



## BETHANY MENNONITE CHURCH Hartville, OH

BY JORDAN BRIGGS

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### *Reflections on God's Work* – Part 3

God is at work. In 2023, the *Beacon* feature articles will seek to capture a snapshot of the ways God is working in churches across our conference. We pray that these articles encourage your faith and spur you on to join God in the work He is doing in your local congregation.

~Kelsey Jurkovich, Publication & Literature Committee

Bethany Mennonite Church is a vibrant community with many young families, located in Hartville, Ohio. The church is blessed with young leaders rising up who bring fresh perspectives and excitement for the future. Additionally, we have an abundance of musical talent within the congregation, leading to a passion for worship through music.

Community is a key aspect of Bethany Mennonite Church. This is evident in the growth of our men's and women's ministries. These groups have expanded in recent years—a positive sign of community and fellowship within the church. Our Life Groups have added another dynamic to our community. We have also been intentional about collaborating with other local churches to create a sense of community and to focus on reaching the unchurched. The Collaboration Team has recognized the importance of working together to share the message of Jesus with those who have yet to hear it. By pooling resources and sharing ideas, our hope is to be able to create a greater impact locally.

#### **John 17:20–23**

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (NIV).

One way that the church has seen God moving is through its prayer and worship night. This event has gone from a small gathering of around 20 to a large gathering of over 100 people. The Holy Spirit is clearly at work in the hearts of the church members as they come together to seek God's face and worship Him.

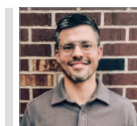
#### **Hebrews 10:23–25**

“Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching” (CSB).

Another way that God has been working in the church is through its Vacation Bible School (VBS). This has been an increasingly bright spot for the church, providing a unique opportunity to present the gospel to young people and their parents. Clearly, God is using this ministry to touch hearts and change lives, and the church is excited to see how He will continue to work in the future.

We averaged about 130–140 children each night of VBS, with an estimate that over half of these children were not attenders of Bethany. It was incredible to see these children ages 3–15 answer the call to protect life in a tangible way, by raising \$2,338 that will go toward various organizations—far exceeding our goal of \$1,200. They also brought in 200 rolls of paper towels, 154 packages of paper plates, and 158 packages of resealable bags to be used by the Pregnancy Center, as well as 174 empty egg cartons to be used by GentleBrook Farm. During the week, we were blessed to have more than half of the church's adults volunteer (more than 100 volunteers).

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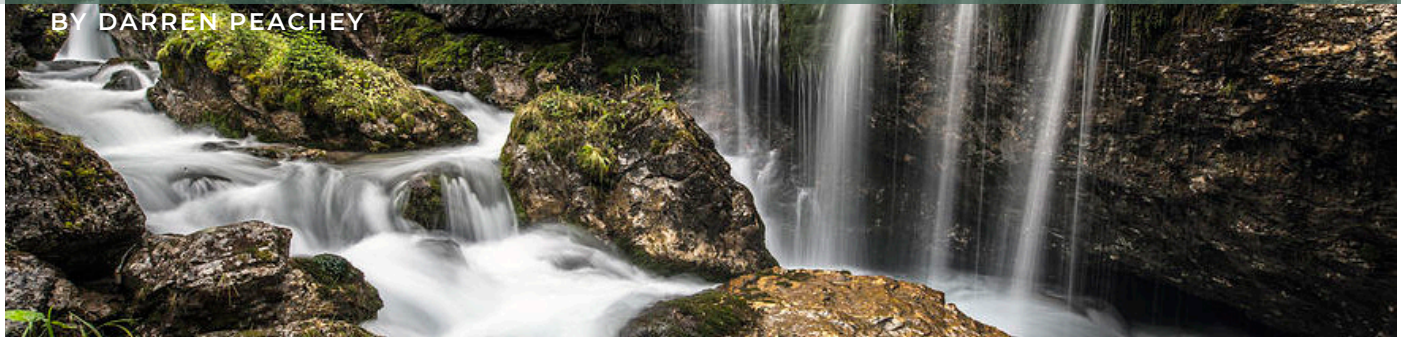


