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A Quarterly Newsletter of Shalom Mission communities

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September 2009: SMC Potluck: The Stories that Filled Our Summer

A Note from the Editor

By Analí Gatlin

Originally the theme for this newsletter was "How to Start a New Community." A few articles have been written with this theme in mind, such as "Planting a Seed" which describes the journey of *The Third Way, a new community in St. Paul, Minnesota.* However, this summer has been a busy time for the SMC communities, and many of our community experiences can't be molded to fit a theme. Even so, these are important stories to bring to the table, so I invite you to grab a plate and enjoy an SMC story potluck.



SMC youth enjoying a sunny Plow Creek picnic.



Planting a Seed

By Joey Cavalier

Whether it is a seed or a garden, a tree or a flower, the writers of the scriptures never shy away from the language of creation and growth. In fact, this language pervades the entire biblical narrative from the opening chapter to the closing chapter. In Genesis chapter one God spoke into existence beautiful fruit-bearing trees and plants and saw that it was good. In Revelation chapter twenty-two an eschatological Eden is regained, and again there are beautiful fruit-producing trees that taste of healing and goodness. And sprinkled between these two magnificent passages are countless references to trees, fruit, seeds, gardens, and things of the like.

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Jesus in many instances speaks of the Kingdom of God as a seed, fruit, branches, and gardens. This Kingdom-language must have some serious implications on specific communities that are striving to live out the Kingdom together in a neighborhood.

There is little that is more characteristic of our community, The Third Way, than the seed-plant theme mentioned above. We refuse to see ourselves as some fully-grown tree that has plopped down from the sky. We have learned patience and discernment in how we plant and nurture our metaphorical garden. We have learned that we need to look at the "gardens" that are other faith communities, so we may learn what works, and what doesn't work. And we have learned through guidance to look to the Spirit who produces fruit in our lives and in our communities.

When people plant a garden they must plant the seeds at the right time and in the right way, or the seed could easily grow in a shoddy fashion and fail to reach its potential. Our community's journey has been one of listening and discerning: a journey of



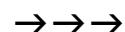
The Third Way neighborhood.

when to do and when not to do, of when to plant, and how to plant.

Some of The Third Way's core people were either leaders or participants in Resonate, a young adults ministry of Woodland Hills Church, located in St. Paul, Minnesota. Resonate's leadership team regularly went away on retreats in order to assess what the God of newness was doing in our lives. Retreat after retreat we felt God calling us to be a missional community intentionally living together in a specific neighborhood so that we may be a witness of God's Kingdom.

When we simply looked at what had been happening in the neighborhood, this vision seemed to make so much sense. A couple of years ago our Pastor Seth and his family moved into The Midway, the neighborhood wedged between St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota. A short time later, a group of people moved a few blocks away and started a community house. One month later, my wife and I moved in across from the community house. And then following several people expressed interest in moving to the area to be part of what was happening. It was clear that we had to pour our efforts and time into the new thing God was doing in The Midway. After meeting and talking and praying about what was happening, we decided to shut down Resonate and plant this new seed called the Third Way in the seemingly fertile soil of The Midway.

Moving forward we felt it was important to learn from other communities. Early this past spring several of us took a trip to Reba Place to learn, observe, and ask questions. Our experience was encouraging



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because Reba supported us in what we were doing; insightful because they shared their knowledge and wisdom with us; and humbling for us because we realized how little we knew about what it means to be an intentional community. During this time we also sensed that we were moving too fast in our efforts to start The Third Way. We were already talking about renting space and going public, yet there was some tension between us and Woodland Hills that had to be worked through. We needed to slow down and let the seed rest in the soil, or otherwise we would have been an unwise gardener who plants his garden in the middle of winter.

This period of waiting and patience was followed by a gentle and careful planting of The Third Way in The Midway. Instead of going public and trying to be a fully grown tree that magically falls from the sky, we felt we should focus first on being a healthy community that is loves one another, a community that is capable of living the way of peace, simplicity and togetherness. Before being the hands and feet of Jesus in this neighborhood, we realized we first have to be a healthy, functioning body.

