



SOJOURNS



Vol. XXXV, Issue 8 The Newsletter of Sonnenberg Mennonite Church April 19, 2026

SENIOR SAINTS April 2026 Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy celebrating to our senior saints who have birthdays/anniversaries in April, 2026!

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*Jim/Donna Johnston (50) Friday, April 3*

*Henry Beun (71), Sunday, April 5*

*Margaret Wenger (86), Saturday, April 11*

*Bernice Franks (97), Thursday, April 16*

*Linda Horn (79) Friday, April 17*



## MCC WORK NIGHT

## SEMILLA LEARNING TOUR

*(The following comes from Charlie and Teri Geiser who visited Sonnenberg along with Semilla staff back in August of 2025. If you are interested in further information about a Learning Tour in January/February of 2027 to Guatemala and El Salvador contact the Geisers directly at [chartergeiser@gmail.com](mailto:chartergeiser@gmail.com) ).*



### SEMILLA

SEMILLA is a Latin American Anabaptist Seminary that serves students from Mexico, Central America, Chile, Colombia, and Cuba. Through CASAS, the Central American Study and Service Program, SEMILLA provides language study, service opportunities and cultural immersion programs for North Americans and Europeans. Casa Emaús, the guesthouse, provides a safe space for international visitors and service groups.

The mission of SEMILLA is to prepare men and women to follow Jesus Christ faithfully and



Thank You to everyone who participated in the work night on Wednesday, April 25! 74 people chipped in over the two shifts. 1,155 school kits were completed as well as 12 comforters. Special thanks to Martins Mennonite who had about 18 people join in on the fun.

thus, to live out the reign of God with justice and peace today.

### Tour Features

You will attend lectures on culture, religion, and history by professors on the SEMILLA campus, visit with seminary students and Mennonite pastors in Guatemala, worship at Casa de Paz Mennonite Church, meet the pastor and a former gang member at a "red zone" church in Guatemala City.

You will also get to know the K'ekchi' Mennonites of Alta Verapaz, with 132 indigenous congregations, visit Colonial Antigua (a UNESCO World Heritage site), explore the Tz'utujil Mayan community of San Juan la Laguna on Lake Atitlán and learn about the work of the Community Cloud Forest Conservation project in the K'ek- chi' Mayan region of the Alta Verapaz.

You will also visit Orquigonía, an orchid sanctuary, tour Chicoj, a coffee plantation and visit a weaving cooperative.

Besides the portion of the trip to Semilla there will also be a journey to El Salvador. Expected costs for the SEMILLA part of the tour will be about \$1,500. The El Salvadoran part will cost a couple hundred dollars more. Space is limited to 20 participants.



**Camp Luz:** is hiring for staff for summer camp. High school students who are 16 years old or older are eligible and this is a wonderful way to serve in a local

ministry. **Summer Staff Team** - Most summer staff have a primary role for the summer but are occasionally asked to fill other roles based on staffing needs.

Requirements For ALL Summer Staff

**Cabin Leader-** Directly responsible for the safety, supervision, and spiritual nurture of 8-12 campers assigned to him/her. (with a co-counselor)

**Cook-** Responsible to assist in preparation, serving, and clean up of the meals and snacks.

**Housekeeping-** Responsibilities include cleaning the camp facilities, refilling supplies and assisting the cooks during meal times and clean up.

**Maintenance Staff** - Assist with camp upkeep including yard work and general maintenance.

**Program Coordinator-** Works alongside the Program Director to plan and lead various tasks. Expected to provide leadership to the staff through encouragement, example and direction. Also expected to do any tasks the Program Director asks them to do. This could be a weekly or summer commitment.

**Photographer/Social Media Specialist-** Take and upload high quality photos. Prepare flash drives of weekly highlights that can be bought by camper families.

