

Grace on the Way

Rejoice and Remember

Anita Stephen

In the early part of 1994 I was approached to create a mural for the “Rejoice and Remember” celebration to be held at Eden Christian College in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The celebration commemorated seventy years of immigration by Mennonites to Canada seeking refuge from Soviet oppression.

I worked on this project through that winter and spring. The result was a 9’ x 13’ pen and ink mural which served as backdrop for the mass choir which sang at the celebration. The drawing depicts the refugee flight through the eyes of a fatherless family and projects their feelings of fear and loss, longing and hope.

[Ed.: In the 500th year of the Anabaptist movement it is fitting to share again Anita’s marvellous piece.]



Rejoice and Remember by Anita Stephen

Anabaptist Community Bible

As part of the celebration of “Anabaptism at Five Hundred, 1525-2025”, MennoMedia has published the first “Anabaptist Community Bible.”

It contains 7,200 marginal notes from Anabaptist sources, including (1) “Biblical Context Notes”; (2) “Early Anabaptist Witness Notes”; and (3) “Community Reflection Notes” gathered from nearly 600 study groups, including Grace Mennonite.

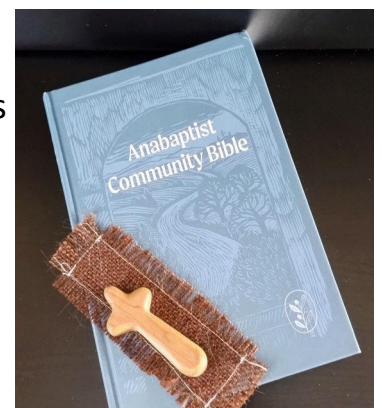
Each book opens with comments on “Context”, “Central Themes”, and the “Anabaptist Lens” (that is, how early

Kevin McCabe

Anabaptists perceived and used this particular book). Forty woodcut-style illustrations dramatize important scriptural passages.

Seven essays by contemporary Anabaptist scholars focus on specific aspects of the Anabaptist tradition as well as current interpretive questions.

All in all, plentiful helps for Anabaptist readers to further elucidate the Bible.



Inside this issue

Charms of Iona ...	2
Walking There.....	3
Banner Maker	3
Migration.....	4
Grace Justice.....	4
VT & HWB.....	5
MDS Blessing	5
Why Grace	6
Signs of Spring.....	6

The Charms of Iona

by John Rempel

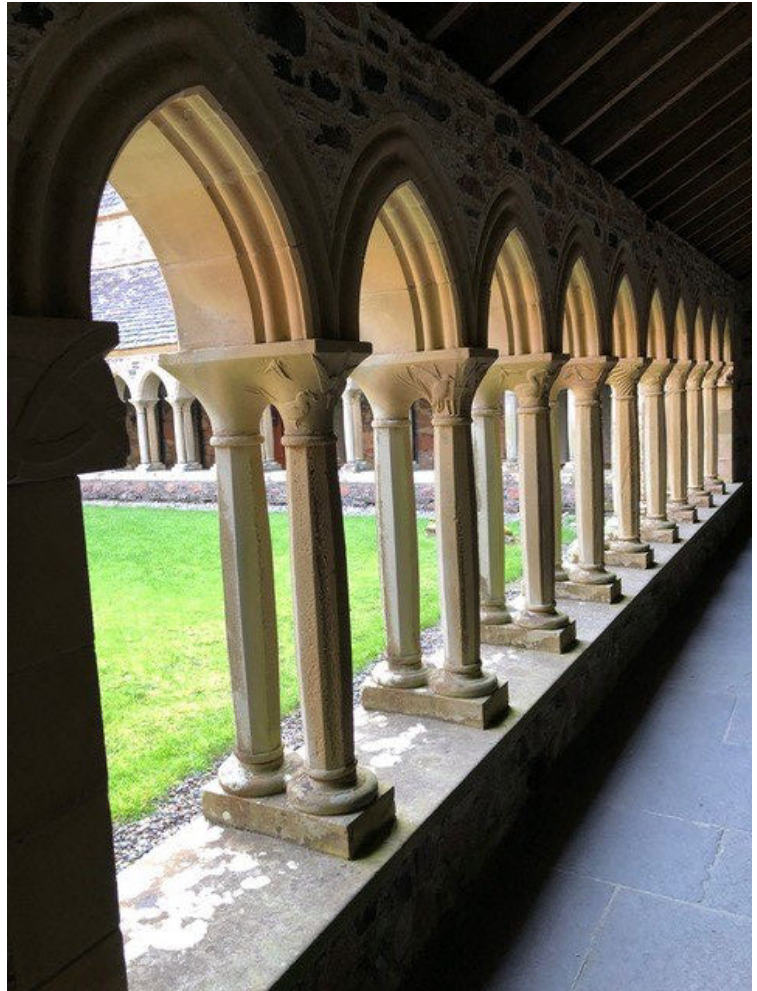
For years I have been aware of the Iona Community, a Protestant “monastery” on a lonely island on Scotland’s southwest coast. It is renowned for its fusion of faith and action and its creation of modern chant music. Last fall I immersed myself in the day to day life of this community for a week. The arrival was auspicious: a train from Glasgow, a ferry from Oban, a local bus line, and then another ferry. Rocks and ruins dot the island.