Once The Third Way was planted, fertilizing, weeding, and watering came next. About three months ago, we began meeting in a house, sharing a meal and our journeys, praying and singing, and defining our life together. Our community has a high view of covenants and what it means to be a covenant community with a clearly defined Christ-centered and Spirit-led way of life. So over a series of weeks we went through our "Third Way Covenant," discussing the twelve items in our covenant that mark out our way of life together.

Now we have finished writing our Covenant and are into the subsequent chapter of our own narrative. We don't know everything about what is next, but we do know God is faithful and at work in our lives and in our community. We trust Him to produce the fruit and bring forth growth of goodness and love. We recognize and celebrate the things that have come about from this little seed called The Third Way. There are now two "intentional households," places of communal living where intensive discipleship takes place.

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SMC Potluck: The Stories that Filled Our Summer

A Story of Community By Dawn Langstrom

There are many ways to tell a story; words are only one of them. I have a story to tell about "community". In my affinity for words I find myself drawn to the following definition of community: *a group of interdependent organisms growing or living together in a specified habitat.*

My experience of community has been varied. My story can begin in 2003 with starting a community school on the pacific coast of Costa Rica in a village turned tourist destination. In my mind, our community included not only those who shared our faith and gathered with us to worship on Sundays, but all those who worked and lived together in this specified habitat.

The details of my departure from the community of Nosara, Guanacaste are filled with pain. I was

committed to that place and people, but neither were committed to me. Perhaps that is why the intentionality of Church of the Sojourners was so attractive to me. Our mutual commitment to live and grow together in common faith and practice has held me here in San Francisco for the last two years.

One of my first assignments as an apprentice was to share my timeline, the story of my life that had brought me to this place. That was probably the most difficult thing I had to do all year as an apprentice, so it felt good to get it over with right away and proclaim shortly afterward, "I'll never do that again." I have come to appreciate, however, the importance of sharing our stories in building community.

Despite how much I like words, I don't think I am actually very good at telling my story. Ask me questions, and I'll answer above and beyond what you ever

wanted to hear. But to tell my story from start to finish is simply overwhelming, and painful. I experienced this same overwhelming pain as the folks of Valle Nuevo, our sister community in Santa Marta, Cabañas, El Salvador, continued to share their story with the SMC delegation this year. It is a story that is better understood within the context of the larger story of the Salvadoran people. It is a story told with words, in conversations, in song, in the homilies given in the popular mass, in the quotes of Monseñor Romero, and in the names engraved on the "*Muro de Memoria*" (Wall of Memory). It is a story told with images, often graphic and bloody, in the murals, painted crosses, embroidered handcrafts, and photographs. It is a story told in the communal working of the land and the arduous process of gaining legal ownership of the place these people have committed their lives to rebuilding. It is a story told in the faces of

those whose hope reflects the gift of faith they were given by the martyrs who boldly spoke words of hope to the oppressed and words of exhortation to the oppressors.

When a story is shared—either through experience or telling—both the joy and the sorrow as well as the pain and the hope spread and grow among us. It can be hard to share the painful parts of our stories for fear that the pain will grow. As I paid attention to the story told in Valle Nuevo, the pain was present, but there was also hope. There was sorrow, but there was also →→→



Jim Fitz points to Archbishop Oscar Romero's name on El Muro de Memoria. The wall lists around 35,000 people (and more to be added) that were killed or disappeared during the Salvadoran Civil War of the '80s.

joy. Bearing one another's burdens doesn't necessarily make them lighter, but as His strength is made perfect in our weakness, we bear our burdens better together and they do not crush us. For the members of the Valle Nuevo community, much of their story is shared in common by experience. This is true, also, for many of the members of our own communities. But for those wishing to join existing communities, or even to start their own, sharing your stories is a good □ place to start.



Philip Bridgewater views photos of the 1989 assassination of the six Jesuit priests and two women at the Central American University in San Salvador.



A view of El Picacho, the agricultural land of our brothers and sisters in Valle Nuevo. For over a decade now, our friends in Valle Nuevo fought to legally gain title to the land that they have farmed for generations. There is hope that by the beginning of next year this legal battle will finally be complete and 172 families will have title to their land. To learn more and find out how to get involved, email anali.gatlin@gmail.com.

Words from Archbishop Oscar Romero

October 29, 1978

A Christian community is evangelized

in order to evangelize.

