

HYGGE artwork by Hilary Rhodes

First Mennonite Church of Champaign Urbana

THE VINE

December 2019/January 2020

## HERE COMES A HYGGE

by Cindy Breeze

The Advent and Worship Committees are delighted to let you know about a wonderful Advent resource that will be available for First Mennonite participants. For the four weeks before Christmas and Christmas Eve, ushers will give a HYGGE to each household (singles, couples, families). Excited?

Not so much? Maybe it would help to know what a HYGGE is. Pronounced HOO-GAH, this Danish word is traced to a Danish pastor in the mid-1870s and roughly translates as simplicity, belonging, the pleasure of ordinary things, home, and welcome.

This Advent we will focus on HOPE (December 1), PEACE (December 8), JOY (December 15), LOVE (December 22), EMMANUEL (December 24). Each Scandinavian designed hygge can be folded into a simple tabletop tent that can be used throughout the week. Included on each week's handout are:

- ◆ Invitation to light one or more candles
- ◆ One focus scripture verse
- ◆ A few reflection questions on the theme
- ◆ Ideas for simple activities
- ◆ Short Prayer

For example, on the first week of Advent when the theme is HOPE, the hygge invites us to light one candle and then has a few sentences about hope, three short ideas for reflection about hope, a couple of hope-oriented activities, and a prayer for the week.

The hygge is adaptable to all ages, and it is our hope that as we use this resource throughout the season, that we will all be blessed by our table tents, but also be encouraged to know that many FMCers are using the same materials in their own living situations.

If you are gone on any given Sunday, you can pick up extra hygge handouts on a table in the foyer.



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Email submissions to: [fmcvine@gmail.com](mailto:fmcvine@gmail.com)

The Vine is also available on our church website (under "news" link): [www.fmc-cu.org](http://www.fmc-cu.org)

## December at FMC

December 1 (Advent 1 - Hope): Worship at 9:15 am; Chrismon Service at 6:30 pm

December 8 (Advent 2 - Peace): Worship at 9:15 am; special music - flute choir

December 14: Progressive Dinner at 6 pm (sign-up deadline is December 4)

December 15 (Advent 3 - Joy): Worship at 9:15 am; special music - choir chimes & men's ensemble  
Congregational meeting at 12 pm

December 22 (Advent 4 - Love): Worship at 9:15 am; special music - Shungu family

December 24: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 6:30 pm

December 29 (Christmas Sunday): Fellowship at 9 am, Worship at 10 am, No Sunday school

*Note: All 2019 receipts for reimbursement should be turned into the treasurer's box (in the FMC office) by December 23.*



## Sharing in Love and Respect

*- from the Spiritual Leadership Team*

Sharing time is one of the most important aspects of our FMC worship. We care about each other and about others in our circles of interaction, and we rightly want to hold them and their needs before the God who cares about all.

However, SLT would like to encourage us all to be careful when we share prayer concerns beyond our own personal requests. Many people would be glad to know that our church is praying for them, but for others, such sharing would feel disrespectful of their privacy.

As you are probably aware, our Sunday morning prayers go out with the announcements during the week. What you may not know is that this email is distributed quite broadly to former as well as current FMC members and friends.

In addition, in a community like CU many overlapping circles of friends and associates exist. So although we may choose not to use names, there may be someone sitting in the pews or reading the email who knows to whom we are referring.



It is ok to ask someone if they would like to be included on our FMC prayer list. If you are not sure whether someone would want their information shared, it is good to err on the side of less information. "Please pray for a friend going through a difficult time" is vague, and you can be sure that God knows for whom the prayers are offered.

Often we share because we have a need to share what is heavy on our hearts. If you feel a need to share more than might be good in our public sharing, feel free to share with a pastor or spiritual friend, who will be glad to listen and to pray with you more specifically.

We give thanks for a sharing, caring, praying community, and for a God who hears, cares and responds to our prayers.

## Statement of Commitment for the FMC Membership Service November 24, 2019

- by Sharon Monday

*(Take some deep breaths...)*

I would like to begin this sharing with an excerpt from Colossians 3:12-17: “Therefore, as God’s people, Holy and Dearly Loved, clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Above all, clothe yourselves with Love which binds us all together in perfect Harmony.”



Why Do I Want to Become a Member of FMC?

Perfect Harmony! I have certainly heard “the heavenly choir” here at First Mennonite during worship as we sing together so many beautiful songs of praise and encouragement.

I have witnessed the qualities of gentleness, humility, kindness, compassion, patience and especially Love alive and active within this community. The heartfelt time of prayer in the service is especially meaningful to me. I appreciate the commitment to serve and be here for each other and the larger community through such initiatives as the racial justice task force or the interfaith conference. And it is important to me that we struggle together over issues of injustice, to be challenged and sometimes downright uncomfortable with the prophetic messages we receive... (did I hear you correctly Pastor Michael? You said to live in the borderlands and love our enemies?) It is wonderful to receive your warm welcome each week as Jack and I enter the church door and sanctuary. You have placed your trust in me to teach adult classes and share stories with the beautiful children at FMC. You have extended hospitality at potlucks, progressive dinners and small group gatherings. And most recently, you have shown me Compassion in prayers, personal notes and cards as I mourn the passing of my beloved spiritual companion, Pachelbel.

