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LIFE WITH US

At Niagara United Mennonite Church

A Place at the Table

~ by Shirley Erena

For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead,

and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!

For woman and man, a place at the table,
revising the roles, deciding the share,
with wisdom and grace, dividing the power,
for woman and man, a system that's fair,
and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace ...

For young and for old, a place at the table,
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
for young and for old, the right to belong,

and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace....

For just and unjust, a place at the table,
abuser, abused, with need to forgive,
in anger, in hurt, a mindset of mercy,
for just and unjust, a new way to live,

and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:

For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free,

and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!

History of Hymns: “A Place at the Table” (see front cover)

by Guest Writer The Rev. Jay A. Henderson

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Shirley Erena Murray

"A Place at the Table"
by Shirley Erena Murray
Worship & Song, No. 3149

“Universal Declaration of Human Rights” – General Assembly of the United Nations, 10 December 1948

Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2: Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind....

Article 3: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. ...

In recent decades, an influential and significant force has developed within the world of congregational song. That force is Shirley Erena Murray (b. 1931), who has written some of the most convicting and challenging hymns of this era by addressing issues and concerns relevant to modern-day audiences through the paradigm of the Christian tradition. In her hymn, “A Place at the Table” (1998), Ms. Murray presents a Christian equivalent to the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” drafted by the U.N. General Council, thus connecting the global concern of Christianity with the global concerns of the United Nations and, indeed, all humanity. She notes: “I couldn't find anything to reflect a broad overview of human rights in any hymnbook. You can see that I have used some of the very basic ideas of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – the right to shelter, safety, food, and later, the right to a job, to freedom of speech and worship. I've tried to put them in a context which relates directly to the Gospel, but without excluding those who are not of the Christian faith. . . .”

A close examination of the hymn reveals thematic connections with the Declaration, thereby demonstrating the relevance of Christianity with contemporary affairs.

For example, in the first stanza, “clean water and bread, a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing” stems from Article 25: “Everyone has the right to a standard of adequate living for . . . health and well-being . . . including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services . . .” The next phrase, “a star overhead,” relates, according to the poet, to Article 26 and the aspiration for education.

A fourth generation New Zealander, Murray is well-educated, holding a master's degree with honors in Classics and French from Otago University. Her awards and honors include the New Zealand Order of Merit (2001) and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music (2006). Her hymn "God, In Your Grace" was chosen as the theme song for the IX Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brazil (2006), and she has been honored as a Fellow of the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada (2009). Though well recognized today for her accomplishments, her development into one of the world's leading English-language hymn writers was a rather unassuming progression and came about as a result of her involvement in the church as a layperson. In fact, the story of her rise to prominence in Christian hymnody should encourage any Christian wondering how he or she can contribute to the community of faith.

Shirley Erena Murray proudly describes her ecclesial affiliation as ecumenical in nature. Though born to a Methodist family, she later became Presbyterian through her marriage to The Very Rev. John Stewart Murray: a Presbyterian minister. As she writes in one of the collections of her hymns, “The Methodist tradition nurtured me, the Presbyterian tradition claimed all my adult life, and the ecumenical movement called me out of both.” Murray describes her identity and perspective as “that of a woman, a mother, a grandparent, a citizen, [and] a layperson.”

Shirley Murray began writing hymns in the 1970s to accompany her husband's sermons, because he had difficulty finding traditional hymns that truly captured and articulated his messages with language relevant to contemporary life. The fruit of her labor resulted in a plethora of Christian hymns that poignantly address modern concerns in a relevant way. Fellow New Zealander and Methodist hymn writer Colin Gibson notes that the most common themes of her hymns address "peace, justice, human rights, inclusiveness, gender equality, environmental concerns, and social responsibility." Her work is included in more than 100 different collections and has been translated into several different languages. Additionally, she contributed to the groundbreaking hymnal *Sound the Bamboo* (2000), wherein she collaborated with Dr. I-to Loh, an ethnomusicologist from Taiwan, to provide English lyrics for Asian Christians with a distinctly Eastern-Asian style of music.

In this hymn, *A Place at the Table*, Shirley Murray finds a way to subtly incorporate the Christian imperative of equality and justice for the entire world. In the first stanza, she begins with the statement, "For everyone born, a place at the table ... for everyone born, a star overhead." At first glance, the song appears as if it will address global hunger, which indeed it does. But on a metaphysical level, she clearly expresses that the justice and equality humanity needs actually comes as a result of the birth of Jesus Christ. Here, she has flipped our understanding of what "the table" actually means. The table does not simply represent the proverbial dining table or the political forum (such as the United Nations), but also stands as a metaphor for the Kingdom of God. The table embodies a world where everyone has a place, because God became human in Jesus Christ, expressed by the star on Christmas night. "The table" of abundance and equality is the prophetic expression of God's will manifest in creation.

