



# SOJOURNS



Vol. XXXIV, Issue 14 The Newsletter of Sonnenberg Mennonite Church July 20, 2025

## SENIOR SAINTS July, 2025 Birthdays/Anniversaries



*Happy celebrating to our senior saints who have birthdays/anniversaries in July, 2025!*

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Don/Ellen Nussbaum (42), Thursday, July 3  
Henry/Julie Beun (47), Thursday, July 10  
Janice Geiser (73), Wednesday July 16  
Ron/Janice Geiser (9), Wednesday July 16  
Marvin/Rhoda Sommers (49), Thursday July 17  
Robert Eshleman (71), Sunday, July 20  
Marjean Lehman (81), Sunday, July 20  
Robert/Jane Eshleman (44), Sunday, July 27  
Richard/Laurel Horst (53), Thursday, July 31



But as the trip got closer and closer there was a lot of uncertainty. A lot of patience is required when coordinating with each different group. Because of the makeup of our group we not only had the work and travel to do but we had to bond as a group and learn to know one another. This was satisfying and rewarding but also exhausting for everyone involved.

With prayer, patience and intentional communication we figured it out. There were moans and groans but the group really did bond and I believe came to trust each other. We had people with different leadership gifts that were able to compliment each other well.

The takeaway for me from the trip was that people who are focused on serving one another find ways to come together over many types of differences. Besides our diverse group, we needed to get to know the MDS staff who were different ages and came from many different walks of life as well as our homeowners who entrusted us into their space and allowed the mess that was required to make things right in their homes.

This reminder was worth it and the struggles that it took to get there will help me to remember the lesson. Thanks for supporting our trip! -Chip

*The following letter is from Elvis. He wanted me to share it with you all. He has safely returned to his home in Kenya...*



BUILDING  
HOPE  
**75**  
YEARS  
1950-2025



Dear Church family,

On Thursday June 19th when I was throwing up behind a Baptist church in the panhandle of Florida I asked myself was it worth it? It is hard to travel. With complications of expense, time off work, coordinating schedules, dealing with traffic, fatigue, unfamiliarity and so on.

When Elvis Otieno, an IVEPer from Kenya, asked me about this trip in late 2024 I saw his vision and was hooked. MYF had looked at doing an MDS trip but it hadn't worked out for various reasons and the idea of working with another youth group was attractive.

Letter of gratitude,  
To Sonnenberg MC

I wish I was there in person to present this letter to the Congregation but time can't allow me since my IVEP program is coming to an amazing end. I'm writing this letter to express my gratitude to the whole Sonnenberg Congregation for supporting the Summer youth program trip to Perry, Florida.

We started organising this trip back in December 2024 with my supervisor Bill Seymour as a way of building relationships between American youths, Hispanic and Congolese. We wanted it to be more of a brotherly fellowship than just a community service. We approached Chip with the idea if he would like to join this fellowship trip with Sonnenberg MYF, he accepted and worked with us in the whole planning process.

We had a group of 19 going to the trip, 5 youths from Sonnenberg MC MYF( Silas, Ezra, Lucas Z, Lucas M and Josiah, 7 youths from Akron Swahili ( Congolese community), 1 youth that Pastor Bill Is mentoring, 4 Adults from Orville MC( Pastor Bill Seymour, Mark Bixler, Kara Shilling and John shilling), 1 Adult from Sonnenberg ( Chip Coleman) and Me ( Elvis Omondi). We didn't find people from the Hispanic community because of some uncertainties but there were people who were willing to come.

Just a little background of the Congolese youths who came to the US as refugees and were there to volunteer. Their parents left their community in DRC back in 1996 fleeing to Tanzania for safety and they stayed in Nyarugusu Refugee Camp and that is where all the youths that came for the trip were born and they don't know anything about DRC and they can't go back because of the continuous conflict. They moved to the US as the only option nine years ago and they have been living with their parents and their community. This trip was the first time spending a week away from their parents, the first time going to a summer youth program and first time packing lunch sandwiches and eating American food for almost a whole week, and the first time meeting the American kids in the group. This was their first experience like the first day in a new school. There were a lot of struggles to adjust to the new life, the rest of the group and

language was also a problem, English is their second language that they only use at school and offices. They loved it and they are ready to do it again and the boys want to do a yearlong program after high school. We planned to take 8 youths from the group and we ended up getting 7. What touched my heart was that these people do not have a place to call home but gave up their time to rebuild other people's homes and lives.