Starting in the early 1930s the Iona Community gradually restored buildings of a Catholic monastery whose church had been built in the 1200s. Our first evening was impressive. We walked to the church in total darkness and were greeted by fifty candles surrounding the middle of the vast church where worshippers sat.

After a communal breakfast mixed with intense conversation in the restored refectory, everyone was given a task. Then came the first half of the study session with a different theme each week. The same sequence followed after lunch with time before dinner to hike on parts of the island.

The original community was Catholic, the present origins were Presbyterian, and people from several denominations were present in the members and guests. I learned that the present community is not monastic in the sense that it doesn’t require a lifelong vow but it does require adherence to a covenant. In the

prayers that were said and the projects the community carries on I sensed an admirable oneness between what members (and many guests) said and what they did.



The Cloister



The Village, with church in background



Walking There

by Doug Schulz

Someone walks there with cloaked back
bent by burdens real though invisible,
toward a hill misty in blue-dawn distance.

We are removed, cannot see the face
of this form so determined; gender, indeterminate.
Should we join, move alongside? We prefer study.

There is a time, everyone imagines, when sorrow
might become a fabric-thread of their garment.
Perhaps fear of such clothing worries all feet.

Is that the reason for taking up a branch
fallen from a withered tree? A gift of grip,
assurance that there is help for the uncertain road?

Who is walking there, back bent so, unswerving bold?

Banner Maker

Mary Koop

The four banners we are using here at Grace during Lent were made in the early 1990s at Vineland UMC when Dave Brubacher was pastor. I was on the worship committee and we thought it would be great to have some visuals to go with the theme for the summer series. We came up with some ideas of what we wanted on the banner and I agreed to try it. That was before the churches had screens to project images and songs for the congregation, but the church had a projector I could use to enlarge the images. I explored banner-making in books and magazines and found this set in the *Leader*.

To make them I first find a wide piece of medium weight fabric in the background colour. Simple images I draw freehand and letters I print from the computer in desired fonts. Then I trace all my images and letters in reverse onto fabric in selected colours that has been backed with 'heat and bond'. Next I cut everything out, remove the paper on the back to expose the glue, and place them on the banner fabric. Finally, I iron the images into place.



Making banners has been an extension of my sewing and quilting hobbies.

Migration

The other morning, I witnessed a flock of Tundra swans migrating back north. I stood in awe watching the bright white birds in flight against the dark sky, their calls fading further into the distance as they continued their journey.

I thought of our neighbours who are also migrating north in this season. Long flights carry them here, and many arrive tired, hungry, and lacking the proper clothes needed for cooler temperatures. They miss

Kit Andres

their families, their churches, their community. They wonder, “Will I be welcome?”

The Lenten season offers us a time of contemplation as we examine our spiritual lives. It’s a time to let go of habits that distract us away from God, yes, but also to add exercises that bring us closer to our Creator. What if we appreciated the migration of all God’s creation during this season? As a faith community, as the body of Christ, I encourage us to answer Jesus’

call to feed, clothe, and welcome the stranger as intrinsic to our spiritual practice. Let’s see how our spiritual lives are transformed and enhanced as we entertain the angels among us.

A clothing drop-off basket for local migrant farm workers is located in the Grace foyer next to the Community Care bin.

Grace Justice Group

Jan Steven

Grace Justice Group had our first free seminar this past November. Hannah Zettler-Graca from Positive Living presented on “Community Supporting Each Other.” She encouraged us to have a kinder, most just approach to our friends who are experiencing addiction and mental health crises and are on the street or under housed. And Hannah encouraged us to carry naloxone kits and let our government representatives—on every level—know our concerns and what we want to see. We were delighted by the turnout.

Our next free seminar (date TBA) will be on “Housing and Homelessness Initiatives,” presented by volunteers from Silver Spire United Church. Watch for it!



Grace Donations for migrant workers



Becky Whitworth for MP Tony Baldinelli, Hannah Zettler-Graca, Jan Steven from Grace, and Sal Sorrento from Regional Council.

