

ON THE JOURNEY

Making Friends With February

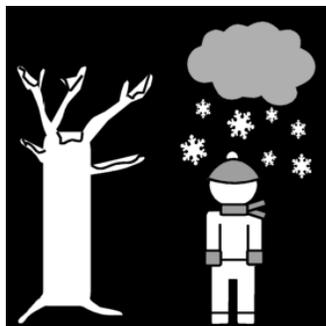
I don't look forward to the month of February. I never have. For me, the best part of February is that we are now past January, and a close second thing is that February is the shortest month of the year. February has way too much winter, and I don't like being cold. I've never been able to find much to celebrate in February. I know there is Valentine's Day, but for most of my life I was single. And then there is Groundhog's Day. But I don't care much for groundhogs either. In fact, I frequently get irritated at that groundhog from Pennsylvania. You know, the one that sees its shadow nearly every year, even if it is pouring down rain, even if it has its eyes closed, and even if they pull the poor critter from its den in the middle of the night. Six more weeks of winter. How depressing! And why do we need a groundhog to tell us there will be six more weeks of winter? One doesn't need to be a mathematical genius to look at the calendar and see that there will be six more weeks until spring whether the groundhog sees its shadow or not.

I used to complain a lot about winter, although, I don't so much anymore. And while I still don't like being cold, my perspective on winter has changed over the years. Winter is one of the seasons, and God gave us the four seasons for a reason. Each season is unique and brings its unique activities. I have come to see that Winter is intended to be a time of rest. I have become much happier, and much more contented since I made that observation. Most of nature rests and gets rejuvenated in winter. Nature seems to do only a bare minimum in winter. Birds do not build nests or raise their young in winter. Wild animals do not have their young in winter. Their goal is to just find enough food and survive the winter. The trees shed their leaves so they can rest, the fields do not produce crops, flowers do not bloom, the grass doesn't grow, and so on. God designed it that even light is reduced in winter so the earth can rest and prepare for another productive year. Perhaps, we should take a lesson from nature, slow down, rest, and get restored so we are ready to be productive when Spring gets here.

I think the reason I used to dislike winter so much is that I tried to do the same things in winter that I did the rest of the year, and everything just seems to require more effort and to take longer. Perhaps God created winter, not to torture us, but for our benefit, to take a break from our endless work, to rest a little more, to get a quilt done, to read some books, put a puzzle together, develop a new talent or revive an old one, or to get together with friends and family, drink some hot chocolate, tell some good stories, and build strong relationships, to do the things we never seem to find time to do in the summer.

Over the years, I've learned to make friends with winter. And even though I have not become a fan of shoveling snow or frigid temps, I do kind of look forward to the next blizzard and getting snowed in for a few days.

Submitted by Pastor Phil Yoder



CALENDAR		
Wed 2/5	9:00 am	Moms In Prayer
	5:30 pm	Wednesday Evening Meal
	6:00 pm	Music Practice
	6:30 pm	Food Pantry Advisory Board
	7:00 pm	Bible Study
Thur 2/6	6:30 pm	Board
Fri 2/7		Women's Retreat
Sat 2/8		Women's Retreat
Sun 2/9	9:00 am	Phil Preaching
	6:00 pm	MYF
Mon 2/10		Health Department
	6:00 pm	Ladies Exercise
Tues 2/11	6:00 pm	Community Life Commission
Wed 2/12	9:00 am	Moms In Prayer
	6:00 pm	Music Practice
	7:00 pm	Bible Study
Thurs 2/13		Maribeth Out of the Office
	9:00 am	First Mennonite Women
Sun 2/16	9:00 am	Phil Preaching
	6:00 pm	MYF
Mon 2/17		Maribeth Out of the Office
	12:00 pm	Blood Drive
	6:00 pm	Ladies Exercise
Wed 2/19	9:00 am	Moms In Prayer
	6:00 pm	Music Practice
	6:30 pm	Administration Commission

Administrative Assistant Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

Closed Friday

Phil Yoder Office Hours:

Monday 12:00-4:00 PM,

Wed. 9:00 AM-12:00 PM, Thursday 1:00-6:00 PM

- **All newsletter submissions need to be in to Maribeth by noon on Tuesday.**

February Birthdays

Sam King – 9

Dorothy Nisley – 11

Glenn Miller – 12

Martha Weirich – 12

Wayne Schrock – 12

Elizabeth Kauffman – 13

Tina Frye – 20

Aldine Wyse – 20

Mary Frye – 22

Edith Herschberger – 24

Gert Kauffman – 29

WORSHIP

Focus statement: One of the best-known stories in the Bible is the story of the Prodigal Son. The famous Bible commentator, William Barclay, called this story the greatest short story ever told. Today, when we read this story, we nearly always focus on the unconditional love of the Father toward his wayward son when he welcomed him home. This is a picture of God's love. And certainly, this was Jesus' intent in telling the story. That is, at least in part what Jesus wanted his hearers to understand. However, there is much more to this story if we would but notice the context. And when we do, we need to ask, which of the two sons did Jesus consider to be the greater prodigal. This story reveals that there is more than one way to squander the inheritance of the Father!

Background scriptures: Luke 15:1-32

Coffee Prep Volunteers

This Sunday: Ward and Pam Bingaman

Next Sunday: Kris Rheinheimer

Welcome Center

This Sunday: Carolyn Miller

Next Sunday: Karen Pletcher

Looking Ahead:

February 5 – Wednesday Evening Meal

February 7-8 – Woman's Retreat

February 9 – Sermon: "Love and the Prodigals"

February 16 – Sermon: "The Wealth of a Child of God – Through Inheritance"

February 23 – Sermon: "The Wealth of a Child of God – Through Position"

February 26 – Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 PM (Lent Begins)

ADMINISTRATION

Stewardship Report for February 2:

Money Given to Budget \$6,996.00

Amount Needed Weekly for Budget \$5,343.12

Year-to-date Money Given to Budget \$122,525.85

Amount Needed Year-to-Date for Budget \$122,891.76

Maribeth will be out of the office on February 13 and February 17.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Wednesday Evening Meal Hosts:

Tonight: Explorers

Mar. 4: Searchers

Apr. 1: Please Volunteer

Nora Mullet has returned home. Please consider dropping off a meal to them the next several weeks.

