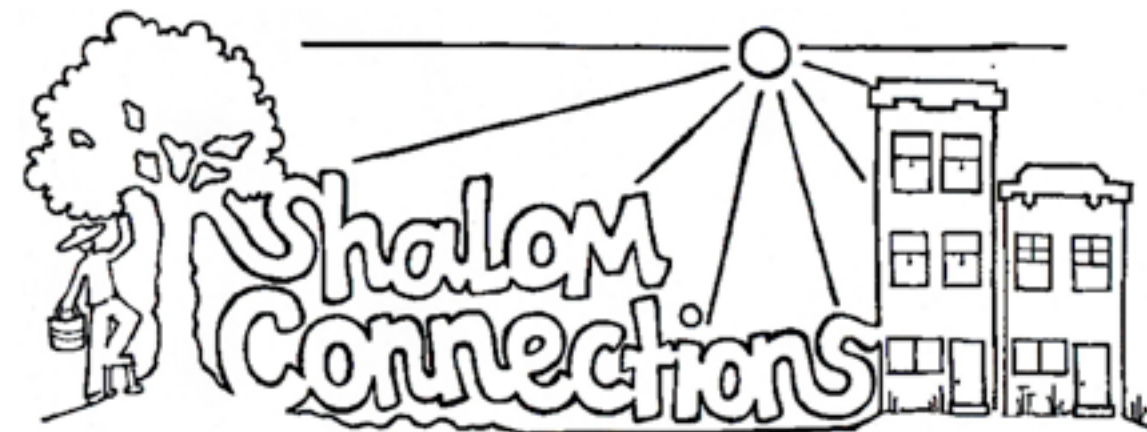


Join us for a weekend of fellowship, work, and discussion. Bring your work gloves and Bibles!

On August 3-5 the Woodcrest Bruderhof youth group is hosting a work camp with a twofold purpose: renovate an historic property on the Hudson River (Mt. St. Alphonsus) and explore the relevance of the Sermon on the Mount. Earlier this year we gathered to read and discuss these three chapters in Matthew's Gospel. The more we read the more inspired we became: Jesus' words are alive, they can guide us today. And, we felt, they demand action. We invite any young people to come participate with an open mind and heart. For more information visit mountworkcamp2012.blogspot.com.

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A Message of Reconciliation

By Angela Adams, Plow Creek Fellowship

In January 2012, after over two years of prayer, conversation, and deliberation, Plow Creek Fellowship adopted a new vision, mission, and Rule of Life. Our new vision is built upon a deep desire for God's shalom – not just peace, but wholeness, justice, and integrity; not just being witnesses of Christian community, but of Christ's reconciliation.

For inspiration for this new vision, we were led to II Corinthians 5:17-21, which says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come. All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the



Fellowship at Plow Creek during the SMC camp meeting in 2011

that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

In addition to Scripture, we looked for affirmation from our Anabaptist tradition. In "What is an Anabaptist Christian" Palmer Becker outlines the basic core values

considered the structures and spiritual practices of The Northumbria Community, Iona Abbey, and our brothers and sisters in the New Monastic movement. "When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the

Continued next page...

Poor and Yourself” (2009, Corbett and Fikkert) identifies four areas of life in great need of reconciliation; these informed our choice to focus on **reconciliation of people to God, people to others, man/woman to self, and people to creation.** These areas of reconciliation were then incorporated into our new Rule of Life and our leadership and structures.



Hope Fellowship worshippers parading around the neighborhood on Palm Sunday

Since January we have been busy! We clarified the different “ways of relating” to Plow Creek Fellowship – as Members, Novices, Neighbors, Interns, and Friends. We welcomed David Stahnke as a new Member; Jim and Meg Foxvog and Matt and Angela Adams as Novices; and Matthew and Christiana Peterson as Neighbors. We created the groundwork for Members of Plow Creek Fellowship to be “Scattered Members,” those connected to PCF by vision and Rule of Life, but living elsewhere. We have developed stewardship teams for spiritual needs, land and property management, businesses, and financial matters. We made the difficult decision to reorganize Plow Creek Farm. And we have much work yet to do.

We are deeply grateful to the Lord for His guidance and presence with us through this process. We believe God has given us this place and this new vision. Now we wait with eager anticipation to see who the Lord will send to labor with us, to see where the Lord may send those of us here. We wait with bated breath to see fruit. Dear ones, we covet your prayers. We welcome your feedback and questions. And we, as is Plow Creek custom, would love to host you for a visit. (After all, some things never change!)

