst • Editor**



**Janet Bauman**



**Leah Boehm**



**Wolfgang Koehler**

## Editorial

It's been an active spring in many ways. We have had lots of musical groups and events at our church. It has been a season of awakening, especially in regard to our message of peace and love. As you read Janet's Pastor's Pen, Wolfgang's and my reflections on Peace Day and view the pictures of the day, may you be called to some form of response.

Also, Leah helps us to Get to Know Ruby Martin a bit better and the Caption Contest provides a bit of levity, I hope. The Crossword in this issue is in honour of Karin and Wolfgang's hip message of peace.

We were all touched by the first-hand accounts of peace by Marcy Ninomiya, Janice Cressman and Peter Klassen on Peace Day. What are your stories? When were you in a position of conflict, a time when you experienced or witnessed injustice, or were involved in acts of peace? Let's keep the conversation going by sharing your story in the next issue of Life Together. Just put it in my church mailbox, drop it off at my house or email it to [brent.horst@rogers.com](mailto:brent.horst@rogers.com)

We will all be blessed by sharing our stories of peace with each other.

Thanks,

**Brent**

## Thank You!

- Article and Picture Contributors
  - St. Jacobs Printery
  - Pauline Martin - Distribution

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We know that we need to tend and grow many forms of peacemaking. We will need the unique gifts, youthful energy, and seasoned wisdom all of us have to share. What are the peacemaking gifts that you have to offer? What particular interests, passions and skills do you have? What resources, energy and time do you have? Looked at through the lens of following Jesus, how can you activate your gifts toward Shalom and all it encompasses: mercy, truth, justice and peace? What kinds of peacemaking might sprout and grow and bear fruit in you? At SJMC?

At the 100th Anniversary celebration of our congregation in the village of St. Jacobs, we used the image of a tree growing by water as a metaphor for how this church has

grown and changed and remained faithful over its lifetime. These verses from Jeremiah 17:7-8 framed our celebrations: *Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whole trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought, it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.* May these words remind us that God is at work in us to root us and ground us, nurture us and grow us so that we can produce the fruits of peace in our time. May it be so.

## Special Events @ SJMC



Ham Dinner



Ham Dinner

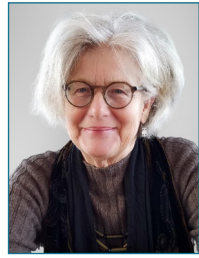


Pancake Supper



Pancake Supper

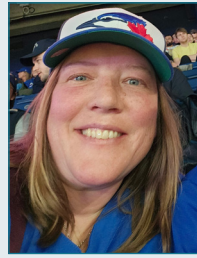
# Life & Times



**Jenny Shantz, 69**

Currently work with *Micredito Central America (micro-lending) and Meda committees. I spend a lot of time planning my hiking calendar and then doing some of it.*

Childhood Home: Shantz Farms RR2 Baden, ON  
Present Home: Waterloo, ON



**Lori Martin, 46**

Helping on our dairy farm. Admin assistant at *Beyond Housing. Volleyball coach.*

Childhood Home: Anten Mills, ON  
Present Home: Elmira, ON



**Mark Diller Harder, 58**

Pastor at *St. Jacobs Mennonite Church*

Childhood Home: Sudbury, ON – 2 weeks  
Present Home: Kitchener, ON

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

- Duh...coffee!
- Any kind of forest, anytime of year.
- Whatever scents and sounds that big water breezes carry.
- In season - mango, papaya, pineapple, passion fruit.
- 2-cycle engine burning - specifically the smell of snowmobiling as a child with my dad.
- Baseball glove - leather is a glorious smell.
- Crackling of our wood stove.
- Ice cream! (only real dairy)
- BBQ steak from our beef animals.
- The smell of a good rain just before it starts.
- The smell of fresh baked bread
- The sound of waterfalls or call of a loon
- The sound of a finely tuned choir chord
- The nostalgic taste of homemade chokecherry sauce

## Some things you may not know about me:

- I was awoken at gunpoint by military police in Colombia.
- My legal name is Jeanette.
- Now growing a constant supply of hydroponic lettuce in the furnace room.
- I was a registered nurse.
- In university I worked in a welding shop with all men (Husky Farm Equipment).
- When I was 6, the ball of my hip joint disintegrated due to nerve damage. There was a chance I wouldn't walk properly again.
- My grandpa (Harry Schneider) chose Ryan for me years before we actually met!
- Born in Sudbury but only lived there for 2 weeks
- Visited Machu Picchu in Peru
- Saw the Queen in Vegreville, Alberta in 1978
- Had a huge Chimpanzee spit water over my whole body (Paraguay Zoo)

