

## PRAYER REQUESTS

- Continue to lift up the Ramseyer family in your prayers! Pray for Myron as he recovers and adjusts to reduced heart strength. Give thanks for his improving comfort level over the past week. Pray for Neil as he seeks healing and wholeness. Pray for Myrna and Anne and the whole extended family as they journey through this incredibly difficult time.
- Please continue to pray for the safe release of the 15 remaining Christian aid workers who were kidnapped in Haiti on Saturday, Oct. 16. Two of those kidnapped were released this past week.
- Pray for Suzan Demiter. She is in Wooster Hospital recovering from emergency surgery.
- Pray for Austin Zuercher in Costa Rica who we support through EMM.
- Pray for Kaitlyn & Spencer as they are caring for their newborn Andrew Jeffrey.
- Remember our people in nursing homes: Patt (&Earl), Suzan, Martha Carolyn & Win.
- Pray for our shut-ins: Pete Stauffer, Paul Troyer, Elmer Richard, Mary Nussbaum, Ila Zimmerly, Brady Murray and Fred's mother Doris Hoffman.
- Give thanks for caring church family, Dave, Delmar, Denny & Dan, who cleared leaves at Bea's home.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- If you would like to bless the Gassers with a meal please get in touch with Julie (330-988-06190), Keith (330-466-0724) or Thomas (330-317-5587) as all of them will be making frequent trips to Akron in the coming weeks. Arrange a time to drop your meal off with Julie, Keith or Thomas and they will drop the food off with the Gassers. Thanks for your support!
- On November 30th at 6:00pm we will be gathering to decorate the church for Advent & Christmas. All who are able are encouraged to come help.
- Dan & Julie will be out of town Dec 10-12 for a grandson birthday visit.
- WSC will meet Tuesday Dec. 14.
- We will be celebrating Communion during the worship service on Dec 5
- On December 11th at 7pm Crown Hill will host a Sonnenberg Station Christmas concert, directed by our own Tim Yoder! The Leadership Team along with the members of the choir felt it best if we did not pack out our sanctuary like we have for previous Sonnenberg Station concerts. This concert is for the people of Crown Hill and local family members of Sonnenberg Station.
- Christmas Eve Service Dec 24, 6:30pm

## November 28

Preaching: Thomas Dunn

Scripture: Psalm 25:1-10; Luke 21:25-36

Sermon: Hope for the Length of the Day

## November 14 Offering

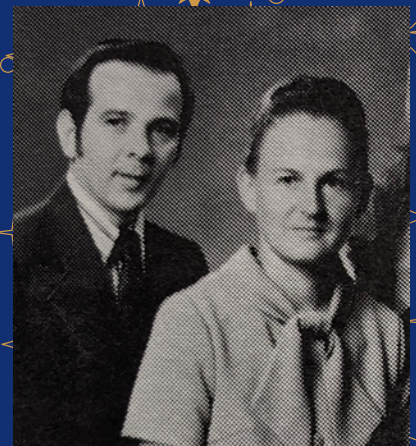
Manor Fund: 60.00

General: 3434.00

## Hint for Last Week's Riddle:

Check the spelling!

WHO'S THAT?



# Pastoral Letter

Thomas was asked to write an article on “Transformation” for the Mennonite Church USA Blog. This is what he submitted.

Attempting to describe the process of spiritual transformation quickly brings me to the limits of my ability to communicate. Transformation is such an amorphous process that I do not even fully understand how, and in what ways, I have been transformed over my lifetime. That being said, I am grateful for the work of Bryan Stevenson, a lawyer, social justice activist, founder/executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative, law professor and author of “Just Mercy.” Stevenson has given me a simple way to understand the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in my life.

Stevenson uses the concept of proximity: “When you get proximate to the excluded and the disfavored, you learn things that you need to understand if we’re going to change the world. Our understanding of how we change things comes in proximity to inequality, to injustice. Proximity will empower you.” Try typing “Bryan Stevenson Proximity” into Google and see what all comes up! Stevenson’s emphasis on proximity resonates deeply with my journey. As I look at the ways in which I have been transformed, it is always a result of who I am close to.

One of my earliest moments of transformation was on a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) service and learning tour to Guatemala, as a teenager. This was the first time that I was in close proximity to the developing world, and it transformed my worldview. I could no longer believe that if you worked hard and made good choices in life, you would end up being comfortable and successful. I was never explicitly taught this concept of a meritocracy, but it is what I absorbed from my community and what I saw in my limited experience. However, my experience up until that point had not put me in proximity to people who had suffered generations of warfare, exploitations and other injustices. I was forced to change my worldview as I walked alongside Mennonites from Guatemala. I am forever grateful for their hospitality and how they opened themselves up to an ignorant 18 year old from Ohio.

More recently, I have experienced transformation through my proximity to other pastors in my area. For nearly a decade, a group of pastors have been intentionally meeting together weekly to plan combined events for our churches, as well as to share openly about the joys and challenges we are facing in our congregations and personal lives. This group has included a Hispanic pastor, a Black pastor and white pastors. We have worked together at developing our intercultural competencies and understanding how racism is experienced in our area. We’ve learned to listen and to share openly. We have walked with one another through deep theological/exegetical questions, we’ve held each other accountable, and ultimately, we’ve enabled one another to remain in the pastoral ministry through some turbulent times. My proximity to these other pastors has transformed me, individually and as a person in ministry.

These two examples are major life transformations for me, but I have also been transformed by the multitude of smaller interactions with individuals and cultures that I have come close to. I believe God leads and guides all these interactions and is constantly calling us to get proximate to the excluded and the disfavored, because that is where Jesus is. We are called not to just go and help those excluded and disfavored but to get close enough that we will be transformed by the relationships.

My hope for myself and for the church is that we can continue to get closer to one another and closer to those who are not yet a part of us. Through proximity, the Holy Spirit will transform and renew us. In isolation, we will resist God’s call and become stagnant.