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NOVEMBER 2014, VOLUME 1 EDITION 3

# Life With Us

At Niagara United Mennonite Church

## This Issue's Theme . . .



## Captive Free by Nathan Dirks

He walked toward us with a steady gait. Confident. Calm. Content. But certainly not carefree. How could he be?

His sun-faded orange jumpsuit stood out sharply against

the stark backdrop of white prison walls. In the background, a football match flowed across a dusty, compressed pitch, the thump of the ball punctuated by shouts from the men. Nervous inmates paced along the inner fence as an eclectic mixture of rhythmic dance music and melodic traditional tunes drifted over the wall from the military housing surrounding the prison.

As he approached, his scars became apparent. Freckles traveled down his face onto his lips, rising in a soft grin, a dramatic contrast with the razor wire fencing behind him.

He stooped to enter the shade of the billowing tent where Taryn and I sat with a group of sixty prisoners and church youth leaders. He took his place at the front and began to speak.

In the tradition of the Apostle Paul, Milton, Bonhoffer, and Solzhenitzyn, he testified from prison about the overwhelming love of God. Acceptance. Restoration.

Purpose. His eyes brightened as he spoke.

He spoke of a system that promised power and control. He took what he wanted. He ended lives when it suited him. And when the blood settled and society pronounced its judgment he was faced with the consequences of his choices. He found that he imprisoned himself long before his country had done so.

But freedom may be found in unlikely places.

With the clock ticking against him he chose to wisely spend what time remained. He recognized a deep, compelling bond among a few of his fellow inmates.

They wrestled together with their anger, supported one another in their distress. They struggled to seek and give forgiveness. He jealously wanted what they had. Not with the old, familiar desire for control, but with a submissive thirst. The brothers understood his longing, and they shared their discoveries with him. They understood the truth that brings life, and their small community put flesh to it. His days numbered, he began to study the Word for himself.

He expressed deep compassion for his fellow death row inmates. Some had come to find their place in relationship with God. Others had not. He felt a great burden to share the grace of God with those who had yet to know him.

He spoke of his beautiful freedom in Jesus, clearly still to be completed, and yet now complete. Razor wire twisted overhead. Brick towered all around. Bolts secured heavy doors. And yet...

"...if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

# Remembering Ministry Sabbaticals...

In light of this issue's theme of "to remember is to work for peace," we are featuring two interviews discussing recent sabbaticals within our church community. Read below to hear their reflections as they obediently followed the Biblical principle of Sabbath, carving out a time for peace in their busy lives, and what they learned from their experiences.

## Stephen Cox interviews Joachim Dau

### SC: What were your sabbatical boundaries?

JD: We listened to the encouragement from Spiritual Council, who said "Just stop everything, don't do some things and not others." I saw the wisdom in that.

We also took the sabbatical in other areas; we cut out all official involvement in everything except essential work.

### SC: How hard or easy was it to maintain sabbatical boundaries?

JD: Everyone knew we were doing this so I didn't feel pressure from the church. I could just BE in the community, no pressure to do—just BE with my family, and be a sponge for a while.

For the most part I kept to my boundaries but there were a few times where the line was fuzzy. For example, I sang with the choir on Christmas.

### SC: Why did you decide to do this?

JD: I wanted to be part of the celebration, and it was minimal effort.

Also, I helped out the Praise and Worship when it was essential.

### SC: Why did you do that?

JD: I wanted to be a part of presenting a new song that I had found. It was my initiative to call and give the song and I felt excited to be a part of that.

### SC: Did this feel like church work?

JD: No because this was her project, and she enjoyed it. Audrey still did her business even when it was church related, but this was okay for us.

### SC: What things did you add in this time?

JD: A lot more family time, very intentional. I wanted to spend more time especially with the boys. Before my sabbatical they would say, "I was always on my way out the door." Addressing that issue at home was a very focused part of my year. When the kids had a PD day, I'd take the day off work and do things with them.

### SC: What kind of things did you do with them?

JD: Going for bike rides, took them to the Bethany Boys Club camping weekend, and just sitting and watching a movie with them, intentional BEING with family.

### SC: Were there any results of this change?

JD: Audrey said, "It's kind of nice that you can just sit and talk."

The most noticeable changes happened in the first little while, when there were times when I knew what was normal, leaving the house at night, but now I could just stay home.

### SC: What would you do differently another time?

JD: I envisioned doing more personal study on peace and non-violence in our church today, but I did not. As I got into it, this

seemed counterproductive to the overall purpose of my sabbatical, but I'd still like to explore this area.

### SC: How did you/will you reintegrate after the sabbatical?

JD: There are 2 areas right off the bat where my previous work load is going to be reduced going forward.

First, I have not gone back to chorus Niagara this year, to be with family. Second, the German service commitment has been lessened, cut in half.

Also, I'm trying to be jealous of my time to make sure that I get enough time to continue positive things I had during my sabbatical year.

### SC: What about Praise and Worship?

JD: I want to make sure that doing things in the worship service do not turn into just work and I lose the worship aspect of the service. Worship leading is generally not a hardship and once it is done the rest of the service is more relaxed

### SC: What resources or help did you access to help you with your sabbatical?

JD: The church advertised the sabbaticals, and supported them without event or push back. The church also helped to fill the gaps left by those who stepped back

Pastors Rudy & Sharon asked about how we were approaching the sabbatical to ensure the time was useful to us. This interview session also helped, and having John & Kaethe already go through it made it easier for us to take one in this community.

# ... and working to maintain that Peace

## Stephen Cox interviews John Tiessen

**SC: What were your sabbatical boundaries?**

JT: Absolutely nothing official, nothing public, no leadership. Still attended services.

**SC: How hard/easy was it to maintain sabbatical boundaries?**

JT: I was never asked once to do or be anything. It had been publicized in advance and this helped a lot.

I did candlelight service. I wanted to do this as a way of participating, and I don't consider this to be an official duty, I'm just taking part. It's a once a year type thing. I enjoy being part of the choir, and I'm a tenor.

**SC: What things did you add in this time or what did you intentionally leave out of your life or do less of?**

JT: I had felt more and more that I was doing and not being.

I knew that I needed time to just

stop, I was burning out, becoming less effective.

I watched Rudy & Sharon not just stop but they were intentional about thinking about engagement too.

We decided to visit other churches, stepped outside of our comfort zone, and went to different churches, big mega churches and small neighborhood churches. We enjoyed every service almost. We took Kurt to a couple of different churches. I also, started reading books on grace.