A light is lit

in order to give light.

A candle is not lit to be put under a bushel,
said Christ.

It is lit and put up high

in order to give light.

That is what a true community is like.

A community is a group of men and women

who have found the truth in Christ and in his gospel,
and who follow the truth

and join together to follow it more strongly.

It is not just an individual conversion,
but a community conversion.

It is a family that believes,
a group that accepts God.

In the group, each one finds that the brother or sister
is a source of strength

and that in moments of weakness they help one another
and, by loving one another and believing,

they give light and example.

The preacher no longer needs to preach,
for there are Christians who preach by their own lives.

SMC Potluck: The Stories that Filled Our Summer

La Cancha

By Nancy Gatlin

It was pitch dark and raining torrentially as we clomped along what seemed to be a slender ridge in the midst of a muddy expanse. Our shoes added a few inches of the substance as we followed Yvonne Dilling by one of the edges of *la cancha* to the home where we would be staying. It was July, 2002, and Joe, Analí, and I were visiting Valle Nuevo for the first time.

Sunlight the following day brought into view *la cancha*. It was a large area, perhaps two city blocks in size, surrounded by houses, Santa Marta's church building and school, a couple of NGO's offices, and two small stores on opposite sides. Cows, chickens, and pigs freely wandered across *la cancha*.

A *cancha* is a playing field, most often for playing *fútbol* or soccer. During this year's delegation David Janzen recalled one of his earliest memories of Valle Nuevo in 1992, when after the signing of the peace accords he and a few others witnessed the landing of a UN helicopter on *la cancha*. Guerrillas came down from the mountains and hills to



Nancy talks with some girls during recess at *la cancha*.

turn their arms in and become citizens. From the inception of life after the civil war, *la cancha* was to be a place of reconciliation, relaxation, celebration and community building.

On a subsequent visit I witnessed different school classes shoring up the perimeter of *la cancha* with boulders. Not an easy job, hauling the boulders from other locations! There was a clear sense of pride and accomplishment as the particular section of the perimeter each group was responsible for was completed. As so many other projects, the community as a whole organized and worked together for the common good.

On yet another visit I asked a young girl of about seven years of

age who hung out by *la cancha* if she ever got to play on the field. She smiled a timid smile indicating that she wouldn't be allowed. In fact, all I saw at that time were males playing *fútbol*.

After shortly arriving in Valle Nuevo on June 23 of this year, our delegation took a short walking tour around the community, skirting the perimeter of *la cancha*. *La cancha* now has a fence around it which impedes the animals from wandering on. Yet, that is all the fence hinders! As we sauntered around *la cancha* we saw much to my surprise and amazement, multiple groups of children, youth and older adults, both male and female, playing many different games of *beisbol* and *fútbol*. The boundaries for each game were very fluid with no one seeming to mind if another ball joined the mix. Others gathered around the field, watching and visiting with friends.

Definitely *la cancha* is the center of activity and energy in Valle Nuevo, Santa Marta. It is a demonstration plot of healing, of being a people, of new paradigms of relationship and the irrepressible spirit of hope that is able to celebrate in all circumstances. □



La cancha—everyone finds a place to play.

An Excerpt from David Janzen's Valle Nuevo Delegation Journal

6/24/2009 about 6:00 am

The sun hasn't come up yet over the mountain range to the east of Valle Nuevo, but the chickens, cows, bus horns, and people are coming alive. My body woke up this morning with lots of kinks from our ride over the mountains yesterday and a night on a flat twine-laced bed with no mattress. But a little stretching of the knees, hips, and back allow me to think beyond my pain.

I really want to savor last evening with our host family Pastor (that's his name, not a title) and Rosa with their children Yesica, Marielos, and Fatima. They hung around Jim Fitz and me with unflagging interest in our photos of family and previous trips to Valle Nuevo.

How can I describe the blessing of children climbing into your lap, of dogs falling asleep on your feet, of spontaneous questions about the community's history as triggered by photos from years ago when everyone was younger and things were different? Common suffering as refugees fleeing from terror and their faith in rebuilding a common life, have shaped them into a people. What a difference it is to visit with a people rather than just visiting people!

