



**MENUCHA**  
Sacred Space - Purposeful Work

# The Menucha Meander

*Menucha is an  
ecumenical community-  
based mission of First  
Presbyterian Church,  
Portland, OR*

**SUMMER 2005**

## MENUCHA: BESIDE STILL WATERS

It is indeed a pleasure, and timely, to write about Menucha, as I begin my fifteenth retreat here this weekend. I am the Director of Counseling at Cancer Care Resources, a community non-profit agency for people with cancer and their loved ones, now in its fifth year in Portland, Oregon. We provide education, counseling, and support services for people with cancer in Oregon and Southwest Washington, and our services are offered free of charge to anyone dealing with cancer. Founded initially by the Northwest Cancer Specialists, a group of community oncologists, they recognized the need for their patients and loved ones to receive support beyond their medical care, and beyond what some hospitals were able to provide. A part of those support services include weekend retreats for people with cancer and their loved ones.

Retreats have long been recognized as an opportunity to "step apart" from one's daily life; to reflect upon one's life and circumstances, to rest and renew, and to return home, hopefully with rejuvenation and perspective. For people experiencing potentially life-threatening illnesses, retreats can help to reduce the sense of isolation and fear that may accompany their cancer journey.

Each time I drive into Menucha's driveway, I am aware of a sense of anticipation: of the unknown, of the uncertainty of what the time will bring. Today, as I drove down the road leading to Menucha, I felt a smile come over me; it felt like coming home. Indeed, I have come to love my time here, though ostensibly, I am "working." Still, "magic" always happens here. I remember the time that one woman came, anticipating the loss of her hair following her first chemotherapy treatment. After a day here, she asked the other women at the retreat to shave her head. Imagine five bald women, all in the midst of chemotherapy, surrounding her with reverence and love,

shaving her head together. There was the time, while women gathered to create "transformation" collages, that a young woman began to talk about her death, and what she might tell her children about cremation. There was another time, when a woman attending a different retreat at Menucha, approached our group respectfully, and offered the bald-headed women hand-woven scarves



from Cambodia. She gently explained that they were the first silk scarves from that region since the Khmer Rouge. She said they were thought to represent "hope following devastation." Another time a visiting choir surrounded our table and sang.

I love Menucha in every season. Today I was aware of the wildflowers and rhododendrons in full bloom. I have teased the kitchen staff that they intentionally fill the air with the smell of fresh baking bread, just to lure us here. Today as I parked my car, I was hit with the overwhelming and comforting smell of just that. This weekend we were entertained by a young deer "dancing" from a distance with a skunk on the lawn. Fortunately, both parted without incident.

I have visited numerous retreat centers throughout the area, and have concluded that Menucha is truly the place that I want to hold retreats. While many retreat

centers have wonderful features, I believe that Menucha has landed on the ideal combination. What is it that makes Menucha so special? Retreat participants say it is the phenomenal beauty, the peacefulness, the food, the sacred space, the food, the wonderful staff, the food, the facilities, the "cleaning staff that does their magic with no one even knowing they were here," ....did I mention the food? (I confess to wanting to just eat the raspberry jam right out of the jar.)

As I return here, I am blessed to be able to know the staff better each time I come. I am grateful for all of you. To the kitchen staff, obviously you epitomize the ability to nurture us with your wonderful food. The office staff is a joy to work with. Ernie, Lynn and Gretchen ensure that the facilities and beauty that surrounds us works. The housekeeping staff indeed works their "magic" quietly behind the scenes. The gift shop offers an opportunity to bring home the treasures that remind us of our time here. And Spencer's humor and down-to-earth hospitality always makes us feel immediately at home, and that we are welcome here. Some of you have even shared your own cancer stories with me.

Our retreats have included offerings for women with breast or gynecological cancers, women with any type of cancer, two couples' retreats, and two retreats for cancer care professionals, who often lack "safe places" to express their own sense of sadness and grief. We are booked at Menucha through 2006, with the hope of increasing our bookings into the weekdays, as the retreat component of our program appears to have gained momentum through the region, now "selling out" sometimes two months in advance. The retreat program is the only service which we change a nominal fee for at Cancer Care Resources. We offset the costs, however, with fundraising as well as a scholarship fund available

*(Continued on page 3)*



## The Bench and the View

There is a gentleman outside of my office window, sitting on a bench contemplating the view. It's a pretty magnificent view to contemplate, and I've noticed that a lot of people sit on that same bench to study that view. I see that view each day I come to work. I drive in, park the Jeep, look out and think to myself, "Nice view," and I go into the office. There I am almost immediately bombarded by questions, requests, phone calls, emails, group orientations, and a host of other day to day activities. Menucha is a very busy place.

But over the past few months I've had a niggling feeling that I was missing something important. So I began to pay closer attention to the view and the people who came to sit on that bench. Here's what I noticed: The view changes, almost by the minute; it's never the same twice. But it is always awe-inspiring and magnificent. Also, the people who sit and watch change. Some develop a far away look in their eyes, as if they are seeing something entirely different. Some look as if they are listening to something very carefully. Some just visibly relax. Most leave (if they have spent any time watching at all) with a smile on their face, as if they have discovered something special.