Initially our time got sucked up into our kids lives, then I had a health scare and then after these things I felt like I really started sabbatical.

**SC: Why did the kids take up so much time?**

JT: Kurt was home from school, Victoria was working, schedules, cars, there was some financial stress with Kurt not working. The difference between a lay & pro pastor when it comes to sabbaticals is that pastors get to completely step away from 'work'. Even though I technically had ex-

tra time, it didn't seem like it because I still had to work my regular job.

**SC: How did you/will you reintegrate after the sabbatical?**

JT: My intention was not to dive back into everything I had been doing. Then I did.

Part of it was that Rudy was on sabbatical, so I accepted a nomination for Spiritual Council chair.

Then it was the churches 75th anniversary, and the spiritual council suggested that the ones who are most excited about it should help with it. The Spiritual Council asked me, and I accepted.

**SC: What resources did you access to help you with your sabbatical?**

JT: Spiritual Council gave good oversight to the initiation of the process, challenges and encouragements at the outset.

I used Rudy & Sharon's prep time to help me formulate how I would approach sabbatical.

## Joachim Dau & John Tiessen combined thoughts...

**SC: How would you advise other lay leaders planning a sabbatical?**

If you are a couple, you both have to commit to the same sabbatical parameters or things will go off track. Plan this together, and help each other maintain boundaries.

Ask about 3 months out, what is life giving for you and what are you hoping to get out of this experience? Be intentional about preparing for it, it won't just happen.

Don't stress too much about doing lots of new 'DOING' things. Be released from the stress of having to 'do things'.

Part of a sabbatical is refreshing your spiritual life, stepping out of your comfort zones, reading things that help you figure out how to listen to God in a different way is a good resource.

The concept of RESTING in God. Getting over your self importance that you HAVE to do something. To allow yourself to not do something or even any-

thing. If you can stretch your sabbatical to include all extra-work activities this adds benefit to the idea.

Recognize the fact that you're not indispensable. The first month was like stepping into a vacuum, but slowly I started to get accustomed to the changes.

Try something new.

Prepare the congregation for what you are doing, why you are doing it, how long it will be, and set up how things will work in your absence as much as it's up to you.

**SC: Any other comments**

**about sabbaticals?**

This doesn't have to be just for lay ministers, the same process could apply for anyone in community who senses a need to step back for a season. Our congregation has been very accepting of breaks.

Taking a break from volunteering can be a healthy way to refocus yourself, refresh, and then reengage ministry with greater purpose.

If this starts a conversation about workload and volunteering and work-life-volunteering balance, then that is a good thing.

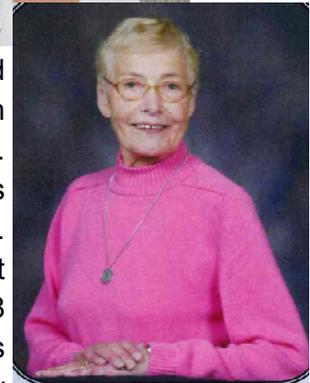
Have you heard about “Helfende Haende”? Maybe some of you have. Have you heard about “Helping Hands”? Maybe a few more of you know about this service, a group of women in our church provide when there is a funeral in our church. I didn’t know everything about it and talked to some people. Let me tell you what I learned.

Way back in the history of our church, when there was a death in a family, the family not only had to deal with their grief, arrange for the service, but also had to prepare the meal for the congregation. In 1971 Emilie Pauls (who else?) had an idea how to make it easier for the bereaved family. She would call some ladies to bake Zwieback (ah, those good old-fashioned Zwieback) some others would bake raisin bread, and so the group “Helfende Haende”, which later became “Helping Hands”, was established. A few years later “Tante Sara”, another very active lady in those days suggested to order buns and raisin bread from a bakery in St. Catharines. They did, but Emilie and her helping hands, amongst them being her sister Mary, Mika Enns, Rita Pauls and others set the tables, poured the coffee and cleaned up afterwards. After many, many years of leading the group, Emilie was ready

to pass on the leadership to somebody else, though kept on serving for a total of 30 years. Anneliese Belau and Hannelore Enss, who had helped out in that group for a while already, took on the job. By then, all the food for our, by now traditional Mennonite meal, was ordered from MB Foods.

When Anneliese’s husband fell ill and her own health decreased, she had to step back, and in 2003 Ann Marie Neustaedter and Anne Pankratz took over, and right away they had two funerals back back: July 16 & 17. After that, nothing could scare them! Ann Marie has a thick book with all the instructions and statistics in there, so she has a very good idea how much to order for how many people. She orders from Valu Mart and from Harvest Barn. I asked her, if she had had any bad surprises and she has had two. Once the raisin bread was not ready on time, and when it finally came, it was still all doughy inside. The other surprise was, when somebody left a message on Ann’s answering machine and she wasn’t home. When Ann Marie read the obituaries in the paper the next day and found out that we had a funeral in our church, it was a bit of a hassle. Ann Marie is a very laid-back and calm leader, but at the same time very efficient. It is a pleasure to work with her. “Helping

Hands” is a volunteer group, but most of the time they get a donation from the family. This money goes to buy a bucket of 18 pink carnations if it is a woman that died or 18 red carnations if it is a man. These flowers are later used to decorate the tables in the auditorium. The rest of the money goes for kitchen and funeral needs and lately also for other church causes, eg. junior youth. The idea of the flowers was started by Ella Bartel. We sadly have to say, that she already got her 18 pink carnations and so has Anneliese Belau and many of the founding ladies of this group. We thank them all for their dedicated and meaningful service and hope that there always will be some volunteers (women and men) to keep this tradition going. What exactly does Helping hands do? Now you know.





# Reflections

## How did that go??

Thank you to all the Ride for Refuge cyclists and supporters. Update: MC Canada achieved 97% of their \$20,000 goal for Mennonite Church Canada workers Nathan and Taryn Dirks' ministry with at-risk youth in Gaborone, Botswana! Donations are still welcome at [www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2412](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2412).



### Soup Labels for Education Report | Submitted by Martha Bartel

Thank-you for collecting Campbell's Soup labels. Following is a breakdown of the labels that we collected from April 11– October 1, 2014:

- Campbell's Condensed Soup labels– 687
- Chunky Soup labels– 67
- V8 Juice– 20
- Family Size Soup labels– 26
- Ready-to-Serve– 28
- Habitant Soup– 32
- UPC bar code– 7 (from Goldfish crackers, Campbell Soup boxes, Campbell cooking sauce, Campbell broth boxes, etc.)