Earlier in the evening at Tomasa's table, the conversation flowed naturally between two topics of major interest for this people. Everyone rejoiced in the political triumphs of President Obama in the U.S. and of President Mauricio Funes, the FMLN candidate who is the new president of El Salvador. Hope for greater social justice and life for the poor is strong. It might mean their preschool gets funded. It might mean rural communities will have advocates in government rather than just enemies.



Saturday morning prayer and worship time at the Valle Nuevo chapel.

But we talked even longer about a new movement of the Holy Spirit with small and humble beginnings. Two years ago Tomasa's husband Felix was dying. Two times they had taken him to Sensuntepeque at \$60 per visit only to hear the doctor say what they knew—he was dying. Tomasa then asked some friends to meet with her on Saturday mornings to pray more strongly for Felix, and for others who were ill. The prayer group grew, sick people were brought to them and

some were healed. People from the Catholic charismatic renewal service in the capitol came out and taught them about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the baptism of the Holy Spirit fell on many. Tomasa's daughter Reina was given the gift of prophetic visions.

The Saturday morning prayer meeting moved from Tomasa's porch to the chapel at the center of the Santa Marta municipality, and more people kept coming. Sometimes the chapel was full with several hundred people. Now two years later, Tomasa's husband, the original focus of prayers, is going to work in the fields each day and, though he is not well, Tomasa says, "God keeps loaning him more life."

Normally the local Catholic priest from Villa Victoria comes out to celebrate mass here on Saturday afternoons.

But the current priest, like most before him, has not been sympathetic to the folks at Santa Marta. Tomasa said, he was upset by poor attendance at a women's retreat and for punishment, now for two months, he has not shown up on Sunday afternoon mass. This prayer meeting, with its mix of liberation theology, songs from their own history, Holy Spirit fervor and lay leadership, by default, has become the center of Santa Marta's spiritual life. □

Presentation by Rosa Ayala to the SMC Delegation:
Santa Marta, El Salvador—June 25, 2009

Para: Hermanos de buen corazón
De: Rosa Lilian Membreño Ayala

Tengan muy buenas noches todas y todos.

Son palabras muy sencillas, pero me nacen del corazón.

Gracias queridos hermanos por tener un corazón tan grande y bondadoso.

Yo soy muy joven, pero sé lo mucho que le han ayudado a nuestros padres. Yo lo único que les puedo dar es mi amistad y millones de gracias. Pero si sé que hay un Dios vivo que todo lo ve y lo sabe, y ama a todo el mundo. Será él quien dé a cada uno de ustedes la recompensa que se merecen por ser tan generosos. Bendito sea Dios porque ha permitido que hermanos como ustedes vengan hasta aquí a compartir su amor y alegría con nosotros. Yo pediré a Dios que cada día de sus vidas les bendiga y bendiga a su iglesia.

Gracias. Para mí es un gusto que hoy este día estén cenando en mi casa.

Por ser unos verdaderos hermanos y amigos, se quedaran en mi corazón para siempre.

For: Brothers & Sisters of good heart
From: Rosa Lilian Membreño Ayala

Good evening everyone.

These are simple words, but they come from my heart.



Rosa is the 19 year old daughter of Pedro and Angelina Ayala.

Thank you beloved brothers and sisters for having a heart so great and generous.

I am very young, but I understand all the help that you have given our parents. The only thing I can give you is my friendship and millions of thanks. But I know there is a living God that sees and knows everything and loves the whole world. It is He that will give each one of you the payment you deserve for being so generous. Blessed is God because He has allowed brothers and sisters such as you to come here and share your love and joy with us. I will ask God to bless each day of your lives and bless your church.

Thank you. It is a pleasure for me that today you are eating dinner in my house.

For being true brothers and friends, you will remain in my heart always.

Raising Peace

By Hope Lane

Suha Oh, a 29-year-old woman from Seoul, Korea, arrived in Chicago in February and spent five months living at the Clearing household while completing an MCC term in the United States. Her actual first name, Seung-Hwa, translates as "raising peace." Though unaware of its meaning when chosen, her parents selected a name that has proven astoundingly prophetic.

