

# SMC Youth Week

Hope Fellowship, Waco, TX

Lock-in! July 2012 Games!

Fun at the Farm!

Food! Swimming!

Junior and Senior High Youth from SMC and related communities are invited the last week in July.

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## A Word on Remembering

Church of the Sojourners' 25th Anniversary Celebration

October 22, 2011

By Debbie Gish

It seems good and right to me that this anniversary celebration has been filled with shared meals. So much of our life together has taken place around the breaking of bread. Back in the day, even before I came on the scene, the Bernards, the Poppingas and the Reeds chose to share a Sunday evening meal, as they came together to worship and support each other. From there the weekly tradition has continued, moving from sitting cross-legged on the floor of the Potrero living room to plates on laps in the Florida worship space, always bookending the evening with the bread and the wine. Extending hospitality to

each other and to guests has happened week in and week out for these past 25 years at our household dinner tables and as we've gathered as a body each week for worship. I believe that breaking bread in our homes has been central to our life together and has turned stranger into friend and has turned housemates into family.

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Something Jack Bernard would often say was, "I have a very good forgetter." I have one of those, too. Now for all its flaws, having a good forgetter has its benefits. Like when my girls want to read the same stories over and over again. I'm less inclined than most to say, "That one again?!" Or when we go camping year after year to the same spot in the Sierras, I continue to be overwhelmed by the beauty of the place as if encountering it for the first time.



*Celebrants at Sojourners' 25th Anniversary Celebration*

*Continued next page...*

But having a good “forgetter” has its downsides as well. Like the fact that we tend to forget the most important things, the central things. Scripture is filled with the admonition to remember, to remember on purpose, to remember so as not to forget. Part of what went wrong for the Israelites in the land of milk and honey was that they did not remember, as they were told to, that they too were slaves in Egypt. And food was part of trying to help them remember rightly, to remember the most important things. A new manna taste had been put in their mouths to wash down and overpower the memory of the supposed mouthwatering fleshpots. And they were called to celebrate the Passover, a meal filled with memory joggers like bitter herbs, unleavened bread and a roasted lamb. Remembering. Not just with our heads, but with our mouths and bellies, our heart and gut.

Remembering is much of what the church must do in order to live a faithful life. Remembering is at the heart of the Eucharist, the keeping of Sabbath, of Advent and Christmas, of Lent and Easter. Much of all our eating together centers on remembering, whether it’s the feast of the Epiphany, Caedmon’s second birthday party or showing up for dinner to remember that in Christ’s name we are family.

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Remembering is what we are doing and why we’re eating together here today. But how do we remember well? How do we tell that story honestly? One thing we’ve started doing of late when new people join us is take them on what we call a “Sojo history tour.” Laura and I usually give these tours, being with Edith, the official “old timers.” It’s kind of like a much condensed version of what we did this afternoon. We visit Steve



*Sojourners’ Caedmon*

and Laura’s house on San Carlos and talk of the immigration clinic and the church that met in their garage. We pull into the driveway of the condos on 15th Street where “The Women” first lived, where Laura recalls a stressful year of conflict and uncertainty and I remember my honeymoon year in community. We tell of growing from 10 to 30 and buying three buildings in three years. We remember both the legacies and the passing of John Alexander and of Jack Bernard.

We also recall our nearly 25 year history with Church of the Servant King which includes profound pain and joy-drenched reconciliation. We rejoice in our partnership with Shalom Mission Communities, with Reba Place, Hope Fellowship, Grace Fellowship and others who have brought us fresh perspective, humility and accountability. And as Laura and I tell some of these stories, roaming the streets of the Mission District of San Francisco, we are reminded of so many more stories of what we’ve counted as more than 230 people who have lived among us over these years and the hundreds more who have slept a night or two in our

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Bierma is still figuring out what marrying covenant member Joseph Marshak on Nov. 26 means for her own commitment level. Darryl Connolly, a new arrival in the Howes' household, is discerning where he fits. He has taken a teaching job at Reba Early Learning Center.