The labels were taken to the WMCEC Enrichment Day meeting which took place on Fri. Oct 3rd—Sat. Oct. 4th in Cambridge. They will be forwarded to one of our schools for their educational programs.

**Reminder:** Please do not fold the labels more than once. Also, **both the UPC symbol** (bar code) **and the picture must be shown on the soup label.**

On the bulletin board near the Campbell's Soup collection can, (near the mailboxes), you will see a poster which shows all the Campbell's products that are eligible for labels for Education projects. Further information can be found online: "Google Campbell's Soup Labels for Education." Note: Our schools (UMEI and Rockway Collegiate) do not collect lids nor bottle caps.

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## Congregational Survey

Please tell us what your favourite hymn or Praise & Worship Song is:

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Please submit your response on this paper to the blue box located at the Welcome Centre. Survey results will be printed in next month's newsletter!

Stay tuned– each month we will pose a new survey question and publish the results the following month!



We, our members at NUMC have known each other for many years, in some cases for decades, but what do we know about each other outside of the Church environment, our interests, our hobbies, our likes and dislikes. With this in mind, I want to tell my impressions

from our trip to Europe in June and July of 2014.

Our trip lasted six and a half weeks and we visited relatives, met up with my sister Karin and her husband Erik, and traveled with our son Paul and his wife Estelle.

It was also the most expensive trip we made because we took a River-boat-tour on the Danube. To give an overview of the trip: we landed first in Amsterdam and then on to Frankfurt, Germany. From there to Nürnberg where we embarked; traveled up and down -in locks- on the Rhein-Main-Kanal into the river Donau. In a week we arrived in Budapest, Hungary. Then we spent time sightseeing with my sister and ended up in Český Krumlov, a historic city in the Czech Republic.

Joining up with Paul and Estelle we went to an island in Greece: Naxos for some time in the sun and on the beach; visited Athens and then on to the Loire Valley in France and to end the trip with a highlight visiting Paris.

It would be boring if I mentioned all the sights, cities, rivers, mountains etc we have seen; but what left an impression in our mind is what I think may be of interest to you. I also want to include some specifics, so you can experience a bit of what we have done.

In general, prices are often the same in numbers as here, but they are in Euros, €, and we paid 1.57 Canadian dollar for one €. Enough about money, just to give you an understanding of costs, which are always a consideration when traveling.

Life there is the same as here; people pursue their normal life as we do here: you go to work, if by car, you sit in traffic; if by public transportation, you wait until your medium arrives; if by bicycle, you make sure you remember where you parked it so you have a chance to find it again among the thousands of bikes, especially in Holland.



The Churches are mostly empty; people are mostly well off, God is only second in line.

This brings me right to the centre of my thoughts: the Churches, Cathedrals and monasteries in Europe. You drive by on the Autobahn or the train and you see a "Dorf" a closed village in the countryside and usually the Church with its steeple is the highest building and right in the centre of the village. ( the Gasthaus is usually very near by ). So the impression is that the Church is the centre of the lives of the people. It is definitely the most elaborately decorated building. The Altar is very often covered with gold done by famous artists, may be even centuries ago.

The huge pipe organs dominate one side of the inside of the Cathedrals. The building is huge inside; the ceilings extremely high and often very decorated; again painted by world known artists. The layout, as seen from the top, usually represents a cross. The benches are hard and uncomfortable; most have kneeling platforms. Coloured glass windows is the norm.

If there is someone playing the organ, the music is overwhelming, loud enough so God can hear it all the way to heaven. It also sounds heavenly. But our Church here at NUMC has regularly more people than I have seen in Churches there.



I don't want to forget the Church bells either. They are still part of the daily life there. Some announce the time, and when it is time to go to Church. Others ring at sunset for a long time; loud enough to make you stop your conversation if you are near by.

Altogether, I agree with the words of Pope Francis, as they were written in our September 14 NUMC Church News. Churches need people worshipping the Lord.

We, at NUMC are doing well, we have faithful people attending regularly. Most important we have an active Sunday School Program to insure a future for our Church.

- Submitted by Gunnar Doerwald

About 25 km north-west of Gdansk, Poland, lies the tiny village, Koleczkowo. From 1942 to 1945 it was called Kollendorf. Here in Koleczkowo, I was born in 1945. For years, my passport listed as my place of birth Danzig, Germany, until a clever passport official suggested to me that there is no such place and that it should read Gdansk, Poland. When I mentioned this to my older sister, Clara; to my surprise she commented, “Actually you’re not born in Danzig at all, but in a small schoolhouse in Kollendorf.” During the final years of WWII, many Mennonite refugees from the Soviet Union were housed in a camp in Neustadt, and from here some were sent out into the surrounding area to work. Our family was sent to Kollendorf, where our father took on a teaching position in a small school among the Kashubians. Here, in the teacher’s living quarters at the school, I was born.

In August of this year, our son Chris and I set out on a quest to find Koleczkowo and the school where I experienced my first daylight. After a short visit to Baden Württemberg, we flew to Gdansk, accompanied by Christian Aprich and his mother, Gerdi. Christian and Gerdi had arranged transportation to and from Poland as well as for accommodation in Gdansk and Berlin. Gdansk is a beautiful and interesting city that dates back to the tenth century. The Poles have done a magnificent job in restoring the city to its original architectural beauty after much of it had been destroyed during WWII. There is considerable evidence of the earlier German residents, especially in the architecture and in writings on old plaques in churches. Chris now feels a certain kinship with the area after he found a store named Wedel (Gina’s name) in Wejherowo and chocolate manufactured by a Wedel enterprise in Gdansk. An original Mennonite church, now a Pentecostal church, is found in the Mennonitenstrasse on the periphery of the old town. We found accommodation in an attractive, small hotel called Amber, a name that is indicative of the flourishing amber trade in Gdansk. A breakfast fit for a king was included in the price of about \$115 a night. Here, with the assistance of a very helpful hotel staff, we rented a car and set out for Koleczkowo. Instead of a GPS and a Polish-German (or English) dictionary we had Christian. Christian, a math PhD, is a very competent navigator and a linguistic genius. Even though

he had only started to learn Polish from a book three days ago, his ability to speak and read this language was amazing and delightful.