After her initial six months with MCC in Newton, Kansas doing graphic design work for various peace organizations, Suha came



Suha and her Clearing housemates.

to Evanston to work on a promotional video for Christian Peacemaker Teams. Since she graduated from university, Suha has been working for a Korean peace organization called The Frontiers, which has communities in conflict areas such as Pakistan, Indonesia, and East Timor. Members of Frontiers live together in a single building and share an intensive community life similar to households at Reba. Frontiers, a sister organization to CPT, was founded by a

Korean man who was influenced by Mennonite theology while studying in Germany.

Suha's involvement in peace-making began in college after seeing a documentary about the civil war in East Timor as it struggled for independence from Indonesia. She was moved by what she saw and prayed to be sent there. That summer, she volunteered in East Timor for a month with The Frontiers. Later, she spent a year in Indonesia helping Timorese ex-militia create video letters of repentance for crimes they committed against their own countrymen during the war. These apologies gave villagers the opportunity to forgive the men and welcome them home.

The deeper root of Suha's desire for peace can be traced back to her childhood. During the Korean War, her grandfather lost a leg and continued to suffer from war-related nightmares for years after. Though the influence of the war on her parents was indirect, she saw it become manifest as conflict in her home. As her parents fought, Suha prayed that peace would reign, if only for that one day. Finally, when she was sixteen, her parents divorced. Suha became deeply involved in the

church, which was a source of comfort and healing. She attributes her interest in the peace movement to an early longing for a peaceful home, and sees a strong connection between peace on the personal, domestic level and in the public, international sphere.

After five years of work with The Frontiers, Suha came to the United States with the MCC exchange program in order to learn about U.S. lifestyle and culture. At home, Suha attended many demonstrations and protests against Korean government policy that supported the U.S. Army. She'd accumulated a lot of anti-U.S. sentiment, particularly toward the government. Because she knows the value of breaking stereotypes and dissolving hatred, Suha decided she should come to the U.S. to see for herself whether what she heard and believed about the country was true.

Suha reports having received wonderful hospitality from the Fellowship and experiencing healing during her stay. She sees SMC as a sign of hope; it is evidence of God working through people who want to follow Jesus' alternative way. □

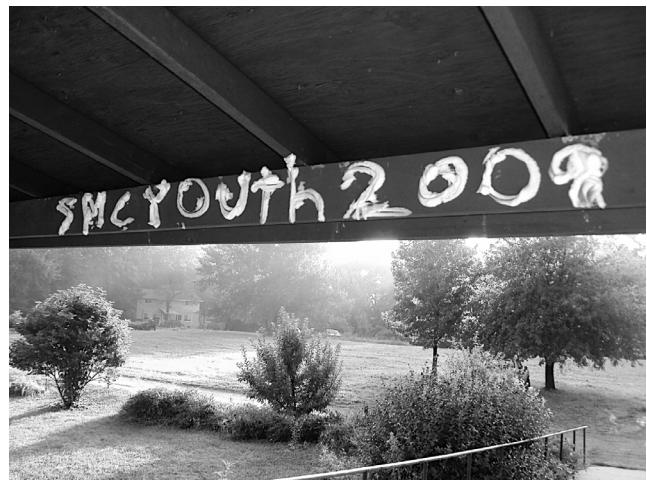


Suha and Joe at the Sonshine Group.

SMC Potluck: The Stories that Filled Our Summer

Plow Creek Running out of Food:
Teens Ate Worms to Survive
Strenuous Week
By Barbara Bridgewater

Eating worms?
Shaving cream and applesauce in your
sleeping bag? Bee stings and sunburn?
Cooking, Cleaning, and Creek wading?



Note: Worm eating is a tradition passed down from former generations of SMC youth. "Why," you ask? We say, "Why not?"

Plow Creek was willing to host a week of fun in the sun for a group of SMC teens in mid-July to play, pray and talk together. Barbara Bridgewater, Hannah Bridgewater, and Ellie Alexander traveled 19 hours to Plow Creek, stopping in Kansas City both ways; while Z (Hannah Zazvorka) and Antonia Guatemala came from Church of the Sojourners. Carissa, Martin, Phillip, Samuel, and Micky from Plow Creek didn't have to travel far.



Barbara Bridgewater and SMC youth posing for a picture.



Ellie, Hannah, and Antonia enjoying some girl time.