In fall we also welcome a new crop of 15 North Park University students to our Monday night potluck and Christian community seminar. This year Greg Clark is taking a break from teaching it in order to offer an evening class on the Zen of Archery. David Janzen and Celina Varela are serving as faculty, using as one of their course texts David's evolving manuscript Nurturing Community for Idealists, Hypocrites and Wannabe Followers of Jesus.

David Janzen and Josh McCallister traveled to Indianapolis to host a gathering of intentional Christian community leaders at Englewood Church October 12, prior to the Christian Community Development Association conference, as part of the Nurturing Communities Project. About 23 folks from 14 communities showed up. They affirmed the value of building networks of support among communities and think SMC is a good model from which to learn.

The weekend of Oct. 13-16, Reba Place Church and Reba Place Fellowship hosted the Christian Peacemaker Team's Congress and 25th anniversary celebration, with some 60 guests hosted in local RPF and RPC homes. The input, the worship, and the fellowship blessed us all.

This followed a 6-week Sunday a.m. worship series on Peace at RPC, so peace-making has been put on our hearts in a serious way. Kara Bender invited us to consider joining her in civil disobedience for an action Nov. 7 at Federal Plaza to oppose proposed cuts in HUD and other poverty funding programs. Five of us joined Kara in getting arrested--Allan Howe, David Hovde, Penny Lukens, Pete Manzella, and Gus Roddy. Others came along to the rally to give support. They were actually disappointed to get tickets instead of going to jail.

On October 22, eighteen of us were able to take part in day-long prayer retreats centered on Jesus

as our Prince of Peace offered both at Emmanuel Lodge and in Evanston. This came out of the Spiritual Practices Committee's efforts to provide resources to deepen our spiritual foundations. The Fellowship of Rogers Park also enjoyed a weekend retreat at Emmanuel Lodge Nov. 4-6. We were inspired to have more FUN together, following the good example of Church of the Sojourners (whose 25th anniversary Doug and Lisa had just attended.) The Selphs turned us loose on a scavenger hunt taking pictures with digital cameras. We projected the results and laughed a lot, especially at the 5-frame Biblical dramas.



*Pictured at the Nov. 7 demonstration are RPF'ers Kara Bender (standing center), David Hovde, ) seated middle, and Gus Roddy (seated right) blocking the intersection at Jackson and Clark as a form of civil disobedience.*

# Reba Place Fellowship News

By Sally Schreiner Younquist

We celebrate with Celina & Peter Varela the birth of Mateo Velthuizen Varela, at 1:12 A.M., October 20. He weighed 6 lbs. 15 oz. Celina and Peter are very thankful. Mateo is healthy and beautiful. They are grateful for everyone's prayers.

We have enjoyed having the pre-schoolers involved in recent community gatherings, blowing instruments to usher in Rosh Hashanah in September and decorating a Sukkah (booth) and parading into it with lit candles for our Sukkot worship in October. Vera Stoehr, one of our senior members, explained the meaning of this holiday from her rich Hebrew-Christian heritage and her experience living in Jerusalem. On October 28 we threw a kid-friendly All Saints potluck & story-telling time about our favorite saints around a



*Mateo Velthuizen Varela, born October 20*

bonfire. Josh McCallister organized a Day of the Dead art display to go along with it.

Early fall is the time folks among us discern what level of commitment they would like to

pursue with us this year. Tiffany Udoh and Phillip Kelley have come among us as 9-month apprentices. Finding jobs is not easy these days and we welcome your prayers that they can find more work. Ben Anderson is a new practicing member, and Susie Kauffman, Mike Mirza, Lydia Warr and David Wetzell. Kara Bender, Jim Fitz, Judy Friberg, Chizu and David Lottich, Susan McClelland, and Dillon and Irene Ross will continue with us at the practicing member level. New novices include Megan Hering, Pete Manzella, Celina and Peter Varela, and Carol Youngquist. Eric and Katie Dahlaw, Helen and Ric Hudgens, and Camille and Dan Walker are continuing novices. Gus Roddy will be joining as a covenant member soon. Novice Kate



*The Nurturing Communities Project gathered leaders from 14 intentional communities together Oct. 12 at Englewood Christian Church in Indianapolis*

## *Shalom Connections*

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midst. We recall comings and goings, weddings and funerals, births and adoptions. And to tell the story honestly we remember sorrow and pain, failure and brokenness. But to further tell the story honestly, we know that God has been among us.