Chris had great fun maneuvering our little Mercedes along well maintained, but very narrow, tree-lined country roads. After about an hour’s drive and a lengthy visit to a famous Catholic Church (Gerdi and Christian are devout Catholic Christians) we saw the sign “Koleczkowo.” I admit, I felt a surge of excitement shoot through my veins.

European villages usually consist of a compact cluster of homes organized around the town square and surrounded by manicured fields. Koleczkowo, on the other hand, is a loose conglomeration of scattered, yet beautiful homes, with no apparent town centre, no restaurant, and no Rathaus (city hall). I believe it is administered from Wejherowo, about 25km further north-west, which was known as Neustadt during Nazi occupation.

In about fifteen minutes we had passed through the town and hadn’t seen anything noteworthy, except a Post Office. Here we stopped and Christian, in his best Polish, explained to two very young and perplexed looking ladies the purpose of our visit. They could only give us a detailed map of the area. A few minutes later, while the others were studying a monument near the Post Office, an elderly couple arrived. I asked them if they spoke German or English, but they emphatically shook their heads. However, I was determined to make myself understood and asked about “school”, “Schule”, “old.” And lo and behold, the woman spoke some English and pointed up the road to two relatively new adjacent buildings, which we had already identified as school buildings on our initial drive through the village. She gave me to understand that the first building was the one we were looking for. We drove to the buildings and parked our car in an empty parking lot. While we were walking around the buildings looking for people, a car drove up and a friendly middle-aged woman got out. Immediately, I asked if she spoke English or German. She shook her head but indicated for us to wait. She went into the second building and returned with an attractive, young, blond woman, who spoke very good Eng-

lish. I explained what we were looking for and why. The determination and diligence with which these two ladies set out to find my birthplace was heartwarming. They invited us into their school, (the second building) a primary school, grades 1 to 3, where the older woman was the principal and the younger one a teacher. They went through old books and made phone calls, until at last one such call gave us the answer for which we were looking. The school we were looking for was the building next door, the one the lady at the Post Office had indicated to me. The building had been renovated, the roof had been removed and a second story constructed. With gratitude in our hearts, we thanked our hosts for their assistance and walked over to the other building, a school for older children. The front doors were locked, but when we came to the back of the building, Chris called, “Dad, come look at this!” He had found an obviously old entrance. The wooden door looked very old, the doorway was lower than normal, and the doorframe consisted of old, painted wood. The door was unlocked, and Chris and I entered a small, very old looking foyer (ca. 2m x2m). There were two doors in the foyer, one leading into the building - it was locked. The other opened into a very narrow, two-foot wide stairway leading into a basement. The only light in the narrow stairway came from the door we had just opened. At the bottom was total darkness. Using the light from Chris’s phone, we followed this stairway into an area of little, seemingly ancient passageways and tiny old, empty rooms. Everything was small, narrow, low and obviously, very old – the original structure. We left this rather ghostly, dark cave and headed for daylight. I am satisfied that this building is my birthplace.

Grateful, that we had accomplished what we set out to do we headed back to Gdansk and a wonderful supper of Polish pierogi. The next morning at 7:00 we took the ICE (inter-city express) to Berlin, a five-hour trip. I am convinced, that there is no more comfortable way to travel than by ICE accompanied by a travel guide named Christian.

- Submitted by John Rempel



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SA
<p><b>2</b> @ 10 am German Service— Joachim Dau @ 10 am Interactive Sermon @ 11 am Worship Service— Rudy Dirks</p>	<p><b>3</b> @ 7 pm Women's Bible Study @7:30pm Male Chorus</p>	<p><b>4</b> @ 9 am Women in Service @ 7 pm Church Council</p>	<p><b>5</b> @ 6:30 pm Pioneer Club @ 7 pm Prayer Mtg @ 7 pm Worship Committee Meeting</p>	<p><b>6</b> @ 6:30 pm German Choir @ 8 pm Choir Practice @ 8:30 pm Candle Light Choir Practice</p>	<p><b>7</b> @ 6:30 pm Youth Band @ 7pm Leadership Retreat @ 7:30 pm Youth</p>	<p><b>8</b> @ 9 am Lead- ership Re- treat</p>
<p><b>9 Peace</b> <b>Sunday</b> @ 10 am BFC Discussion @ 11:00 am Worship Service— Guest Speaker— Jason Martin</p>	<p><b>10</b> @ 7am Women Baking @ 7 pm Women's Bible Study @7:30pm Male Chorus</p>	<p><b>11</b>@9am Women in Service  @ 7:30pm Member- ship Meeting</p>	<p><b>12</b> @ 6:30 pm Pioneer Club @ 7 pm Prayer Mtg</p>	<p><b>13</b> @6:30pm German Choir @ 8 pm Choir Practice @ 8:30 pm Candle Light Choir Practice</p>	<p><b>14</b> @ 10 am Senior's Tea @ 6:30 pm Youth Band @ 7:30 pm</p>	<p><b>15</b></p>
<p><b>16</b> @ 10 am German Service— Udo Woeke @ 10 am Interactive Sermon @ 11 am Worship Service— Rudy Dirks @ 1 pm—Jr Youth Event— Chocolate FX</p>	<p><b>17</b> @ 7am Women Baking @ 7pm Women's Bible Study @7pm Male Chorus</p>	<p><b>18</b> @ 9 am Women in Service @ 7 pm Spiritual Council Mtg</p>	<p><b>19</b> @6:30pm Pioneer Club @6:30pm Young Adult Leadership Mtg @7pm Prayer Mtg</p>	<p><b>20</b> @ 6:30 pm German Choir @ 8 pm Choir Practice @ 8:30 pm Candle Light Choir Practice</p>	<p><b>21</b> @ 6:30 pm Youth Band @ 7:30 pm Youth— Potluck</p>	<p><b>22</b></p>
<p><b>23 Eternity</b> <b>Sunday</b> @ 10 am Interactive Sermon @11 am Worship Service— Rudy Dirks</p>	<p><b>24</b>@ 7am Women Baking @ 7 pm Women's Bible Study @7:30pm Male Chorus</p>	<p><b>25</b>@7am Women Baking @9am Women in Service @7pm Education Committee Mtg</p>	<p><b>26</b> @6:30pm Pioneer Club @6:30 pm Young Adult Leadeship @7pm Prayer Meeting</p>	<p><b>27</b> @ 6:30 pm German Choir @ 8 pm Choir Practice @ 8:30 pm Candle Light Choir Practice</p>	<p><b>28</b> @ 6:30 pm Youth Band @ 7:30 pm Youth— MYOM</p>	<p><b>29</b>  Neal- McShane Wedding</p>
<p><b>30 1st Advent</b> <b>&amp; Communion</b> @ 10 am Interactive Sermon @10:45 am Worship Service— Rudy Dirks @ 3 pm German Advent Program</p>						

# Milestones

9

Join us as we celebrate one another's special milestones!