## Personality traits others would say I have:

- Thoughtful, pleasant and humourous (this from my loving and faithful husband)
- Impulsive, determined, impatient, patient, abrasive, kind, measured, edgy, laid back, grounded, fun, boring, private.
- A good listener
- Like to tease and joke
- People expect I'm extroverted. I'm not. It takes me a ton of energy to socialize, and need ample time to regroup.
- Compassionate Calm Competitive
- Extrovert/Outgoing
- Creative
- Caring/Empathetic
- Competitive
- Friendly
- Hard-working

## My interests include:

- Currently hiking, singing, pickleball and making sense of the world.
- Sports! volleyball, hockey, golf, cycling, fast-ball, skiing
- Reading books and discussing them with others
- Planning and taking trips
- Keeping up with Isaac and his many interests
- Advocating and learning about mental health
- Choral Singing
- Hockey/Curling/Cross Country Skiing
- Hiking & Campting
- Wilderness Canoe Trips
- Baking Bread

## Some favourite lifetime memories:

- Early years with family on Martin Creek Rd.
- International choir tours.
- Recently traversing an Accursed Mountain pass in Albania during an early October shock of snow, sleet and wind.
- The births of all my children.
- Sharing life's journey with Ryan
- It has been such a blessing to be Isaac's mom
- Summers at Chesley Lake Camp with Grandma & Grandpa Brubacher and my family
- Surfing in Hawaii with Courtney and Glacier Lagoon with Hannah in Iceland.
- Spending a year in Paraguay at age 11
- Wedding day with Rachel, and birth of our 3 wonderful children.
- Lots of tent trailer camping trips with family to provincial and national parks
- Singing Large Choral works with conductors Robert Shaw and Helmut Rilling

## Where I like to play or ponder:

- On the deck of our cabin at Saugeen Reserve #29 and every step on the trail.
- Taking our dog, Duke, for a walk
- Going to coffee shops and having good, honest conversations with the people in my life
- Hot tub conversations with Isaac
- On a wilderness canoe trip
- At the piano, playing the music of Bach
- On a cross-country ski trail

## Some items on my "Bucket List":

- Harmony in all things.
- Learn how to articulate my ideas/viewpoint in a calm and assertive manner when challenged
- Keep my physical and mental health in tip-top condition so I can continue to enjoy life.
- Visit Scandanavia, the original LEGO factory (Denmark)
- Canoe the Nahanni River
- Fly in a Hot Air Balloon
- Hike in Gross Morne National Park
- Travel to lots of distant places and countries
- Conduct a Professional Orchestra (happened in March – the Benedictus of Mozart Requiem with K-W Symphony and Menno Singers)

# The *Quiet* in the Land?

Brent Horst

I received a call from a reporter from The Observer about the SJMC Peace Day, held here on April 26, 2026. During the call, I mentioned to him that Mennonites are historically a Peace Church and that we are often referred to as “the quiet in the land”. I mentioned that both these facts were important when we tried to determine what *working for Peace* means for us, in these times. How do we share a message of Peace, while still being the quiet in the land?

The next Sunday, Janet Bauman preached about Nurturing our Peace. Janet mentioned being in silence as part of this nurturing. She talked of two types of silence; inactive silence driven by fear and a second more active silence that refuels us to act for Peace. As I thought more about this, I wonder if we can redefine being the quiet in the land. I have always viewed this quietness as not making too many waves, being humble and somewhat keeping to ourselves like our Old Order ancestors, who are somewhat separate from the world. The quiet in the land can also go about their days with integrity and a faith that we expect others to see to have an impact on their lives. I wonder if it can also mean a non-violent, clear message of love and peace within a very loud and violent society. Can being quiet in the land include walking downtown with signs of peace, singing songs of love and peace? Can it mean writing letters to the editor, signing petitions asking the government leaders to work for peace and standing up for any injustice that we see? Can it be a quiet but firm resistance to injustice? I think so.