She continues her theme of justice and equality in the subsequent stanzas by providing a series of binary expressions, thereby articulating the need for Christians to extend justice and joy across the diversity of humanity: "for woman and man" (stanza 2), "for young or for old" (stanza 3), and "for just and unjust" (stanza 4). In the fourth stanza, Murray presents us with perhaps a more difficult challenge by including both "abuser" and "abused" at the table. She draws the language of "abuser/abused" from the Lord's Prayer: "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," acknowledging that all humanity stands in need of God's grace, love, and mercy: even those who have committed acts of abuse in its many forms.

An omitted stanza, listed as "optional" in the original publication, confirms the radical hospitality that is proposed by the author:

***For gay and for straight, a place at the table,
a covenant shared, a welcoming place,
a rainbow of race and gender and color,
for gay and for straight, the chalice of grace . . . ****

The author states her theological premise in the introduction of the collection, *A Place at the Table*: "I have used the words of the hymn 'A Place at the Table' as title for this book, because there are still Christian people not welcome, either at the communion table or at the common table of society. . . ." Such hospitality, however, is already apparent in the Invitation to the Table found in *The United Methodist Hymnal*: "Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another." The invitation is extended to all regardless of gender, cultural background, social class, or sexual orientation. This stanza, deleted from most hymnals, is a further demonstration of Ms. Murray's willingness to address the concerns of a contemporary audience. Here she challenges us to recognize the sacrament as a place of unconditional inclusivity.

According to the refrain, we understand the Christian's role to play in offering "justice and joy" because paradoxically, "God will delight when we are creators of justice and joy." In this way, the Creator expresses delight when humanity "creates" justice and joy. Not content to leave Christianity as a relic of the past, Murray's hymn gives new voice to Christians crying out for God's justice and joy as they enact God's will "on earth as it is in heaven."

The Rev. Jay A. Henderson, a Master of Divinity student at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, is the pastor of Celeste and Kingston United Methodist Churches in Northeast Texas and studies hymnology with Dr. C. Michael Hawn.

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Precious Memories

1. Pre-cious mem-ries, un-seen an-gels, Sent from some-where
 2. Pre-cious fa-ther, lov-ing moth-er, Fly a-cross the
 3. As I trav-el on life's path-way, Know not what the

to my soul; How they lin-ger, ev-er near me,
 lone-ly years; And old home scenes of my child-hood,
 years may hold; As I pon-der, hope grows fond-er,

And the sa-cred past un-fold,
 In fond mem-o-ry ap-pear, Pre-cious mem-ries,
 Pre-cious mem-ries flood my soul,

how they lin-ger, How they ev-er flood my soul; In the
 still-ness of the mid-night, Pre-cious, sa-cred scenes un-fold.

Words by J. B. F. Wright and Lennie D. Curtis Music by J. B. F. Wright

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When my sister Laury and I were in our early years of marriage, and found ourselves living back in Niagara, we developed a little birthday routine with our mother, Hilda Willms. At least 3 times a year, usually close to one of our birthdays we would choose a shopping destination, and go for the day. This of course had to include a nice lunch out. We all looked forward to, and enjoyed these outings for many years.

When Alzheimer's started to change Mom's personality, when she became more and more dependent on my Dad, and was forgetting many things in her life, Laury and I decided we should try and make our shopping/lunch dates a weekly thing.

We would pick her up on a Saturday from Brookview, often Dad was at the front doors waiting with her, go for our excursion, and then bring her back later in the afternoon. We did this for a few years.

One day, when we were bringing Mom home, she turned around and looked at Laury and me with such joy and contentment in her face. She said to us, ***"Girls, this has been such a wonderful day!! We really should do this more often!"***

Her words have left Laury and me with a smile, and a cherished memory.

~Ruth Willms

It all started over 30 years ago when I was born. From the day that my dad met me he knew that his kids were going to be one of the most important things in the world to him and that a strong and close relationship would be key to their upbringing. My dad was a selfless man that never put his needs in front of his kids and whole heartedly became involved in anything that caught their attention. I have been blessed to be able to enjoy so many activities with him over the years including Boy Scouts, mountain biking, building cars and adventuring through Canada by snowmobile.