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bright colors round me
wild flowers are all i see
texas spring is here

sit with darkness
make your acquaintance with it
it will never change

the rat race of life
imprisoning darkness, fear
call of christ, rat-free



Celebrating Alexina's 10th birthday at Sojourners

enfrente dem
aqua claro bonito
pas ha llegado

la oscuridad
siempre carrying
hacia mo ser

laughter and sharing
dancing, lemonade, cookies
sparkles and giggles

bed full of roses
thorned radiance, petal beauty
perennial bloom



Praying for Peter Varella as he begins a job with the park district this summer working with kids in Reba Park

grass, how do you feel
you, made to meet your maker
is it beautiful?

running in a field
free from fear and angst and greed
twirling in circles

The children of Hope Fellowship ready for the Easter Egg Hunt



Reba News continued . . .

The theme of our April 27-29 RPF retreat was: "Drawn into the Loving Embrace of God". We had times of worship, recreational activities (including canoeing), meals together (including a special Sabbath meal) and a fun night (including charades of acting out Bible verses). We heard and told stories that reminded us to write the truth about God's presence throughout life on our hearts. During Sunday's worship, we heard experiences different ones shared about how radical God's embrace is as we experience conversion and transformation.

Friday evening, May 4, Living Water Church had the group Ted and Co. perform the Peace, Pies and Prophets program. Charleta Erb and Rick Rhea serenaded us before the program began. It was great to have a chance to hear their bluegrass music. Then, we enjoyed the program: "I Want to Buy an Enemy". The program used English to do a play on words, so it was not easy for our friends for whom English is a second language to participate. However, the program made clear how making friends with people from other parts of the world makes sense, except to those controlled by fear. The program was interrupted at intervals to auction off 5-7 pies at a time. The audience bought pies like they buy quilts at auctions. We made \$3000 from the auction for Christian Peacemaker Teams.

At our May RPF meeting, we expressed appreciation to Tiffany Udoh, who was an RPF apprentice for the past nine months, for her spirit and service. Tiffany also expressed her appreciation to the members of RPF, reflected on her experience with us, and shared about her upcoming plans to visit Nigeria with her brother, where their father lives. The following week, we welcomed four members of the Cherith Brook Catholic Worker in Kansas City. They visited to reflect with people in RPF about the topic of stability in community. They shared deep conversations over meals and meetings and their musical talents at an open mic night.

Also noteworthy: we have been using small group time to share our thoughts about and experiences with LGBT issues, and listening to each other without trying to debate, convince, or confront differences among us. Many have found this to be a helpful discipline in talking over a hot issue. Finally, our finances have continued in the black for which we are very thankful. ☞

Children of Light

a collection of haiku created by the
white house worship cluster,
Hope Fellowship
April 2012

twirling in circles
my face up towards the sun
believing in truth

tears are wiped away
children frolic in the soil
jehovah giggles

the light closes night
night an envelope of fear
open light escape

Con estaciones
viene la esperanza
a lo incierto

prism breaks spectrum
colors share diversity
distinct, beautiful

amazing oak tree
giver of play and rest
thank you god for oaks

se me cortaron
miles veces antes
las alas mias

light and darkness made
soil and plan and life and death
you have made it so

blinding me with light
I can't see anything now
scales cover my eyes

continued . . .

Shalom Connections

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Plow Creek Fellowship: Mission

With God's help, Plow Creek Fellowship seeks to be a global village sharing God's message of reconciliation and practicing the peace and love of Jesus.

We believe that God is calling Plow Creek Fellowship, leaders of a Christian community, to the message of reconciliation in four primary areas:

- Reconciliation of people to God
- Reconciliation of people to Others
- Reconciliation of man/woman to Self
- Reconciliation of people to Creation

Our leaders, community life, work, and structures should support this call and mission. One particular "structure," our common Rule of Life, will help us live out our calling to share the message of reconciliation in each of the four areas of reconciliation and walk in peace and love.

Our Common Rule of Life

Reconciling with God

We do this by:

- Daily fixing our eyes on God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Provider.
- Confessing our sins and reveling in Jesus' forgiveness.
- Daily offering praise, gratitude, and supplication to our Father.
- Gathering as a community to worship God.
- Responding to the Father's grace and provision by generously sharing our time, attention, and money.
- Acknowledging our brokenness and finding our home and wholeness in the broken body of Jesus.
- Obeying the voice of Jesus.