**Lifeguard-** Responsible for keeping guests safe at the Camp Luz pool. (certification required) \*fill out lifeguard application if you plan on only being a lifeguard, otherwise complete the summer staff application\*

**Nurse-** Responsible for the health forms and medications of campers and staff and on-call for treatment of injuries and illness. (licensed RN or LPN)

**Internship-** because of the nature of camp work, there are a variety of internship possibilities we can help you meet. If you are looking to fill internship requirements in Guest Services, Food Service, Ministry, or Programming, talk to us about how we can help.

All summer staff are expected to attend Staff Training (June 1-5, 2026) and are expected to be able to agree

## NEWS & NOTES

**Stand Up Comedy Show**  
BENEFITING  
OPEN ARMS  
HISPANIC MINISTRY

**21** APRIL 2026  
6:00 PM DOORS OPEN  
7:00 SHOW STARTS

FEATURING  
BRETT HOLLIS & BOB MORTIMER

FAIRLAWN MENNONITE CHURCH  
8520 EMERSON RD, APPLE  
CREEK, OH 44606

BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY!  
REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED  
OPEN-ARMS.US

THERE WILL BE A FREE  
WILL OFFERING TAKEN  
FOR OPEN ARMS  
HISPANIC MINISTRY

**Open Arms Ministry Benefit**  
Open Arms Hispanic Ministry is hosting a Stand Up Comedy Night Fundraiser on **April 21st @ 6:00PM at Fairlawn Mennonite Church**. Join them for a fun, family-friendly evening while supporting their work in our

community. More details are available on the flyer.

with the Camp Luz Statement of Faith and be willing to sign the Summer Staff Covenant.

*Our 28<sup>th</sup> Annual*  
**MAPLE SYRUP MISSIONS  
FESTIVAL**

Pancake and Sausage Breakfast

Browse the missions displays and sign up for a door prize

**Dine-In or Drive Thru**

**SONNENBERG MENNONITE CHURCH**  
14367 Hackett Road, Kidron

**Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026**  
**serving 7:00 - 10:30 AM**

By Donation

ENJOY SONNENBERG'S OWN

**PANCAKES** MADE FROM SCRATCH & TOPPED WITH  
**SYRUP** MADE FROM LOCAL MAPLE SAP  
**SAUSAGE** SPECIALLY SEASONED & STUFFED  
**DRINKS** OJ, MILK & COFFEE

Proceeds support our mission and missionaries.

Extra syrup & sausage available for purchase to take home.



**OrrVilla Retirement**

**Community:** Is continuing its Speaker Series each month.

OrrVilla's Speaker Series events

are a 1-hour presentation (2:00 – 3:00 PM) on a variety of topics. These talks are free to the public, with an RSVP (330-462-1038), and are intended to be informative and educational.

**May 5 | 2:00–3:00 pm. Julie Hartzler, Founding Executive Director of IncludeAbility, will present “Introducing IncludeAbility”.** Julie Hartzler is the Founding Executive Director of IncludeAbility, a nonprofit dedicated to disability inclusion. Her work is shaped by both healthcare experience and personal advocacy for her own family's disability issues.

What began as an idea to help families in Wayne County, now serves individuals and communities worldwide. This Matters for Churches - whether your congregation includes individuals with disabilities or not—or families supporting loved ones—this one-hour presentation offers helpful insight and resources.

IncludeAbility is a local nonprofit providing practical, short-term and long-term support, including: A Lending Hub with adaptive equipment for free use, with \$50 transportation fee, hiking and beach wheelchairs, outdoor ramps and accessibility solutions and resources that promote independence and inclusion.



Please join us on Thursday, April 23 at 6:30pm at the

Hartville Kitchen for our Annual Fundraising Banquet,

an evening centered on the students of Southeast Canton and the inspiring work unfolding through Lighthouse Ministries! Thanks to generous sponsors, there is no cost to attend, but there will be an opportunity to give at the conclusion of the program as we work toward our \$75,000 goal before our fiscal year ends on May 31.