Being a new father in the last year, I can see what my dad did so long ago. I am grateful to have such an amazing mentor through my life and hope that I can be half the man that he is.

~ Erik Metsa



Raising a family of 9 kids had my Mom being very efficient. As we got older and were out late because of jobs or with friends, at night my Mom would make a list of us kids that were out and put it on the kitchen counter. This way when we came home in the side door, we would cross our name off the list. The last one home had to lock the door and turn off the lights. But more often than not, my Mom would be sitting in her easy chair by the side window, watching and waiting up for us. I'm sure she was hoping and praying that we would all make it home safely. Such fond memories I have of my amazing mother.

~Submitted by Laurene Nickel

Tribute to Grandpa

By: Ellery Rauwerda

Over the past 4 months, Mark and I have been lucky enough to have the chance to travel, spending time in a handful of countries in Southeast Asia, as well as New Zealand and Australia. These months have allowed us to slow down and appreciate the diversity that the world has to offer, both in humanity and in nature. As we soaked in the natural landscapes of rolling New Zealand hills, the rural mountainous regions of northern Thailand, and many sunsets over the sea, my mind drifted regularly to our Grandpa, John Harder, who passed away just two weeks before we left for this adventure of a lifetime. Grandpa was an avid traveller and a lover of natural beauty. He called the birds of the backyard his pets, free to come and go as they pleased from the squirrel-proofed feeders hanging from their back deck. Grandpa believed that half the joy of a trip is in the anticipation: the dreaming, planning, booking, and eagerly awaiting the date of departure. We are so grateful that we got to share in some of that while he was still with us as we spent this past year in a season of anticipation. I felt equally grateful for the gift of encountering Grandpa in unexpected ways as we travelled. As his body declined in those weeks preceding his departure from earth, his spirit strengthened, and we discovered just how near heaven is to us here on earth. I've come to believe that the spiritual realm and the earthly realm are a lot more connected than we understand, and I think nature is the closest we come to seeing that connection. Grandpa visited us all along the journey: in the green, sheep-dotted hillsides of New Zealand, a place Grandpa always longed to visit; in the gentle, calm nature of the elephants we observed in Thailand; in the many, many birds we saw, which Grandpa would have undoubtedly been especially interested in had he been here following our blog. In this Spring season of renewal and celebration of life and those who have given it to us, I am mindful of the impact that each of my parents and grandparents have had on my life. I am especially mindful of the legacy left for us by Grandpa's faith and life on this earth, and of the ongoing influence he will continue to have as we travel along life's path.



Remembering Dad

~ Joannie Penner

This will be the first Father's Day in my life that I won't be able to honour my dad in person, so it only seems fitting to take the opportunity here to honour his memory.

My dad was awesome. I always felt lucky and proud that he was my dad. He was gentle yet strong; firm yet fair; thrifty yet generous; a talker yet a listener. He held firm convictions yet rarely judged others. Although impatient by nature, he was a patient teacher. He was well read and interested in a wide variety of subjects, from politics to sports, business to music, geography to literature. He could thoughtfully and knowledgeably engage in a discussion on just about anything. He considered women his equals, and worked side by side with my mom both in business and (more in later years) at home. And yet with all that wisdom, he taught more by example than by words. He is

my inspiration, and I have long aspired to live like he lived, give like he gave, care for others as he cared for others, to be the example of Christian love that I felt he was. His absence in my life is huge. And yet I am so grateful for the long time he was with our family. Thirty-five years ago we came very close to losing him, so his presence and influence in our lives and particularly his grandchildren's lives since that time has been the greatest gift. That my children know, and love, and were loved, by my dad is something that I and they will treasure forever.

**Thank you Dad for that legacy.
Happy Father's Day**

Love Family HAPPY
 Treasure Memories TOGETHER
 TOGETHER
 TIME HISTORY LOVE
 adventure Cherish
 Remember FOREVER Family

A Deere Occasion

My parents, Frank and Natalie Lammert, loved their property on Niven Road. It was their one acre of "Paradise". It also came with one acre of lawn to mow.

Sometime in the 1970's Dad purchased his first John Deere lawn tractor and it became his pride and joy. Little did he know it would also become a source of many happy family memories. We dressed in John Deere attire. We played with John Deere Lego. We gifted all things John Deere to Dad. And, of course, as the grandchildren arrived, each one would have a turn sitting on the "big tractor" in the garage; and, if they were very good, they would have the privilege of riding on Opa's lap as he mowed the lawn.