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One of our constant disclaimers when we give the tour is that this isn't just our story, meaning that of Laura, Edith and I, but it's the collective and individual story of each and all who have lived among us. This story would be told and undoubtedly is told quite differently by others and by each of you as you remember and retell your story as it intersects with the "our story" that has made us a people. What is highlighted, what is forgotten, where grace was encountered, where hurt remains, all of these vary widely with each telling.

Which is why I've come to realize that this event is more than the anniversary of the beginning of the church formerly known as La Iglesia de los Extranjeros. This is a family reunion of the family called Church of the Sojourners. This is the family reunion of a family that has grown and matured, that has broken and mended, that has fallen and continues to walk and work and gather gladly only by God's grace.

A song we often sang as we gathered on the floor of the Potrero living room was Hebrews 12. It begins, "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us..." The writer of Hebrews has just finished a long list of those who had gone before, who did not lose heart even when they didn't see the fruit of their labor. He's calling them to

remember. He's calling the church to remember. To look around. To notice the cloud of witnesses throughout history, present in their midst. Well, listening to the stories told today and looking around this room now, we have a cloud of witnesses. I see the faces of those who have loved well, have loved in costly ways, who have loved through thick and thin, both here and elsewhere. I recall story after story after story. Some have been told over and over again throughout the years. How many of you have heard the one about John Bauer and Tim Otto hanging

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*Remembering. Not just  
with our heads, but with  
our mouths and bellies,  
our heart and gut.*

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overnight on the side of Half Dome? And Jesus and Eloisa, many have heard their story, but few have had the joy of meeting them. Looking around, I remember times of struggle, of miracle, of wonder and of sorrow. And in between, the mundane but beautiful stuff that makes up a life lived together in community. And you all, together with those who are not with us today in this room, have made up the history, the story, the witness that is Church of the Sojourners.

Eugene Peterson wrote a kind of paraphrase of the bible which he entitled the Book of God. A good title, the bible as the book of God, the story of God. But the story of God cannot and is not

*Continued next page...*

told without a myriad of human characters. It's not just a God story, it's a "we" story, it's a story of God encountering his people and his people encountering God. So to tell the God story well and honestly, it includes the human story. And to tell the human story well and honestly, it must include God.

Similarly the story of Sojourners would not even be a story without God, but I have to say God's story among us would not be the same without each and all of you. You have each shaped who we are today and I imagine that however long or short your intersection with Sojourners was or is, you have been shaped in some way by God at work here. We are indebted to each other. I know that I'm indebted to all of you. My hope and my prayer is that our mutual encounter in this life has led each of us to greater dependence and faithfulness to the One who made it all possible in the first place.

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Four original members of Sojourners

As many of you know, a practice we have had for many, many years now is to ask during our worship service "how have you seen God at work this week?" And that question is asked very specifically – "how have you seen God at work in each other this week?" How have you encountered Christ in your brother or sister this week? Some

find this to be a funny or off-putting practice, kind of like a mutual affirmation exercise. But I have found it profoundly encouraging, profoundly reorienting. Testimony time with a different twist – testifying to the work of God in the other guy. It's an exercise in noticing, an exercise in remembering. As we all know, living together can be beautiful, but it can also be quite the daily challenge, whether it's with one other person or with many. Not much is hidden when you're sharing life together under the same roof. It's easy to see the flaws. Sometimes the beauty of what is there takes some mining for and sometimes we just take it for granted. Sometimes, thankfully, it jumps out at you beautifully without warning. Either way, it does our soul and the souls of others good to proclaim the goodness of God we see in them, to remember and remind each other that God has been and continues to be at work.

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I want to dust off that Hebrews 12 song that we sang so often back in the day. Let's thank the One who has brought us all back together and

within our church, the Waco Time Exchange provides a way for people to contribute resources and use resources in the wider community.

