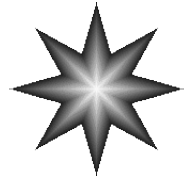




E-MANUAL



The Newsletter of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Minneapolis, MN

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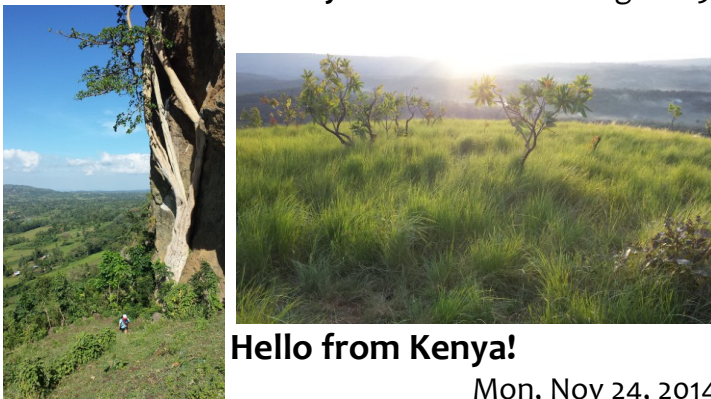
and working for an organization called One Acre Fund. I'm living very close to the equator, but I'm at an elevation that keeps the weather tropical all year round. Nobody here knows what a Snow-pocalypse or Snow-mageddon is, and I deeply appreciate that ☺.

What am I doing? One Acre Fund is a non-profit organization that helps improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. We sell agricultural inputs (fertilizer, seeds, etc.) to farmers on credit and we train families on modern planting/farming techniques. Our farmers see big improvements in their harvests, which allows them to get through the entire year without experiencing hunger. We enrolled about 180,000 farm families to work with us in Kenya this year, which means we'll be serving about 1.3 million people in the region.



But what am I actually doing? My job is to help One Acre Fund find new ways to serve farmers and to grow our organization more quickly. I manage a set of research trials aimed at learning how to do a better job recruiting farmers, and how to make the biggest possible impact in the areas where we work. I'm also working on a new project related to Human Centered Design, which means that I help re-design our organization's tools and policies around the needs of the farmers that we serve. It's a really cool thing!

I'm really happy with my life and work here. My job takes me into the field about once per week, which means that I actually go to corn fields and meet farmers to talk about their concerns and successes. The rest of my week is spent in our



Hello from Kenya!

Mon, Nov 24, 2014

Hello Friends and Family!

This update is long overdue, but I wanted to wait until I actually had something to write to you all about! For those of you in a hurry, here's the summary: I'm doing well, Kenya is a great place to work, and I'd love to hear from you. For those of you with a little more time on your hands:



I arrived in Kenya just over two months ago. I'm living in Bungoma, which is a medium sized town in the Western Province of Kenya

office nerding out in excel spreadsheets or brainstorming new ideas with the rest of my team. I have good friends, and loads of awesome co-workers

There are more than 40 languages spoken in Kenya, but Swahili is the most common. Quite a few people speak English, especially young people and people that have received formal education. I'm taking Swahili lessons and making slow but steady progress!



I'm attaching some pictures that I've taken over the last few months. I've

had some great adventures already! Some of these are from hikes that I've taken near my house, others are from visits that I've made to farmers.

Most importantly, I'd love to hear from you! As much as I'm enjoying my life here, I miss all of you. All of you NSMC and Emmanuel friends, you HCMC folks, Humphrey-ites, Trinity pals, Henning clan, Peace Corps people, Flanagans (of course), and anyone else who may have put up with me in the past. Thanks for making it to the end of my update!

My Very Best,
Jesse (jesse.a.flanagan@gmail.com)

Service Without Guns: A reflection on Veterans Day 2014

Adapted from remarks, November 9, 2014,
Emmanuel Mennonite Church
by Jim Kielsmeier

On Saturday November 8, I joined 50,000 football fans at US Bank Stadium to watch Minnesota handily defeat arch rival Iowa 51-14. The game was out of reach by the end of the first quarter and the mood was festive.

In pre-game rituals and during half time Veterans Day (formerly Armistice Day) was celebrated a few days early. Unlike most national holidays which are tacked onto weekends, there is historic significance to November 11 and the 11th

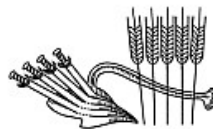
hour, 11th day of the 11th month. At that moment in 1916 the Armistice was signed in France and the guns went silent ending WWI. In three years of fighting over 16 million people died including 116,000 Americans.

The identity of the November 11 holiday has shifted from marking the end of WWI to recognizing all military veterans. I sat near the 50 yard line with friends from Emmanuel during the game. Half time included a patriotic reading about the sacrifice of military veterans and the unfolding of a huge American flag on the playing field. The announcer then asked all current military members and vets to stand. I could have but did not.