*Jordan is youth pastor at Bethany Mennonite Church; he is passionate about young people's relationship with Jesus and their ability to develop their own faith. He and his wife, Mary, have four children.*



# “We Have a New Name”

BY DARREN PEACHEY



“We have a new name” read the text message as I was boarding a flight from Columbus to Albuquerque. I had left the CMC Ministers Business meeting in Apple Creek, Ohio, before the conference name change discussion and vote. I was traveling to attend the Celebration of Life service in honor of Sara Miller, wife of longtime pastor/church planter Maurice Miller. Sara had recently completed her earthly race following a battle with cancer.

During the flight with time for reflection, I was able to picture the faces of my fellow pastors, my brothers, men whom I have come to love and respect in my role as conference pastor. I knew that some felt strongly that it was time for a new conference name, others cherished the history associated with the name CMC, and others had theological or cultural reasons for having (or not having) words like “Conference” or “Mennonite” in the name. I believe I know my brothers well enough to recognize that many are embracing a new name, some are disappointed, and a few aren’t sure what to think. But following what I am sure was a respectful and robust dialogue, sharing opinions and thoughts from differing perspectives, the CMC ministers voted to choose a new name—Rosedale Network of Churches.

In Albuquerque, I heard stories of Sara and Maurice’s life together and visited with their friends and family. Maurice shared some of his personal life pilgrimage with me. Maurice left the family farm in Michigan as a teenager in 1970 and prepared to become a Kingdom worker by studying at Rosedale Bible Institute (now Rosedale Bible College) for two years. In 1972, Maurice chose to volunteer with Rosedale Mennonite Missions (now Rosedale International) and soon found himself serving the Lord in Nicaragua. Maurice and Sara met each other working in a remote village clinic and were married in January 1976. They spent the first years of their marriage living in Michigan and then answered the call to serve missionally in Albuquerque, moving their family west in 1986.


Two people, one couple, Maurice and Sara Miller, entrusted themselves to Jesus, which began a stream that is turning into a river that flows into new places and future generations. During my brief visit to Albuquerque, I met people—from California, Mexico, Texas, Arizona, Nicaragua, of course New Mexico, and other numerous locations—whose lives have been impacted

by the ministry of Maurice and Sara. I came away asking myself again, how can one couple bless and impact so many people?

On my return flight, I continued to think about John 7:38 when Jesus said “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within them” (NIV). And in Acts, there are several references to “increase and spreading,” referring to the gospel of Jesus and His Church, as early believers, submitted to the Holy Spirit, simply lived life with their attention on the kingdom of Jesus.

The 113-year history of CMC is rich with people who were committed to the purity and spreading of the gospel. The original five ministers (representing three congregations who first gathered in 1910), visionaries who invested in launching a mission agency and Bible college, Sunday school teachers, business people, prayer warriors, and present-day pastors and church planters have all contributed to the “increase and spreading”—the springs and rivulets becoming streams, joining to become rivers of life that have literally spread around the world.

As my plane was preparing to land back in Columbus, I began to understand that CMC is not something we are leaving behind. Despite the many seasons of her history, some even filled with strife and uncertainty, the people of CMC have maintained a passion and vision to see the gospel of Jesus Christ impact families and neighborhoods. It is that ongoing passion to *mature and multiply churches locally and globally* that has brought us to where we are in 2023.

We have a new name, but CMC is not the irrelevant past. Rather, CMC—represented through generations of faithful followers of Jesus, committed to His Word—has propelled us to become “Rosedale Network of Churches,” a global family of Anabaptists. 



Darren travels extensively with his wife, Caryn, visiting churches in his role as conference pastor of Rosedale Network of Churches. They live in Belleville, Pennsylvania, and attend Locust Grove Mennonite Church.



