

Stewardship Is...



Love in Action



January, February 2016, VOLUME 2 EDITION 10

Live With Us

At Niagara United Mennonite Church

"All Are Welcome"

*Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions;
All are welcome, all are welcome.
All are welcome in this place.*

*Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and a symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
All are welcome, all are welcome.
All are welcome in this place.*

*Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground, where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:
All are welcome, all are welcome.
All are welcome in this place.*

Author ~ Marty Haugen

World Fellowship Sunday, January 24, 2016

Each year Mennonite World Conference (MWC) encourages Anabaptist-related churches around the world to worship in spirit together around a common theme, on a Sunday close to **January 21. On that day in 1525 the first Anabaptist baptism took place in Zürich, Switzerland.**

Theme and Texts: “Walking with God”

Walking with God finds its total meaning in fellowship in the breaking of bread, in serving, and in meeting the needs of others. It does not mean any absence of challenges, but recognizing we are assured of victory with and through Him.

African proverb: “If you want to walk fast, walk alone; if you want to walk far, walk together”.

To walk, in the Bible often means a way of life.

A word search of “walk” turns up countless examples – some are literal examples, but the figurative ones say more about our walk with God.

“...that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths”. Micah 4:2

“...what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God”.

Micah 6:8

“... whoever says ‘I abide in Him’, ought to walk just as He walked”. 1 John 2:6

Psalm 23 has a focus on Jesus being the Good Shepherd who leads, guides, protects, and provides as we walk in His ways.

Stewardship Sunday, January 17, 2016



Theme: Risking Generosity

We clutch our tiny bits of faith in tight fists
shoved firmly in our pockets.
We clutch it suspiciously, so unwilling to let it go—
we don't want to lose it.
We clutch it fearing that once it is spent,
we will be without hope,
cast adrift, out of luck.

Help us loosen our grip.
Help us to pull our hands out of our pockets.
Help us to uncurl fingers stiffened over time:

to grow,
to shimmer,
to pulse,
to explode into the air
like a thousand red birds. AMEN

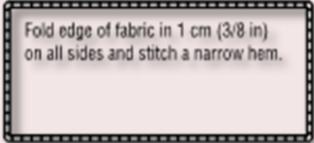
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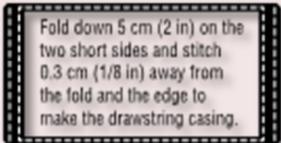
Make an MCC kit bag

Finished bag size: 30 x 43 cm (11¾ x 16¾ in)

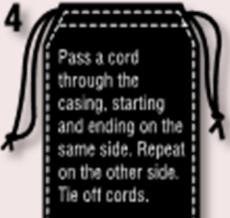
Fabric: 32 x 97 cm (12½ x 38 in)

Cord: 85 cm (33 in) for each drawstring (cut 2)

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1 Fold edge of fabric in 1 cm (3/8 in) on all sides and stitch a narrow hem.
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2 Fold down 5 cm (2 in) on the two short sides and stitch 0.3 cm (1/8 in) away from the fold and the edge to make the drawstring casing.
- 

3 Fold bag in half, wrong side in. Stitch bag sides from casing seam to bottom fold close to the edge.
- 

4 Pass a cord through the casing, starting and ending on the same side. Repeat on the other side. Tie off cords.

Stewardship

is heart work



One Small Step in the Journey of Life

When my children were in elementary school, I was surprised to discover that they expected to get a new set of pencil crayons every year during the September back to school shopping ritual. I remembered my own childhood and told them my story of what a big deal it was to get a 24 pack of Laurentian pencil crayons in a plastic case. We knew the number of each colour by heart, guarded them carefully and always put them back in their proper order. We certainly did not get new ones every year. In fact, I told them, I think my case is still somewhere at the back of my desk drawer, the most popular colours by now being tiny stubs.

Around this time, I came across an MCC publication that listed the supplies needed to make school kits for MCC – 4 notebooks, 12 pencil crayons, a ruler, an eraser and 4 pencils in a drawstring bag. I decided it would be a good idea to help those less fortunate than my own children to have nice school supplies as well.

I contacted Jessie Bartel, as I had heard that she was one of the ladies that made the school kit bags, and picked up 12 beautifully made bags. I purchased the supplies to fill them, and felt quite a sense of satisfaction. The next year I filled 35 bags; an achievement to be proud of, I thought!

I am not a shopper, but I always liked buying office supplies, so I kept my eyes open for deals on the school kit supplies. I discovered a 5 week window in August and September where the supplies can be purchased at about a quarter of the regular price, so four times as many kits can be made for the same amount of money. This is good stewardship.

The next back to school season Rudy happened to be at Zellers with me and asked the manager if we could order pencil crayons at their special low price. The manager agreed to look in to it. How many did we want? “500” said Rudy without hesitation. Whoa. He had totally made that up. I was speechless. The manager indicated it should be no problem and he would contact us shortly.

Some time went by, and during several phone calls we were told they were still working on it. I had my doubts, so I started buying packs of pencil crayons and the other needed supplies bit by bit. Inspired, I rose to Rudy’s unplanned challenge of 500 kits. And can you believe it? Just when I was done, Zellers called, we could pick up our 500 packs of pencil crayons! That is how my goal became 1000!

I believe that Education is the key to poverty reduction and peace. Children need to go to school, and they need to have supplies. Stewardship is one of the buzzwords of our time. There is considerable debate about the best way to help. Handouts can be a problem. Should we be sending our money directly to the local villages to purchase supplies there and support the local economy? Should we send the money to MCC for them to buy in bulk, rather than making kits ourselves? Should we be doing something else entirely? I don’t know the answers, and I’m sure they vary with differing circumstances. But we must not let the questions prevent us from doing anything.