During the season of advent, we are gathering jointly for worship and teaching on Sunday mornings, taking leaving of an old structure and anticipating new life and new blessings in an unfolding structure that awaits us. ☞

Right: Casa Rosada/The Pink House, a house of hospitality, and an experiment in common ownership for a few members of Hope



## Sojourners News...

by Katie Rivers

The News in any given context is often presented in terms of what has happened. Well what about what has not happened? Isn't it time that we heard about that for a moment?

For example, Edith at age "in her sixties" did not run a marathon; she did however tend to the garden in the back yard with exuberance. The garden looks lovely. And Leo did not get in trouble for 20 straight days in a row at school. And furthermore, to my knowledge, not a single sojourner has taken a vow to cease using all doorways and enter any given house via the window. I will say that I did see Ben do the "spider shimmy" up the outer wall of one of our houses in an effort to attempt entry from a window.

OK, enough with the "what-has-not-happened shenanigans." Actually a lot has happened. Let's take the Sojourner 25th anniversary celebration for example. That happened, and some of you were here with us.

News from the Flesh: Jeff had nerve surgery on

his toe. Please pray that it heals well and that he will not need any further procedures done. Christi continues to be brave through her struggle with cancer. Please pray for her as she makes more decisions about treatment. Please pray for her peace.

Caedmon, son of Matt and Mary, continues to have a healthy heart. Two years ago, the little guy came through two major heart surgeries. We are truly grateful.

Sadly, it must be said that Dan and Katie Piché are no longer married. Katie continues to be involved at Sojourners and has started going by the name Katie Rivers. Dan has moved on. Please pray for all involved. ☞



Dancing at the Sojo 25th Celebration



Nate Pequette and Caedmon Toney Hang Out

# News From Hope Fellowship

By Gabriela Gatlin

We have good news to share! After more than two years of listening, discussion, research and prayer as to how we should receive the gift of new growth, we made a decision. We have decided to adapt the social structure of our congregation (not the building) to encourage the growth of community, intimacy, and accountability while at the same time welcoming the new people that God is bringing our way. The members of Hope Fellowship met in October and approved through consensus a plan to continue growing as a church through clusters of covenant groups.

Covenant groups of six to eight people will continue to meet on Wednesday evenings, and on Sunday mornings clusters of two covenant groups each will worship in homes near the Meeting House where all of the children and youth will continue to meet for a joint Sunday school. Once a month on a Sunday evening we will gather as a whole congregation for a time of worship. These are the broad brushstrokes of our decision, and in the coming new year, we'll begin to work out the details.

In the meantime, we continue growing in shared life. Many parents are developing childcare swaps. Others in the church have organized meal shares. Shannon Malburg moved into



*Hope Fellowship hosted a training day for visiting immigrants in detention centers*

the downstairs of Casa Rosada and regularly throws big parties for us. Gabriela and Analí Gatlin bought a house on the same block as Casa Rosada. Lucas and Sara Land and their children returned from Bolivia. After staying with the Rowe-Millers for a couple months, they will move into the apartment that Gabriela and Analí vacate.

The Mustard Seed Fund is now in operation. Mustard Seed is a revolving 0% loan fund designed by several folks within the church who want to provide a unique opportunity to financial invest in each other. The loan fund hopes to support short term educational goals, efforts to get out of high interest debt, transportation needs and microenterprises.

We find ways to share life

with our neighbors as well. Earlier this fall Hope Fellowship hosted a training day for visitations to immigrants in detention centers. The training was led by organizers from Austin and attended by folks from Hope Fellowship as well as members of Waco DREAM Act and other friends in Waco. We now hope to begin visiting women detained at the Jack Harwell detention center here in Waco.

Some individuals in the church have collaborated with others in the Waco community to establish the Waco Time Exchange. A time exchange is an informal institution that allows people to bank and trade their skills equitably. Although this exchange of time and skill sets already happens organically



*Brunch group at Sojo 25th Celebration*

has sustained this community, this family through so much over these past 25 years. Let's acknowledge the cloud of witnesses we have been given throughout history and in our midst. And then, let's raise a glass to how we have seen God at work, how we have shaped each other's lives, have encountered Christ because of each other's faithfulness, raise a glass to the ways God has sustained us and has sustained this little and not so little community called Church of the Sojourners.