I want to share one more Pachelbel story with you to convey my appreciation and gratitude for you. On the night before Paco was laid to rest at our home, I wanted to convey Peace and Love to my dear companion friend, Paco. Jack was beside me in bed to comfort me as I held Pachelbel near me. I thought to myself, “How am I going to make it through this last night?” I put my hand on Pachelbel’s heart and whenever I started to feel anxious or overwhelmed with grief, I whispered prayers of blessings, of reassurance...the shepherd leads us to green pastures when we are in the valley of darkness... I said words of comfort, affirmation and gratitude to my little friend. It truly felt like Love messages flowing back and forth between my heart and Pachelbel. That is how I feel about you, my dear friends and companions here at FMC. Let’s face it. Life can be rough at times and confusing. We make mistakes and can hurt each other. So, we hold each other’s hearts with tenderness and we give each other transfusions of Love to help shape and transform us and to bear witness to God’s Great Love for us.

I would like to conclude with a paraphrase from the Servant Song and a passage from Micah...

“Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to You? Pray that I may have the Grace to let you be my servant too. We are Pilgrims on the Journey, We are Travelers on the Road, We are Here to Help Each Other, Walk the Mile, Bear the load, Celebrate the Joys, Confront the Questions and Grow ever Widening and Expanding Circles of Justice, Tender Love and Grace.”

## FMC Mennonite College Scholarship Fund

- by Bob King

Mennonite educational institutions have much to offer with our distinct traditions of peace, service, justice, community and deep faith in God.



At First Mennonite Church, we believe in the power of working together to help each other grow and succeed on our life journeys. To encourage students to consider attending a Mennonite institution and to assist in the expense of that education, FMC offers a college scholarship program of \$1,000/year for undergraduates and/or seminary attendance. Additionally, students who receive tuition assistance grants that originate from a congregation are eligible for a matching grant from their Mennonite institution.

The current scholarship fund balance is sufficient to meet current needs, however consider designating a portion of your end of year giving to our college scholarship fund so that our future students will be fully funded.

For an interesting article about the legacy of Mennonite education check out this link. In this article, seven alumni share their personal stories for what they experienced and the impact that Mennonite educational experience had on their lives: <https://themennonite.org/feature/legacy-mennonite-education/>.

## NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet on October 25, 2019



First Mennonite Church members attended the banquet. At their table were friends from Bethel AME, St. Luke CME, and Church of the Brethren.



- by Marcia Nelson

“As long as we live, we will speak for peace” are the words of survivors of the A-bomb bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. Hibakusha, as they are called, tell their stories in a book that Barb Shenk asked me to bring to the FMC Library.

As Long as We Live, We Will Speak for Peace, Collection of Hibakusha Experience Testimony in Honkawa District (revised), published by the Honkawa Hospitality Group. The book is written in Japanese and Barb has translated the 17 stories into English in a second segment of the book. Dannie contributed to the information section of the book using material adapted from “The Outline of A-Bomb Damage in Hiroshima” published in 2006.

The writers of these stories are now elderly and all were children on August 6, 1945. They speak of their schools, in which they have great pride and which were a source of refuge on that terrible day and in days to follow, as the work of burying/burning the dead and rebuilding all normal societal functions and infrastructure began. The strong feelings that come through about death and dreams destroyed give the book great poignancy. These are stories of terror, heart-break, compassion, and courage. Everyone was impacted by the war and school children were asked to contribute in many ways including working in factories, in agricultural production and in creating firebreaks by tearing down houses as protection against the fire-bombing occurring in Japan.

The Honkawa Elementary School was in close proximity to the hypocenter of the bombing and suffered catastrophic bombing. Today there is a museum there supplementing the large museum at the Hiroshima Memorial Peace Park. The work that Barb and Dannie are doing at the World Friendship Center, founded by Quaker peace activist, Barbara Reynolds, seeks to connect the world with the people of Hiroshima. The hibakusha, who were re-victimized after the fateful day by stigma, chronic illness, and denial of opportunity due to their status find it difficult to speak, but many do so with courage so that “never again should this happen.”

I am grateful to have met two hibakusha at the World Friendship Center while we were in Hiroshima and to have read the book. I recommend it to you. Being able to travel to Japan and be hosted by Barb, the “near-native” and Dannie, the professor, was blessing indeed.



## Images from the Dayspring Native American United Methodist Church



On October 27, Sharon Monday, Jack Paxton, Janet Elaine Guthrie and Mark Jaeger visited Dayspring Native American UMC in East Peoria, IL. Sharon's reflections on the experience were shared in the November 19 prayer email and can be read online: <https://tinyurl.com/wa8ytsa>.