We all enjoyed our week together, and the weather was PERFECT (warmer for the Californians and cooler for the Texans). Our schedule was just right with breakfast and prayer in the mornings followed by a work project, helping Plow Creek get better internet access. We still had plenty of time left for lunch and naps (who would have thought our kiddos who HATED naps now volunteer for them!). We also squeezed in some fun time in the afternoon before supper and evening activities.

Barbara and Z had a hard time keeping up with the active teens! David Stahnke was a wonderful Plow Creek host organizing play time and meals all week! The teens organized an email list with each other and have already begun discussing next summer's teen event. If any other SMC teens who didn't make the event want to jump on our email list, contact Barbara @ bpbridgeh2o@hotmail.com.



SMC youth working hard at Plow Creek.

SMC Potluck: The Stories that Filled Our Summer

Reba Evanston News

By Heather Clark

We've been swaying to a lively South African tune from *Sing the Journey* during a number of our worship times: "Hamba nathi mkululu wethu ...come walk with us, the journey is long..." This summer's been a season of many comings and goings, and we give thanks for "traveling mercies" for those of us who've been on the road. Here's a sampling of recent journeys:

In late May, Julius Belser traveled with a small delegation from Reba Place Church to Angola, where the government has contributed ten square miles of land for the construction of a university. While there, he took part in a 125th anniversary celebration for the United Church of Christ in that country and had the pleasure of spending time with the family of Guerra Freitas, an Angolan brother who resettled in the Reba neighborhood some years ago. Julius has partnered with Guerra in numerous ways over the years to lend aid to many in Angola.

Andy and Kristin Ross journeyed to Kenya, where they spent several weeks sharing the tools for prayer for emotional healing pre-

sented last fall by Carl and Charlotte Lehman. They worked and worshipped (exuberantly!) with three thousand children in six different schools. The trip also gave Kristin the chance to become acquainted with the places where Andy grew up and to meet significant people from his life there.

Adam, Stephanie, and Seth Vaughan recently spent time in New York visiting the Woodcrest Community (part of Church Communities International, formerly known as the Bruderhof). Their friendship with a young married couple there is providing wonderful opportunities for sharing across community lines. Their stay coincided with a significant time of confession and repentance within the community there. They returned to remind us of the importance of reconciliation in our journey together.

Allan Howe and David Janzen joined others at the Simple Way's annual Family Reunion, a gathering of representatives of the Simple Way and other young Christian communities, held this year in rural eastern Tennessee. David and Analí Gatlin oriented the group to how Shalom Mission Communities operates. The group affirmed a proposal that David visit twelve of these newer



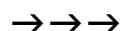
Karima and the silver salmon she caught in the North River outside of Unalakleet, Alaska.

communities in 2010, helping them review and troubleshoot and learning from them as well.

We've been blessed by the Wednesday arrivals of Paul Munn driving the CSA truck. Aside from some strawberries and garlic scapes escaping from the back of the truck as it traveled along the highway one week, fresh Plow Creek produce has made it safely to many of our tables.

A total of five young men from various parts of the country showed up for one of two intensive two-week volunteer opportunities, getting acquainted with life in the community through service, meals in various homes, and discussion sessions with RPF members. Six new apprentices (three men and three women) will arrive late in August for a more extended time of participating in life here.

Those of us who've made the short trip up into Wisconsin to spend time at our recently rebuilt Emmanuel Lodge have appreciated the vision, resources, and hard work which



Andy and Kristin with a group of Kenyan school children.

have made this lovely place of respite available. We're so happy that Daniel and Camille (Hobbes) Walker have driven a covered wagon (i.e., moving truck) up from Oklahoma to homestead with us. And we'll be glad to see Chico and Tatiana soon to hear the latest about their life in Ford Heights, where daily walks about the neighborhood can lead them through some dangerous territory.

News from Sojourners

By Katie Piché

Every summer we designate one week to be "Kid's Week"- a week when we celebrate the kids. The kids, accompanied by a few adults, take a trip out of the city. They use this time to play things like photo tag and swim in the nearest body of water. But this time is also used to engage God through stories and art. This year the focus was forgiveness. The kid's listened to Pinocchio on CD as they traveled to Lake Tahoe and looked deep into the story of the prodigal son. They reflected on this story through things like writing poetry, eating from a trough, and a modern day reenactment of "The Prodigal Daughter." At the end of the week the kid's watched a movie about a friendship that becomes broken

Practicing member Karima Walker just returned from a two-week trip to Alaska, reconnecting with many folks at a Covenant Church camp there. Ask her about her thrilling plane ride through the mountains and her latest fish stories!

