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Will We Offend Them?

Contributed by Lazaro Martinez, Meridian Mennonite Church

A few weeks ago, Meridian Mennonite Church was busy setting up tables and chairs in a local park. The three Treasure Valley churches take turns hosting a joint service once a year. We were grateful that the smoke, which had driven us all inside for weeks, had dissipated to a mild haze. The trees which in years past had provided shade hadn't fared so well and we were concerned about the sun. We discussed options while keeping an eye out for **Eric Massanari**, who had come out to present on *gelassenheit*. A man, whom none of us recognized, walked towards us. He was dressed like someone headed to church. Maybe he was from one of the other churches?



He was definitely from one of the *other* churches. He and his blended Mennonite and Amish family were traveling from Ohio to the California Redwoods. They had searched for a place to "do church" and learned of our meeting. One of their group was very excited about learning more about *gelassenheit* and asked if they could join us. We said "of course" and took turns introducing ourselves. The man went back to his van and a few minutes later, he and his family headed our way. Some were dressed not that differently than us, some were plain.

Shortly thereafter, the local Mennonites began appearing. Our new friends caught their eye and it was heartening to see how fast **50 many of our group were quick to introduce themselves and make our new friends feel welcome**. Treasure Valley Mennonites are a mix of ethnic and non-ethnic Mennonites so it was old hat for some and a new experience for others. Someone asked, "Will we offend them?" *Well, only one way to find out*. The service began with songs and prayers. We only had to adjust once for the sun, finding shade under smaller trees. Eric began his sermon and everyone settled in. Eric told us about Meister Eckhart, the German theologian, who promoted the idea of *gelassenheit* and how it has been understood, and misunderstood, throughout time. Terms like submit, surrender, and yield have been used in its place post-martyrdom to control and abuse. Instead, Eric taught us to look at *gelassenheit* as a "loving releasement". **It can be thought of as being released from something as well as released into something.**

Eric also shared Eckhart's use of the word *grunt*, ("groont"), as his word for God. It means "ground". Eckhart said, "Even stones have a love, a love that seeks the ground." After sitting with that quote for a while, I can almost hear stones hitting the ground in John 8, intermixed with footsteps of the crowd walking away after Jesus said, "Whoever hasn't sinned should throw the first stone" (John 8:7, CEB). What did those people release? Did the stones become heavier in their hands as the stones' love of the *grunt* reminded the holders of their love of God? Eric used another Jesus quote from John in his sermon, "I assure you that unless a grain of wheat falls in the earth, and dies, it can only be a single seed. But if it dies, it bears much fruit," (John 12:24, CEB).

Eventually, the sermon was over and we all headed over to the eating area. We had a great time. Pictures were taken. Stories were shared. Both groups walked away as friends and, in a way, as one group. Did we offend them? I don't think we did. I think we all, if only for a few hours, let the Love of God cast our judgments to the ground and let us spend time together.

I hope we can let the kernels we all hold of judgment, fear, resentment, and everything that weighs us down fall to the ground so we can move forward and bear fruit. From all of us here in the Treasure Valley, we hope you can do the same. Let's all join together, let go of what binds us, and go where God is calling. While we're at it, let's keep our ears to the *grunt* and pray we hear stones falling to the ground.

2026 MCC Benefit Bike Ride | Flathead Valley | July 27-30 *Contributed by Libbie Lapp, MVMC*



Sixty-three registrants converged upon **Mountain View Mennonite Church** in Creston, Montana on Sunday 7/26/26. They signed waivers, picked camping spots, wore name tags, and played an icebreaker game. All enjoyed the newly remodeled bathrooms and showers that were finished late Saturday evening. PHEW! The entire Flathead Valley was invited to participate in the event as volunteers, riders, and/or concert-goers.

The ride consisted of four days of bike routes around the greater Flathead Valley. Rides, meals, and evening activities, were based at the church. (MVMC)

Bicycle rides - Three rides began at the church and one started with self-transport to the route. Each day included long and short route options. A few local riders reported to the church on the day of the ride, signed waivers, packed their lunches, and joined the crowd. We travelled South to Bigfork/Ferndale, North to Columbia Falls and Whitefish, Northeast to Hungry Horse, and finally, West to Kila and Foy's Lake.



Nightly Activities - Were held on MVMC church grounds or inside the sanctuary.

Monday: GDMBR (Great Divide Mountain Bike Route) video and conversation.

Tuesday: MCC's Allan Classen-Thrush reported and MVMC's personal Ukraine experiences and current relationships were shared.

Wednesday: Time to explore Glacier National Park and try a GTS Full Moon Ride

Thursday: Community Concert with Susan Gibson and Ice Cream!

Friday: Breakfast was met with great relief and some sadness as we said our goodbyes.

Thank you to all who volunteered, participated, and genuinely enjoyed this wonderful week!

Great generosity was evident from all who participated! **\$30,854 will be contributed to MCC for relief work in Ukraine!**

Hello wonderful Montana cyclists,

What a week! I am so thankful for the way it all came together and for your participation. Biking together for this cause – MCC's work to bring hope & reconciliation to Ukraine – was fulfilling on many levels. I pray we have been inspired to continue down this Jesus path.