For now, I know that the special prices during the back to school season are lower than what can be negotiated with suppliers. Often these items are used as loss leaders to get shoppers into the store. As long as this is the case, I will continue.

I appreciate the support of our congregation in raising funds to go towards the purchases of the supplies. Some of you have also been inspired to donate school kits as wedding favours, as teacher gifts, or as alternatives to gift-giving at various celebrations. I have received money from strangers in the store line behind me when they heard what I was purchasing so many supplies for. Still others have donated supplies or helped to buy them from more distant stores, including some who do not support many charities.

Every fall my family had to put up with a living room that looked like an office supply warehouse. This past winter, our son Jeremy participated in MCC’s “SOS for Syria” campaign. He was interviewed in Canadian Mennonite, and imagine my emotion when I read the following quote. – “I remember sitting in our living room and it was stacked wall to wall with notebooks, pencils and erasers. My mom would pray over these kits that some of them would help kids become doctors, teachers or change agents in their countries. She hoped the kits would be one small step in their journey.”

Making school kits gives me a great deal of satisfaction! But my greatest joy is that a mindset of compassion and a legacy of giving has been passed on to the next generation. I challenge you to find something to help others that you are passionate about, and just do it!



~ submitted by Dorothea Enns

Matthew, our “Angel”

As some of you may know, my second grandson, Matthew Belletrutti was born with Down Syndrome. My daughter, Becky and her husband Paul, were overwhelmed and concerned with the many challenges Matthew faced. At four months of age, he underwent open-heart surgery to correct a large hole in his heart. He made an excellent recovery, and his parents, with support of family, friends, church, and the Down Syndrome Society of Calgary, vowed to give Matthew the best life possible.



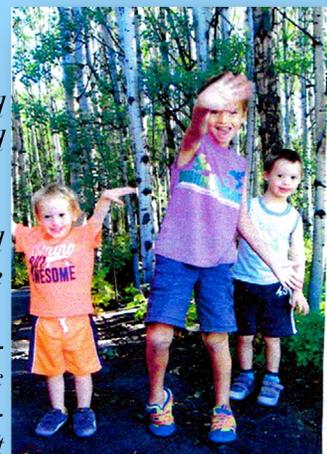
And so, under one year of age, Matthew was enrolled in a “Prep” class for children with Down Syndrome. There he learned to focus on the teacher and to socialize with other children. He also made good progress in speaking, walking and running.

At five years of age now, Matthew attends Kindergarten at Menno Simons Christian School in Calgary. Here he has the help of a teacher’s aide, whom he knows from his Sunday School at Foothills Mennonite Church.

To prepare the children in his class, and their parents, Becky and Paul crafted a brochure for everyone, to help them understand why Matthew is the way he is. These few excerpts from the brochure can help us better understand what life is like living with a child that has Down Syndrome.

Hi, I’m Matthew. I am five years old and I go to Kindergarten. I have blond hair and brown eyes, and I’ve already lost one tooth. I have two brothers, Ben (seven years old), and Isaac (two and a half years old).

We are all born with chromosomes. These determine the colour of our hair and eyes, how tall we are, the things we are good at, and the things we might have a hard time doing. You were born with 46 chromosomes, but I have 47. I have Down Syndrome and this makes me loving, caring, and very funny. I make my brothers laugh with the funny things I say. I’m a great dancer and am wildly enthusiastic about most things in life. I also love to run and jump. The extra chromosome is also why I have a small body and soft hands. It was hard for me to learn to walk and talk. Sometimes it’s hard for me to sit still.



Maybe you don’t understand all the words I try to say. And it might be hard for me to understand you. It takes me longer to learn things, but I’m not a baby and I can still be a good friend.

I love to go swimming, jump on the trampoline, ride my scooter, and help Mom in the garden.

Following are some of the traits Matthew has, and suggestions as to how to respond to them.

I am very affectionate and love to give hugs and kisses.

It’s okay to ask me to stop and ask you first.

Sometime, it’s hard for me to share my toys.

It’s okay for you to remind me to take turns.

Sometimes, I want to share things with you, even if you don’t want them.

It’s okay to say “No thank-you”.

Sometimes, I get mad or frustrated if things don’t go my way.

It’s okay to give me some space. I’ll feel better soon.

Sometimes I like to do and say things that I’m not supposed to, to make people laugh.

See, we’re more alike than different!

Matthew is our “angel”. He is a blessing to our family and we love him dearly. We pray for him and we wish him all the best as he endeavours to face the many challenges that are before him.

Grade 1 and 2
Winter Scenes
Inspired by
the Art of Maud Lewis



**Painting Inspiration:
My Winter Memory**

~ by Marion Griese



The artwork was made by the grade 1 and 2 classes in Pioneer Club. The children learned about the Canadian artist Maud Lewis and were inspired by her colourful and imaginative work. Maud was born with a disease that crippled her, yet that did not stop her from painting. Since she could not move around very well, she spent her days in one spot by the window painting scenes from memory. The children were inspired by this and based their artwork on their own favourite winter memories.

My Favourite Part of Painting was:



CAMRYN

I loved adding details with permanent markers.



ADDISON

I'm in my backyard. I liked to paint the snowflakes.



ELIOT

I'm sledding in my backyard & having a snowball fight.



AVERY

At Oma & Opa;s cottage making an igloo & a snowman.



ASHLEY

I'm sledding at Fort George with family. I liked making snowflakes.



BRODY



SARAH



CLAIRE

I'm in my backyard making a snowman with my family & friends. I liked painting purple snow.