Receiving a visit from a half-sister who's lived in France for the past 25 years has reminded me (Heather) of the spiritual prepara-

and then redeemed. I think that 4 year old John David Lockie caught on to something about forgiveness and unconditional love that week. I overheard him volunteer to his mom that his favorite part of the movie was when the main character said "You're my friend forever no matter what you do."

We have faced hard things this summer, but we still celebrate and have much to be thankful for. We welcomed Caedmon Lee Toney, new son to Matt and Mary Toney, into this bright world on June 24th. Caedmon arrived at a healthy 6 lbs 15oz and measuring 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches even with the hole in

tion involved in being both a host and a guest. Many of us could swap stories on how the Lord has worked with us around that, leading us gently along, helping us to open our hearts to the stranger. So often His help comes through our brothers and sisters:

"We are pilgrims on a journey, we are travelers on the road,
We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load."



Antonia and Hannah travel to Plow Creek for the SMC youth week.

his heart. At this time we seek your prayers for Caedmon as he has been diagnosed with congestive heart failure. He is now recovering from the surgery he had to fix the hole in his heart. We also ask prayer for Matt and Mary as they care for Caedmon.

We also ask for prayer for other medical situations in our midst. Rick DiMicco has a malignant tumor in his intestines and is scheduled for surgery in September or October. It doesn't seem to be spreading and the doctors think that it can be entirely removed with surgery. We also ask for continued prayer as Christi Beutler is on chemotherapy in the form of a pill to treat the cancer in her throat. We give thanks for the friendship that Christi has developed with Edith Bernard. It is



Sojourners on the Covenanted Members Retreat.

SMC Potluck: The Stories that Filled Our Summer

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beautiful to see the ways that Edith cares for Christi in things that are as simple as doing her laundry. It is also beautiful to see the ways that Christi can encourage Edith and lift her spirit.

In the middle of August we moved 8 adults and one baby into our housing, in spite of the fact that our remodel won't be complete until the end of September. Somehow by the provision of God we are stretching our space and extending grace to each other in tight spaces. We are welcoming 6 new apprentices and Jon and IvaJo Pedersen into our midst. Jon and IvaJo lived with us several years ago and have returned with a sense of calling to our life together and will be novice members.

Nate Pequette and Hannah Zazvorka have become novice members, wanting to explore the long term commitment of covenanting. We are also excited that Jenny Prosa who has been living with us for the past four years has made the decision to be a covenanted member.

This July Tim Otto and Dale and

(Continued from page 3)

The intentional households have both novices (disciples) and leaders who have taken on a vocation of disciple-making. These houses in many ways are the core of what is happening with The Third Way. My wife and I live in one of the intentional households as leaders and are thrilled to see what grows throughout this year. In addition to the intentional households, many have sacrificed their individuality and comfort by moving into the neighborhood and joining us in what we are doing, or better said, in what God is doing.

Debbie Gish were able to go to the Ekklesia Project. They had the opportunity to be involved in leading some discussions on shared finances. They returned to us encouraged by the whole conference.

Tim and Jenny Lockie will be staying at Sojourners after a period of discerning a possible call to Venezuela. Lots of good things came from the process and we are grateful to have them stay with us. □



Sojo kids eating ice cream out of a pig trough after the Prodigal Son Study.

There are many intentional neighbors who have chosen to live in proximity and share their lives with each other and interact with the intentional households. Also, many of us participate in a Relational Tithe, one way that we seek to eradicate need and poverty in our community. R.T. continues to bless those in our community and those in our neighborhood who are struggling economically. And lastly, The Third Way is close to owning its first local business, a coffee shop right next to both of the intentional households.