A number of SJMC folks attended the Sing in Solidarity event at Trillium Lutheran Church in Waterloo on Sunday March 22, 2026. Some accounts thought there were 700 of us there to support those going through unpeaceful events in Minnesota. The videos they played that day helped bring home the message that violence and injustice is happening in Minneapolis neighbourhoods and Mennonites there are speaking out. We sang for over an hour in solidarity with their situation. It was a powerful event and not “quiet” as we added our voices to the call for justice for the people of Minnesota and other places.

I mentioned on Peace Day that I have been impressed with the Pope’s message of peace and love recently. The Pope showed that many Christians don’t support the current acts of violence and war, even when justified with the Bible and God’s support! I wondered out loud where our Mennonite Pope is to speak for Anabaptist themes of peace. I have realized that we, you and I, are the collective voice (Pope) of the Mennonite Church. Our church believes in the priesthood of all believers, and we all have a responsibility and ability to speak about and live out our faith, particularly our view of nonviolent resistance. Peace is more than an opposition to war; it is a call for alternative solutions to conflict, calls for loving our enemies and for reconciliation of differences. We have

a message of love and peace too, and we are called to make it known. As SJMC led the song “Lord, listen to your children praying” at Sing in Solidarity, may God give us Love, Power, and Grace to do so.

The quiet in the land can and should speak out against war, hatred and injustice. How we each do that will differ based on our gifts, as Janet points out in her Pastor’s Pen article in this issue, and our collective voices will be heard!

Wolfgang’s essay prodded us to respond. Before that, Levi Bender’s message last year started many of us thinking about what our role is in the current end of immigration in the US. His first-person account of praying by the US-Mexico border wall was also a powerful reminder of the need for bridges, not walls. Now Canada has limited immigration, reduced foreign aid and increased defence spending too.

May God’s Spirit continue to speak to us, and may we each find a way to respond as our gifts and our abilities allow. As Wolfgang reminds us, this may take us out of our comfort zones and that’s okay. Those living in conflict around the world and nearby are not comfortable and we are called to speak and act in ways to help them.

***Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. (Matthew 5:9)***



# What's Next for Our Peace Movement?

Wolfgang Koehler

A Peace Day was held at SJMC April 26th. This day represented our spirit-fed desire to learn what peace means to us and what we could ultimately do to start promoting peace in our community. After much planning by the Peace Day committee, the day finally arrived. The day started with what many said was a very moving service. This statement couldn't be more true as the service started with a wonderful choir singing peace-themed songs. Singing was followed by memories from Peter Klassen and his experience as a Mennonite refugee in Berlin during World War II. Then we had sharing from Marcy Ninomiya working as a nurse for MCC in a hospital during the Vietnam War. Finally, Janice Cressman spoke about her voluntary service assignment with MCC during the Atlanta civil rights movement.

In typical SJMC fashion this special service was followed by an incredible potluck that certainly nourished us all with some generous and tasty dishes. After lunch the afternoon offered us many interactive opportunities to explore peace in our own way. There were peace stations throughout the church. There was instrumental music for the soul playing in the sanctuary that allowed for quiet reflection. There was comforter knotting for MCC relief work in the gathering room. Off the gathering room was a chance to create peace signs that would be used in our peace march later in the day. In the library there was a chance to utilize our creative writing and review peace resources. Graffiti peace messages could be written by all ages inside or outside.

I was the facilitator for the Peace Talk- What Now station. As a group we discussed many topics, some of which I want to highlight here.

The first topic we talked about was "How do you feel about the current state of the world? Are you feeling optimistic or pessimistic?" The consensus in the room was that everyone felt pessimistic and they generated a small list of why they were feeling this way. The war in Ukraine has been dragging on for years. There is the ongoing war between the US and Iran with no end in sight, not to mention the devastation in Gaza. We are being threatened by our neighbors to the south making claims to our sovereignty and that we should become the 51st state. The group agreed, when comparing today to Germany in the 1930's, that history was indeed repeating itself and that we were shocked at some of the things that we had been seeing in the news. A comment that really stood out for me was that the United States touted itself as a



Christian nation, yet they pulled the funding for foreign aid which was the most un-Christian thing to do.

