

Don't Forget

March 11

MYF pie auction and lunch

March 25

Palm Sunday

April 1

Easter Sunday breakfast and worship service

April 8-15

Family Promise rotation

April 14

Goodbye concert for Betsy and Bruce

April 20-21

MSMC Faith and Life Forum, LaJunta

April 22

Pastor Betsy's last Sunday



FROM THE



PASTOR

As you know, I am a person to whom tears come easily. As I anticipate having to say goodbye to you, my beloved congregation, already I get choked up. I know that I will not get through this without a lot of tears. That is why my attention was particularly caught by Franciscan Richard Rohr's reflection on February 1. The scripture for that day was "Blessed are those that mourn, for they will be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). He wrote:

"Tears are therapeutic and healing, both emotionally and physically. Crying helps the body shed stress hormones and stimulates endorphins. Weeping is a natural and essential part of being human."

It is also, apparently, inevitable. Mystic Eknath Easwaran puts it this way: "We can spend the better part of our lives attempting to construct the perfect personal environment, a kind of bubble that will insulate us against everything that is unpleasant. But sorrow is woven into the very texture of life."

Sorrow is inevitable but it is not experienced in isolation. It is woven into the very texture of life. I like that image. It resonates with me. It is something that we need to hold onto, I think. We experience sorrow because we experience life. If we didn't love, if we didn't have hope for the future, if we didn't know joy, then we wouldn't know sorrow either. These things are intertwined.

There is strength in this image. When I worked as the MCC Area Director for programs in East Asia I regularly visited the country of Laos. I had the opportunity to travel around the country visiting folks in rural villages. In many of these places we'd see looms set up in the protected space under houses on stilts. Laos is famous for its beautiful, intricate weavings. I'd

MARCH

ANNIVERSARIES:

6 – Art & Jeni Hielt Umble
19 – Nina & Tim Hoffert
22 – Linda & Merritt Welty

BIRTHDAYS:

3 - Holly Freeman
10 - John Simpson
12 - Brenda Bartel
12 - Elvira Schierling
13 - Eunice Brenneman
14 - Butch Bartel
15 - Sadie Yoder-Horst
20 - Joyce Hofer
22 - Ardith Eigsti
23 – Bricole Smith
23 - Delmer Miller
26 – Susan Bertsche
27 - Bruce McCrae
28 - Melissa Kauffman
29 - Greg Eigsti

Adult Sunday School schedule March 2018

March 4: “Monkeys and Mennonites,”
led Nathan Graber-McCrae

March 11: No Sunday School: MYF pie
auction and lunch

March 18: Church Family Forum – “Looking
ahead”

March 25: No Sunday School: Palm Sunday

From the Pastor, continued

watch as the weaver moved her shuttle back and forth, somehow bringing all the different separate threads together into a strong, colorfully patterned, richly textured piece of material.

Rich texture results when threads of differing thickness or quality are woven together. Obviously, a weaver chooses the threads she wants for her pattern. In life, however, the threads may not be what we would choose. But we have to weave them in anyway. Threads of pain and loss lie next to threads of joy and anticipation. Threads of grief are twisted together with threads of hope. No thread remains separate. No thread can easily be pulled away from the rest. The whole is strong. Each piece is beautiful in its own way. It stays intact.

Part of living into this strength is knowing that our sorrow, our tears, are an integral part of our life with God. This means getting out of our heads sometimes. Historically, our Western Christianity has tended to filter everything through the head. It is important for us to understand intellectually. The theology of the Syrian Fathers, however, is much more localized in the body. Syrian Saints Ephrem and Simeon actually proposed that tears be a sacrament in the Church. Saint Ephrem went so far as to say that until you have cried, you don't know God.

So, my friends, as we face difficult good-byes, as we grieve the loss of what has been, as the tears flow, let's remember that all this is part of what has been and still is very good. It is part of the strong texture of the tapestry that is our life. This pain is not separate. It does not mean that things are coming apart. Instead it is woven tightly in. Held by so much goodness. Held and known by God.

With love,

Betsy

Lent 2018

Between Me & You



Our theme for this Lenten season is "Between Me & You." It's all about covenants.

Covenants of various kinds are found throughout the Old and New Testaments. Promises are made and broken, narrowed, expanded, and reimagined. The covenants that God makes with the people of God provide hints at the nature of the relationship intended between God and creation, as well as guidelines for how we are to relate to God and to one another.

The theme "Between Me & You" is multifaceted. It refers to the relationship between us and God; it also refers to the relationship between people, and the relationship between people and the rest of creation. Covenants are made between two parties, and sometimes things get in between those parties. As humans, we may struggle with maintaining our relationships and commitments. We bind and blind ourselves with limitations and barriers. Like Mary standing at the empty tomb on Easter morning, we find ourselves amazed, if still a bit confused and disoriented, at the new reality of nothing between us.