Listen to these words that have come to be called "The Prayer of Oscar Romero":

*It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view.*

*The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is beyond our vision.*

*We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.*

*Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.*

*No statement says all that could be said.*

*No prayer fully expresses our faith.*

*No confession brings perfection.*

*No pastoral visit brings wholeness.*

*No programme accomplishes the church's mission.*

*No set of goals and objectives includes everything*

*This is what we are about:*

*We plant seeds that one day will grow.*

*We water seeds already planted,*

*knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities.*

*We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.*

*This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.*

*It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,*

*an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.*

*We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.*

*We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs.*

*We are prophets of a future not our own.*

And lastly in the words of Hebrews 12, let's not forget what all this remembering is really about, what any cloud of witnesses including this one should provoke in us:

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God."

Amen. ☞

# What it means to be . . . SMC YOUTH!

By Barbara Bridgewater

- “Shalom means hello.”
- “It’s more than just the absence of war.”
- “It’s a greeting that means both peace and hello.”
- “Shalom means caring.”
- “I’m not sure what ‘Shalom’ means.”

These were all responses from teens in different SMC communities when I asked them what “Shalom” means to them as part of Shalom Mission Communities.

This summer at the SMC gathering at Plow Creek, it was enjoyable to hear stories from the teens about their different communities. Over the years at these summer gatherings, we adults have observed several of the teens from other communities as they have grown up: Philip from Plow Creek, Hannah from Hope Fellowship, Ransom from Reba Place, and the Graham family

teens are all familiar, though maturing, faces. New youth joined us this year from South Bend and Thirdway, bringing new life and new questions to our conversations about what makes intentional community living. The visiting teens enjoyed “creeking” with the Plow Creek youth while exploring through conversation what it is that joins them together in different ways to live out church.

“People think we’re weird,” was one comment from a Sojourners teen describing how friends respond when they learn about the SMC communities. “Living closer together makes us live church differently, like sharing a kitchen.” Another teen commented, “We’re different because we’re more of a family. My friend’s church is a large group.” A teen from Hope Fellowship noted that our SMC communities all seem to emphasize the message of peace, not always found among their other friends.

One youth noted that it hadn’t occurred to her that some of us intentionally live close together, thinking that we just happened to be living near each other. “SMC is where people from all over the United States hang out and get deeper into God.”

What SMC means to teens in our communities in contrast to what it means to us adults is an important indication of how well we’re communicating our vision. “It’s



*Hope Fellowship siblings Evan and Ellie carving a pumpkin at a Youth Pumpkin Carving Party*

continue this process of practicing membership within Shalom Mission Communities. Seth has also been visiting with other Mennonite Churches within our local conference. Last weekend he was in Mountain Lake, MN visiting with a group who are trying to open a coffeehouse in their community as part of an effort to be more missional. This weekend Seth along with a handful of others from our community will be heading to West Union Mennonite Church where they are hosting a fundraiser for our community! While Seth is there he will be visiting with a new Hispanic Church planting group to see what ways we can be related. It is one of our goals this year that every member of the Thirdway gets an opportunity to visit at least one other community.

In other news the ceiling at Groundswell, our community coffee shop, collapsed in September. It damaged a lot of our equipment and the coffee shop has been closed down as it



*Group shot at Thirdway*

is being renovated. This has been both a stressful time for our community and a hopeful time. The Hamline-Midway neighborhood has been very supportive and eager for the coffee shop to re-open. Our official grand re-opening will be on Saturday Nov. 19th - there will be activities for kids, games, live music and special deals - we are advertising around the neighborhood and at nearby

Hamline University hoping for a great turn out!

And finally, congrats are due to Matthew and Brooke Rody who have recently gotten married up on the Northshore! They are a newer addition to our community, and we are thrilled to be part of their new life together as a married couple. Please continue to pray for us.

Peace. ☞



*snapshots from life at Reba Place Fellowship*



# News from Thirdway

By Jessie James

For the last couple months as Fall colors have begun to fade here in Minnesota, the Thirdway Community has been faced with a lot of ups and downs.