The following members, who are 80 years of age and older are celebrating birthdays this month:



Justina Bartel turns 89 on November 2nd  
Gerhard Hummel turns 80 on November 7th  
Helianta Block turns 85 on November 13th  
Nettie Goerz turns 88 on November 23rd  
Helen Riss turns 90 on November 23rd  
Siegfried Wiens turns 81 on November 24th  
Katie Quiring turns 80 on November 26th  
Susanne Janzen turns 88 on November 27th  
Gunnar Doerwald turns 80 on November 28th

We wish you all much happiness and health on your special days!

## ADDRESS UPDATES:

Elfrieda Braun  
17 Eden Street #107  
Virgil, ON L0S 1T0

Victor Braun  
1743 Four Mile Creek Rd  
Rom #HP 102  
P.O. Box 350  
Virgil, ON L0S 1T0

Herman & Elizabeth Neufeld  
678 Line 2 Road  
Virgil, ON L0S 1T0

**\*\*Reminder: If you have moved or changed any of your contact information, please alert the office so that our records remain current. \*\***

**Congratulation to the following couples as they celebrate 25, 50 & 60 years of marriage this month!**

- **25th Anniversary** on November 4th for David & Linda Epp
- **50th Anniversary** on November 14th for Udo & Anne Woelke
- **60th Anniversary** on November 14th for Peter P. & Mary Dirks



*Wishing you the warmest of congratulations on these special days!*

## A look back to this day in our history...

**November 6, 1905**

Death of George Williams, founder of the YMCA to give young men an alternative to soul-destroying recreations in London, and then the whole world.

**November 10, 1871**

Henry Stanley finds David Livingstone at Ujiji, Lake Tanganyica, one of the most famous moments in missionary history, supposedly greeting him with the words: "Dr. Livingstone, I presume."

**November 13, 1913**

Lenin writes to Maxim Gorki "Every religious idea, every idea of God, even flirting with the idea of God, is utterable vileness..."

**November 15, 1878**

Death of Jane Montgomery Cambell, who translated a number of hymns from German to English, including "Silent Night" & "We Plou the Fields."

**November 18, 1525**

Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz and Georg Blaurock are sentenced to bread and water in the tower by Zwingly and other intolerant Zurich authorities because of their Anabaptist beliefs and practices.

**November 20**

Francis "Fanny" Crosby becomes a Christian and goes on to write hundreds of beloved hymns such as "Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine."

**November 20**

Death of Isaak Watts, who wrote close to 600 hymns, including "At the Cross", "Joy to the World", etc.

# Contributions

## 60th Anniversary

November 14, 2014

Peter & Marie Dirks

The Dirks family and the Kroeker family both immigrated from the Ukraine, Russia in 1922 and 1924 respectively. The Dirks' settled in Mexico and the Kroeker's settled in Steinbach, Manitoba in hopes of finding a good life and to raise their children. The Dirks' eventually moved to Manitoba but when they relocated to Virgil, Dad stayed with the Kroeker family to finish school. It took some time but Peter and Marie finally became a "couple". They were married in Winnipeg on November 14, 1954 and moved to Virgil to start their life together. I was born a year later, November 15, 1955 and Peter John was born April 17, 1958. Mom and Dad have attended this church most of their married life. We moved around Ontario for a few years but returned to live in St. Catharines in 1965.

Mom filled the table, freezer, and pantry with preserves and baked goods. She was always ready for guests. Dad worked long hours and when he arrived home prayers were said, the phone was taken off the hook, and dinner was served. Dad enjoyed building and renovating homes around Niagara and finally retired at the age of 76, he still finds projects to do around the house. Since Mom's hip operation (2012) Dad has learned to make and serve simple meals to his beloved

"Frauchen". Each day he lovingly cares for her needs.

Mom (92) and Dad (96) are celebrating their 60th anniversary in November and are planning to move into one of the new Wellness Suites at Tabor Manor before Christmas. This will begin a new chapter in their lives but Dad knows it is best for mom and he is looking forward to the Mennonite meals served on Thursdays. It may have taken them a bit of time to get together but their bond of love and commitment to faith has become a strong example for Pete, myself and our children.



Submitted by Susan Kaye and Peter J. Dirks

## 50 years of Marriage

Udo & Anne Woelke

50 years of marriage certainly make an interesting life. In Genesis 2:18 the Lord God said: "It is not good for a person to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him." And in Genesis 1: 28: "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number'."

We started our family late. After six years of marriage and schooling for Udo, we were blessed with three children. With God's blessing we shared many happy years together, and also a few really difficult ones. The wise Solomon said: "Two people are better than one . . . If one falls down, his friend can help him up." And after 50 years of marriage there is absolutely no doubt, that these are not just 'words'.

**10** It has been said that good marriages are made in heaven, but the maintenance must

be done here on earth. And a successful marriage involves teamwork, where every member of the team has specific roles to fill and tasks to do. But eventually situations arise, where members have to take on chores for each other, even if they are unprepared and unfamiliar. With Anne's present health situation, Udo has had to learn more in the last two months, than in the previous 50 years.

As the years pass, and life goes on, family needs and personal capabilities change. Regardless how much we try to resist, our bodies (and sometimes also our minds) age, and we have to adjust and downsize. And here again, with lots of help from friends and family, and especially our NUMC church family, we experienced God's incredible blessing. He has blessed us with a long and happy life. Now we really enjoy our new home, without outside chores and duties, in lovely, peaceful surroundings, right here in Virgil. Thanks be to God for all his blessings.

## My Dad turns 80 Gunnar Doerwald's 80th Birthday

My Dad is turning 80 years and I was asked to share some thoughts on what impact he has had on my life. With my dad's interests being as diverse as they are this was not an easy assignment if I wanted to keep this to a few paragraphs. Many would have a different take on the impact my father had on them, but for me this is what came first to me.

My Dad is an intellectual, somewhat strong willed with a most interesting character. Frugal is the middle name he wasn't given at birth. With his well-rounded range of interests he is versed on many topics, making him fun and easy to talk to- in Spanish, German or English.

Papi, as we children call him, was not born with his interesting character. It was likely moulded by his thrifty nature.