# Differing Perspectives on Foot Washing

BY RBC

## ***This or That?*** Part 3

### **Why we practice foot washing at Word of Grace Church in Lancaster, PA** ~Daryl Driver

Much of the genius of early Anabaptism was the commitment to simply obey the commands and principles of the New Testament. When those in this movement read, “Do not resist the evildoer,” or “Go and make disciples ... baptizing them ...,” they sought to literally put those directives into practice, even at the cost of imprisonment and martyrdom.

Why shouldn't we likewise take a simple, straightforward approach with the following words of Jesus, given shortly before His death? “So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done for you” (Jn. 13:14–15, HCSB).

At Word of Grace Church, we practice foot washing once a year. Just as baptism reminds us of surrender and salvation (Acts 2:38), and as communion reminds us of sacrifice (1 Cor. 11:26), foot washing reminds us of servanthood.

To me, one of the most amazing passages in Scripture is this: “Jesus knew that the Father had given everything into His hands...So He got up from supper, laid aside His robe, took a towel, and tied it around Himself. Next, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet” (Jn. 13:3a, 4–5a).

I'm afraid that if I had been the one with everything—all power and authority—placed into my hands, I would have found a throne and scepter, not a basin and towel! But our King is One who came to serve and minister, not to be served.

What an incredible opportunity we have to practice what Jesus did for His disciples! The act of literally washing each other's feet is so profound that it speaks volumes about the attitude of Christ. Yet it is also so elementary that even a child can grasp its importance.

At Word of Grace, we appreciate the physicality of foot washing. Throughout the centuries, even though God has changed the practices He calls us to, physical rituals that carry spiritual meaning have always been a part of honoring God, from animal sacrifices to water baptism.

With all the confusion about physicality and touch in modern society, I believe that foot washing is a practice that is God-ordained and spiritually designed. In almost a half century of participating in foot washing services, I cannot remember an occasion when this act was not meaningful to me.

### **Why we do not practice foot washing at Mechanicsburg Christian Fellowship in Mechanicsburg, OH** ~Joey Brown

When I think about this subject, I ask myself—and us—did Jesus intend to create a lesson, a tradition, or both?

At the recent CMC Pastors Conference in Apple Creek, I was encouraged that every leader I spoke with appeared to have a deep interest and concern for those they were talking with. I was not part of a single conversation that made me think there was any comparison or competition. (In many leadership conferences I've attended during 12 years of ministry, I've often tired of the shallow façade of comparison and competition.)

The humility at the conference alone made me feel like the leaders were washing my feet. They were hospitable and met us where we were. This felt far more beneficial for Macy and me than someone literally washing our feet.

We all know that the disciples struggled with who was greatest among them (Mk 9:33–35), and how they desired great positions next to Him (Mk 10:35–45). In John 13, Jesus washed His disciples' feet, setting an example of practical hospitality, humility, and love. He was modeling that there is no low place His love will not go. He humbled Himself to take on the dirty, lowly job of the culture, and went on to die a death we were supposed to die.

But I don't see where Scripture tells us to literally practice foot washing. I believe foot washing only makes sense if we make

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RBC is the educational arm of Rosedale Network of Churches, helping students lay the groundwork for their future by providing two years of mentorship, community, and biblical education in the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition.



# Opportunities to Minister at the RIC

BY MADALYN

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms...do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ*  
(1 Peter 4:10-11, NIV).

For several decades, Voluntary Service was a vital part of the missional outreach of our conference. Generations of young adults left their home communities to give their time and energy in service of the Kingdom. Some went overseas. Others served through opportunities like elder care in El Dorado, Arkansas or childcare in Cincinnati and London, Ohio. Their dedicated efforts brought the light of Jesus to communities near and far and made lasting relationships and impacts that continue to this day.

While VS is no longer an active ministry option through RI, we do have a current opportunity for several passionate individuals to serve at the Rosedale International Center (RIC) in Columbus, Ohio.

