

From our Churches

Author: Carol Dyck

Church: Faith Mennonite Church

Date: May 2009

This resource is part of a larger **From Our Churches** archives available as an inspirational resource to teachers, ministers and others of Mennonite Church Canada. Posted by permission of the author. Permission to reproduce and distribute is granted.

The Zucchini Wars

Lena's grandfather was a wonderful gardener. He took pride in his beautiful fruits and vegetables. Not only did he grow enough for his family but there was always plenty for friends and neighbours as well. Everyone appreciated Grandpa's generosity – and ate well from Grandpa's garden. Always thankful to God, Grandpa believed that it was wrong to waste anything that God provided. That is, until the Zucchini Wars happened.

"Look, a package of zucchini seeds! Where did they come from? They must be a gift from God," exclaimed Grandpa with delight.

Grandpa planted all the seeds. Soon he had many, many zucchini plants and many, many zucchini. Lena came everyday to help Grandpa in the garden and deliver veggies to friends and neighbours. Everyone was pleased to get new potatoes, carrots, peas and beans. But it didn't take long before they were all groaning, "No more zucchini!"

Grandpa proclaimed, "We can't waste what God provides. We should eat all the zucchini!" Grandma, Momma and Lena spent long days in the kitchen making zucchini muffins, zucchini cake, zucchini stir-fry, zucchini casserole and zucchini pickles. Even after all the freezers and canning jars were full, the zucchini kept growing. Tired of all the gifts of zucchini, Grandpa's friends and neighbours began to lock their doors and purposely avoid him. Even in church, people locked their car doors lest they find zucchini in the back seat when they returned.

Grandpa became angry. He felt like Moses when the Israelites complained of eating manna. He felt that his friends were insulting God for refusing what God provided. Grandpa's heart began to harden against his neighbours and friends. He began to think bad thoughts and he no longer prayed for them. He did not enjoy their company at church. "I don't want to go to THAT church any more!" Soon Grandpa wasn't even enjoying his garden. "I don't think I will bother to have a garden next year," he thought.

Grandma called the pastor of the church for help. She had had enough of a grumpy miserable Grandpa.

"Will he listen?" the pastor asked.

"I hope so," said Grandma. "I will be praying."

The Pastor found Grandpa sitting under the apple tree gazing at his garden, misery painted all over his face.

“Do you want to tell me about it?” she asked.

Grandpa pored out all his hurt and anger to her.

“Our wisdom is not God’s wisdom,” the pastor said. “Would God want your peace destroyed over fruits and vegetables? Would God want our community to suffer over this?”

Grandpa hung his head.

“Let’s pray and ask for God’s wisdom,” the pastor suggested.

And they did.

For the next three days Grandpa did not think about zucchini. He went to his friends whom he had offended and asked for their forgiveness. He worked at producing goodwill in the neighbourhood.

Soon people stopped in to visit once more. Mr. Lehn and Grandpa again played chess under the apple tree on a lazy summer afternoon.

A few days later, someone in an old pickup truck pulled into Grandpa’s laneway.

“I am looking to buy some zucchini. Do you have any?” asked the stranger.

Grandpa and Mr. Lehn began to laugh. “Did you say zucchini?”

“My pigs seem fond of them,” the stranger replied.

“You can have all of them. They just have to be picked,” said Grandpa amazed.

The farmer sent his sons to harvest all the zucchini. The grateful farmer gave Grandpa pails of pig manure for the garden. Grandpa’s garden continued to flourish and Grandma’s flowerbeds never looked so good.

Grandpa remarked. “God’s wisdom is so good. I, too, was tired of zucchini!”