Patriotism expressed at football games and other public events is too often defined exclusively around war and military service. This limited public narrative glorifies war and leaves out people who oppose a national identity framed predominantly by military experience. I know the majority of people in this congregation have spent significant portions of your lives in missions and volunteer service. A number of you and your relatives were conscientious objectors and performed alternative service during times of war.

For almost five centuries Mennonites have chosen a nonviolent, non-military path – often involving personal and collective sacrifice. For example, Mennonite migrations throughout Europe and to North America were the response to forced military service and brought my great grandparents to Manitoba.

In a quiet public park on New York's Upper West Side across from the United Nations inscribed on a granite wall are the words of the prophet Isaiah. Chapter 2, Verse 4:



“He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.”

I respect those involved in military service who have sacrificed for the nation. But also believe

public service and nonviolent pathways to conflict resolution should be carved deeply into the granite of our national consciousness. We can serve country and community without violence.

Anyone have a plan for a Mennonite marching band for half time? Any other ideas?

Naomi

by Kristie Mandel



We in the Women's Bible study are eager to seize the opportunity for flexing our creative muscles in regard to the text we're studying.

N.T. Wright says in his book *Surprised By Hope*: "Part of the role of the church in the past was—and could and should be again—to foster and sustain lives of beauty and aesthetic meaning at every level, from music making in the village pub to drama in the local primary school, from artists' and photographers' workshops to still-life painting classes, from symphony concerts...to driftwood sculptures. The church, because it is the family that believes in hope for new creation, should be the place in every town and village where new creativity bursts forth for the whole community, pointing to the hope that, like all beauty, always comes as a surprise."

I also like this quote from Brene Brown in her book *The Gifts of Imperfection*: "The only unique contribution that we will ever make in this world will be born of our creativity."

In that vein, I submit the following poem inspired by the first chapter of Ruth. During our discussion we talked about how devastating Naomi's circumstances were and also drew out the lesson that no matter how bleak (and I was told that adjective didn't do the circumstances justice) things look, God can bring redemption and joy. This poem is an attempt to capture Naomi's heart before she allows Ruth to return to Israel with her. I usually don't use rhyme when I write, but the verses sort of came to me with a very specific rhythm..hopefully it'll translate in writing.

Naomi

Hope is a sword

much too heavy to wield
I've been pierced by its blade before
But the pain doesn't start
till the steel is removed
and the blood rushes in with a roar

I'm a festering wound
I'm a walking raw nerve
Every breath that I take is a sigh
I've lost all I hold dear
there's just no more to give
I don't care if I live or I die

Ten years ago
we arrived in this place
My husband, my two sons, and I
Now I've buried them all
no child carries our name
and my river of tears will not dry

My two daughters-in-law
are now widows like me
but perhaps I can alter their fates
If I cut all the ties
that have bound them to me
they'll seek Moabite men for new mates

It is too much to ask
that they carry this load
and return with me to my homeland
They have carried their shares
of disappointment and grief
They'll receive no more by my hand

So I'm steeling myself
to chase them away
saying "Go!" when they beg me to stay
It's a kindness to them
young hearts can heal and mend
They'll think back and be thankful one day

The Almighty's Hand
has lain heavy on me
Do not call me "Pleasant" again
But "Bitter" the name
that makes sense of my path
and this life that I'm left to defend.

How dark is the road
that lies before me
How dark that which stretches behind
I walk with no faith
but I keep taking steps
and pray the LORD's mercy I'll find



Letter from Nov 4-2-5 Cedar e-newsletter
submitted by Philip Friesen

December 1, 2014

Dear friends,

Sometimes it's hard to know how to tell you about our work in Cedar-Riverside while respecting the young men with whom we interact. There's a story I want to tell you, but so much of it is so raw, so vulnerable, that even changing names doesn't seem enough. The stories I am told sometimes are like jewels—a gift of trust and openness in the midst of a hard world where people are mocked for “catching feelings” or getting “salty” (a reference to tears). I will tell you that there is a young man whom Timothy and I have been able to love in some very practical ways, and in return, he has shown me his heart. He says he has never met anyone like Timothy and me, that we're the best people he knows, that he loves us. And then he tells me that no matter what he does, the police still stop him and pat him down every single day, still play mind games to intimidate him, still expect him to be a problem—even though he's trying to get his life together and they never find anything on him. All he wants is respect, and no matter how he lives, he'll never be more than a criminal in so many people's eyes. He wishes he could escape but doesn't know how. Over and over again, he says to me, “I don't know why this is happening to me. I'm just in a test right now. I hope I pass.” We had just been watching out the window as a female police officer patted him down (!), then put him in the back of the squad for five minutes for no discernible reason, then let him go. He says, “It just makes me sad. I was happy before. You saw me.” And I did. He was having a great night. Then he was spread out on the hood of a police cruiser in front of the whole neighborhood. Like he is every day. My friend's grief goes deeper than what I will write here, and I came away from that conversation with a broken heart, wondering how