Consider arriving a little early or staying a bit afterward, as our student-run businesses will be open both before and after the program!

**Save the Date**  
CELEBRATING  
**25**  
Years

MCC Connections

**Daily specials: May 11-15, 2026**  
**25 year Celebration: May 16, 2026**  
*Stay tuned for more details*



## Ohio Conference names

### Conference Safety Liaison:

Ohio Mennonite Conference is committed to providing a safe place for persons who have been victims of pastoral misconduct. The conference's trained Conference Safety

Liaison is ready to receive your confidential report and provide support:

**Mark "Woody" Woods**

**Conference Safety Liaison (CSL)**

330-621-4395

[mwoods.woody@gmail.com](mailto:mwoods.woody@gmail.com)

See posted flyers on bulletin boards and bathroom doors for more info about recognition of abuse and reporting.

*This Week in Anabaptist History ...* On April 19, 1892 three million acres of land in the Cheyenne and Arapaho territories were opened to white settlement. Among the earliest homesteaders in the western part of the Oklahoma territory were numerous Mennonites, primarily from Kansas and Nebraska. Their settlements extended into the counties later called Blaine, Custer, and Washita. One group homesteaded near the present site of Geary, another in the vicinity of Watonga, and a third in the vicinity of Okeene. In 1893 the Cooper Mennonite Brethren Church was organized. In 1902 this settlement was disbanded. The first Old Order Amish settled in the Thomas community in 1893.

Through a study it has been estimated that some 100,000 people joined in the race to establish claims in the Oklahoma Territory; many Mennonites were among them, coming from Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri. They were the founders of the communities of Meno, Medford, Deer Creek, Orienta, Fairview, Lahoma, Kremlin, North Enid, and Enid. The first Mennonite (General Conference Mennonite) church founded in 1894 as a result of this "run" was located in the Fairview community. The North and South Hoffnungsfield Mennonite Brethren congregations were established here.

Mennonite (GCM) families from McPherson and Marion counties, KS organized the present Meno community on June 13, 1895. They established the New Hopedale Mennonite Church and the Ringwood West New Hopedale Mennonite Church. The village of Meno (Menno) was founded in 1902.

The Mennonite Brethren Church of Medford was organized on February 4, 1897. John F. Harms was the minister there and the editor and printer of the Zionsbote. The town of Deer Creek was founded in 1898 adjacent to a Mennonite settlement of persons primarily of South German background who organized a congregation in 1899.

Mennonites of the Mennonite Church group settled in Alfalfa County and organized the Milan Valley Church. Other settlements were established near Manchester and Newkirk. A few families of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, settled near Fairview. The Church of God (Apostolische Brudergemeinde), followers of Herman Peters, established a small group (see Fairview Church of God). Mennonites also settled in Kiowa, Beaver, Texas, and Caddo counties in 1901-1907. Two General Conference congregations and one Mennonite Brethren in the Gotebo vicinity were established shortly after 1901. In the Oklahoma Panhandle, Mennonites settled in Beaver County near Turpin, and in Texas County near Balko and Hooker.

Pioneer life on the Oklahoma plains was difficult, intensified by poverty and drought conditions. Pioneers lived in sod houses and dugouts. Many found lack of water a serious problem. After 1897, when bumper crops were harvested, conditions improved in many places.

By the close of the Territorial period in 1907 there were, according to Marvin Kroeker, 37 Mennonite congregations in Oklahoma, sixteen of which belonged to the General Conference Mennonite Church, twelve to the Mennonite Brethren, three to the Mennonite Church (MC), two to the Old Order Amish, one to the Amish Mennonites, one to the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, and one to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonites.

[https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Oklahoma\\_\(USA\)&oldid=174696](https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Oklahoma_(USA)&oldid=174696)

The next issue of Sojourns will be printed for Sunday May 3, 2026. Submit items to the church office by Thursday April 30, 2026 @ 9:00 a.m.