I want to start with sharing some of our more positive progress. As most of you know Natalie Potts has stepped down from the position of Thirdway coordinator as she is feeling lead in different directions. My name is Jessie James, and with the help of Natalie and Seth I am excited to be taking over the role of coordinator of Thirdway community.

I am eager to continue building relationships with all of you folks as we walk together in Christ. Let me tell you a little bit about myself. I am married to Justin James and we have a beautiful 10 month old baby girl named Zola June. We live in the Selby Dale neighborhood in a four-plex that recently has become occupied by Thirdway folks.

My husband and I place great value on community and doing life together with others - we believe it takes a village to raise a child and we are so glad we have this village within Thirdway! Justin and I met while studying in New Brunswick, Canada at a small University called St. Stephen's University. After I graduated with a degree in History and Literature, my husband and I spent a year teaching ESL in South Korea. We share a common passion for



*Thirdway's Jessie James and family*

people: we want to serve those around us, be a part of the movement of Christ, and savor the simple parts of everyday life together. We have found a real home in Thirdway.

The weekend of September 30th through October 2 was our annual fall retreat. It was held this year at a YMCA camp Icaghowan. We had lovely fall weather and a great turn out from our community. We spent the days going for walks, playing group games together, eating meals, roasting marshmallows around open fires, and enjoying a break with the people we care about. We had three session times. In one session we reflected back on all the great things that we had done together in the previous year, and we were amazed as we realized it truly was a year of

hope and healing. Then in another session we shared with each other our hopes and dreams for the next year. It was an encouraging weekend together and renewed our confidence in and vision for our community.

We were excited to finally get our covenant groups up and running following the Fall retreat! Although our community is very small there was a mutual need and desire for covenant groups. We now have five covenant groups with 6-8 people in each of them and they are going well. These groups are a place for us to share more intimately in each other's lives and hold each other accountable in our walks with Christ and within Thirdway.

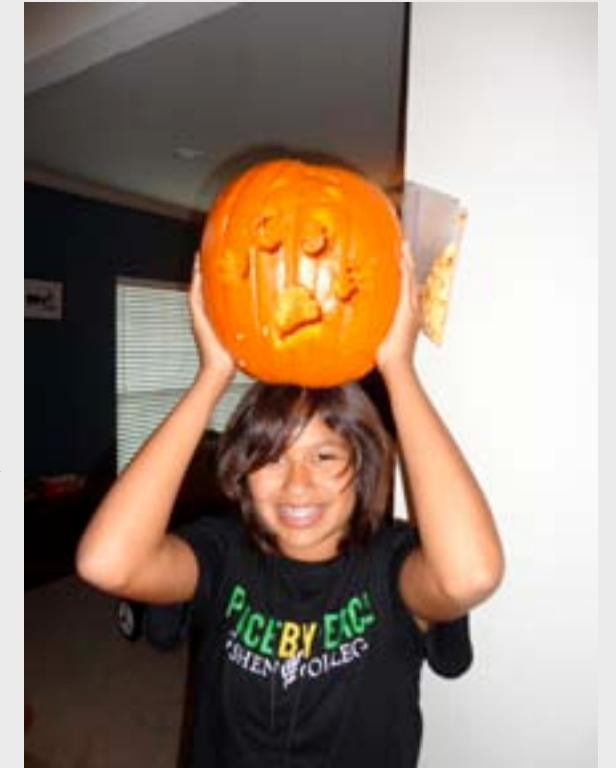
As I write, there is a group from Thirdway that is visiting Reba Place Fellowship as we

important to be in each other's lives as much as possible." The teens all felt SMC relationships were important, and that they could only be maintained by getting together periodically. "We need to take part in the mission of SMC!"

In addition to our summer gatherings with the whole SMC family, we've had several specific youth gatherings in the last 3 years, one in Plow Creek and one in San Francisco. We reminded all the youth at our gathering last summer that Waco wants to invite junior and senior high youth from SMC and related communities to gather the summer of 2012 in the last week of July.

Just a few of the activities that Hannah and others from Hope Fellowship are planning for the SMC teen gathering in July are a lock-in, serving at the World Hunger Relief Farm, swimming, games, and eating a lot!