I would handle it if I had to live like that every day. He knows we believe in him, but that only goes so far. He says that talking makes him feel better; but I know that the next day, the same nonsense will happen again. And all he's trying to do is get a job so he can provide for his mother. Please pray for encouragement, for all the young men who are trapped in pigeonholes by society and see no way to escape. The motivation to live better lives is low when everyone around you will never see you differently. We feel so privileged to be people who get to believe in these guys, because they deserve that, and it is rare for them to experience it. But when they receive that affirmation, they begin to thrive. Another young man came up the other night, beaming. And instantly after we said hello, he told us that he'd gotten a job. We got to celebrate with him and encourage him, asking questions about it all. And then he left. He had other things to do that night, but he came up to tell us his news. What a gift. We are honored.

For His Kingdom,
Molly and Timothy Paulson
House of Hope Church

“But you've got to have kids!”

One of our guys was discussing family and was shocked that Timothy and I aren't certain whether or not we'll have a family. I explained that DNA isn't the only way to leave a legacy and then said, “Besides, if we had a baby, we might not be able to do this anymore.” He paused for a moment, then said, “I could babysit!” Another guy standing with us said, “Yeah! Me, too!” They quickly devised a plan where child care responsibilities would be rotated among the guys. The second one said, “Yeah, we at least owe you that.”
Priceless. Molly Paulson

reprinted from Nov 425 Cedar e-newsletter

THANK YOU

To Whom It May Concern,

We wanted to take a moment to say “thank you so much!” for your recent gift supporting our

work in Cedar-Riverside. We don't know who all was involved in making that decision, but we want to thank everyone at the church for their part in blessing us. We feel great affinity for your community and are humbled by your faith in us and willingness to partner in the work we are doing. Thank you so much, and may God bless you all as you continue to seek him and his kingdom.

Gratefully,
Molly & Timothy Paulson
House of Hope, Cedar 4-2-5

Follow Alicia Poplett on her Cross-Cultural trip with EMU

Our spring cross-cultural team heading to Guatemala and Cuba includes Alicia Poplett from your congregation. You may want to visit our website where you can read student journals, view photos and learn more about the group's experiences: www.emu.edu/crosscultural/.



Byron Peachey will be leading the group and facilitating related courses of study. Beginning at the U.S./Mexico border, the group will explore realities of the borderlands and the many policy, human rights, and economic complexities found there. They will then travel to Guatemala for a significant portion of the semester to study Spanish with CASAS in Guatemala City, along with family home stays. Spending eight weeks in Guatemala gives opportunity to focus on Mayan history and culture, the fascinating, multiple cross-currents of religious beliefs and practices within Guatemalan society, as well as facing the dramatic divide between the wealthy elite and widespread poverty, both rural and urban. The final portion of the semester will be spent exploring Cuba and the distinctive social and cultural characteristics of this island nation.

We encourage you to keep the students and leaders in your prayers as they travel and adjust to different surroundings. Upon returning from this cross-cultural experience, please consider asking Alicia to share in a Sunday School class, during

church or simply over lunch.

Blessings.

Phil Helmuth, Director of Church Relations
Eastern Mennonite University

PA 2015 – Mennonite World Conference

- The next Global Youth Summit of Mennonite World Conference will take place July 17-19, 2015 at Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania. All (young) Anabaptists are invited to come and learn from each other, build relationships, worship, and be the church together. The 2015 theme is “Called to Share: My Gifts, Our Gifts.” After the summit, participants will join the MWC assembly on July 21-26. For additional information, visit mwc-cmm.org/pa2015.
- Mennonite World Conference is coming to North America in 2015, and registration is open! The 16th assembly will be held July 21-26, 2015, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The theme is “Walking with God.” At this reunion of Mennonites and Anabaptists from around the world, all ages are welcome. Join for a feast of fellowship, song, laughter and worship. Costs, lodging, schedule and other details are available at mwc-cmm.org/pa2015. Plan to attend!
- Consider joining Mennonite World Conference’s Assembly Prayer Network. Prayer is essential in planning and hosting a global Assembly. Join a network of over 60 people from 20 countries to pray for Assembly – its staff, volunteers, leaders, and participants. When you join the Prayer Network, you will receive monthly communications with scriptural meditations, stories, information surrounding Pennsylvania 2015, and items to pray about. See more at: <http://www.mwc-cmm.org/pa2015prayernetwork>
- Mennonite World Conference needs you! Volunteers are needed before, during and after the gathering to assist from near and far. Volunteers during assembly receive a discounted registration rate. More information can be found at mwc-cmm.org/pa2015volunteer.