KENNEDY

I'm sledding down my favourite hill Fort George. I liked designing our painting.



Pleasant Thoughts

Author Unknown

*I want to remember lovely things;
A baby's smile, a butterfly's wings,
An evening star, the blue, blue sky;
A perfect snowflake, clouds on high,
Sweet songs of birds, a sunset glow,
Refreshing rain, soft winds that blow,
To keep the storehouse of my mind
Full of thoughts that make me kind.
Lovely thought to live with me;
Making my life a rhapsody.
When youth's gay pleasures may have passed by,
Sweet, happy thought must never die.*

For years I have collected poems and lately I have decided to memorize a few of them. I have shared some of them with special people – so, please do feel “Very Special” as you read my story.

I was born in the Ukraine and share the experiences of war, trek immigration with many in our congregation. Because of these experiences I have always felt extremely blessed. My heart is filled with gratitude and wonder of this miracle of life, protection, guidance and the many, many blessings.

Just as each year has seasons, Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter, so my life has seasons too. Since I have arrived at the Winter Season of my life, I choose to think of my life as part of a day. Winter is such a cold, cold time. Even as I am writing this in the Spring I seem to feel the cold.

Twilight – the gradual decline of light before dark – I have always thought of twilight as the serenely, peaceful, beautiful time of day. I am in the twilight of my life. The time when my life overflows with joy and thanksgiving. A time for me to retrieve treasures from the storehouse of my mind and share “The Journey of My Thankful Heart.”

Jake and I were married July 1958 in this church (Niagara United Mennonite Church). I was determined to be a good cook for my husband, however the new recipes did not gain approval except for the apple pie. He would say, “Forget the recipes, just cook meat and potatoes for me.” Meat and potatoes I cooked! Same old! Same old! I peeled and cooked potatoes over and over again.

One day my mother was visiting and she must have heard me grumble about potatoes before, and when I complained about having to peel potatoes again, she said, in a not so cheerful voice without looking up from her handiwork in her lap, “Be thankful that you have a potato to cook!” These words spoke to me deeply and suggested, “Grow an attitude of gratitude.” You have that choice! From then on I decided to check my thoughts and attitude, and choose to find things to be grateful for.

My journey of cultivating my attitude of gratitude began with thanksgiving for my country Canada, for freedom, peace, safety and opportunities, for our beautiful Niagara Region, for all the vines, fruits and vegetables grown here; birds and bees, busy ants and all creatures great and small; for beauty and fragrance of flowers, for butterfly's wings reminding me of angel wings. Through choice, observation and admiration of God's awesome creation grew a heart of praise. I opened my Bible and learned Psalm 8 (TLB):



O Lord our God, the majesty and glory of your name fills all the earth and overflows the heavens. You have taught the little children to praise you perfectly. May their example shame and silence your enemies! When I look up into the night skies and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you have made—I cannot understand how you can bother with mere puny man, to pay any attention to him! And yet you have made him only a little lower than the angels and placed a crown of glory and honor upon his head.

You have put him in charge of everything you made; everything is put under his authority: all sheep and oxen, and wild animals too, the birds and fish, and all the life in the sea.
O Jehovah, our Lord, the majesty and glory of your name fills the earth.

While peeling the potato again one day, I looked down at the peeler in my hand – invention, designed by man! This manmade thing even makes peeling potatoes a pleasure. My thanksgiving list grew for house, kitchen and all the things designed by creative minds of men to make my life more pleasant. Challenged and inspired by creative minds, an amazing list of interesting potato recipes grew in my collection. The same old ordinary potato became treasured comfort food. I challenge you to try this.

Gnocchi

*3 cups mashed potatoes
3 tbsp olive oil
2 eggs, beaten
1 ½ cups flour (to 2 cups)
Salt and pepper to taste*

*Mix potatoes, salt, pepper, oil and eggs well.
Add flour, and mix to a dry dough.
Turn out onto a floured board and knead well until smooth.
Divide dough into 4.*

*Roll each piece into a sausage. (1/2" rolls)
Cut into 1" pieces and form into crescent shape.
Press gently against a fork.*

Cook gnocchi in boiling water for 5 minutes. After they rise to the top of the pan, remove from pan with a slotted spoon

Drain.

Place gnocchi into a greased casserole dish. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese and 1 tbsp melted butter.

Serve with your favourite sauce.



Baked Sweet Potato Wedges

*Peel sweet potatoes,
Cut into wedges,
Toss with olive oil, salt, pepper and oregano.
Bake on foil-lined baking sheet in 450* oven for 20-25 minutes or until tender and golden, turning once.*



~ to be cont'd in next newsletter

Around Christmas 1945 (70 Years Ago)

It is now 70 years ago when WW2 was over, but peace for us was not yet here. The escape from the Red Army took us with God's helping a very cold January from our West Preussen (Prussian) home to the area of Stolp. "Us" included my Uncle Bruno, Aunt Clara, my mother, my sister Hannelore and me. Through all the trauma we stayed together all of 1945 in a house in Pommern. We were unsure if this was still German territory. Aunt Clara was brave and made her way to Berlin in November.

Two weeks later she was back with the information we were in Poland and had to get out. We packed what little we had and headed to a train station. The freight train that took all Germans out of Poland arrived and pulled out of the station around noon. As soon as it got dark the train would slow down at each station. Men with guns would get on and threaten and rob the people of what little they had, even coats and shoes they were wearing. At midnight, we landed at the border. In the dim lamp-light we could see people wrapped in blankets, some bloody and beaten. My sister also had no coat, but we felt blessed because we had each other.