Lent #3, March 4: Me & You & Working it Through

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22

Focus statement: Between Me & You and in all we go through, God's promise and God's love grow stitch by stitch.

Lent #4, March 11: Me & You & Darkness in View

Scripture: Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-22; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21

Focus statement: Between Me & You, even in darkness, God's promise and God's love grow all around us.

Lent #5, March 18: Me & You & Covenant New

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

Focus statement: Between Me & You, in a new covenant, God's promise and God's love grow in our hearts.

Palm Sunday, March 25: Walking through Holy Week with Jesus

Drama, music, hand washing, Communion.





Why I decided not to buy clothes for a year

By Rhoda Blough

Everence Women and Money, January 2018

Two years ago, I decided not to buy any clothes for a year. For those friends who know me well, shopping has always been a fun activity for me - particularly shopping for clothes. I used to pride myself in finding a good bargain and justified my shopping expeditions because I seldom paid full price for an item. After coming home from a shopping trip, my then-husband, Ron, used to ask me, "So how much did you save me this time?"

One day, my friend and I had started discussing our obsessions with shopping for clothes and how it was getting out of hand. We both recognized that we had plenty of clothes and jewelry and that maybe it was time to take a break. Not only did shopping affect our budgets, we were not being good stewards of God's gifts to us. That conversation gave me the courage to try not to buy clothes for a year.

How did I do it? I found a new joy in getting rid of things and leaned on my accountability partner.

First, I realized how often I had been going to a store because I had received a catalog or a flyer about a sale. I was not shopping because I needed a particular item. Instead, the act of buying something on sale felt like an accomplishment. I started throwing out those endless catalogs and sale flyers which came so frequently in the mail, and I stopped going to websites that featured clothing and jewelry. I discovered when I stopped going shopping that I could find other ways to give myself a sense of accomplishment. I began cleaning out my closet and it felt cleansing to give those items away.

I'll admit that my friend and I weren't always successful at meeting our goal. But when I faltered, I knew I could call my accountability partner. We would talk about the triggers for shopping and why we didn't always stick to our plan. Then we would start over with new determination.

It has been a year since I completed my "year of not shopping for clothes" and I have changed much of my earlier habits. I am more intentional about what I buy, and I buy with the idea of mixing and matching my wardrobe. This means I buy less clothing, but have more options for different outfits. Instead of buying items I do not need just because they are on sale, I try to think more intentionally about clothing which might cost more, but will last longer.

In order to hold onto these benefits I've made a new year's resolution: For six months beginning February, I plan not to make any purchases of clothes, jewelry and shoes. Would you like to join me? If you have an interest in being part of a group of women who are intentional about not shopping for clothes, jewelry and shoes for six months, send me an email at rhoda.blough@everence.com. At the end of the six-month period, we can share our findings with others in this forum. Please consider joining me.





POETRY – A PEACEFUL PLACE

by Keith M. Lyndaker

existing in this existence
within the middle distance
depressed by inconsistency
in what i say and do

seeking more than subsistence
moving from resistance
to a peaceful coexistence
between me and you

what it takes is persistence
and some divine assistance
with courageous insistence
but that's what peacemakers do

yes that's what peacemakers do

(Editor's Note: This poem was originally published at
peacegrooves.wordpress.com)

March 2018 Calendar

Thursday, March 1	Bible Study at Doris', 7 pm
Sunday, March 4	Choir practice, 8:30 am
Monday, March 5	Bipolar/Depression support group, 7 pm
Thursday, March 8	Bible Study at Doris', 7 pm
Sunday, March 11	Choir practice, 8:30 am MYF Pie Auction, 11 am
Thursday, March 15	Bible Study at Doris', 7 pm
Saturday, March 17	Men's Breakfast, 9 am
Sunday, March 18	Choir practice, 8:30 am
Monday, March 19	Bipolar/Depression support group, 7 pm
Tuesday, March 20	Daytime Mennonite Women, 9:30 am
Wednesday, March 21	Elders meeting, 7 pm
Thursday, March 22	Bible Study at Doris', 7 pm
Sunday, March 25	Choir practice, 8:30 am
Thursday, March 29	Bible study at Doris', 7 pm

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Kate Rempel

Administrative Assistant

Office Hours: Tuesday, 8 am – 2 pm

Friday, 8 am – 2 pm

Our Mission

To be a faithful community of Jesus Christ

Our Vision

Empowered by the Holy Spirit,
We envision growth;
building a community of faith which practices
constructive responses to conflict;
and, in a world driven by fear, promoting a
Christian voice of love and nonviolence.

NEWS & NOTES

Compiled by Betsy Headrick McCrae and Kate Rempel

Layout by Kate Rempel