"As a Mennonite what are your thoughts on our government increasing defense spending? Do you think it is just?" This topic certainly spurred on a great deal of conversation and rightfully so. We are, after all, Mennonites, and we have a pacifism stance. The response I received from the question surprised me a bit, particularly when I read this quote from Menno Simons, "The regenerated do not go to war, nor engage in strife. They are children of peace who have beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning forks and know no war." I brought up the 1994 Budapest agreement between the US, UK, Russia and Ukraine, that said if Ukraine gave up the nuclear weapons to Russia that the UK and US would protect Ukraine and there would be peace. Well in 2022 Russia violated that agreement and invaded Ukraine that now has no way to protect itself. Is this inability for Ukraine to defend itself something that could happen to Canada as well if we don't increase our defense spending? During the discussion we agreed that Canada has had the reputation of being the peacekeepers in the world and would likely never be the aggressor. Many, maybe reluctantly, agreed that spending money on defense for the purpose of defending ourselves was okay.

To piggyback on the above topic, we discussed the small country of Switzerland. Switzerland is considered a neutral country, however they are the 25th largest army in the world in terms of spending per capita. Switzerland has mandatory military service for men and after training is done, the men are considered reservists for life. They have only been in one war once in 1815 to defend themselves from Napoleon. We talked about the possibility that Canada could adopt a similar model and if it would then align with Mennonite values?

We then moved to what we could do as SJMC to bring our message of peace forward to the broader community? One

very interesting idea that came up right away was how do we speak to others with a different point of view than us? We all agreed that we had friends or family members who had completely different points of view than our own and sometimes the discussion could get ugly. How do we handle someone who is "in your face" with their own views that don't agree with yours? The suggestion was maybe we could bring a professional in as a guest speaker who would be able to provide solutions or training on conflict resolution.

Another idea was to reach out to an experienced podcast host like Ken Ogasawara and see if we could maybe bring our message of peace to his show. Everyone liked the idea of a podcast but felt it would be easier and quicker to work with a professional with years of experience like Ken. I have reached out to Ken myself and will see where this goes.

We talked about reaching out to the Canadian Mennonite (CM) magazine as well. We thought this would be a great idea to reach out to the broader church community and

felt that working with CM would be a great place to start. We also agreed we should reach out to other Mennonite churches to help us spread the message of peace.

There were many ideas to make our peace message more personal. Many wars have been fought over oil, and the suggestion was to make us less reliant on oil. We should look toward buying electric vehicles and using solar power. Examples were given of other churches and Mennonite buildings like Conrad Grebel that have converted to solar power. The suggestion was brought up to maybe create an Environmental Committee that could communicate these environmental initiatives to the congregation. More peace ideas came up about personal legacy and how to honor your legacy with financial donations to advocate for peace.

The days ahead will be interesting as we move forward with our peace movement here at SJMC. As a Mennonite community, we are moving from a Sunday of reflection to a season of action, striving for peace in our local community. Peace Sunday was just the beginning. Now we will work on these ideas to bring peace into the world.



Peter Klassen



What's Next Discussion Group



What's Next Discussion Group



Comforter Knotting for MCC relief.

*peace*  
BE WITH YOU



# Getting to Know...



*Leah Boehm*

On a spring afternoon with the sun breaking through between rain showers, I met with Ruby in her apartment in the lofts above Home Hardware in St. Jacobs.

Ruby was born on a farm near Bayfield, Ontario in the Zurich area. She is the oldest in a family of six; Ruby, Rita, Olive, Leroy, Irla, and Mahlon. Sadly, her mother passed away when Ruby was an early teenager. She became the caregiver of her young siblings, cooking, cleaning, and laundry became her daily responsibility. A heavy load for one so young to carry.

It was not only the house and children to look after, but also outside farm work. There were chickens to feed, cows to milk, and occasional driving the tractor for her dad.

Two years after her mother died her father remarried. His new bride had been a nurse, so she faced many challenges when suddenly becoming a parent to six energetic children. Two daughters were born to his new union so now there were eight. With the new mom able to take over the household tasks, Ruby went to work for other families as a nanny and homemaker. She was able to spend several semesters at Ontario Mennonite Bible School in Kitchener, but not able to continue to graduation. But they were good times and memories. Ruby attended Zurich Mennonite Church with her family and was baptised there in her teenage years.

She was married to Albert Martin in 1958 and together they attended Hawkesville Mennonite Church. They farmed west of Elmira along the bypass. A springtime specialty was the production of maple syrup, and Albert was active in the Maple Syrup Producers Association for many years.

They also had a large orchard where they grew many varieties of apples. Their cold storage area was valuable for both the apples and the maple syrup. Field crops and livestock took time and care, creating a full load of work.

Ruby and Albert became parents to five daughters. All are married and have families of their own. Ruby is the proud grandmother of twelve.