Continued next page...

Reconciling with Others

We do this by:

- Daily loving one another with warm eyes, true words, and gentle deeds.
- Seeing the beauty and image of God in each person.
- Practicing hospitality for strangers and friends.
- Loving our critics, enemies, and people who take advantage of us.
- Refusing to participate in the military, police, and any institution that depends on the use of violence.
- Refusing to protect our property or ourselves with the use of violence because we depend on the Father for protection and redemption from evil.
- Taking the plank out of our own eye before approaching a sister or brother about their shortcomings.
- Speaking truth in love.
- Not using the police and courts to settle disputes with brothers and sisters, but using humble, open, and Jesus-led conversation.
- When we remember a brother or sister has something against us, we will leave our gift in front of the altar and go and reconcile with our brother or sister.
- Going privately to a brother or sister who sins and seeking to win them back to the Father. If that fails, we involve two or three others in trying to win them back. If that fails, we involve the whole community in trying to win them back. And if that fails, we treat them as Jesus treated publicans and tax collectors.
- Forgiving others as we desire to be forgiven by the Father.
- Befriending, building community, and seeking justice for those on the edges of our communities—separated by color, sex, disability, intelligence, ethnicity, nationality, or poverty.

- Honoring the gifts God has given to each person in the body of Christ, the beloved community.
- In community decision making, being humble when in the majority, honoring those in the minority, and trusting the Lord whether in the minority or majority on a decision.

Reconciling with Self

We do this by:

- Seeing ourselves as fearfully and wonderfully made in the womb in the image of God.
- Humbly acknowledging the great chasm our sins create between us, God, and others.
- Confessing our sins to God and others when we fall short.
- Acknowledging that loss and pain are a part of the brokenness of life.
- Grieving, knowing that “Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.”
- Knowing we are made whole by connecting with the broken body and shed blood of Jesus.
- Seeking God’s deliverance and miraculous intervention through counseling, telling our stories, laughter, prayer, medical intervention, the help of friends, and sharing one another’s burdens.
- Mourning with those who mourn and laughing with those who laugh.
- Setting boundaries for Sabbath rest, solitude, exercise, and quiet time with our Creator.
- Focusing on the mission God has given each of us.
- Setting healthy boundaries by loving the other, being honest with the other, and letting him/her be responsible for her/his own decision.
- Being responsible for our own actions and bring accountable to our Father.

Continued next page...

workdays helping with the farming. The Walkers plan to spend several days out of the week on the farm in the near future. Susie Kauffman, David Lukens, and others removed invasive species on Reba's Camp Lake property in an effort to launch sustainable ecology there. During March, Peter Varela and David Janzen built two large raised gardens in the front yard of the Reba-Sherman building where the bookkeeping office is located. A week later, another crew unloaded 8 cubic yards of topsoil into the wooden frames. Camille Walker and a bunch of gardeners put in vegetable seeds and seedlings and Camille brought the first radishes to our May meeting.

RPF members used the money saved by having simple meals weekly during Lent to purchase several apple trees that were planted in the backyards of neighbors on Chico and Tatiana's block in Ford Heights in early May. In late April, Peter Varela and Jacob Belser helped to construct a chicken coop for Tatiana and Chico's chickens, which arrived May 10.

Baby Nadia was born to Irene and Dillon and brother Saleem Ross March 2. Also in early March, the Jung family visited RPF, testing whether they should move to the neighborhood to participate in RPF. They are originally from South Korea and lived with the Bruderhof in England and New York. They had a good visit here and Derek, Heather, Heejee, and Meenkyu moved into a Reba apartment at the end of April. March 10 a group from Reba visited Plow Creek to learn more about the



Charleta Erb and Rick Rhea play before the Peace, Pies, and Prophets program

community and build relationships. A group of Calvin college students visited Reba that weekend to learn about Reba. On March 31, the 5-person Doran-Moriarty family moved from the Pratt-Ashland neighborhood in East Rogers Park to the Reba neighborhood in Evanston.

At our Monday night seminars for March, several local communities came to speak about their communities. Two Taize brothers, who came to Chicago in preparation for the Taize Pilgrimage of Trust scheduled to take place in the city May 25-28, came to a Monday night seminar to speak about Taize.