We left Ohio June 15 and came back June 22. At the MDS station in Perry Florida, we worked on home repairs that involved replacing floors, dry walls, ceiling, painting and replacing doors and windows. We ended up working in four job sites and two houses were done while the remaining two were almost done. I personally enjoyed watching the youths working together and learning from one another.

For the fellowship part: we organized a get together every evening where we would sing, share personal stories/ testimonies and pray together. The Congolese youths were brave enough to share their stories about their life in a refugee camp, the challenges they faced both at the camp and when they arrived in the US and also the good experiences that they are having in the US in the midst of challenges. People got to know one another at a personal level and that was the goal of the trip. We started as strangers and finished as friends who wanted the friendship to continue.

We also had fun activities that involved going to the beach twice( it was the first time for most of the Congolese), playing basketball, visiting the Lost Sea in Tennessee.

Great thanks for those who supported us financially and through prayers, your support made a big difference in the lives of the youths and also the home owners, it is an experience that will never be forgotten. One of the Congolese boys asked me where we got the support to cover the transportation, food, accommodation and adventure and I responded that there are people who heard about the trip and they came up to support. God bless all of you and I wish that one day you will meet the amazing Congolese kids. The Congolese are very grateful for the opportunity to go out and

serve, they asked if they can do it again next summer.

We are also grateful for the parents who allowed their kids to join the trip. I personally enjoyed the fellowship we had, seeing their commitment to make a difference by repairing the houses passionately and their love for Jesus. This was a life changing trip, a ministry that touched lives. Their satisfaction was my satisfaction.

God bless Sonnenberg MC and I hope that this fellowship will continue.

May the light of Christ Shine Upon You.

Elvis Omondi Otieno

IVEPer 2024/25

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## ReGen: Following Jesus Together



**From July 3-7**

**a total of 20 Sonnenbergers attended the Evana network's youth convention. It was great to hear the reports of their experiences on Sunday July 13. Thank you for your support !**



It hurts to lose a loved one.

Find help at GriefShare.

GriefShare helps group members apply biblical principles to the healing

process after the death of a loved one. Throughout the videos and workbook, participants see how the gospel brings hope and restoration. Plans are being made to start a new GriefShare group on Wednesday, September 17, depending upon expressions of interest in doing so. The sessions are 75 minutes in length (4:00-5:15 p.m.) once a week for 13 weeks including a video presentation and group discussion. If you would like more information, or to express interest in joining, please contact Gladys Geiser (330-201-1510) or Carl Wiebe at the Kidron Mennonite Church office (330-857-3461). Please respond by August 13 if you are interested.



### Hope's House:

To be included in their text feed for freezer meals, to be contacted for needed items or if you want to

volunteer you can call or text the phone number...

(330) 439-2236 [hopeshouse1832@gmail.com](mailto:hopeshouse1832@gmail.com)

To donate financially (they are a 501c3) Checks can be made to:

Hope's House

Pure Gift of God

PO Box 292

Berlin Oh 44610

Or you can donate through Venmo



### OrrVilla Retirement

**Community:** You are Invited to Celebrate Vision 2027!

We are excited to announce the

formal Groundbreaking for the newest phase of OrrVilla Retirement Community. Join us as we mark the beginning of this expansion of our campus, which will increase independent living units and add a beautiful community clubhouse. The ceremony will be held on Saturday July 19th, at 9:30 am, directly south of Maple Terrace, with light refreshments served before and after the service. For this brief service, bring your own chair if you want one; a limited number of chairs will be available. Come Celebrate with us!