I decided that perhaps I needed to spend some time there, on that bench with that view, to experience first hand what so many of our guests experience. Maybe I could begin to understand its allure. So I sat. You know, the view is just the beginning. It's nice, but the quiet, the time to reflect, the absence of phones, emails, radios, televisions, honking horns, traffic, or even others demanding your attention, *that* is the ultimate allure of the bench and the view. It gives you an opportunity to gaze deep within yourself and offers you a chance to critique that view. It even allows you the time and space to make some minor modifications, or maybe plan some major ones.

It also gives you the opportunity to truly listen. Not just to the rush of the wind or the sound of humming birds buzzing by, but to that still small voice of calm that is within us all. It allows us to listen to the music which stirs and moves our soul. And if you listen very carefully, you might even hear the quiet voice of God.



**Executive Director Rev. Spencer Parks**

And if you sit there long enough, the cares of the world begin to drift off. For in the face of such a view and in the presence of such stillness you come to a different perspective of the world and how you fit into it. Nothing seems too large to overcome; nothing seems too small to notice. It all begins to fit together. And if this doesn't bring a smile to your face, then nothing will.

The bench is not the only spot at Menucha where this happens. It takes place everywhere. We have tried to remove as many of the mundane distractions of the world as we can. There are few phones here, not too many TV's (and none of these hooked up for reception) and only a handful of radios. On the other hand, there are plenty of places to sit and reflect. We have several views, not just of the magnificent Columbia River Gorge, but of flowers, trees, quiet pools and inviting green spaces. We're even thinking of putting in a few more (you can never have enough when it comes to spiritual discovery and self awareness).

So, when you next visit Menucha, or perhaps visit for the first time, come and sit on our bench. Enjoy our view. You'll be amazed at what you see.



## THE MENUCHA COOKTOP *Summertime Chicken Salad — serves 7*

*2 cups cubed, cooked chicken or turkey*

*½ cup diagonally sliced celery*

*1 tablespoon thinly sliced green onions (including tops)*

*½ cup oil*

*¼ cup white wine vinegar*

*2 tablespoons sugar*

*½ teaspoon salt*

*½ teaspoon dry mustard*

*½ teaspoon grated lemon peel*

*2 cups cantaloupe, cut in bite-sized pieces*

*1 cup seedless green grapes*

*1 medium (1 cup) apple, unpeeled and diced*

*½ cup coarsely chopped walnuts*

*Lettuce leaves*

*Strawberries and kiwi fruit, sliced, if desired*

In large bowl, combine chicken or turkey, celery and onions. In small bowl, combine oil and vinegar; stir in sugar, salt, dry mustard and lemon peel. Pour 1/3 cup dressing over chicken mixture; toss to coat. Cover and chill. At serving time, add cantaloupe, grapes, apple and walnuts to chicken mixture; toss to coat. Arrange lettuce leaves on serving dish. Spoon salad over lettuce. Garnish with strawberries and kiwi fruit, if desired. Drizzle remaining dressing over fruit.



## CANCER CARE RESOURCES (continued from page 1)

to those who otherwise could not afford to attend. It is one of the more popular items to support at our annual fundraising auction.

Magic happens here. Why? Certainly the location is a key component. However, equally important is the vision and mission of Menucha itself, and its dedicated staff and supporters. We thank you for being here. We thank you for allowing us to drink in the magic, the beauty, the mission, and the love, that exists here. It truly makes a difference for those who are struggling to come to terms with illness, loss, mortality, and meaning.

Wendell Berry has words that I believe help to describe what happens at Menucha.

*When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's  
lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests his beauty on the water,  
and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief.  
I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars,  
waiting with their light.  
For a time I rest in the grace of the world,  
and am free.*

Thank you, Menucha, for being. You are a blessing.

Susan Hedlund, LCSW  
Director of Counseling  
Cancer Care Resources — Portland, Oregon

## Sacred Space — Purposeful Work

Our beautiful new entrance sign incorporating our new logo is completed and in place to welcome guests to Menucha. Built by Woodcarver Signs in Portland, it is a two-sided sign that is easily seen by eastbound as well as west-bound traffic on the Historic Columbia River Hwy.

The sign was donated by the family of Willie B. Harris to the glory of God in his memory.



*Plans for our 3rd Annual Harvest  
Fundraising Dinner & Silent Auction are  
underway with Sharley Bryce as our Auction Chair.*

**SAVE THE DATE!**

*Sunday, September 11 — 5:30 pm in Wright Hall  
You won't want to miss a great evening in support of Menucha.  
Hors d'oeuvres • Wine • Silent Auction • Dinner • Raffle  
Music by harpist Jennifer Craig Emcee Julie Emry*

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT: DONNA LEAMY

My first experience with Menucha was in December of 1975 when my then-fiancé John and I announced our engagement during our church Christmas banquet. Now, 30 years later, I look back and realize that Menucha has been a major part of our lives in so many ways.