Hymnals in Worship

Annie Schulz

Music is an integral component of our worship experience at Grace. The songs for each service are selected to complement the scripture readings and meditations.

At Grace, we primarily sing hymns from *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (HWB) which is in our pews. When the *Voices Together* (VT) hymnal was published in 2020, we decided to use this new resource as an addition to HWB. We did not buy the VT hymnal for the pews but chose to print in our weekly bulletin the words to VT songs that are suitable to sing for our congregation.



We have two music groups that meet regularly to learn and rehearse songs from both hymnals. These groups lead the congregation in song at worship services.

The *Voices Together* hymnal offers new expressions of our Christian faith and life through the diversity of tunes and cultural relevance of the lyrics.

We strive to sing a balance of the more familiar hymns from *Hymnal: A Worship Book* and the newer songs in *Voices Together*. VT songs provide challenge and refreshment both musically and theologically.

Mennonite Disaster Service Blessing

David Brubacher

Mennonite Disaster Service typically works with people already disadvantaged by economic and personal circumstances. That was certainly the case with one home where I worked in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia. The homeowner, living in the extended family home, was in hospital suffering from cancer. During the pandemic her elderly father suffering with dementia is believed to have been swept away by the ocean a few hundred feet from the house, not to be seen again. During Hurricane Fiona two windows were damaged and siding blew off one side of the house.

The house, like many in the area, was built as temporary housing for coal miners over 100 years ago. Due to the closing of the coal mine and the decline in the fishing industry, people could not afford to maintain the houses properly.

While I was there, we replaced two windows. During that time, the hospitalized homeowner instructed her sister, who was staying in the house, to make sure we always had pizza or donuts to eat. While I have rarely seen so much despair, I have also rarely experienced such generosity. Experiencing such blessing is why I volunteer with MDS.



Why Grace?

The Grace church family celebrates new family members. We asked some of our newer family members why they've made Grace their church home. Here are some responses:

Lacey Willmott and Chris Sawatsky: "We started attending back in the fall and have really found Grace to be a blessing. Both of us were looking to reconnect and attend a church with a spiritually mature outlook, liturgy and congregation. Through many services, Peace Group meetings, and Fellowship Times we have truly felt so very welcomed, accepted and valued. The congregation size is not large, but it has a great impact. Focused but not intense. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the baked goods and coffee have been outstanding too."

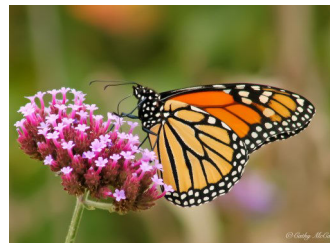
Kit Andres: "What drew me to Grace was seeing its members boldly acting as the church outside the church, responding to the genocide in Palestine by speaking truth to power and visiting MPs. What keeps me coming back to Grace is being welcomed into a community that both challenges and encourages me in my spiritual growth and offers a place of sanctuary."

John and Judy Doerksen: "We have been attending Grace for about a year and a half.

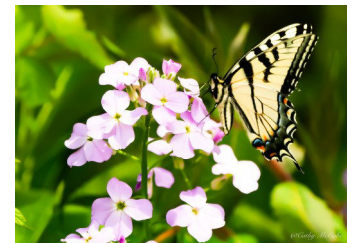
True to its name, Grace Mennonite Church initially drew us in because of a graciousness that we've felt since we began to attend. We realize we weren't there all those years that other members worked hard, faithfully attended, supported each other and served God through their gifts, yet they have welcomed and included us now in the life of this fellowship. And in the time that we have been part of all this, our leaders have thoughtfully presented many sermons and lessons that have spoken to our intellects and challenged us spiritually."

Signs of Spring

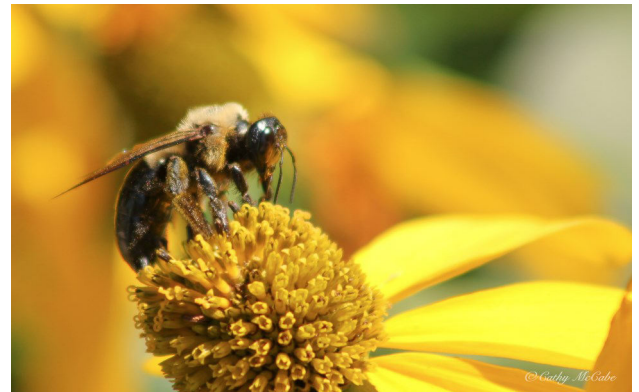
Cathy McCabe



Monarch



Swallowtail



Busy Bee

Graceletter

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"I do not understand the mystery of Grace —
only that it meets us where we are and does not leave us where it found us."

— Anne Lamott