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Sow Seeds of Divine Love

A Reflection on Drift Creek Camp's Annual Meeting with excerpts from a sermon by Chris Nord

For most people, autumn represents abundance, harvest, gathering, even celebrating! It is a time for reflection; an opportunity to slow down, take a deep breath, rejoice, and humbly give thanks. Each fall, friends of Drift Creek Camp gather in early November to commemorate another year of operations. Members look back on the year and plan for the coming season.



Growing up on a farm, the rhythm is not dissimilar. With stubborn hope, seeds are cultivated. Just like as at camp, young children are nurtured with love and tender care. Kids dip their toes not only into the creek, but also into community. Like the mycelium under our feet, a network of friendship develops, *some lasting for a lifetime*. Youth explore ways to connect with God; to cultivate wonder and to see Christ in the faces around them. Young adults return to serve on staff; choosing to be the hands and feet of Jesus as they foster the next generation. *Like planting in the fields, the cycle repeats.*

The 2024 celebration was a joyous time to connect with friends, meet new board and staff members, and to enjoy the harvest that is the camp community. Attendees were treated to enjoy the delicious harvest bounty of salmon prepared and donated by brothers, Levi (left) and Jake (right) Kropf. Many hands came together to prepare tasty food for the entire crowd.

Sadly, due to a family emergency, Sara Gibson was unavailable to give her presentation on mushrooms and how they reflect community. In her absence, all were appreciative of a meaningful and challenging message given by PNMC Moderator and DCC Board Member, Chris Nord. He shared a sermon he had preached at his home congregation, Albany Mennonite. He shared the Parable of the Sower from Mark 4 and compared the traditional ways of farming with modern, high-tech modes of subduing the land. With an image of a fancy John Deere, he described the mastery of technology. He explained how a new John Deere can plant with perfectly planned rows. The seeds will be spaced perfectly within each row, and each seed placed at the perfect depth. Chris raved at how with this masterpiece of technology, one can plant 54 rows at a time, at a speed of 10 miles per hour. That is equivalent to planting one row at 540 miles per hour, with each seed optimally placed to produce a thriving crop! And, he explained, "If you were the lucky owner of this planter/tractor combo you could operate it from the quiet, climate controlled comfort of your tractor's cab."

Chris looked to the ancient sower who would have cautiously saved seed from year to year. He painted an image of the best plants being carefully set aside. The seeds were gathered and stored over the winter. He pondered the sacrifice, saying, "How tempting it must have been to consume those seeds during hard times and acknowledged the hard choice to resist, thus enduring a period of hunger rather than eat the seed stock because **seeds are just that precious!** Seeds represent our hopes for the future as well as the hard labor of the past. Each seed is a tiny little ark, carrying humanity safely into the next year. And the next, and so on." Chris went on to declare, "God believes in the goodness of creation so much that **God sows the infinitely precious seeds of love with wild abandon into all kinds of soil.** Do we believe in the goodness of creation a tenth as much as that? Even a hundredth as much? A thousandth as much?"

Chris explained, "If the answer to any of those questions is yes then caring for creation is much more than simply a good idea, it is an imperative. To abuse creation is to spit in the face of the creator. *Friends, I don't want to spit in the face of the creator and I don't believe that you do either.* But the world that we inhabit is tilted in that direction. The path of least resistance through our western, middle-class lives is filled with resource extraction, carbon pollution, single use plastics, egregious food waste and staggering overuse of water resources. It takes hard work, persistence and creativity to steer our lives against this current. The good news is that God has sown the seeds of hard work, persistence and creativity into the soil of our souls, we just need to nurture those seedlings. **For me, the essential first step into the paradigm of the extravagant sower is to fall back in love with creation.** I do this by spending time outdoors. I seek to let go of my expectations of comfort and convenience, and simply soak in the goodness of creation. Let that goodness be a foundational truth of my story. God still believes that creation is good. Can we dare to do so too?" (Read the entire sermon [here](#).)