On a hot, sweltering day in August 2003, the occasion of

my parents' Golden Wedding Anniversary, we gathered together outside on their lawn with a photographer who was tasked with creating the family portraits on this special day. The air was sultry, the grandchildren were restless, their parents were trying without success to corral them for the photo, and nothing seemed to be working to bring order to mayhem.

Suddenly, we could hear from the garage the growl of an engine starting. In a few minutes, Opa appeared to the rescue, riding on his trusty John Deere tractor. Well, the transformation of the scene was instantaneous. Everyone stopped to watch as Dad, grinning ear to ear, drove his "big tractor" down the driveway and up the side yard, and parked it under the shade of the mulberry tree. Smiles appeared on the grandchildren's faces, everyone gathered together and this precious family photo was the result.

On this sixth year since our Dad passed away, we remember the quiet man who could transform our hearts with just a smile.

Happy Fathers' Day Dad!

~ Ruth Lamarre



There is a book written by Shel Silverstein called "The Giving Tree". It tells the story of a lifelong relationship between a boy and a tree, where the tree gives of herself unconditionally until she has nothing left. It is a parable about the beauty of generosity and the power of giving. This story reminds me of my mother - she is a giver.

Mom is constantly giving - of her time, her talents, and of herself. She spends countless hours preparing material and sewing blankets for MCC. Several times a year she is in charge of organizing volunteers, shopping for ingredients and baking for our community bazaar. No job is ever too big or too small. Mom always makes time to cook weekly family dinners, making sure there are enough leftovers to send home with each one of us, so that our next meal preparation is easier. She generously shares freshly baked goods and volunteers to do sewing projects for family, friends and neighbours. She is a good friend to many and is always willing to help anyone in need.

During the many years that dad was sick Mom was the ultimate caregiver, taking care of his every need. We were constantly amazed at her strength, compassion and willingness to do even the most undesirable of tasks. She was dad's angel for sure!

Mom, you are an incredible example of kindness, generosity and unconditional love to all those around you.

HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY

~Submitted by Christine Pauls



ALL IN ONE HOUSE!

The title above was my spontaneous response when I read this issue's survey question. What memories do I have of parents and grandparents? Well, we ALL lived in one house! Yes - grandparents on both sides of the family and several aunts and uncles at various times, all under the same roof!

My extended family came to Canada from post-war Europe during the late 1940's and early 1950's, some via Paraguay. These were very happy, and in some cases, miraculous reunions. Being together, helping each other and caring for each other was very much a value. After my parents (Arno Bartel and Ella [Jantz] Bartel) were married in 1951, plans were made to build a house that would accommodate at least 2 families. The parcel of land they purchased included the property on which the new Wayne Gretzky Winery now stands! In 1952 the family began construction of a large home at 1239 Stone Rd, which looked like a single family home on the outside, but was essentially a duplex on the inside. Despite it being not quite finished, my parents moved into the house in Oct. 1952 and occupied one side. My Dad's parents, Ewald and Emilie Bartel, as well as my Dad's 2 sisters, Anne Marie (Bartel) Enns, and Natalie (Bartel) Lammert moved in at the same time to the other side. The sisters weren't there very long, since Natalie married in Aug. of 1953, and Anne Marie in Jan. 1954. In 1953, my mother's parents (Hermann and Agnete Jantz) arrived from Paraguay and stayed with us for a while until they moved to BC to help my mother's sister Erna with child care. In the meantime, my mother's brother Eugen with his wife and first 4 children had arrived from Paraguay and stayed at our house until their home was finished in 1954. I was born in 1955, my Jantz grandparents came back to live with us in 1957 after they had also lived with Eugen, and in 1958 my brother Ben was born on exactly the same date as I was!! It was a full house now: 6 adults and 2 children!

(I have to add a little disclaimer here: What follows are my impressions of how this multi-family, intergenerational arrangement functioned, through the filter of a child's eyes. Some of my relatives reading this story may remember those years differently - and that's OK!)