The sanctuary (left)



Ceremonial drum in the sanctuary (below)



Janet receives a blessing during the smoke smudge portion of the service (left)



Grandmother Turtle window art (above)

## Prayer list and bulletin...your questions answered

- from the FMC staff





QUESTION: Help! I'm confused about who to contact with an announcement or prayer request for the Tuesday email.

ANSWER: It's confusing, but it might help to understand that the Tuesday prayer and announcement email is compiled in two parts by two different people:


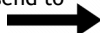
### 1) Prayer List

One of the pastors (typically Deb) writes up the items that were shared in church on Sunday. Both written and verbal items are included in the Tuesday email, along with any prayer requests sent to the pastors by email. If you have an item to include on the list, it's best to send it directly to Pastor Deb and Pastor Michael to ensure it won't be missed (e.g. one of them might be out of the office and may not see the email).

In summary:  send to  michael.crosby@fmc-cu.org and debra.sutter@fmc-cu.org  
(praying hands emoji)

### 2) Announcements

All other sections of the Tuesday email are compiled by the office administrator, Rhonda Gibson. The announcements are divided into two parts: FMC related announcements and announcements from the larger Mennonite Church, and community announcements not directly related to FMC, but of interest to people at FMC. If you have an announcement (FMC or community), please email it to the church office unless Rhonda is on vacation; then email it to the pastors.

In summary:  send to  office@fmc-cu.org (if Rhonda isn't in the office, email the pastors)  
(announcement emoji)

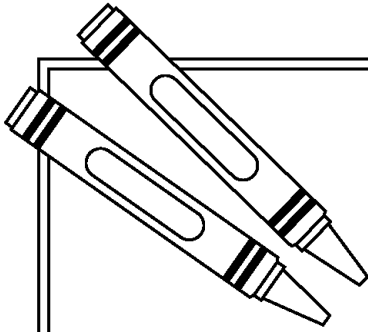
*Note:* The staff reviews the entire prayer list and announcements together during our staff meeting in an attempt to avoid omissions. We are mostly successful, but sometimes we are human and fail to include items; we appreciate your gracious understanding when this happens.

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QUESTION: I want to share information about an upcoming community event with the congregation. I see that it's in the Tuesday email but not in the Sunday bulletin. Why?

ANSWER: Many people at FMC are involved in the larger CU community. This helps connect the congregation with what is going on in CU, which is great! But over the past few years, an increasing number of community announcement requests have been made. Since the bulletin announcement space is limited, the staff discussed the issue and decided that Sunday bulletin announcements would be limited to FMC events or events that FMC is involved with in a more formal way. Occasionally we also include announcements from Mennonite-affiliated organizations (camps, MCC, MDS, MC USA).

Since there is unlimited space in the Tuesday email, we make every effort to include all community announcements sent to us. People can also make verbal announcements on Sunday and perhaps via the electronic bulletin board, too.



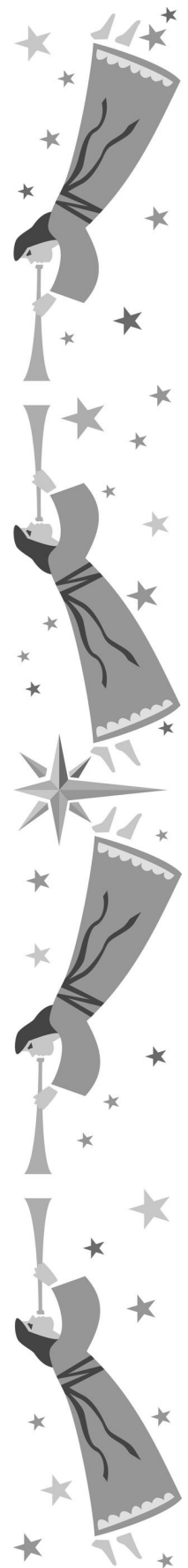
# Just for KIDS

## The Christmas Story

Each line below contains the letters to form a word that is part of the Christmas story. But each group of letters has 1 that is extra! Unscramble the words and write the extra letter on the lines at the bottom. What did we all receive at Christmas?

- ① TGLBEHHEME \_\_\_\_\_
- ② NEAGLO \_\_\_\_\_
- ③ NRMEDAG \_\_\_\_\_
- ④ ODEKSNY \_\_\_\_\_
- ⑤ AMGYR \_\_\_\_\_
- ⑥ OHESJIP \_\_\_\_\_
- ⑦ EFJSUS \_\_\_\_\_
- ⑧ ITEENMSW \_\_\_\_\_
- ⑨ SPHHDSREEO \_\_\_\_\_
- ⑩ EMCFAL \_\_\_\_\_
- ⑪ TLSRA \_\_\_\_\_
- ⑫ CSSNUEO \_\_\_\_\_
- ⑬ HEVSPE \_\_\_\_\_
- ⑭ ENIN \_\_\_\_\_

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”  
 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 9      10      11      12      13      14



Bethlehem (G), Angel (O), Manger (D), Donkey (S), Mary (G), Joseph (I), Jesus (F),  
 Wise men (T), Shepherds (O), Camel (F), Star (L), Census (O), Sheep (V), Inn (E)  
 Gods gift of love