

I am a born and raised Mennonite. I grew up in this very church. I attended Western Mennonite School my freshman year. I served a year of Voluntary Service in LaJunta, CO. I met and married a born and raised Methodist that I met while in LaJunta. We moved to Goshen, IN, so that my husband could finish his college education at Goshen College. When our two children were 8 and 4 we went to Jamaica with Mennonite Central Committee for two years. My husband taught one year at Iowa Mennonite School. Our two children graduated from Goshen College and one married a Mennonite from Archbold, OH. Together as a family we have lived in 4 states and one foreign country. In all of these locations, we have attended Mennonite churches.

I do not consider myself an “ethnic” Mennonite. Some of my mother’s family has Swiss origins. She was born in Hubbard, OR. Her father was from Illinois and her mother from the Hubbard area. Her parents and their four stillborn sons are buried in the Zion Mennonite Cemetery. My father’s mother, at the age of 19, left her home in Alsace-Lorraine, Germany, and arrived at the Port of New York on March 13, 1904. I do not know the exact circumstances following this, but I do know she met her Mennonite husband in Illinois and after living in several states, finally arrived in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. My father was born in Missouri and at one time lived near Kalispell, MT, attending the Mennonite Church there. So, my parents were both born into a Mennonite family and raised as such. They raised us 4 children as Mennonites as well.

Growing up I do not remember anything that I would call Mennonite food other than the typical roast, potatoes and carrots cooked in the oven while we were in church on a Sunday morning. I was an adult before Zwiebach, Rollkuchen, Shoo Fly Pie, Peppernuts, Varenika, Whoopie Pies, Borscht, Faspa and others became words in my vocabulary. It would be several years before I experienced any of them. Some of them I have yet to experience.

When I asked Melanie what those of us who do not have the same heritage as many of you have, could bring to share she asked if I would be willing to share my experience and then bring something that has come to have special meaning to our own family. Today I brought with us some coconut pecan clusters. While in Jamaica, we learned to really like coconut in many forms. I found this recipe in a magazine and it has become a favorite with our family. It is also gluten free for those who need a cookie of that nature. I hope many of you will be able to try them during the Faspa time.