I would describe my childhood in that beehive of activity as wonderful. There was always someone to talk to or who would help with a task. I was completely comfortable in the company of relatives of any age. I was not even really aware of "sides" of the family, since both were present and usually everyone participated in everything we did. Visitors and special events were shared by all. Some things were unique for Ben and me as children though. For instance, we never went to 'Grandma's house' for Christmas dinner, because that was OUR house. We never had a 'real' babysitter, because there were lots of them on site. We rarely went anywhere without grandparents in the back seat of the car! I never lived in a house without a grandparent until I got married and moved to my own home. You might think that with all those adults present, that the children might be spoiled but I don't think that really happened. I can only remember 2 occasions, one with each grandmother, when we conspired just a little to get me out of trouble! Oma Jantz helped me re-wrap a Christmas present that I had 'accidentally' found too early and Oma Bartel helped me clean up a dress that I wasn't supposed to play outside in. To their credit, and with my utmost admiration, I have to say that as a child I did not sense or become aware of any dissension among the adults in the house! Having everyone in one place proved to be quite practical too. For instance, when it was our birthdays, my Mom made one beautiful torte and put pink candles around the outside for my age, and a smaller circle of blue candles closer to the middle for my little brother. Both sets of grandparents were already there, cousins were dropping in regularly anyway, so—DONE! - 2 birthdays, one event. "Ein Abwaschen!" (wash dishes only once!)



Emilie & Ewald Bartel



Agnete & Hermann Jantz



Birthday party 1961



Opa Bartel & grandkids

The BEST part of this family togetherness was the frequent connection with COUSINS! Whenever any of the other families came to visit the grandparents, they dutifully said hello to them, and then the kids came to play with us. There was lots to do since my Dad had built us a doll house,



Cousins May, 1963

swings, a teeter-totter, and we had a long driveway to ride our bikes on. Sometimes we had pet rabbits and there were always cats. I believe the closeness we still feel now, began in those early years of basically growing up together - almost like siblings. Still today, I anticipate the arrival of cousins with great excitement!



Bartel cousins Easter, 1970

Visitors in general, were a very common occurrence. Their signatures filled multiple guest books! Sunday mornings I made sure I was dressed properly when I went down for breakfast because I might find a missionary, a conference guest speaker, or a long-lost relative at the table.

My Opa Bartel kept some animals and they generated a fair bit of shared activity. I remember a cow, a horse (what happens when a horse dies INSIDE a barn is a story for another day!), some pigs, and chickens (ask Ben sometime about his experience with roosters). Opa Bartel also grew some crops like tomatoes, strawberries, and winter wheat. I remember the sound his shoes made while I walked beside him as he sowed the wheat by hand from a pouch over his shoulder. Tending and harvesting these crops also required co-operation with various family members. One day, however, our little gaggle of cousins were in trouble with Opa! We discovered how much fun it was to play "fox and goose" in the winter wheat and had trampled quite a bit before the grown-ups realized what all the laughing that they heard coming from the field, was all about!

I wish I remembered more about the individual personalities that my grandparents were, but a few things do stand out:

Opa Jantz: He had some mobility issues, so when the Jantz cousins came over, he usually couldn't come outside. But he did throw handfuls of wrapped candy out of the window of his upstairs bedroom and we kids below scrambled to gather them up. His passing in Jan. 1962 was my first experience with death in the family. That was really hard.

Oma Jantz: She had a very soft voice and I loved it when she read us bedtime stories. She hid Tavener's Fruit Drops candies in her bedroom closet. (In her memory, we keep this kind of candy in our car for our grandsons!) She had the most beautiful doe-like brown eyes. Even when she had dementia, I would look into her eyes and it seemed to me that her real self was still deep inside there somewhere, wanting me to see her. Oma Jantz died in Aug. 1971.



Jantz grandparents 50th anniversary, 1957



Oma & Opa Bartel 1963

Oma Bartel: I think she was the grandparent with the broadest range of emotion. She was very easily startled and rewarded us with a hearty scream if we jumped out from behind a door. My parents didn't like that we did that but they couldn't help laughing in spite of themselves. One day, I opened a door to a stairwell and found Oma sitting on the steps and crying. This was during the Cuban missile crisis and she was afraid because she knew only too well what war could mean. She seemed to like to cuddle and wanted us to sit on her lap quite often. This was a little difficult because her lap was, shall we say "fluffy", and we kept sliding off! Oma died on Easter weekend in 1965.

Opa Bartel: Most nights after supper, my Dad went over to the other side of the house to see his Dad, my Opa. I remember him as a fairly serious and deeply spiritual man. He always fasted on Good Friday.

When I was little, I thought he must be like God - he didn't say a lot of words but seemed very wise! He didn't let us celebrate his birthday or any other occasion before the actual date in case he didn't live that long! To this day, I don't like to have events early, nor do I feel comfortable having Easter celebrations on somber Good Friday. One winter Opa wanted me to give him English lessons, but we had limited results. As a matter of fact, none of the grandparents learned to speak English or drive a car. Again, that then involved the co-operation of several family members to look after all of their paperwork and appointments. I was the only grandchild whose wedding Opa was able to attend. He died in Dec. 1974, the first Christmas Dick and I were married, at our Bartel family Christmas dinner!