Sally Youngquist received the large majority of nominations from RPF members in our nomination process for community leader. At our April meeting we voted to affirm her as community leader for three more years. Also in April, Ivy Wagner, a graduate student in St. Paul, visited RPF for a week while taking a course in Evanston on narrative therapy.



Char Oda and Dorothy Konsterlie

Reba Place Fellowship News

by David Hovde with contributions from Sally Youngquist, Allan Howe, Nina Frantz, and Ruth Anne Friesen

The year 2012 began with three fatal shootings in the North of Howard area, a neighborhood between RPF Evanston and the Fellowship of Rogers Park, where Good News Partners is. (GNP is a ministry started by the Gatlins of Hope Fellowship, and now directed by RPF member Ronn Frantz.) In February, more shootings occurred south of Howard St. A young man recently released from jail was killed on the street just north of the Living Water Meetinghouse on Maundy Thursday afternoon. The Living Water congregation brought the water from foot washing out to the site of violence to pray and cleanse the



Chico inside the chicken coop built with the help of Peter Varela and Jacob Belser

ground after their Maundy Thursday service led by Ronn Frantz and the Fellowship of Rogers Park. April 30 several RPF members participated in the

Organization of the Northeast (ONE) Act for Peace Summit in Rogers Park. ONE coordinates the efforts of local groups addressing the root causes of violence.

A number of RPF members spend time lately working with the soil. RPF and the White Rose Catholic Worker in Rogers Park participate in a "gift economy" where RPF members help on the WRCW farm in Monee, near where Chico and Tatiana Fajardo-Heflin live, and the WRCW gives RPF vegetables. The basement at 712 Monroe will be a center for food processing and bagging. Joseph and Kate Marshak, Peat Manz, Dan and Camille Walker, and Megan Hering spent several long



Megan Hering and Joseph Marshak at the White Rose Catholic Worker farm

Reconciling with Creation

We do this by:

- Honoring God as the Creator of all, giving him glory as Creator.
- Delighting in creation as God did when He finished creation.
- Knowing that both men and women are created in the image of God.
- Being fruitful in both marriage and singleness.
- Meditating on God's love and faithfulness through abundance, variety, and fruitfulness in His creation.
- Caring for that part of creation for which God has made us responsible.
- Humbly working with, rather than abusing, creation in the place God has planted us.
- Co-creating with God through work, art, order, word, dance, worship, and music for His glory.
- Recognizing that God is Lord of people and place. ☞

Rising from the dead

"The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many." Matthew 27:52-53 (NRSV)

So you show up at the door this morning
as pretty as you please and nearly
send us all to the tomb you just emptied.

How did you expect me to react seeing you again
after all these many months - what was I
supposed to say if I could have found any words at all?

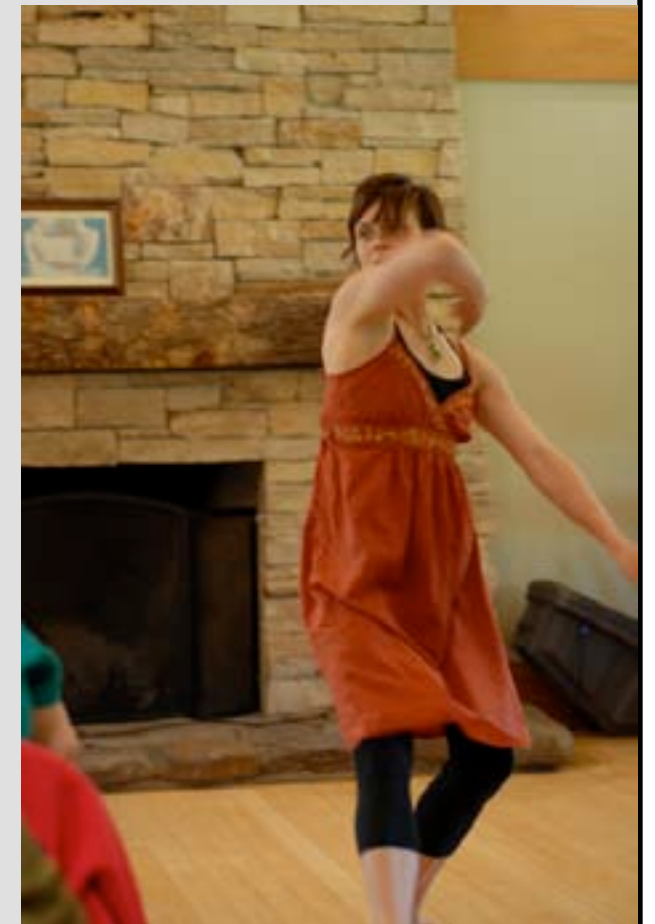
Here you come now with that resurrection grin on your
face

like there's nothing to regret in every miracle and
me still cleaning up the mess you left behind,

Tripping over my grief morning noon and night and
just trying to keep on keeping on.
What am I supposed to do with us now?

