



Mara to Naomi by Alana Carson

Recently, a group of fellow believers and myself went through the book of Ruth. As women, we are familiar with this book of the Bible. It is often used as an example of what a faithful woman should be and what trusting in God and His almighty provision looks like. This time reading it, though, we were drawn to look at Naomi: the secondary character; the mother-in-law.

Naomi, while not the central character in the book, has much to teach us through these four short chapters. When we first meet her, she has lost all hope. She feels that “the Lord’s hand has turned against [her]” and that she has nothing left (Ruth 1:13). When she finally makes it back to Bethlehem with both sons and her husband dead, she tells the whole town to call her “Mara,” a name which means “bitter” (Ruth 1:20-21). She is drowning in misery. She proclaims that it was the Lord who has brought her misfortune and afflicted her, and thus, she desires a name that more aptly describes her.

In this time period, names were everything. If you look through the Old Testament, the names of individuals all represent what prayer or promise had been said over their life (like Abraham, who was later the forefather of the Israelite people, has a name which means “father of nations”/“father lifted up”) or it is a word that represents a characteristic of themselves/their birth (like Esau meaning “hairy” due to him being so hairy when born). Now, when looking at the woman of Naomi, her name means “pleasant,” yet Naomi commands all her friends and community to change her name to signify the bitterness she has.

Look, however, at God’s response: For all of the following references to Naomi’s name in the book of Ruth, she is only ever called Naomi. Even though she may have changed her own identity or the way she thinks her life is going (in her limited human perspective), God never changes the identity that He has given her. She remains Naomi; she remains pleasant; she remains His child, and He has never stopped caring for her, despite her afflictions. The narrator calls her Naomi; Ruth and Boaz call her Naomi; the other citizens in the town call her Naomi. In fact, 16 more times is she called by name as Naomi, but not once as Mara.

This cannot help but give me peace and confidence in God’s provision. He knows the plans which are ahead, and He will provide us with what we need to live out His expectations. Let us not live in misery or bitterness over what has happened, but instead in the promises that God has for us. It may never be your own desires which are granted, but God is also never done with the special purpose and identity He has given unto you.

“The women said to Naomi: ‘Praise be to the Lord.’” (Ruth 4:14)

June 2024 |





Making Connections

Meet **Kristen Weaver**.

Coming back to Franconia after a decade away truly feels like coming back home.

I grew up coming here with my parents, Tom and Donna Kauffman, and my four siblings; Ally, Marissa, Rachel and Zachary. You may remember me as one of “the twins”. I went to Penn View and then Christopher Dock, and then took a gap year to figure out my next step. I went on to study nutrition at West Chester University and became a Registered Dietitian.

While at WCU, I reconnected with my sister’s prom (banquet) date, Nate, and we got married on May 6, 2017. I have to throw that detail in whenever I can :)

I worked at the ShopRite of Hatfield teaching community nutrition, and I loved it. I remember running into many of you while I was there! I became a stay at home mom when we started having kids, and now Lucy, Jack and Henry keep me busy each day.

There have certainly been times when I have longed for more “purpose” or recognition for this never-ending job, but I feel so blessed to be home with my kids.

My hobbies include cooking, baking (I’m on a sourdough kick thanks to the frolic!), playing tennis and traveling. If I’m not at church on Sunday, I’m probably in OCNJ or visiting one of my siblings, now that we are in five different states.

One day, I hope to help out with the Kitchen committee and nursery team. For now, I will greatly appreciate everyone’s help and once my kiddos are a bit more independent, I look forward to helping out too!

My favorite Bible verse is Jeremiah 29:11: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord. “Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.”





Get Involved!



Morris Arboretum Outing
June 22
9 AM – 2 PM

Tickets can be purchased online ahead of time or at the entrance.
Pack a lunch and water bottle.

Meet at Franconia Mennonite Church at 8 AM.

Wear sunscreen and good walking shoes (umbrella if inclement weather)

Please **SIGN UP** at the Women's Ministry Table or by emailing franconiawomen@gmail.com

Women's Retreat at Spruce Lake

Canadensis PA

September 13-15, 2024

Alisa Childers, speaker

- Former CCM recording artist with the Dove award-winning group ZOEGirl
 - Investigated her doubts about faith
- Now she's a Christian apologist, and wrote the recent book, "Deconstructing Christianity: What It Is, Why It's Destructive, and How to Respond."

Cristabelle Braden, worship leader

- Award-winning singer/songwriter, speaker, writer, podcast host and brain-injury advocate.
- Her songs express her own healing process through brain trauma, invoking resilience and hope!

If you are interested in attending the retreat with others from Franconia Mennonite Church, email franconiawomen@gmail.com by June 22nd.



CONTACT US: franconiawomen@gmail.com

Women's Ministry Co-Chairs: Gail Reinford & Sydney Leaman
Team Members: Janet Derstine, Julie Stitt, Charity Veltre, & Heidi Yoder,



Get Involved!

Flower Potting on May 8th



Bible memory encourages us, and we should encourage each other. Hebrews 3:13 says: **“Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”**

Other Upcoming Activities

Sewing Circle
Tuesday, June 11
8 AM – 4 PM

Prayer Shawl Ministry
Tuesday, June 11 at 7 PM



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