

# How to Eat Zwiebach

LOIS SIEMENS<sup>1</sup>

One day, a friend in my congregation was visibly upset after worship. It was then that I learned that not everyone attending my church felt like I did. The worship that morning emphasized our heritage without taking into consideration those who have joined us because of our theology, not our reputation for cooking good food. My friend was not an ethnic Russian Mennonite and didn't cook Borsht or bake Zwiebach (a bun with a second smaller bun on top).

In reading through some of “The Mennonite Treasury of Recipes,”<sup>2</sup> a book created by the Ladies Aid of the church I grew up in, I came across a statement about some people preferring to dunk their Zwiebach and others believing that dunking spoils the taste. This is a seemingly small statement that, I imagine, had many strong conversations behind it, pulling it into the writer's focus. It is the small differences, like how one might eat Zwiebach, that often become a source of painful division. Zwiebach became a source of community for me as this same friend and I silently swallowed buns later at a mutual friend's funeral.

Mostly this piece of calligraphy is about hospitality. Sunday *Faspa*, in particular, is when my family had company at a meal: from the poor person down the road to the pastor. When mother called us to the table, we walked from all rooms of the house to gather. The floor patterns expressed in the “tablecloth” around the edge of this piece come from every room in the house. They are patterns of painted floors found on the floors of Mennonite homes in the historic town of Neubergthal, Manitoba.<sup>3</sup> Reflecting on this piece, I recall the image of Isaiah where different nations whose diverse tastes currently cause dissension will one day *Faspa*/feast together at the Lord's table.

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1 Lois Siemens is half-time pastor at Superb Mennonite Church near Kerrobert, Saskatchewan, Canada, and can't imagine life without photography and calligraphy. Calligraphic medium: Parallel Pen on Hot Press 140 lb Arches paper.

2 “Some prefer to dunk them, others believe, dunking spoils the taste.” From *Mennonite Treasury of Recipes* (Steinbach, Manitoba: Derksen Printers, 1962), 2. Used with permission.

3 Floor patterns can be seen in *Neubergthal Mennonite Street Village Catalogue of Exhibition June 27–October 11, 2010*.

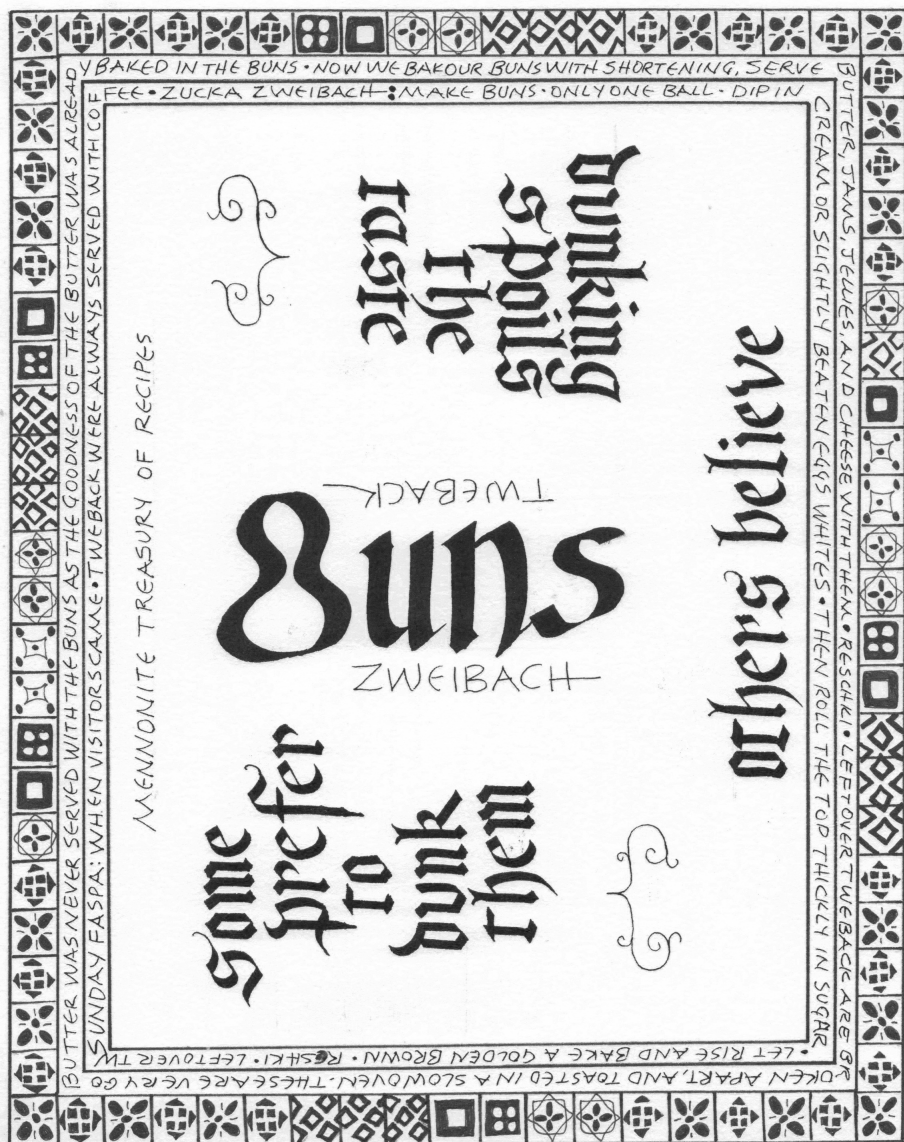


Image 1. Lois Siemens. *How to Eat Zwiebach*, 2010. 8.5 x 11 inches. Pen on paper.