Ruby has enjoyed embroidery, quilting, sewing and gardening, especially growing flowers. Sewing dresses for the girls kept her busy with not only the sewing, but the ironing as fabrics were not as easy-care as now.

After Hawkesville Mennonite Church closed, Ruby decided to come to St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, and moved her membership here. She stated she had some good childhood memories of attending Vacation Bible School here. Both she and her sister would go to her uncle Ananias Martins for holidays and come to VBS from there. That meant she had early connections to SJMC.

Since February 2025 Ruby has been a regular at our worship services and participates in various activities.

Ruby was busy sorting and packing up belongings in preparation for her move to St. Jacobs Place at the end of May. We wish her well with her move and welcome her continued presence in our congregation.

# Special Events @ SJMC



Karen Metzger - Beyond Sunday Morning



Grace Lao Egg Roll Production

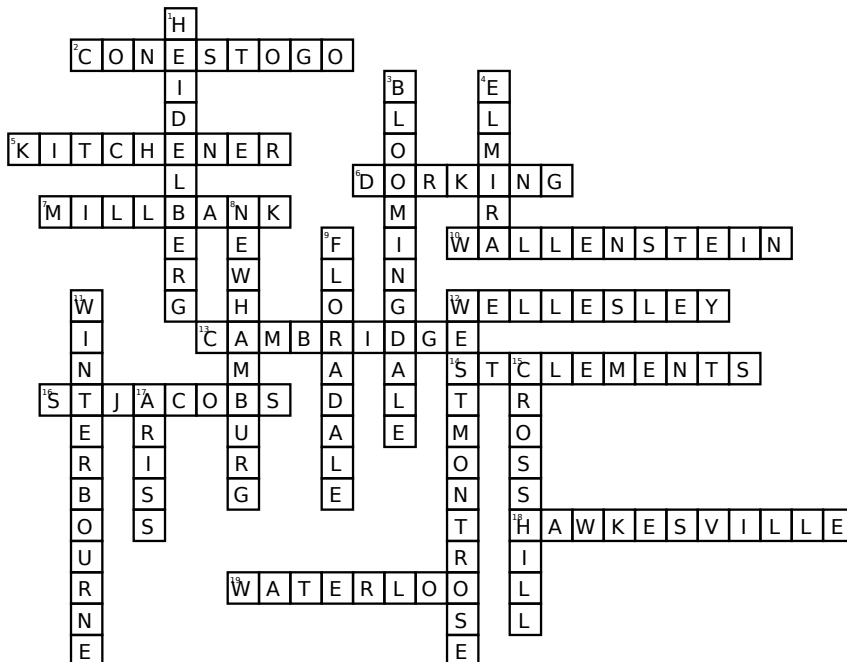


Guess Who's Coming Dinner



Anointing

## Nearby Places CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS



**Down:**

1. Home of Stemmler's Meats
3. Another flowery valley town
4. Home of the Syrup Festival
8. Home of the Mennonite Relief Sale
9. Sounds like a nice flowery valley
11. If you have a birthday from December to March
12. Famous for a covered bridge
15. Ontario's Golgotha
17. End of the middle Crowsfoot road

**Across:**

2. Named after a river and a Mennonite wagon
5. Renamed from BERLIN in 1916
6. Not WINDOW/QUEEN but similar
7. Home of Anna Mae's
10. Suburb of Yatton
12. Better place to live than SICKSLEY
13. Amalgamation of Galt and two other cities
14. A stereotypical Catholic village
16. The centre of the Universe (not Toronto)
18. Not FALCONTOWN but similar
19. 1815 Battle of \_\_\_\_\_

# Caption Contest

A number of people offered captions for this picture of Larry:

- Music is food for the soul, but I'd rather have the food!
- This food is stacked!
- Please sir, may I have some more!
- High on Hymnals.
- I'd rather eat than sing.
- Elevated dinner to a higher level...literally.
- When you forgot your booster seat, but brought your Bible study stack.
- Now where did I put that music?
- Marcia's collection of hymnals is coming in pretty handy.
- SJMC Seniors' Christmas Potluck Poster-Boy.
- Larry singing the new rendition of Voices Together #641-A: "And I Will Raise You Up...On Hymnal Spines".
- Yummy piled high.
- Mechanic-Larry's Prototype for Ergonomic Eating Assistance Device for Seniors.