In 1979 my husband John received a phone call with the news that Menucha was looking to hire someone to eventually replace long-time cook Zelda Dyer. John accepted the position in April of that year, and we moved to Menucha in June. We lived in The Hideaway, awaiting the birth of our first child. In fact, both of our children (Matt, 25 and Casey, 22) were born during our years at



*From top left: Matt, Maleena and Kristin, Casey, Greg and Linda Sampson (Kristin's parents), John. From bottom left: Judge Waller, Grandma Jo Brooks, me, Craig and MaryAnne Bidondo with Anna and Joseph.*

Menucha. It was a wonderful place to raise our young family.

We lived and worked at Menucha for eight years. During that time, I occasionally helped in the kitchen, but mostly had the privilege of being a full-time mom. Eventually I worked in the office part-time, job sharing with

Pat Haffner. These days I have an official title at Menucha — Special Projects Manager. My job is varied, and I learn something new every day. I work with Becky, Christine and Pat in the office five days a week. My main responsibilities include answering the phone, processing reservation fees and payments, payroll, and our quarterly newsletter. In addition, I work with the Friends of Menucha Foundation, which has been established to raise funds for Menucha.

John and I recently celebrated our 28th wedding anniversary, and have just become first-time grandparents! Our son Matt and his wife Kristin adopted a 2 ½ year old girl named Maleena. The official adoption ceremony, pictured, took place June 13. The three of them are living with us, and we are having the time of our lives!

Our daughter Casey graduated from the University of Portland in May, and is hoping to teach middle school math in the fall. She and her husband Eric will celebrate their first anniversary in July. Our son Matt is the Art Director/Head Designer for Leamy Printing and Design, our family business located in downtown Troutdale. He and Kristin will celebrate their third anniversary in August.

Menucha is forever woven into the fabric of my life as well as the lives of my family. It's a great place to work: terrific co-workers and staff, fabulous food, and spectacular views of the gorge. I am so thankful to be part of the ministry here!

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Menucha Retreat and Conference Center  
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## CONTACT INFORMATION



You may join our mailing list or update the information we have for you by returning this form to us, or contacting us at:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** 503-695-2243  
**Fax:** 503-695-2223  
**Email:** office@menucha.org  
**Mail:** PO Box 8  
Corbett OR 97019

I would like to receive Menucha communications via:

Email  Regular mail

Is this a change of address (mailing or email) notification?

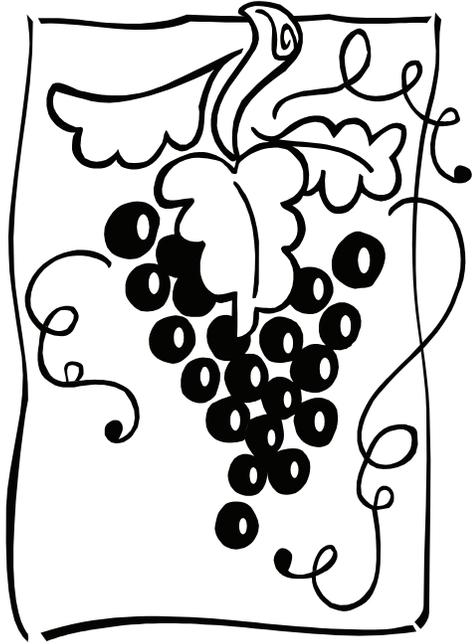
Yes  No

*Many people have discovered the joy of planned giving as a way of being responsible stewards of the blessings God has entrusted to them. If you would like to remember Menucha in your will and see the ministry and mission of Menucha into the future, please give us a call. We have excellent representatives who can talk with you about planned giving and answer any questions you might have.*



### WE HAVE A NEW WAY TO GIVE TO MENUCHA!

You can now donate money to Menucha using your credit card with our secure on-line form. Simply go to our webpage ([www.menucha.org](http://www.menucha.org)) and click on the "Giving to Menucha" link. You may also print out a Donor Form and mail it to Menucha, or simply fill out the enclosed Donor Form in this newsletter and mail it to us. We are grateful for all gifts, large or small. The monies help us make Menucha available to groups and individuals from around the Pacific Northwest. Thank you for your continued support!



# SAVE THE DATE

for our  
3rd ANNUAL MENUCHA  
HARVEST DINNER  
and SILENT AUCTION

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2005

5:30 pm in Wright Hall

Cocktail Attire



## TICKETS:

\$50.00 per person

\$350 for table of 8

*Wine* & *Music* & *Raffle*

503.695.2243 • [www.menucha.org](http://www.menucha.org) • [office@menucha.org](mailto:office@menucha.org)



# Donor Pledge Form

Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Business (If Applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

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**How would you like to make your monetary pledge?** Please print clearly.

Amount of gift: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check Made payable to: Friends of Menucha Foundation

Bill me:

- Quarterly, starting \_\_\_\_\_
- Monthly, starting \_\_\_\_\_
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Credit Card:  Visa  Mastercard

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(Call Menucha at 503.695.2243 to discuss details)

**Categories of Support:**

Seven Generations	\$5,000 or more
Old Growth	\$2,500 to \$4,999
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Journey	\$500 to \$999
Nurture	\$250 to \$499
Heritage	\$100 to \$249

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*Compensation, goods or services have not been given by Menucha in return for this contribution*