Listeners felt challenged hearing these hard truths and inspired to be sowers that reflect God's love with wild and generous abandon.
-Brenda Kauffman, Drift Creek Camp

PNMC CONGREGATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS & MINISTRIES

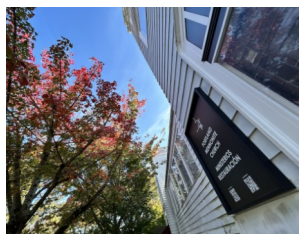
Corvallis Mennonite Fellowship



CMF members Gerry Langstraat and Ed Peachey volunteered in Kahului in Maui, HI in late October. The MDS project was in response to the fire in the nearby town of Lahaina in October 2023. Additional CMF participants, *but at other times*, include Andy McKee and Phil Hstand. The project is ongoing and will likely extend through February. Volunteers helped with framing of the community centers, installed windows and doors, finished up plumbing, hung doors, and put furniture together. Learn more [here](#).

When asked to identify a highlight of the assignment, Ed Peachey responded, “The entire project was a highlight. Everything from meeting the leader and visionary of the project (Maude), to meeting volunteers from all over the US and Canada, and working on meaningful projects. This assignment was so different from other projects I have worked on. It included all new construction designed around very innovative building blocks that provide private spaces for families. The small living areas for each family are clustered around community centers that mimic traditional housing of the islanders native to Hawaii.”

Portland Mennonite Church and Ministerios Restauración



When you visit Portland Mennonite, you might notice a change that recognizes the long time relationship between PMC and Ministerios Restauración. Thanks to the handiwork of Ed Shirk, the names of both congregations now appear on the signs along with the QR codes that link to sites with more information about each worshipping community. For 30 years, the two congregations have shared a worship space and have occasionally engaged in service together. Transitional pastor, Kris Voss Rothmeier reflected, “We celebrate this partnership and pray that God will continue to bless our relationship. We pray for all who will see those signs in coming years — neighbors, friends and future friends—and know that all are welcome.”

PNMC in 2025: "The Transforming Church" (Romans 12:2)

Saturday, February 1 -- Conference Communications Council (on Zoom), 8:30am-12:30pm Pacific.

The Transforming Church: Anabaptism at 500

June 19-22 -- PNMC Annual Meeting - *The Transforming Church: Centered on Christ, Community and the Way of Reconciliation*. Kalispell, MT

MENNONITE CHURCH USA & OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Mennonite Church USA

The Lead/Follow podcast, Season 2, episode 8: Glen Guyton interviews Iris de León-Hartshorn, MC USA's associate executive director of Operations and Human Resources, who will be discussing reimagining church. Watch [here](#) or listen on [here](#) or [here](#). Follow [this link](#) to read the entire edition of *PeaceMail*.



Sister Care International Goes to Mongolia

Carolyn Heggen, psychotherapist specializing in trauma healing, and Rhoda Keener, Sister Care Director for MC USA, wrote an article for the November edition of *Anabaptist World* about teaching Sister Care in Mongolia: It was a profoundly moving experience to share Sister Care, a ministry of Mennonite Women USA, with 50 first-generation Christian women leaders Sept. 27-29 at a retreat center outside Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia, a nation where Christianity barely existed 35 years ago.

Speaking openly about Jesus became possible in Mongolia in 1990 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 1993, Mennonite Board of Missions, a predecessor of Mennonite Mission Network, in cooperation with other mission agencies, formed Joint Christian Services in Mongolia. From five known Christians in 1990, the number increased to about 1,000 by 1993 when mission worker Laura Schlabach joined JCS. Today there are an estimated 70,000 Christians in Mongolia, about 2% of the population.

The women at Sister Care shared their stories of becoming Christians and spoke of the joy of knowing that when they died, they would be with Jesus. As Buddhists, they had worried about what they might become in future reincarnations. Read the article [here](#).

Upcoming e-Bulletins:

Dec 2 (submissions due by 11/25)

Dec 16 (submissions due by 12/9)

Jan 6 (submissions due by 12/30)

Jan 20 (submissions due by 1/13)

If you would like to contribute, please send a brief announcement in Spanish & English with website links to brenda@pnmc.org. Our goal is to provide a valuable resource, not an In-Box jammer. If space is tight, we may omit announcements that are not as pertinent to PNMC. Announcements will run ONE time only, unless specified otherwise. *We welcome your feedback!*

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