Feeling my feelings rise from the dead
I remember all we had and didn't have and now
I know I'll just have to bury you all over again
some day.

A poem by Ric Hudgens of Reba Place Fellowship



Katie Dahlaw dancing at Reba

For As Long As God Allows

*A Requiem for Christi Beutler
1948- 2012*

On Holy Saturday this year, Christi Beutler departed the present reality where the rest of us remain. Needless to say, at Sojourners, we felt the grave that night, and the hope of resurrection carried with it more than any of us could say the next morning at the sunrise service.

When Christi came to Sojourners in 2008, we did not initially know that her time with us would be the close of her life. She had already been through one "terminal" bout of cancer and was living life...again. We had the privilege of knowing Christi in her best years. It is these last years that cause me to reflect on Christi's life as a living painting of "It is Never Too Late;" transformation is always possible at any time. A life of relational struggles was reborn into a life of gratitude when Christi survived round one of



Christy Beutler at the Covenant Retreat in 2011

thyroid cancer at age 56. Life as a gift became one of her base understandings; this shift created a ripple of healing that spread from her person and into others as her ways of being human were revised.

Christi had been living with us less than a year when cancer was once again detected and it eventually became clear that Church of the Sojourners would be her last home. She covenanted with us last June living into the

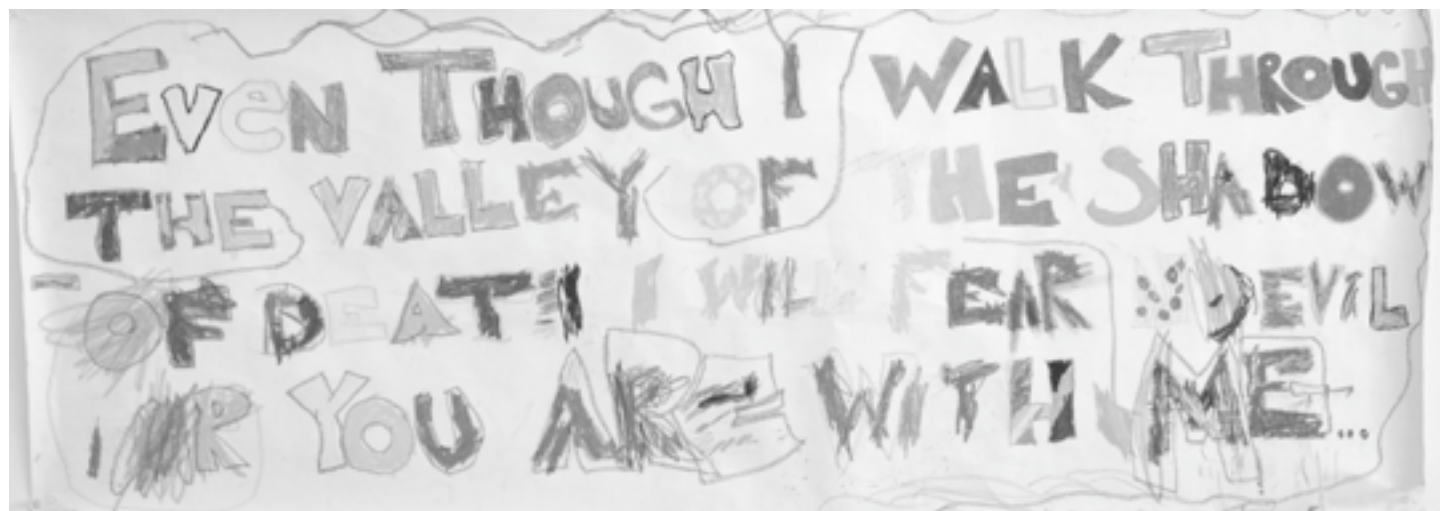
Mundt, RM3 Project, InIrie, The Blood Washed Band, Pond Pals, Ricky, Joel & Ned, Matchy Matchy, and the Ericksons. And despite the rain there was a steady flow of people who were connected to members of Thirdway or those who lived in the surrounding neighborhood and had heard about the festival. There was an excitement in the air and everyone was thrilled to be together. A few students from nearby Hamline University even reported on the event for the Hamline Oracle.