Poems written during kid's week:

By Leo Hare

The DAD was nice
The son was mean
The frinds was mean
The son was happy
The son was poor
The famer has pigs
The pigs was slopy
The son was hungry and tierd
The fathers servants was full and clean
The DAD was relly relly happy
The Brother was selfish
The son was worried
The son was happy
The End

By Steven Guatemala

PiGSTY
Stinky stinky pigsty foolish pigs
Snuffle snuffle short snuffle
short snort short
Sorry sorry prodigal sad and mad
eating slop like a foolish man
slop slop mud mud smelly smelly mud
Sorry sorry father take me home

Our story is that of a seed or a garden; a tale of when to plant and how to plant. It is a saga of patience and discernment, of listening to the Spirit and nurturing what has been put into the ground. We understand God is a God of newness, and we seek to take part in that newness by living in intentional community. We desire to be a light in a dark place, a city on a hill, in a humble, peaceful fashion, recognizing we need each other on this long journey on a very narrow road. We look forward to growing and sharing mission together while looking to the creative God of grace and loving-kindness. □

Growth at Hope

Fellowship

By Gabriela Renée Gatlin

We asked for your prayers in our last news before plunging into what has been the 4th hottest summer on record, and here we are in September looking back and trying to take stock of it all. Perhaps, a record of the comings and goings is the first step towards making sense.

In late May, Justin Bullock and Jessica Studinka were married in Cameron Park with friends and family celebrating. They now live a couple blocks from the Meeting House and are preparing to begin an internship at the World Hunger Relief Farm.

In June, Jim and Ría Snyder moved to Kansas to live in Schowalter Villa in Hesston, KS so that Jim could receive more nursing care as his Parkinson's progresses. It was a sad leave-taking, but we are glad to know that both Jim and Ría are receiving the care that they need. Emily Rowe-Miller returned for the summer after spending the spring semester in Peru through



Luis and his mother host the Hope Fellowship guests in Oaxaca.

the Goshen College SST program. Analí Gatlin returned to our community after living the last two years at Reba Place. She and Gabriela share an apartment near the Meeting House, and Analí is slowly learning to manage a kitchen for two after coordinating the kitchen in the Clearing household of 15+ adults.

In July and August, several of us went south. Philip Bridgewater, Gwendolyn Matias-Ryan, Nancy, Analí and Gabriela Gatlin participated in the Valle Nuevo delegation. Luis, Paloma, Gwendolyn and Gerson spent the summer at home in Oaxaca, Mexico, as

they usually do, but this year they went with the desire to dream and plan for the creation of a Christian community or center in Oaxaca. J.B. and Bethany Smith, Joe Gatlin, and Justin Clark visited Luis Matias and family in Oaxaca for a few days at the end of the summer.

Others of us went north. Barbara and Hannah Bridgewater and Ellie Boardman-Alexander traveled to Plow Creek to spend a week with other SMC youth. They appreciated Plow Creek's hospitality, and Barbara enjoyed trying on sweaters in the middle of the summer!

Throughout the summer months, each Sunday morning worship has drawn a large number of visitors to the Meeting House. On many Sundays there have been close to 70 people worshiping and eating in our little house.

Over the course of the summer, we have also welcomed Larry Egly and Allan DeLaurell into the membership. In both cases, it was surprising to realize that Larry and Allan were not already members. It was about time!

The summer is drawing to a close, but the heat continues.



Hope Fellowship and friends celebrate Luz's graduation from Waco High.

(Continued from Page 5)

Allan DeLaurell will be spending a few months at a monastic community where he seeks time for quiet and contemplation.

Luz Rueda is a freshman at Baylor and I moved so far away to a dorm on campus! Our pastoral selection process is proceeding with an extended listening time for each member of the church.

Even before this summer, we had a sense that God might be talking to us about growth. So naturally, we created an ad hoc committee to process

“growth.” The

Growth Committee

has recently facilitated a couple meetings of the membership in which we have listened to all of our

many readings on growth in the Hope Fellowship community, and we have brainstormed a variety of responses. We are seeking God’s direction in responding to our physical growth.



Mennonites on a super slide at Emily and Anal's welcome back party.

At the same time, the membership has affirmed that essential elements of our vision as a body are an understanding of church as community and an understanding of church as an expression of God’s desire for diversity. We know we are called to grow deep, diverse and interlaced. Is God also asking us to grow wider? And

what will we do in the meantime if our little Meeting House won’t grow wider? □

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