The trip now continued in an East German train to Berlin Station "Friedrich Strasse". This is where a large Camp received all fleeing people from the East. After registration came delousing and distribution of food. We had friends in Berlin, so we did not stay in the camp but could receive our daily food rations. My mother and Aunt Clara wrote letters to addresses of relatives we hoped to find. The days in the destroyed city passed quickly. All these displaced people had to be distributed, so on the 7th of December we were again on a train which was parked more than it travelled and no one knew the destination.

Then finally on Dec. 9th, my 16th birthday, we landed in Bad Kleinen at a distribution camp called Loften. The next day I joined a "Workbrigade" where besides something to do, there was also food. Our work was to dig the mass grave a few meters longer each day. The digging was not so hard because it was sandy soil.

Every morning a truck came with about 20 bodies, mostly children. They were the innocent ones in this mad war! When possible, these small souls were given a quiet prayer while we leaned on our spades. When my mother found out I was working by this open grave, she told me not to go there anymore. She meant well, but it was too late. I will never forget the eyes of these innocent children. God is on our side when we ask.

Already the next day, when walking in the woods, I met a man who asked if I knew someone who could build him a shelf. I told him my uncle could do it. Then he asked if I could handle horses. Because I grew up with horses. This was no problem. We now both had work and most importantly, a good meal on this small farm. The next day, my sister was also hired to clean and cook syrup from sugar beets. We were very thankful to have food and work to survive. This was just before Christmas in a camp where hunger and sickness and death were the norm.

Christmas Eve was very quiet in our barracks, everyone deep in their own thoughts. It was perhaps the hour where back home we would enter the "Gute Stube" to celebrate the birth of Christ in the glow of the Christmas tree. Suddenly our door opened, and three people entered! By the glow of a flashlight our names were called. Then we heard "Mutti, Papa". It was our cousin Ruth. She had now found her parents and us. The other two people were officials from the camp. Ruth had received the letter her mother had written in Berlin. Since she was a Red Cross nurse, she was able to find out where to find us. That glow of the flashlight was to us the bright star over Bethlehem. There was much to talk about, and reason to thank our Lord. Ruth was our way out of this camp to Finsterwalde Mark Brandenburg. My eldest sister Else also survived the perils of war. She was nurse in a hospital in Sachsen.

I have often asked myself why this Christmas Angel came to us when so many others suffered much more. I thank God for giving me guidance on all paths of my life.



We Don't Talk About That

An Amazing Story of Survival

by Giselle Roeder

Millions of women were abused and raped during the final stages of WW II, and while the attitude among many survivors is "We don't talk about that", this woman has found the courage to place her memories on record.

Growing up in a rural village in Pomerania, Gila's tranquil life turned tragic when the fighting approached her neighborhood. Her father was captured and taken to Siberia while she and her family became displaced persons and joined the trek of thousands "on the road to nowhere." She was witness to gruesome acts of violence that quickly aged her before her years. She barely survived diphtheria and later, recovering from typhoid fever, she took responsibility for her three siblings while her mother worked. Despite her interrupted schooling through circumstances beyond her control, Gila's determination empowered her to become a Physical Education teacher and successful competitive kayaker. The division of Germany into East and West with its political ramifications caused her to escape to West Germany. Here she was able to fulfill an old dream despite having to face new challenges, including an unwanted affair. Gila's story is one of heartache, courage, pain, love, liberation and reclaiming life.



Following her emigration to Canada, Giselle Roeder became a successful business woman and international public speaker. She has regularly written for several magazines and authored two books regarding healthy living. She currently resides on beautiful Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

(edited from Friesen Press review)

(Editor's notes)

Although this book is not written by a Mennonite writer, nor tells the story of a Mennonite family, it certainly applies to many of our Mennonite families during this same time in history. And asking our Mennonite mothers and grandmothers about these horrors, they would also often answer "We don't talk about that".

Let's remember these experiences as we bring in new refugees from the mid East. The experiences of these women and children will be more similar to ours than we care to imagine. They will need the emotional and spiritual support of our church community to help them overcome the fears and scars of their past. May we be sensitive to these needs and pray for understanding and love.

(this book is not in church library)

K R

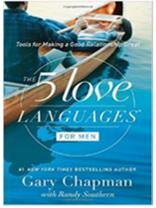
BOOK CORNER

The 5 Love Languages for Men

By Gary Chapman

The love she craves, the confidence you need.

"In this edition, Gary Chapman speaks straight to men about the rewards of speaking their wife's love language. You'll learn, how to identify your wife's, and speak it clearly. Packed with helpful illustrations and creative pointers, these pages will rouse your inner champion and empower you to master the art of love."



Do you Believe?

By Travis Thrasher

A heart stirring, faith affirming novel about how God works in the lives of those who believe.

"When Pastor Matthew Wesley encounters a homeless man in the middle of the night who asks him if he believes in the cross of Jesus Christ, he can't imagine the series of life-changing events that will result from that brief moment. But as the stories of several desperate people come together one climatic night, they all come to understand how God works in amazing ways in our lives.

Evocative and moving, this sweeping story challenges you to ask: Do you really believe in the power of the cross, and if so, what are you going to do about it?"



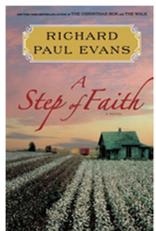
A Step in Faith

By Richard Paul Evans

"Alan Christoffersen lost his heart when his wife was killed in an accident almost one year ago. He lost his trust when his business partner stole his advertising business. He lost his home when the bank took his house. So Alan decided to leave his painful memories behind and walk from Seattle to the farther point on the map, Key West, but in St Louis, he is forced to stop.