We had a handful of featured artists for the event. Some of the art was out on the walls and there were a few tables where people were selling their arts and crafts. In a side room attached to the coffee shop crafts and activities for kids and families took place with much excitement and energy. These included making your own pair of binoculars and going on a scavenger hunt around Groundswell, planting seeds and soil in egg cartons and decorating the cartons, covering pinecones with peanut butter and rolling them in birdseed to create a bird feeder, face painting, and you could even get a feather put in your hair!

All in all it was a wonderful day filled with lots of good conversations with our friends and neighbors and great music and entertainment! As owners of Groundswell we



want to be great stewards of our space and use it in ways that are beneficial for the neighborhood. As the first major event or festival we have held I would say it was a great success and I hope it is just the beginning! We were also finally able to fix up our patio to be a usable space for customers. The patio has a brick inlay ground, new patio furniture, and a garden of wild grasses! Keep posted for more information on this and other events at Groundswell on www.groundswellcoffee.org or you can link to it from our Church website at <http://www.thirdwaychurch.org>. Peace to you all from your friends at Thirdway! ☺



SMC Youth Week!

Junior and Senior High youth from SMC and related communities are invited to Hope Fellowship in Waco, TX, July 22-29.

It's not too late to sign up but contact Hannah Bridgewater at twizzler247@gmail.com or Barbara Bridgewater at bpbridgeh20@hotmail.com ASAP!

News from Thirdway

By Jessie James

Thirdway Community decided to kick off this Spring with our first ever Music Festival at Groundswell (our community coffee shop). The Grounds And Sounds Festival took place on Saturday April 28th from 2pm-8pm with the direction of Justin James who is in charge of music events at Groundswell. It took weeks of preparation in booking bands to play, building stages, gathering sound equipment, advertising and passing out flyers in the surrounding neighborhood, asking local artists to display and sell their art, decorating the coffee shop and brainstorming fun crafts



Natalie Potts and Sage Gilbert working on the planting project at the Festival

and activities for families. When April 28th finally arrived we were more than ready for everything -

except a rainy day! Despite the rain it was wonderful to watch as Thirdway community members arrived early Saturday to help set up for the festival and got creative with working around the rain! We were able to borrow one large tent from a generous customer and a few more from other churches in order to still have some of the festival outside on our patio and parking lot. By the time the Festival was scheduled to begin all was well and covered!

There was an indoor and outdoor stage with Ten groups that played throughout the afternoon and into the evening. The performers included Mark Grim, Lewis



The Band MatchyMatchy performing at Grounds and Sounds - consisting of Danny Churchill, Mat Axelson, Kevin Kneisl and Jessica Smith

line that hauntingly reads, "For as long as God allows."

In a letter to Sojourners last June Christi said:

"I do realize that we have no way of knowing our time on earth and I could be here a lot longer than modern medicine thinks. Only God knows and for that I am grateful. What I do know is the stage 4 cancer I have is incurable, so only a miracle will heal me and that has not happened, so I continue to move closer to death than life as the cancer grows even though the medication is slowing it down... I do want to live each day as well as I am able with the energy I have and with God's help have it be to His glory... I continue to see God's hand on our lives here and want to be fully present.... It is great to be able to be fully present for activities and feel well in the midst of our life together here. We really do not know how our days are numbered and what we will be given to live them out. I am most grateful for each day with you all as we seek to live and love together in community. Thanks for being my family. Christi"

Christi lived her life to the fullest, giving and receiving, until she was no longer able. Her body became frail; she could no longer speak or move. Sojourners and family began round the clock care, there to manage pain. The pain became unmanageable. Her face gave visual testimony to Christ suffering on the cross, until she found her place with Christ, and the rest of us found our place together at a Wake on Holy Saturday. It is deeply meaningful to encounter death while moving through the celebrations of the resurrection; it's electric and there is a lot of adrenaline flowing. But the initial shock of death and the hope of resurrection fade into the reality that a life has been closed and our daily world is different. We are left witnesses to the life of a woman who courageously



Mateo reads the twenty third Psalm for his grandmother

faced life and death simultaneously.