Papi was never very interested in hiring anything out. Most everything was done himself. I used to wonder who hires trades and how they could make a living?

My Dad built his own houses, he does renovations - new kitchen cabinets, paint, wallpaper, reupholster, dry wall, bricklayer, roofer, plumber, electrician, furnace repair, auto mechanic, gardener, tailor and computer problem solver. It seems there isn't a lot he wouldn't do and not much he doesn't know something about.

Dad loves his spare time and has had a variety of hobbies. When he developed an interest in flying he built his own

planes. Lessons were cheaper if you provide your own plane.

Dad has a love of travel that he shares with our mom. They have done countless trips of varying sorts. From backpacking through southern South America to peaceful European riverboat cruises, there isn't much they won't do. Most of all, though, they love the trips they take with their camper. Since the best sites (and Walmart parking lots) don't have electricity he decided to replace the air conditioner on the top of the motor home camper with an energy saving solar panel.

Our father has been retired for a number of years now. He loves the energy of the youth and delights in his grandchildren. They often come to him for help or guidance as they are learning their own way. Embracing the computer era sets him apart as a grandfather and keeps him relevant. He is "friends" with his grandchildren and "follows" them with interest.

His more senior years have led our father into a deeper and more meaning full relationship with Christ. This has been such a blessing to us. Becoming actively involved with the German worship services has had him spending hours reading his bible and has laid a firm foundation for a Christ centered life.

My father has most definitely impacted my life. Not because I can fix anything, because I can't, but he has taught me you can do most anything if you want to and if you try.

Submitted by Erika Froese

## Tribute to Oma Justina Bartel's 89th Birthday

My beautiful Oma, Justina Bartel was born on November 2, 1925 in Siberia. At the age of 16, she became a Christian. This was during the time when the Russians had a "hard time under Communism." The Germans had come into Russia, bringing with them the message: "God is with you." She accepted this message and turned her life over to Christ. In 1947, she was baptized in a church in Germany.

One year later, her family came to Canada through the help of one of her father's cousins. They first lived in Saskatchewan from 1948-1949 before coming to live with Jake Epp (her father's first cousin) in Niagara. Her family then joined him in attending Niagara United Mennonite Church, where she became an active member.

It has been a joy to join my Oma in membership at NUMC with my own family. Her active role in missions both within the Frauenverein and in the greater community continuously demonstrates to me the selfless nature of Christian attitude. I have been inspired by her hard work ethic, and by the fact that she seems able to do anything she puts her mind to! I love hearing stories of her creativity and ability to make 'something from nothing.' From making syrup out of beets, because that was all they had, to knitting a sweater from the threads of a war parachute, Oma seems to have invented the do-it-yourself fashion! But truly, her work was out of a necessity to use what was available to survive and thrive in a broken world.

As I reflect on my Oma's service within the Church and others that served alongside her, I am reminded of the importance of putting others' needs before my own. In a society presently grounded on instant gratification and 'me-ism,' it is easy to be caught up in focusing only on my own family's needs; however, Christ calls us to stand apart from the world, and to serve one another. It is a blessing to have been brought up in a family and church whose history is rooted in service. As we now raise our own children, we pray that we too can pass on Oma's heritage of hospitality and her internal desire to serve in whatever way she can.

# *Eternity Sunday* We remember...

In 1816, King Frederick William III of Prussia made his cabinet pass a decree that stated all Lutheran churches in the areas under Prussian rule had to observe the last Sunday before Advent as a “general celebration in memorial of the deceased.” Other churches outside Prussia followed, eventually as well. In the United States, some Protestant churches celebrate this service of remembrance as “Totenfest.” It often coincides with the celebration of “All Saints Day.”

## ***Sorrow comes to Everyone***

The crisis of grief comes to everyone sooner or later. It is no respecter of persons. It is an experience that we do not fully understand until we walk through it ourselves. I felt sorry for my friends when they lost their loved ones, little did I know how much it hurt, until I experienced it myself.

After you have had 58 years of loving companionship, it is hard to describe how you feel and you're expected to start a new life. How can you when you don't even want to? You're in a complete fog. Nobody can help you, this is a chapter in life that you have to travel alone.

*Jesus wept,  
And in His weeping,  
He joined Himself forever  
To those who mourn.  
He stands now throughout all time,  
This Jesus weeping,  
with His arms about the weeping ones.  
“Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they shall be comforted.”  
He stands with the mourners,  
For His name is God-with-us.  
Jesus wept.*

Ann Weems

In those 29 years of my husband's retirement we did everything together, those certainly were the “Golden Years.” Our granddaughter said we were like a team. I can still hear his voice and feel his presence no matter where I am and what I am doing, and yet he is not there. Eberhard & I had a lot of time to discuss things before he died. Little did we know how painful it would be for me. Memories are wonderful but they also create many tears, but tears also help to ease the tension.

Life goes on and I am thankful for my church, family, friends and caring neighbours. My husband is not suffering anymore and for that I am thankful. Death is a mystery and so is Heaven. How blest we are to know Jesus Christ and that we will meet again. I can't imagine what life would be like if we did not have that assurance.

When we would quietly sit together on a cold winter evening, reading, watching TV or playing a game, we would often remark how cozy it was to be together. God has been good to us in our 58 years of marriage and having the privilege of living in our peaceful country Canada.

Eberhard's famous words were “Ich bin wunschlos gluecklich” after his war experiences in his teenage years. He has overcome the ills and trials of this world and I must carry on until we meet again.

- Submitted by Lena Van Bergen

**We are a congregation of approximately 600 members.**

**We have about 48 widows and about 7 widowers.**

**Approximately 22 of these individuals still live in their homes, 14 live at Creekview, 6 live at Pleasant Manor and the rest live at Heritage Place, Garden Court and other places.**

A little over 12 years ago Arno and I moved into a Life-Lease Unit at Pleasant Manor and we are glad that we did. We have good neighbors and we feel very much at home here. We can stay in our home or we can go to the "Link" where we can meet other residents.

The "Link" is the building that connects the Creek View Apartment Building with the rest of the Pleasant Manor Residences. It is a large and bright room, with a T.V., surrounded by comfortable chairs and chesterfields in one corner, a pool table in the other corner, a table with lots of puzzles for someone who likes to put them together, and of course many tables with chairs to play games, such as Scrabble, or card games or just to sit and chat.