Because his severe vertigo is diagnosed as the side effect of a brain tumor, Alan must go to Los Angeles for treatment. He is surrounded by those care most for him; his father, who is happy to have Alan back in his childhood home; Falene, who has been by his side through his most difficult times; and Nicole, who helped him recover from a mugging in Spokane. One by one, Alan alienates them all, and resumes his journey in angry loneliness. The people he meets as he walks the dusty southern back roads have lessons to teach Alan about accepting love. He just has to have faith that life can be worth living again – and that the woman he rejected will be willing to forgive him."

~ submitted by Debbie Fast

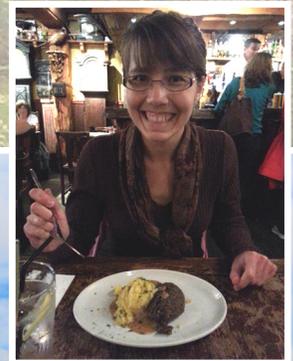


I've always dreamed of traveling. I remember a time in high school when I was saving to attend a class trip to France. I never made it on that trip and, through the following years, responsibilities prevented me from ever traveling. My goal was to visit Europe after I completed university and my school debts were paid off. I arranged that I would visit my friend in Scotland and I would climb a mountain... Then I became ill and the task of facing a chronic illness, never mind the thought of traveling with one, along with the financial limitations that came along with it, caused that dream to vanish. Life became about survival and I soon forgot how to dream.

The Lowlands and The Highlands

As a quick aside, there is a phrase that is spoken often among my generation, "first world problems". My lack of travel experience would categorically fit that designation. I've experienced many things in my life and I recognize this opportunity as special despite my circumstances and even more special because of them. However this experience turned out to be more than a first world dream. It became an intensely spiritual journey, a pilgrimage.

Last autumn, after having a conversation with a friend about dreams, I went home to an email in my inbox from WestJet introducing flights to Glasgow for the first time. Providence opened one door after another, including making it onto the supply list. Before I knew it, I was on a plane over the Atlantic Ocean.



Like my everyday life, it didn't look normal and it certainly wasn't easy. Pictures would show the highlights, but they miss the wheelchair I used in the airports to ease the effects traveling would have on my body, the hours I spent inside the flat on a couch resting, and the simple meals I chose to eat to abate the nausea (oddly, haggis was the best meal for me to eat while I was there!).

But God had brought me to Scotland. I continually had to place myself in His hands. Here at home, I spend a lot of time planning and pacing to optimize my energy. I can generally predict how my daily tasks will affect my health. Throughout my illness, I have been learning time and again to trust God to give me my daily bread instead of trying to be the one in control. Traveling is a different story and I had no choice. There is no control, only abandon. And the more I let go, the more God overwhelmed. Through this pilgrimage I learned to trust God not only to give me my daily bread but to make my cup overflow.

Across the street from my friend's flat was a free gallery, I spent almost every weekday sitting over lunch listening to talented organists or pipe and drums resonating throughout the stately main hall. We spent the weekend driving through the yellow blooms of heather, between rippling lochs and composed munroes, stopping in at castles and cairns along the way. I sang "The Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond" in a centuries-old pub on the bank of Loch Lomond with locals, I picnicked and prayed in the ruins of a monastery where many prayers have been lifted to God's ears before, and I took a gondola up Aonach Mor to stand in the clouds at the top of a mountain. God is so good, in the lowlands and the highlands.



*He makes my feet like hinds' feet,
He sets me upon my high places.
- Psalm 18:33*

Happy Birthday OPA

JAKE EPP



O ~ Outstanding
P ~ Patient
A ~ Awesome



Our Opa does so many neat things for us!

- building & fixing things
- gives us neat boxes & candy
- playing games with us
- built our house
- likes Dairy Queen
- lets me ride his scooter
- built a treehouse
- likes to garden
- tinkers with clocks



from your

GRANDPAPA



We love you, Opa! Renae

My Opa is Awesome! Elena

My Opa is the Best! Aria

I love you Opa! Eliot

January & February in NUMC History

A week in the life of an aspiring youth pastor, from the January 12, 1986 Bulletin: "The Search Committee is happy to announce that they have found an Assistant Ministerial candidate, namely Don Penner from Vineland. Presently studying at Menn. Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, he will graduate in May of this year. His wife Kristen is the daughter of Jim and Helen Reusser. Next Friday at 2:00 p.m., Don & Kristen Penner will meet with Pastor Dirks. That night Don will attend the youth meeting. Then on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2:00 p.m., he and his wife will meet with the Search Committee. At 7:30 that night everyone is invited to take part in a get acquainted time, fellowship and refreshments in the auditorium. Next Sunday, 11:00 a.m., Don will preach in the English service. - Please remember this concern in your prayers and attend Saturday night."

The January 19, 1986 Bulletin announced that "'WOMEN ALIVE'" is the name chosen for the new ladies group. Young women feel free to come and join our group activities. We meet at 7:30p.m. on the first and third Tuesday of the month."

Finally, from the "Boy-we've-come-a-long-way" department... from the February 23, 1986 bulletin: "By request of the congregation, the church council has drawn up a form letter and petition regarding Sunday store openings. We encourage you to send this letter personally. The letters, addresses and explanations of how to use them are available in the narthex."