If you want some more information about the Waco teen week this coming summer, feel free to email Hannah at [twizzler247@gmail.com](mailto:twizzler247@gmail.com) or Barbara at [bpbridgeh2o@hotmail.com](mailto:bpbridgeh2o@hotmail.com). ✉



*Miranda of Hope Fellowship at the Pumpkin Carving party*

## SMC Youth Week

Hope Fellowship, Waco, TX

Lock-in! July 2012 Games!

Food! Swimming!

Fun at the Farm!

Junior and Senior High youth from SMC  
and related communities are invited the last week in July

# The Joy of the Right Work

By Rich Foss, Plow Creek Fellowship\*

“Jim, you are not stuck being the farm manager,” I said. I will never forget the look of relief and hope that slowly spread across his face.

When we had this conversation in the fall of 2003 Jim Fitz had been one of Plow Creek Fellowship’s farmers for nearly 20 years. For the last few he had been the farm manager.

As an intentional Christian community, Plow Creek Fellowship has operated several businesses in our forty year history. Early on we had a pole barn building business. We also had a home building and remodeling business for many years.

Currently we have two businesses—Plow Creek Farm that grows and markets fruits and vegetables and Plow Creek Bakery.

In our businesses we face the same challenges as any business—getting the right managers and workers into each position and making sure that we provide products and services that customers love.

Sometimes we have people in the right positions and sometime not. That was the case with Jim. Although he had strengths in growing and marketing vegetables, when he began to manage the whole operation it soon became apparent that he found it challenging. As one of the elders of PCF, I began to coach him.



*Tim Horning and Jo Begly trying to catch autumn leaves as they fall. Harder than it looks!*

Despite my regular support, and his passion for farming, Jim struggled with managing and leading.

Jim was in his late 50’s when I encouraged him to think of other options for work besides managing the farm. Within a very short time, he came back to me and said that he would like to go into peacemaking.

I wondered how his

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*Far from struggling to speak, suddenly the words flowed freely.*

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peacemaking would go because Jim is shy and he struggled when he gave his farm management reports to the PCF members meeting. But I had also glimpsed a passion in him of relating to people from Spanish-speaking countries.

I still remember the pleasant shock I felt when I saw him do one of his first peacemaking presentations. Far from struggling to speak, suddenly the words flowed freely.

We worked out a plan for the transition of farm leadership and then I coached him on how to do fundraising to underwrite his peace work. He put some of the same skills he used to market vegetables to work in raising funds and soon he launched his peace work.

In June he returned from a two-month speaking tour in Colombia where he gave over 30 presentations to churches and schools, many of whom have been caught between the guerillas, paramilitaries, and the Colombian army in a 40+-year civil war.

He reported in a recent e-mail that after a presentation in Colombia, one young woman asked him, “What keeps the guerrillas from killing you?”

“I sense it is people praying...” he responded. “Several times I have had people I have never seen before say, ‘I heard of you and have been praying for you.’ This I believe has made us more effective and provided us protection beyond our imaginations. I have been just a farmer most of my life and the Lord used me anyway.”

Moving from a career as a farmer to working as a peacemaker is an unlikely career change and yet Jim has thrived in his work of speaking to schools, colleges and churches about peace here and abroad.

One of the joys of being part of an intentional community for 34 years has been supporting and encouraging members as they make work and career changes.

Hiring someone, or moving someone into a management position, doesn’t always work out.

All I need to do is think about Jim to remember that assisting someone to move out of a position that does not fit can be a great move for the individual and the organization.

You can read more about Jim’s peacemaking work at <http://www.jimspeacemaking.org/>.

\*A version of this was published as column in the Bureau Valley Chief on July 14, 2011.

## Plow Creek News

by Heather Munn

Plow Creek Church and nearby Willow Springs Mennonite Church are making efforts to be more involved with each other, which many of us have enjoyed. Here are photos from a potluck and hymn sing we had together in the Plow Creek Common Building. We had fun! ☺



*Paul Munn and Willow Springs pastor Cal Zehr discuss.*



*Singing together. You should have heard us.*



*Sisters in laughter: Angela Adams, Erin Mucu Kindy, and Christiana Peterson.*