Did you know that Pleasant Manor also has a "Tuck-Shop", which is a Mini-Grocery store? It is located at one end of the "Link" and residents can purchase basic groceries like milk and bread, canned soup, etc. and other non-perishable items. And most important, fresh coffee and tea is brewed there which the residents can purchase for a small price. Every day, except Sundays, the "Tuck-Shop" is open from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. and many residents come for a cup of coffee and a little chat with other residents. For 2 hours it is a busy place every morning, and many world problems are being discussed and solved in our minds.

Arno and I go there once a week, Arno to visit with other men and I like to make the coffee and talk to all who come for a coffee or tea.

This is a wonderful opportunity to meet other residents and the ladies who volunteer to run the "Tuck-Shop" are very much appreciated.

### not a fan.

completely. committed. follower.

On Monday evenings a group of ladies gather together to study the word of God. Our group has been studying together for approximately 9 years. The faces around the table have changed but the desire to learn more has not. We warmly welcome any newcomers who might want to join us.

We are currently discussing Not a Fan by Kyle Idleman. Our study consists of a DVD & a book. The book doesn't follow the video, so we are watching it first & then will read and discuss the book. The DVD study also includes a leader's tutorial with thought-provoking questions to discuss what was presented during each of the 6 video lessons. The book will be available in the church library shortly & the DVD can be found there once we have finished viewing it.

"Twenty times in the New Testament, Jesus issued a compelling and challenging invitation to Follow Him. He's not interested in mere fans. He doesn't want enthusiastic admirers. He wants Completely Committed Followers. This one-of-a-kind small group study examines what it means to deny oneself and truly follow Jesus"

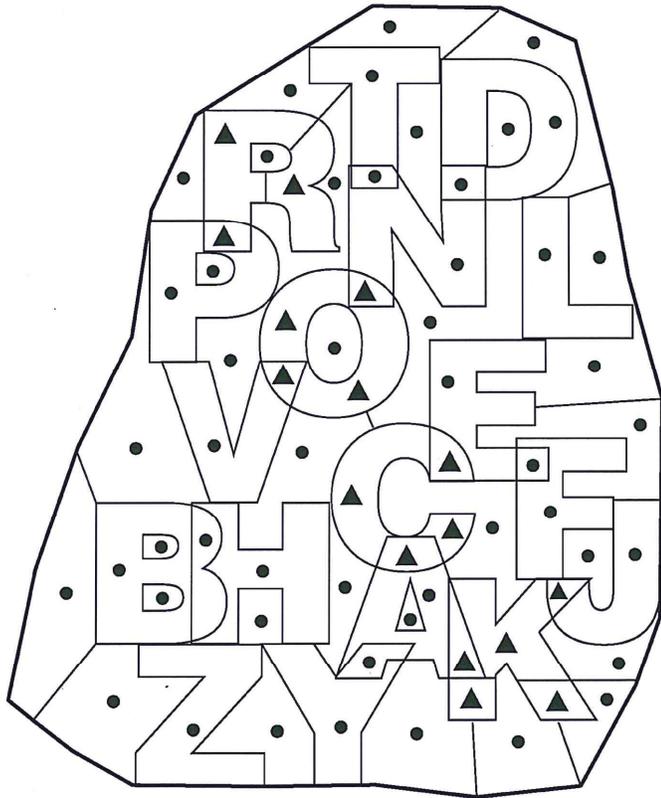
DTR ... define the relationship. What if Jesus asked you to define the relationship you have with him? What would you say? Would you surprise yourself & discover that maybe you are more of a fan than a follower? We tend to want a relationship with Jesus but more on our terms than on Jesus'. Jesus wants to turn our lives upside down, and that can be a bit scary.

"Not a Fan challenges you to consider what it really means to call yourself a Christian. With a direct frankness that you're not likely to hear in Sunday school class, Kyle invites you to take an honest look at your relationship with Jesus. His call to follow may seem radical to us, but Jesus desires it for every believer"

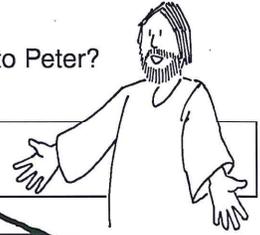
This month's submission is from  
Debbie Fast

Jesus blessed Peter.

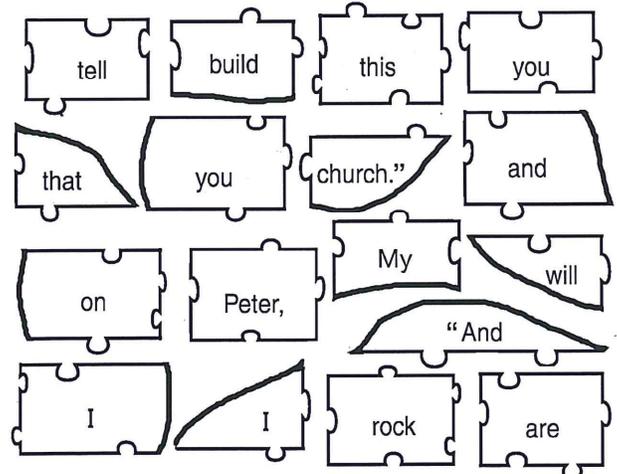
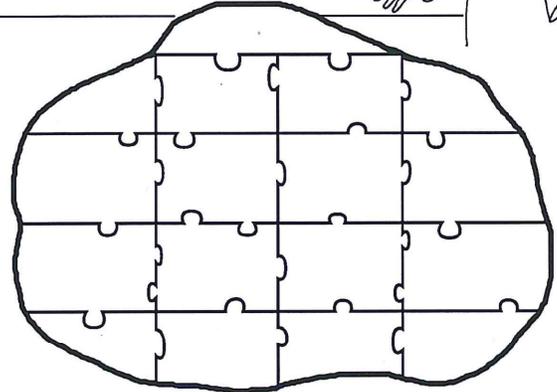
What does Peter's name mean?  
Shade in the shapes with ▲ .



What did Jesus say to Peter?



Fit these pieces in the puzzle.



What is your name? What does it mean?

My name is: \_\_\_\_\_

It means: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete the activities above.

Rip this page out and put it in the Kids Box at the Welcome Centre.  
If you are the winner, you will get your picture in next month's newsletter!

Good luck & have fun!

**Mischa Rose Driedger** is one of our talented young musicians participating in a morning worship service.

How did it feel to play piano & sing in church?

Mischa: I was a bit nervous and scared, but then I felt really good afterwards. It was kind of fun, and I would do it again.