Please no lettuce or stringy cheese.

The family of Joanna Graber would like to thank you for all the visitors, cards, meals, and prayers during the passing of David's mom.

We would like to thank everyone for your prayers and the delicious food you shared with us. It was very much appreciated. –Gordon & Iva Jean Kauffman

The care boxes for the college students are in the foyer for contributions. They will be there until February 9.

We will be trying something new called the "Sharing Table". This will be a table used for sharing items that you don't need any more but someone else may appreciate. Examples: calendar, journal, house plant. If you have a large item (such as a sofa) we suggest you take a picture of your item and place it on the table. These items will stay for 2-3 weeks, after that either you remove or it will be disposed of. We will have a trial period to see how well this is received. The table will be near the library.

Additions to the 2017 Church Directory have been put in your mailbox.

The Goshen Community Chorale will begin rehearsing for its upcoming spring season on Tuesday evening, February 25th, at College Mennonite Church, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The Chorale will be preparing a program built around the theme of "Holy Jazz and Sacred Broadway" and will be accompanied by the Lost Luggage Trio on vibraphone, drums and bass. The Chorale welcomes new members who have a background in choral singing and who wish to commit

themselves to regular attendance at rehearsals and to learning challenging repertoire. Interested persons should contact the music director, William Mateer, at (574) 533-2562 or mateers@aol.com.

DISCIPLING

"Hearing and Seeing Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew" –

Will be held at Amigo Centre, March 27-29, 2020. Tim Lehman, retired minister, will be sharing based on his recently published book, "All Authority Has Been Given To Me." Tim will highlight parts of his book and encourage us to rethink long-held assumptions. In a world of division, bitter partisan politics, and violence, where do we turn? What might truly heal us personally and communally? Imagine a world changed because of God's unconditional love channeled through you. The retreat begins Friday evening and concludes with Bruch on Sunday. Registration includes lodging or commuting rates. We look forward to a dynamic weekend of learning and growing in our understanding of God's unconditional love for all. If you would like a copy of his book at a reduced rate contact mandy@amigocentre.org or call 269-651-2811.

Join the Goshen College Music and Theater

Departments as they celebrate Broadway and classic operatic works with a fully staged Musical Theater Scenes: A Musical Cabaret of Light and Love, on Feb. 14 & 15 at 7:30 p.m., and Feb. 16 at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5 general admission in the Umble Center, and can be purchased online at goshen.edu/tickets.

OUTREACH

First Mennonite Women's next project is supporting the FATIMA building project.

Mennonite Disaster Service's annual All-Unit Meeting, celebrating another year of service and community as well as looking to the future, is being held in Goshen, IN this year - Feb. 7-8 at Maple City Chapel. You don't need to register and all are welcome to hear Executive Director Kevin King Friday at 7:00 p.m., or keynote speaker Brenda Phillips Saturday at 12:30 p.m. If you are interested in eating meals or attending the entire

conference, register at mds.mennonite.net. Join us to hear about the exciting things happening with MDS!

Registration is now open for the RETA Celebrating Life Benefit Dinner. This will be held at the Sammlung Platz in Nappanee on March 5, 2020. Reservations will be taken until capacity is reached or until February 19. If interested go online at link.retaforlife.com/dinner or call 574-522-3888.

Join MCC Great Lakes for an informational meeting to explore opening an MCC Thrift Shop in Elkhart. MCC is excited about the possibility of a new thrift shop in the city where MCC first began 100 years ago. We want to listen to the community as we are in the very early stages of discerning whether there is enough energy and interest in starting and sustaining a thrift shop. Join us at Belmont Mennonite Church (925 Oxford Street) in Elkhart on Tuesday, February 18 at 7 p.m. for a time of information sharing, discussion and brainstorming. For more information contact Eric Kurtz at 574-534-4133 or EricKurtz@mcc.org.

Dear FMC Family,

Second semester has officially begun here at IU so we are back into the full swing of things. I'm still not certain I've entirely processed Israel or even caught up on rest, but January was quite exciting. We had our Great Lakes area winter conference, we celebrated Chinese New Year with students, and Sunday night we had a Superbowl party. Over MLK Jr. weekend, we went up to Milwaukee, WI with all the Chi Alpha's from Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin for the annual SALT Conference. In total about 1,000 people were there with 200 coming from IU alone! The main speaker, Curt Harlow, shared about "Misplacing Jesus" - how/why we do that and how to return to Jesus. He asked questions such as, "Are you living out of your dependence on Christ or living out of your own strength?" which sparked great conversations with my small group. We also had plenty of free time to talk, play games, and pray with our communities. It was a powerful weekend and I'm praying God has planted seeds in the hearts of my guys to desire to know Him

deeper. On Sunday night, our resource community went to my girlfriend Jennifer's mom's house to have a Superbowl party. About 40 students came, in all honesty, to eat food, because only some actually cared about the game. Either way, we had a lot of fun together and I'm looking forward to gathering again as we have our House Church tonight. Thank you for your continued support! Please be praying for our community to continue to grow and that new students would hear about Chi Alpha and experience Christ in a life-changing way.

Thank you for all the love and encouragement!

God Bless You,

Grant Miller