This facility is the base for all of Rosedale International's operations. It provides workspace for our office staff and a home for the REACH and City Challenge programs, RIC interns, and overseas workers on home assignments. It also provides lodging, dining, and meeting space for retreats, family gatherings, and school and church events. It is a blessing to RI's work for the Kingdom, but is currently in need of a maintenance technician, hospitality coordinator, and full-time director to run efficiently.

While three separate employees have held these positions in the past, these vacancies have given us a chance to re-envision what the roles could look like and who could fill them. The positions offer a unique opportunity to use a variety of skills and ministry interests. A number of people could serve in these roles, but it does not need to be filled by individuals only—couples looking for a way to serve His Kingdom are welcome to inquire.

If you care about overseas ministry or the discipleship of young believers—this might be an opportunity for you. If you feel called to missional work, but would like to serve more locally or in a city setting—one of these positions could be for you. If you are passionate about creating welcoming spaces for others, are a trained mechanic or technician, or

have experience in a managerial role, then RI invites you to consider one of these open positions.


The RI **maintenance technician** helps the facility run smoothly and should be a hands-on worker with some experience in manual labor. Responsibilities include keeping the auto fleet operational, maintaining kitchen appliances and equipment, providing lawn and garden care, and overseeing building maintenance through HVAC, electrical, and plumbing.

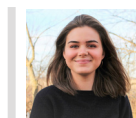
Personable, organized, and flexible, the **hospitality coordinator** serves as the face of the RIC. The hospitality coordinator's primary responsibility is to care for RIC guests along with REACH and City Challenge participants. This person will also be responsible for making beds, doing laundry, cleaning the building, and serving in the kitchen as needed.

As head of the RIC's management, the **RIC director** oversees hospitality, maintenance, and food services. The director will arrange for outside vendors to service the building, grounds, and equipment, and to solicit quotes for large scale projects. Other responsibilities include establishing the department budget and building relationships with RI's neighbors.

In addition to these responsibilities, each position has the opportunity to work directly with the RIC interns, mentoring these young adults spiritually and occupationally. They will also find many chances to become involved in local ministry and church planting efforts in Shepard, the neighborhood where the RIC is located.

RI focuses much of our energy on supporting overseas work, but the ministry at the RIC and for those that enter its walls is vital to keep our programs running. We invite you to pray about joining our team in Columbus.

*If you have questions or interest in applying, please contact Myron at [humanresources@rosedaleinternational.org](mailto:humanresources@rosedaleinternational.org).* 



*Madalyn serves as media coordinator for Rosedale International. She lives in Columbus, Ohio and attends Shiloh Mennonite Church.*

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**Bethany Mennonite Church - Hartville, OH**

To sum up, we are a community that is passionate about seeing God move in our midst. We are excited about the ways that He is working in our youth and children's ministry, men's and women's ministries, our collaborations with other local churches, our prayer and worship nights, and our VBS program. We are committed to following God's leading as we seek to share the love of Christ with those around us, and we are excited about the future of our church and our community. 🙏

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**Differing Perspectives on Foot Washing**

it culturally relevant. What good is it for me to wash Macy's feet after she returns from the local Walmart spa receiving her twenty-dollar pedicure? Her little piggies better not need a thorough cleaning for a couple of weeks for that kind of money!

Joking aside, I believe it's much more biblical for me to listen to her heart, pray with her, and help "wash her feet" by humbling myself and meeting an actual need in her life.

How do we see this happening at MCF? We encourage our congregation to be hospitable, honoring, humble, giving, and loving toward others. We work to find practical ways to lay down our agenda and meet the needs of others. We do this with money, time, encouragement, discipleship, forgiveness, and resources. The list could continue.

I'm reminded of James 2:15-17 where some people lightly offered encouraging words instead of meeting actual needs. Can the traditional practice of washing people's feet cause us to miss the real life needs around us? At MCF, we apply Jesus' humble example of foot washing by meeting the practical needs of those around us. 🙏