Parents are Jake and Justine Driedger

Favourite foods are Rollkuchen and home-made noodles.

Mischa loves any song she can sing. And often sings all day long.

She loves to read mystery novels like Nancy Drew and anything about animals.

Mischa also loves horseback riding and wants to have her own farm one day.

### What's in a name?

As parents, we have a variety of reasons for why we choose certain names for our children. But one of the things that could influence our choices is the meaning of the name. Some of the meanings connected with Mischa's name are: gift from God, a lovely person, sassy and exotic-sounding. Her parents were also looking for a name with Russian descent, as Mischa's Opa was born in Russia. Her family also calls her Mischka, which means little bear in Russian because she sounded like a baby bear when she grunted as an infant.

Rose is the flower of June, the month in which Mischa was born - June 10, 2006.



## What we are most thankful for...

15

Many of you either completed the Congregational Survey last month, or submitted your response to Steve's Thanksgiving Day sermon challenge to share with us what you are most thankful for. Below are some of the responses we received. How incredible to see such thankfulness!

- Food
- My family
- My family, with all our strengths and weaknesses as we grow together
- My kids
- My Grandma
- My Mom & Dad
- My whole family
- My house
- My Spouse, who is always praising me and building me up
- That our Thanksgiving holiday is free of being overshadowed with shopping, as the American's experience with Black Friday
- God's creation
- The Bible
- Jesus
- That God is at work in me
- That God's never lets me down
- That my bad experiences helped to grow me to be a follower
- That God is my potter and I am His clay
- That God is the Great "I Am" and is always with me
- That God is my Almighty Father
- Staying faithful to God
- The teaching at this church

What a blessed people we are!  
Praise be to God!

Congregational Response

**Whoops! There was an error in last month's address update!**

Please update your records for:

**Scott, Yvonne, Josh & Hannah Vanderlee to:  
140 Carlton Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON  
L0S 1J0**

**New home phone #: 289-723-2621**

# Other News...

Anabaptist Witness launched-The first issue of Anabaptist Witness (formerly Mission Focus) explores intersections of mission practice, missiology and Anabaptist identity. Beginning **Friday, Oct. 31st**, read the entire volume at [anabaptist-witness.org](http://anabaptist-witness.org), or visit the site to purchase print copies .

Make a Difference Day is an inspiring one day event designed to empower and educate junior youth on what they can do to make a positive impact in our world. From social issues to food justice, each year features a different theme that will cause never ending rippling changes. **Sun. Nov. 2nd**, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate | 9:30am to 3 pm | Cost: \$15/youth, \$10/sponsor

Prayer Retreat, Niagara region, led by Julie Bender, **November 8th, 9:00 - 3:00** at The First Mennonite Church of Vineland. Sponsored by Mennonite Spiritual Directors of Eastern Canada. Register at [mennospiritdir@gmail.com](mailto:mennospiritdir@gmail.com) or by phoning 289-396-4330 by Nov. 1. Cost payable at retreat: \$25.00. Theme: Experience the Spiritual Seasons: Simplicity: The Season of Spiritual Awakening, Complexity: The Season of Spiritual Strengthening, Perplexity: The Season of Spiritual Surviving, Harmony: The Season of Spiritual Deepening .

People on the Move- The Meeting House, 2700 Bristol Court, Oakville- **9 am - 3:30 pm, November 8th, 2014** Join MCC Ontario at our annual fall conference to hear stories of People on the Move, explore factors that cause people to move, and learn how MCC is responding with your support. [mcccanada.ca/ontariofallconference2014](http://mcccanada.ca/ontariofallconference2014)

Trust me. Trust my tummy- Sandy Maxwell, a Registered Dietician with the Niagara Region presents a free parenting workshop at Fairview MB church on **November 11th at 7pm**. She is passionate about helping people learn to prepare and enjoy 'real food' and to bringing awareness to the community of the importance of being positive role models for healthy eating. This workshop about diet will answer some of the most common questions about feeding children. There will be suggestions that will help your child be more open to try-

ing new foods, allow your child to trust her feelings of hunger and fullness and lead to fewer power struggles between you and your child around food. Plus learn more about how to encourage your children (any age) to learn to cook healthy meals and Snacks.

20th Anniversary of Circles of Support & Accountability Wednesday, **November 12th, 7-8:30 pm**, 50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener- We invite you to join with us at Mennonite Central Committee Ontario as we celebrate the 20th anniversary with Circles of Support and Accountability. Join us for an evening of celebration, reflection and visioning. Together we can build safer and healthier communities. Please RSVP to Laura VanderGriendt [atlauravander-griendt@mennonitecc.on.ca](mailto:atlauravander-griendt@mennonitecc.on.ca) or 519-745-8458 ext. 214

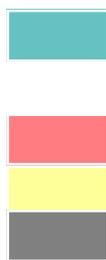
Spirituality & Aging Seminar- **Fri. Nov. 14th - 8:30 am @** Conrad Grebel University, Great Hall, 140 Westmount Rd. North, Waterloo, ON. The speaker for 2014 is Dr. Kenneth Pargament an internationally renowned researcher in the area of spirituality and health, speaking on "Spiritual Transformation in Late Life." In particular his research has explored religion, spirituality and coping during times of loss and crisis. Dr. Pargament is Professor of Clinical Psychology at Bowling Green University in Ohio and Distinguished Scholar at the Institute for Spirituality and Health of the Texas Medical Center in Houston. Registration for this event is now open. \$50 registration, Seniors and Students \$25.

Waterloo Living Wage Program Launch- This community driven initiative recognizes employers that pay a living wage. Join us for the program launch on **November 14, 4-6 pm** at 50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener. More info at [mcccanada.ca/get-involved/events](http://mcccanada.ca/get-involved/events)

Niagara Life Centre presents the Homes of Distinction Christmas Home Tour on **November 14 and 15**. Fabulous homes are all decked out for the Christmas season by local designers, decorators and stagers. More info and tickets are available by calling NLC at 905-934-0021 or at [nlchometour.com](http://nlchometour.com).

If you would like to submit any photos or articles for the newsletter, please contact the Newsletter Committee, or the church office at: 905-468-3313 or by email at [office@redbrickchurch.ca](mailto:office@redbrickchurch.ca).

**Deadline for the December newsletter is November 12th, 2014.**



LIFE WITH US

NEWSLETTER

**Niagara United Mennonite Church**

1775 Niagara Stone Road

Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario

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Phone: 905.468.3313