~ contributed by Harold Neufeld



Milestones

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

January Birthdays

Eric Goerz: 83 (1/1/33)
Else Ballau: 89 (1/2/27)
Victor Braun: 88 (1/2/28)
Rudy Wiens: 90 (1/7/26)
Frieda Neufeld: 82 (1/12/34)
Elvin Penner: 80 (1/15/36)
Hermann Gau: 82 (1/17/34)
Gunter Block: 86 (1/18/30)
Frank Siemens: 82 (1/19/34)
Jacob Epp: 82 (1/21/34)
Anna Toews: 94 (1/22/22)
Nettie Rahn: 85 (1/24 31)
Margarete Pauls: 85 (1/28/ 31)

February Birthdays

Helene Peters: 83 (2/3/33)
Hertha Neumann: 84 (2/5/32)
Mary Goertz: 85 (2/8/31)
Lena Van Bergen: 83 (2/9/33)
Hannelore Enss: 82 (2/9/34)
Hansulrich Fieguth: 81 (2/11/35)



Child Dedication **Leyton Scott Bradnam**

~ Nov. 15, 2015
son of Michelle & Jon Bradnam

New Addresses & Phone Numbers

Linda & Willi Pankratz' home phone number is **289-868-8697**.

Trudy & Art Hildebrand's phone number is **289-723-1316**.

Anneliese Fieguth has moved into Rm. 8 in the Lincoln wing at Linhaven

Katie (Katarina) Fieguth now lives at Arbourview #148.





Musical Notes

At Christmas time it was “**O Holy Night**”! At his son’s wedding it was “**Bless this House**”! At his daughter’s wedding it was “**Sunrise, Sunset**”! At his niece’s wedding it was “**Perhaps Love**”! At a friend’s wedding it was “**The Lord’s Prayer**”!

It was my dad, **Jake Goerz**, who sang all these wonderful songs at these special occasions. One might ask, how is it that he became such a popular, requested singer at these kinds of events.

Well, indeed his rich and deep baritone voice was simply a pleasure to listen to and could bring one to tears as you listened to him sing. Actually, though, his love of singing and music was inherited from his mother who sang to him as a youngster and taught him the notes and pitch through a unique number system, as well as his father who played the violin, guitar and clarinet. He honed his singing voice at the tender age of 15, when he joined a choir, in the small western town of Blumenort, where they first landed upon immigrating to Canada.

After settling in Niagara in the 1950’s he joined the choir at The Niagara Church. It was under the direction and encouragement of the choir director Mr. Baerg that he began to sing solos. When initially asked to perform, he refused; but with the insistence of his mother and wife, he agreed to give it a try. Just to confirm with himself that he could indeed sing solo, while he was doing some work at the Shaw Festival, he found himself walking across the stage and seized the opportunity to check out the acoustics by singing to an empty theatre. A secret on-listener caught the impromptu show and confirmed his abilities. The rest is history, as the saying goes.

It was under the choir direction of John Rempel that my dad’s love of singing continued to blossom and grow. I knew he was committed to John and singing when he left a visit to my family in British Columbia early, so he could sing at the candlelight service. Or he would try to ensure that his other love, hockey, would not usurp a choir practice. If he was sick and was beginning to feel a tickle in his throat before a performance, he would simply down a “huggle muggle”. I know, you are wondering what a huggle muggle is? Well it was a couple of raw eggs and a couple of teaspoons of sugar, whipped together, that he believed was the cure as it slithered down his throat. Uncannily enough, he rarely missed a choir practice or performance because of illness.

My dad not only sang solos but loved singing in duets, (even with his daughter) quartets (with his nieces and nephews and friends), small groups (male choruses) and mass choirs for over 60 years in both German and English and even some Russian.

For all those that have encouraged, shared and engaged with my Dad in his love of music and singing over the years, I know that he has the fondest of memories and is eternally grateful.

Submitted by Mary Regier

Thank you to everyone who has been involved with music programming throughout the Christmas Season. From choir members, to Sunday School students, from bell ringers to special music musicians, we extend a heartfelt thank-you for making our Christmas season a truly memorable one!

Upcoming Sunday Morning Musicians:

January 24: Praise and Worship

January 31: Will Friesen and Rachael Peters

February 7: Choir and Praise and Worship

February 14: Will Friesen and Rachael Peters

February 21: Praise and Worship

February 28: Choir



Beyond Sunday Mornings:

Do you love piano music?

Piano duets??

Piano and organ duets???

Stay tuned for an exciting concert announcement in the next edition!

A Passion for Teaching Painting



When I think back to my early painting days, I remember a young mother who was just happy to get a night out, to do something that would spark my creativity that was buried beneath meals, laundry and diapers. I enjoyed learning the steps to bring a simple project to life. I started teaching Folk Art Painting at the Fairview

Mennonite Brethren Church on Geneva Street at their program for women called "Time Out". That was 30 years ago. I am still teaching Decorative Painting in my home and at the Time Out program on Tuesday mornings. I am inspired by my students.... their enthusiasm excites me. Their disbelief that they have achieved a beautiful piece of art, whether it is a cute simple Santa made from a burned out light bulb or a portrait of a loved one, they are re-born in their creativity as well. The art of decorative painting is a learned skill that anyone can master. I always admit that I am a great copier. I do feel, however, that God gave me a special gift to share and that is to teach, and my passion is to teach painting.



(Susan's paintings will be displayed in the downstairs Art Hallway shortly)



- submitted by Susan Kaye

100 Huntley Street Interview

Udo Woelke & Bill Devolin were interviewed by Cheryl Weber on 100 Huntley Street about our church's decision to sponsor a refugee family from Syria. Following this interview, our church received several emails from people outside our church who were impressed with NUMC's undertaking. Some even contributed money to our refugee fund.



Niagara Bethany Bell Choir

We were treated to the **Bethany Bell Choir** on December 6th.