*Let's give a special thanks to **Barb Buxman** for being our official treasurer. She reports that a total net income of \$30,854 that will go to MCC. Riders can count 100% of your bike registration as charitable giving.!*

Thank you all for sharing so many great pictures of our week. Here is a link if you to enjoy the great memories.

Bike Ride Photo Album

*Finally, a great big thank you to **Libbie & Rich Lapp** and the Mountain View team for dreaming up this ride, working so hard to plan it, and for joyfully welcoming us. We were warmed by your hospitality, nourished by your wonderful meals, and awed by your fantastic scenery as we happily peddled the routes you created for us.*

Stay tuned for 2028!!! With gratitude to God for safe rides and friendships formed/ deepened, -Bruce Kuhns



PMC is hiring a Congregational Administrator to support the Pastors, Leadership Table, and Core Ministry leaders. This includes coordinating and streamlining workflow as it relates to church facility use, communications, records, accounting, and managing the church office. This non-exempt, 0.75 FTE position offers generous benefits with expectations of working on-site, but hrs/week and location may flex depending on candidate. Find details [here](#). Send a cover letter, resume, and contact info for 3 references to [Pastor Kevin](#).

PNMC CONGREGATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS & MINISTRIES

Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship

Hyde Park hosted its first ever Peace Camp this Summer! They welcomed fifteen kids from the surrounding Boise community for four days filled with activities, music, games, and food. The days at camp centered around ways we can find and bring peace into our world. Campers explored the practice of recycling and conservation, learned how to be water protectors, discovered ways that peace can be shared through food, and worked together to recognize injustices in our own city. The children made their own water filters from recycled plastic bottles, planted strawberries, packed hygiene kits for folks in their community, and made blankets for a local shelter home. Members of our loving and supportive congregation made the camp possible by volunteering their time, donating items for meals and projects, and providing a welcoming space for the campers throughout the week.



Salem Mennonite Church

Join SMC **Saturday, 26 September, 4-6 p.m.** for the feature length documentary *Exodus*. Learn about the work of the Agua Prieta migrant shelter, a border town, where traumatized migrants (most from Guerrero, México) are sheltered through the work of a bi-national team. Migrant testimonies cast doubts over the reasons for the extreme violence they face by authorities and the media. Through testimonies, scholar interviews, and life at the shelter, this is an expose' on the War on Drugs in México, while offering hope in community and collective action. This documentary features Salem's former pastoral couple, **Jack and Linda Knox**, who will answer questions after the documentary. A meal following the documentary will be hosted by Comunidad Cristiana Vida Nueva. **Where:** Salem Mennonite Church, [1045 Candlewood Dr. N](#), Keizer, OR | **When:** **Saturday, 26 September, 4:00 – 6:00** with a meal following (Breakdown: 4:00 ~ Welcome; 4:05 – 5:30 ~ *Exodus* showing; 5:30 – 6:00 ~ Questions with Jack and Linda; 6:00 – 7:00 ~ Dinner hosted by Comunidad Cristiana Vida Nueva | *All are welcome!*

Portland Mennonite Church

Join PMC **September 29** for the screening of *Exodus*. Through first-hand testimonies of migrants, interviews with historians and journalists, the film exposes the realities of the War on Drugs in Mexico. It highlights the resilience of the shelter workers and refugees, while offering hope in community and collective action. *What is actually fueling the humanitarian crisis causing families in Mexico to flee north to the border?* To RSVP and order arepas, click [here](#).

Where: Portland Mennonite Church, [1312 SE 35th Ave, Portland](#) | **When:** Tues., September 29, 2026

- **5:30pm:** Meal (*order bean or chicken Venezuelan Arepas*, \$8 each) | **6:30-8pm:** *Exodus* Film Showing
- **8-8:30pm:** Panel discussion with Agua Prieta shelter workers, **Jack & Linda Knox** (Jack is former pastor of Salem Mennonite Church, both worked with Mennonite Central Committee in Mexico.)

Drift Creek Camp

Now is the time to plan for the [2026 Fall Quilt Retreat](#) at DCC. Registration is OPEN for the **October 15-18** gathering. The weekend is the perfect opportunity to carve out time to work on projects of your choosing while DCC provides the work space, custom coffee drinks and nourishing meals. Registration deadline is **September 30**.



MENNONITE CHURCH USA & OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Mennonite Church USA

Follow [this link](#) for the latest edition of *PeaceMail*.

Mennonite Mission Network

Following a 2-week stay in July at Camp CAMREC, **Phil and Janine Kanagy**, Harrisonburg, VA, spent another week at DCC through [MMN's SOOP](#) (Service Opportunities with Our Partners). They were amazing volunteers, making significant contributions for both camps! At DCC, they did the post-camp cabin clean; painted the front entrance doors to the lodge, and took on the huge task of painting all 30+ of the craft room doors! The space looks bright and fresh! The DCC staff is so thankful for their contributions!

Upcoming e-Bulletins

Sept 21 (*submissions by 9/14*)
Oct 5 (*submissions by 9/28*)
Oct 19 (*submissions by 10/12*)
Nov 2 (*submissions by 10/26*)

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!*

For more PNMC updates: <http://pnmc.org> e-Bulletin Archives: <http://pnmc.org/Resources/eBulletin>