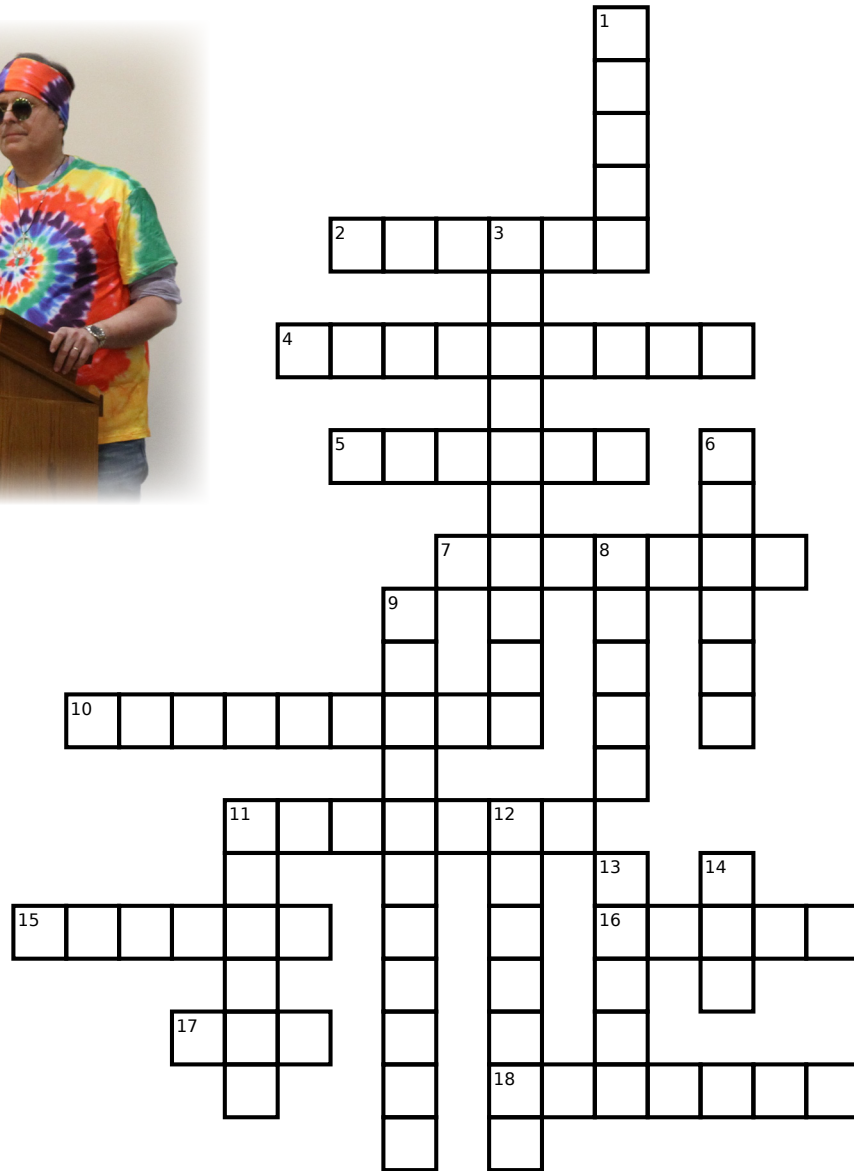


- Don't forget to eat your veggies, Larry!
- Hey, Larry! Time to review Canada's Food Guide.
- All this food 4 hymn self.
- How can I keep from singing?
- Less effort. More reward!

*Now try your hand at this one!...*



# 60's CROSSWORD PUZZLE



## Down:

1. Two words meaning to understand, appreciate or agree.
3. Two words for something amazing or fantastic
6. Fantastic, cool, or harmonious
8. Profound, deep or intense.
9. A phrase representing non-violent peaceful protest
11. Two words for authority figures or establishment
12. Refuse to conform with society
13. To leave, especially quickly or suddenly
14. House or apartment; place of residence

## Across:

2. Two words for impressive, weird, or wonderful
4. Four words for asking someone to give information or opinions
5. Someone who isn't cool, implying conventional or old-fashioned attitudes
7. Two words as an exclamation of agreement or affirmation
10. Two words to calm down, relax, or go with the flow
11. Clothes, specifically stylish or unique ones
15. A disappointing situation or person
16. The word for two fingers in a V
17. A person (e.g. "cool \_\_\_")
18. Tense and unable to enjoy life; overly anxious or stressed