A big thank-you goes out to Tracey Frena for bringing the ringers to the 11:00 service. Niagara UM's very own Emma Bartel, Allison Dube, Emily Dube, and Joyce Friesen are part of the ensemble.

Mrs. Ella Dick formed the bell choir in the late 1970s, and Tracey Frena took over as conductor in 1995.

The bell choir's motto is "Children helping children".



All proceeds are donated to **Grace Children's Hospital** in Haiti.



From the Turkey's Mouth

We have turkeys at our place – beautiful Bronze turkeys that frolic in a protected enclosure, secure in the knowledge that their dinner will be provided at 4 p.m. daily – it appears, like manna from heaven, except the golden pellets and grain drop from a steel canister over the fence, into the feeding trough. ‘Ah-hah,’ you say – ‘you’re fattening them up for Thanksgiving, or maybe Christmas.’ Err-yes... three years ago (and the year after that, and the next one too). Just like our geese, the last of which is still feisty at age 20 (she is predeceased by 3 pen-mates, all of natural causes). And then there are our chickens, the ones we bought for eggs and continue to feed even though they’re past their production peak. A savvy farmer and business person would be enjoying these as soup chickens by now – the only thing our chickens need to fear is the coyote who’s been visiting more and more frequently in broad daylight and appears to think we’ve fattened them up just for him (we let our chickens free range during the day) – very traumatizing for the chickens. We’ve learned to identify the particular warning squawk, accompanied by a mass rush of chickens in a single direction that signals imminent coyote danger. In contrast, you can recognize happy chickens easily – they meander around the grassy yard, pecking and scratching at will or enjoying a sand bath (in my favourite flower bed, no less) – clucking away in that distinctive, happy tone that makes you feel good. But I digress – the point is, when I think of turkeys, I think of those fortunate, happy creatures that we are responsible for and that I have the pleasure to watch, going about their happy bird lives on a daily basis.

So this year, when I purchased turkeys for turkey supper – the finest butterball turkeys (on sale!) – I spared a moment for the birds that (were) sacrificed for us and tried to get the number of pounds purchased just right. Can you imagine a turkey supper with no turkey?



Although we made positive changes at turkey supper this year (e.g., round tables, coleslaw instead of boiled peas & carrots, silent auction/food sales, sponsorships to cover the cost of food), rest assured there will always be a turkey at turkey supper. Here’s why:

This past fall, I ran into Linda and Willi Pankratz on my way into church and gushed about turkey supper - they were the first recipients of my spiel, designed to spread the exciting news early and often, that TURKEY SUPPER is ON and COMING SOON!

Willi, with quick wit I so appreciate, responded: “Ah, so you’re *the turkey*...” (That’s code for the lucky youth parent that drew the turkey supper coordinator/parent contact straw.) I grinned and made the appropriate self-deprecating, chagrined, affirmative response - all the while knowing *it’s great to be a turkey!*

Turkey supper is more than just a dinner and show, a tradition, an obligation, and a lot of hard work. It is a point of connection through time, that brings people together in a feel good way, for good purpose, building relationships and capacity among all of us in the NUMC community and beyond, but especially in and between our youth and youth leaders and the wider church.



Some of us took the lead in various aspects of this year’s turkey supper, but none of us accomplished anything alone. It takes individual strengths, shared for mutual benefit, to create successful events and collaborative communities. I’m proud to be a part of this one.



Thank you all for responding to my happy squawks and entreaties with enthusiasm, honesty, encouragement, suggestions, donations, and hard work! Altogether, the youth raised \$4000! As per tradition (a good one, in my opinion), half will fund youth programs and the other half will be donated to a cause the youth chose. This year, our youth voted to support NUMC refugee sponsorship, specifically the newcomer family NUMC is sponsoring that will arrive any day. When I asked my son (Andreas) about how the youth arrived at their decision, he responded in typical teenage style, “It was a no-brainer mom. Everyone agreed.” Our youth are awesome!





So remember to mark your calendars for the second weekend of December 2016. You'll want to be a part of this and your opportunity awaits!

See you at Turkey Supper 2016!

Your Turkey,
Esther Tiedtke



P.S. Enthusiasm, participation, feedback, and suggestions always welcome! Positions for turkey of the year opening soon – will train! Talk to this year's turkey if interested!!!



Where do those banners come from?

The phone call came.....Wendy can you please write something. And that's how it usually starts with a phone call. That's when I start thinking and planning.

Lani asked me a while ago to write a sentence or two on how I get my ideas for doing banners. It's usually from others having ideas. I dig out my banner books and start leafing through them. Sometimes I use one as it is in the book and other times I combine ideas to make it work with a theme or season.

My pencil crayons come out as I figure out the colour schemes. Then paper comes out and the drawing starts. Then it's off to Fabricland to buy materials. When I get to this point, it tends to consume me and thanks to a loving husband who cleans up suppers and does dishes every night so I can work on the banners, they get done.



I do work better under pressure, so writing this article with a 12 hour deadline worked.

Thanks Lani.

~ submitted by Wendy Janzen



When Ramona was decorating the church for Christmas, she found this empty spot over the fireplace that was missing something. She asked me if I could make a banner for the area that was for the season.

The wreath I made was from an old German hymnal that had belonged to Emilie Pauls. I thought it only appropriate that the "Joy to the World" banner go with the wreath made out of song sheets.



CAMPBELL'S SOUP LABELS FOR EDUCATION

It seems people do not eat as much soup during the summer months. The total number of labels turned in over the past 6 months is only 701 compared to our previous submission of 1419 in April. But it is interesting to note that Chunky soups are becoming popular, and Campbell's Franco American Gravy is being used as an easy way to serve gravy without any lumps.