### CAMO Collection:

CAMO collects more than just medical equipment. Each month they'll focus on new or gently used items. For June & July they'll accept the items for the

Community Gym. Items can be mailed or dropped off at...

322 Westwood Ave,  
Orrville, OH  
44667

Jump ropes,  
Scooter Boards,





Bosu balls,  
Volleyball supplies (Nets, Poles, Pole Padding, Knee Pads), Basketballs (full size), Shin Guards, Fox 40 Whistles, Ball bags, Stopwatches, Ball baskets (collapsible), Jerseys (any), Shorts, tennis shoes, and soccer cleats. (sizes 12 youth- 10 adult).



MCC Connections Thrift Shop in Kidron is hiring a Staff Assistant to join our team in late August. This is a part-time, paid position (three days a week: Monday, Wednesday, and every other Friday/Saturday). The role provides vital support in both the donation area and the retail store. The ideal candidate will support the mission of MCC, be flexible and willing to learn, and have strong people skills. Applications will be processed as received. Apply online at [www.mccconnections.com](http://www.mccconnections.com) or request an application by calling 330-857-7802, ext 1# or send an email to [Michael@MCCconnections.com](mailto:Michael@MCCconnections.com).



**OrrVilla Retirement Community:** Is continuing its Speaker Series in August by joining with the day-long Orrville Senior

Fun Fair scheduled for Tuesday, August 5th.

The Senior Fun Fair will be held in the gym at Orrville Christian Church and is sponsored by the Wayne County Senior Services Network (WSSN).

OrrVilla has had an integral role in the planning and implementation of this event for the past three years. We continue to support this local, free event. Those approaching retirement and their senior years will participate in "fair" games and learn about local services as they meet vendors from a wide range of services in one location with coffee, donuts and lunch provided!

RSVP is essential. RSVP by 7/25/25 to Mary Vicars at 330 419 4923

The next issue of Sojourns will be printed for Sunday August 3, 2025. Submit items to the church office by Thursday July 31, 2025 @ 9:00 a.m.

*This Week in Anabaptist History ...* On July 20, 1980 Calvin Wall Redekop lost his father Jacob Kaspar Redekop in Minneapolis, MN. At the time Calvin was teaching at Conrad Grebel College, one of five universities where he either taught or served in administrative roles.

Cal was the second of five children to Jacob and Katherine (Wall) Redekop. He grew up on a farm in Montana and in 1937 the family moved to Dallas, Oregon. Three years later the family relocated again to Mountain Lake, Minnesota where Calvin attended high school. Calvin received his BA in sociology from Goshen College in 1949, and thereafter completed his MA at the University of Minnesota and his PhD in Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Chicago in 1959.

While serving overseas as the director of MCC's PAX program Cal met Freda Pullman, serving with Menno Travel in Amsterdam, and they were married on August 20, 1955 in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Calvin and Freda had three children: William, Benjamin, and Frederick. Calvin died 20 July 20, 2022, in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and is buried in Weavers Mennonite Church Cemetery in Rockingham County, Virginia.

Calvin's academic career spanned 35 years and he was a prolific author, credited with 13 publications and a steady stream of articles in professional journals and church papers.

Calvin was a long-time supporter of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and its predecessors, becoming the founding editor of its journal, *The Marketplace*, and serving in that role until 1985.

As a means of combining his environmental zeal with real-world business acumen, Calvin became involved in several businesses. His first business venture was to join Excel Industries, Inc., a turf equipment company. He was also a founding member of Sunflower Energy Works in Kansas, one of the first solar energy companies in the state. Owing to his expertise, he served on the boards of other eco-based companies, including EnerSource, Secure Futures, and Wood Composites Inc.

Owing to his restless mind, Calvin was sometimes known as the "holy disruptor." Critical thinking certainly endeared him as a frequently invited lecturer on university campuses. Through his publications, Redekop has left for posterity a rich legacy of contributions.

[https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Redekop,\\_Calvin\\_Wall\\_\(1925-2022\)&oldid=178746](https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Redekop,_Calvin_Wall_(1925-2022)&oldid=178746)