

Assembly—Open Mic Night

By Dennis LeFevre, Host



When I volunteered to host open mic night, I wasn't really sure what to expect. After all, it's been a while (thanks COVID-19!) since any of us have been together in person, and just as long as we've performed in person! But what a pleasant evening it turned out to be! A great mix of young kids singing songs from 'The Sound of Music' and commercials for their new favorite Mennonite college, to more seasoned participants with thoughtful songs and funny stories. The evening was capped off with ice cream and treats at the annual Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp Thank You Ice Cream Social!

If you missed it, I hope you'll be able to attend next year. And, it's not too soon to begin gathering your thoughts about how you'd like to share at the next Open Mic Night!

[Click here](#) for photo captions.



RECAP: CONFERENCE GATHERS AND IS BLESSEDLY UNPRODUCTIVE

By Katrina Toews, Assembly Planning Committee Co-Chair



Katrina Toews and Marc Yoder, current and former Assembly Planning Committee Chairs.

The Theme “Blessed Unproductivity” came in many forms over the Assembly weekend. It was a welcome opportunity to reconnect with members in person.

We had **101** participants, 82 that gathered at The Abbey in Cañon City and 19 who joined us virtually. There were multiple ways participants could relax and enjoy the theme of the weekend, “Blessed Unproductivity.” Many of the options for children, youth and adults celebrated interactions with 3 of our Passion Ministries. Members of Prayerstream, TiLT and Casa de Paz engaged participants in multiple ways throughout the gathering.

Brenda Fox and Carol Suderman of Prayerstream brought their camper, ‘Beulah’ to welcome anyone into their space. At Prayerstream, meditation greeted each day with participants in-person and over Zoom. Prayerstream was nestled under large trees that provided ample shade during the hot days at the end of July. It fueled informal conversation and it turned into an outdoor gathering spot for many.



Ted and Lisa Lytle, advocates for Casa de Paz shared their work with the elementary children. They told migration stories of families with children who traveled to the US for a better life. The MSMC kids had lots of questions and began important conversations about migration and how children handle these hardships.

Both children and adults helped make cards and wrote letters to people in detention as part of the weekend’s service project. During the afternoon workshop for adults, Ted and Lisa shared more in-depth about Casa de Paz. The heart-wrenching stories of people fleeing to the US and the difference that Casa de Paz is making was inspiring to all who attended.



Ted Lytle, Leona Gingerich and Rhoda Blough



Todd Wynward and Daniel Herrera, founders of TiLT engaged and shared their work with the youth group and the adult workshop. A lively discussion amongst the adults highlighted the opportunity to use “collective thinking” to push a revisional way to support land and water in our regions. The interconnectedness of the participants allowed the discussion to move to actionable items. An invitation to come to TiLT and support their mission is in the works for 2022. Stay tuned.

Todd and Daniel also led a discussion with the teens. A thoughtful conversation highlighted the young people’s creative and prayerful ways they see engaging in their world and local surroundings.

Two art-making workshops, by MSMC intern Sydney Nuñez, of East Holbrooke Mennonite rounded out the weekend. It gave participants an artistic outlet through painting. Each person who registered also took home a piece of art they created. Additional artistic endeavors included a Hymn Sing inside the gothic-style chapel and an Open Mic that highlighted talent from across the conference.



Special thanks to Amy Zimbelman, conference minister who brought the message on Saturday morning to connect the Luke 12:27 passage to Wendell Berry's poem, "The Peace of the Wild Things" and rest. Sunday, a panel discussion from members of the Mennonite, Jewish and Native communities discussed the perceptions of rest in their own traditions. The worship of each day was filled with singing, scripture, and dance. Many thanks to the committee who planned the event, workshop leaders and teachers of the youth. Your talent was appreciated by many.



Assembly Photos Above:

TOP: (Left) Lauren with the Elementary (Middle) Carole Suderman doing Children's Story (Right) Worshipping Outside
 BOTTOM: (Left) Worship in the Chapel (Middle) RYNO and Todd with the Youth (Right) Panel during Sunday Worship

Assembly—Open Mic Night Photos:

TOP: Dennis LeFevre, Host

2nd ROW: Jordan Penner, Beuford Aeschliman, Jeni Hiatt Umble, Dave Foncannon

3rd ROW: Corinna Aeschliman, Lena and Tali Mendoza-Toews; Amy and Matt Zimbelman; Erin Dudenhefer, Moravia, Zafaran and Denali Satterfield, Hannah Dudenhefer

BOTTOM: Colin, Cara, Audrey and Jenelle Roynon; Leona Gingerich; Tessa Rae; Vern Rempel