Thank you for continuing to collect Campbell Soup labels . Why not ask your friends to help in this project. The labels were delivered to Rockway Collegiate Institute to be used for their educational program.

THANK YOU FOR NOT FOLDING THE LABELS MORE THAN ONCE. REMEMBER; 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, (in the area where the Mail Boxes are), you will see a poster which shows all the Campbell's products that are eligible for **LABELS FOR EDUCATION** projects.

~ submitted by Martha Bartel



Habibi the Camel

Did you see the newest member of our nativity scene on Christmas Eve? Being strange to our church & somewhat shy, Habibi hid behind the children in the background. If you look carefully, you might see him in the picture.



Here is Habibi's story.

"Like the Three Kings of Orient who travelled westward, Habibi the Camel has "traversed afar" eastward to join us. Originally made by a Mennonite craftsman in the Kitchener area, he was created as a work of art for his friends, a goldsmith & interior designer couple. Thus he was appreciated for a time, till there was not enough room for him. At this point, he was presented as a wedding gift to a friend's son and daughter-in-law (also an artist).

This was fine, but alas, once again, there was not enough room and he moved on to the son's parents.

It was here that I first laid admiring eyes on him, having always been in much awe of the talents of woodworkers. A few years later, these friends were looking for a home for Habibi as they downsized, and they recalled my admiration. When they asked me if I would like him, I immediately agreed, not knowing just where I would put him, but knowing this special camel needed a good home.

Upon reflection, I could think of no place Habibi could be better loved than in the hearts of children presenting their tribute to Jesus on Christmas Eve.

And so Habibi happily joins our Sunday School program wherever he can help out."



~ submitted by Jocelyn Thwaites

Mennonite Church Canada Short Term Ministry Program



In recent years, Mennonite Church Canada has been receiving more frequent requests for short term workers to assist alongside our long-term international ministries and partners. At the same time, we are receiving an increased number of requests from individuals from within our national church family expressing an interest in serving globally for terms of one year or less.

In response, Mennonite Church Canada has developed a short term ministry program to meet these needs and interests. The wide range of roles and contexts of our placements offer possibilities for individuals or couples 18 or older (or even families!) for 3-12 month assignments. We encourage home congregations to partner with short term ministry workers in this experience.

Our congregations have many qualified candidates with knowledge, gifts and experiences that are needed by our global partners. Will you take a moment to think of those in your congregation who may be interested in serving in this way? Would you consider shoulder-tapping such individuals and encouraging them to consider an assignment?

How do I know if I am suited for short term ministry?

There are a wide range of roles and contexts of our placements. Most people 18 or older can find an opportunity to use their set of gifts, interests and experiences.

How long are assignments?

Assignments range from 3 to 12 months.

How do I apply?

I welcome any questions that you or others from your congregation have about our short term ministry program, service opportunities, and locations. Thank-you for your partnership in finding the right people from our churches to serve the wider global church and benefit from this unique learning opportunity.

Tany Warkentin Short
Mennonite Church Canada

(403) 627-2232 twar-



Term Ministry Coordinator

kentin@mennonitechurch.ca

Pastor Rudy Dirks and Church Council Chair Lloyd Redekopp have requested that the following article from MCEC be included in this newsletter.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada recently released information about sexual misconduct by a former pastor. Sexual misconduct by church leaders is a topic most people would rather not talk about but unfortunately, the church is not immune. Abuse does occur, and the effects can be lasting and devastating. As a church, we take reports of sexual misconduct by a pastor or other church leaders very seriously. Victims deserve to be supported and heard with dignity and respect.

MCEC has created a ***Reporting Sexual Misconduct by Church Leaders*** webpage. This page answers many questions, including confidentiality and the process involved if a disclosure is made. It outlines ways in which a victim can privately learn about their options.

MCEC is committed to finding ways to bring God's healing and peace to situations of harm and brokenness and supporting congregations to ensure that they are safe for everyone. Please visit the ***MCEC Reporting Sexual Misconduct by Church Leaders*** webpage at www.mcec.ca. It outlines how victims of sexual misconduct by pastors or church leaders can choose to disclose. Common concerns and questions related to misconduct are addressed: What kind of process is involved? Am I safe reporting? Once I report, do I give up control of my story? MCEC remains committed to supporting congregations to ensure that they are safe places for everyone.

Peace Love & Healing

Prayer for the Road Ahead

*I seek you, God, in the spaces of my life.
The spaces between what I've done
and what I've left undone.
The spaces between my convictions
and my actions,
the spaces between all that I hoped to do,
and what I've actually done.
I come with humility,
knowing that I can't always see
the way I've disappointed you,
nor can I always see
the long-term effects of the good I've done.
This is a prayer for the road ahead,
which is an empty space stretching before me.
Fill me with a burning compassion
for my brothers and sisters,
a love that will not let me go.
Give me courage to give boldly,
love simply,
hope deeply,
risk greatly.
My light is small,
my time is short,
but let it shine for you,
always, ever, all for you.
Amen.*

~ by Carol Penner

Christmas Eve Moon over Münchingen, 2015

LIFE WITH US NEWSLETTER

If you would like to submit any photos or articles for the newsletter, please contact any of the Newsletter Team of Editors:

Lani Gade | 905-468-2316 | wlgade@bell.net

Kathy Rempel | 905-468-3829 | jrempel6@cogeco.ca

Niagara United Mennonite Church
1775 Niagara Stone Road
Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario
Email: office@redbrickchurch.ca
Website: www.redbrickchurch.ca
Phone: 905.468.3313