On Mother's Day this year, Christi's daughters Dawn and Hope, grandsons Rubén and Mateo, and companion Edith Bernard released her ashes to ocean.

*"Your love was like the dawn
Brightening over our lives,
awakening beneath the dark
A further adventure of color.*

*When orchids brighten the earth,
Darkest winter has turned to spring;
May this dark grief flower with hope
In every heart that loves you.*

*May you continue to inspire us:
To enter each day with a generous heart.
To serve the call of courage and love."*

~ from *To Bless the Space Between Us* by John O'Donohue and read by Dawn at the ocean

News From Hope Fellowship

By Gabriela Gatlin

“You better run!” scream the children racing past the porch of the common building at Three Mountain Retreat. On Saturday evening of our annual Easter Retreat, several of us staked out spectator spots to watch the Zombie Chase game that Luis initiated a few years ago. Becky tells us that the children in the middler Sunday school class (ages 8 to 11) anticipate the upcoming zombie game every Sunday morning until Easter. This year Luis recruited Shannon and Lucas as novice zombies in hopes that the tradition will continue even after he returns to Oaxaca this summer.

But it isn't just the middler Sunday school class that marks time by our Easter Retreat. Truly, Easter weekend marks the beginning of the Hope Fellowship new year. We can recall our history by recounting memories of each retreat. There was the Easter retreat when it snowed . . . when the Caruthers and Bethany became members . . . when JB, Jesse and David Heddy led the Christian power team skit . . . when we first assigned housing because the group had grown so large . . . when we had the multisensory Good Friday art walk . . . when JB organized a capture the flag game that spanned

the 3 mountains . . . when two-year old Lydia sang her ABCs solo at the talent show . . . when we celebrated 5 birthdays . . . when we almost cancelled all future retreats because Alan Caruthers was injured in Spasms in Three Speeds . . . when James White added the 4th speed of reverse . . . when the sunrise service became optional . . . when Suzanne, Gwendolyn and Sarah choreographed the three women dancing at the tomb . . . when it rained the whole retreat and we spent the whole weekend together in one room . . .

Now that we regularly worship in four clusters, the Easter Retreat has become all the more meaningful as a time and a place for us to enjoy everyone's company away from the distractions of our busy lives.

A pastoral letter of encouragement during our transition to clusters earlier this spring defined Hope Fellowship as “a complex set of interactions and activities as we live a common life of discipleship through worship, service, mutual aid, forgiveness, and parties.”

At our first common worship in February, about 90 of us gathered for communion and a potluck dinner. Other gatherings over the last several months included: the Porter children adoption party,

various meetings with the neighborhood association and City of Waco to discuss development plans for the old Sanger Heights school yard in front of our Meeting House, the men's retreat and telling of their authored short stories, the Monday afternoon peace vigil, the Mustard Seed micro-loan meetings, friends helping Grandma Allene clean her apartment, a clothes swap at the Pink House, koinonia groups meeting throughout the week to work on discernment or study Henri Nouwen or Psalms, Lucas, Sarah and Sara's “Hablar y Tomar” Language Exchange, and Children's Day in the park with clowns and all of Francisco's birds.

In our four clusters, we are all following a teaching series on conflict, nonviolent communication and reconciliation informed by many sources including John Paul Lederach and Marshall Rosenberg. We've spent several weeks studying and discussing interpersonal conflict in the Bible and in our own lives. Soon we will begin to engage conflicts rooted in cultural



Shannon Malburg at Children's Day with one of Francisco's feathered friends



Front-porch-pickin' at the Easter Retreat: JB Smith, Lucas Land, Zac Bryan, and Neal Curran



Nancy Gatlin welcomes Carlos Hinojosa as a member of Hope Fellowship at the Easter Retreat

differences and systemic injustices.

For now, we are learning to practice the following statement: When (specific observation), I feel (emotion word) because I need (root of the emotion). I would like you to (action request).

Let's just hope our children don't catch on to this nonviolent communication too easily. At our next Easter Retreat, they might encounter the zombie and respond, “When you jump down from the live oak tree in the dark without warning, we feel loved and secure because we need to have predictable rituals. Let's institutionalize Zombie Chase so that we can make sure this game is perpetuated even when the original zombies have gotten old and gray or passed on.” Some things are just better when left to the pure joy of a visceral squeal, hyperventilation, and the unrestrained laughter of ten-year-olds. ☺