All of my grandparents called the house on Stone Road their home, until they went to their heavenly home. After Opa Bartel passed away, the west side of the house was vacant and was used by many guests, from many countries, sometimes for extended stays. A few times the unit was rented out. By 1986 my parents built their new house, on the same lot, behind the original house. I never lived in the new house, even though I grew up on that property. It was a condition of the Town of NOTL, that the old house had to be removed within a year, so it was sold and

MOVED to Concession #7, between Line #7 and Line #8, in July 1987! The move was featured on the front page of the St. Catharines Standard the next day. It was heartwarming for me to learn, that the family that bought the house, had a boy whose birthday was the same date as Ben's and mine! It was lovely to think that Happy Birthday would be sung in our house on May 9th for years to come!

I feel so blessed to have had a childhood rich in relationships, security and love. There is no doubt that the example



House on the move July 1987



of my elders, has shaped me and influenced my role as parent and grandparent. The broad family experience has given me context, support, and so much joy. Sometimes I wish I could still just sit "at the kids' table" and have no worries, but my heritage has given me tools for living. I am truly thankful!

~Marlene D. (Bartel) Heidebrecht

BOOK CORNER ~ by Debbie Fast

Eve By Wm Paul

"On a mysterious island between our world & the next, a young woman washes ashore – broken & barely alive. John, the kind Collector who finds her, enlists the aid of Healers & Scholars, and they soon discover that her genetic code links her to every known race. No one would guess what her survival will mean to all of humankind ... no one but Eve, Mother of the Living.

A bold, unprecedented exploration of the Creation narrative, the story of Eve is true to the original texts & centuries of scholarship – yet with breathtaking revelations that challenge traditional beliefs about who we are. As *The Shack* awakened readers to a personal, non-religious understanding of God, Eve frees us from the faulty interpretations that have corrupted human relationships since the Garden of Eden. Thoroughly researched & exquisitely written, Eve is a masterpiece that will inspire readers for generations to come."

Sons and Mothers Stories from Mennonite Men Edited by Mary Ann Loewen

"Their reflections delve deep into the often close, but sometimes troubled, relationships that exist between mothers & sons. With remarkable honesty & grace, they tell of the complicated, vulnerable & inspirational women who formed them & reveal struggles over faith, unfulfilled dreams & aging.

Patrick Friesen, Howard Dyck, Josiah Neufeld & others share their Mennonite roots, but also shed a loving new light on a relationship both timeless & universal – that of mother & son"

Midlife Manual for Men Finding Significance in the Second Half

By Stephen Arterburn & John Shore

"Welcome to the best years of a man's life.

Ignore the midlife jokes & stereotypes & see the "middle" years for what they really are: the absolute best phase of life thus far. You might not sense it yet, but all along your life, God has been showing & teaching you everything you need for a great second half.

In this profound & surprisingly funny book, you'll discover how your past & present – and all that you've tried to be – is exactly the raw material you need to become the man you want to be."

Celebrating 25 Years

A wedding anniversary is a perfect opportunity to pull back from your daily grind and relive a moment that changed your life forever. Celebrating it reinforces the fact that your marriage is a priority. Anyone can pull out all the stops on their wedding day, but when a couple makes it to 25 or more years of marriage, well, now that's something that needs celebrating!



To mark the occasion of our 25th wedding anniversary, Gerry and I felt led to renew our marriage vows in the presence of God and our family and friends. We are so thankful to God for bringing us together and for blessing us with twenty-five years of loving and sharing; hoping, planning and believing; caring, compromising, comforting and forgiving, and all the memories we treasure from those experiences in our lives.

And so, on the afternoon of Thursday, March 15, 2018 we gathered on beautiful, sunny Sunset Beach in Treasure Island, Florida, with a small group of immediate family and close friends, to give thanks to God for His love, and reaffirm our love and commitment to each other.

Pastor Charley Reeb, Senior Pastor at Pasadena Community Church



where we have been attending while in Florida, presided over the ceremony. His message was on the passage in Genesis 2, "...and the two shall become one" ...that in marriage, we are joined together, yes, but in a way that allows our personal identities to burn even brighter... and love giving us the space to become our best selves that God has created us to be.



While we basked in the Florida sunshine, our hearts glowed with gratitude as we read our personal statements to each other and repeated the traditional vows.

At the beach reception following the ceremony, we toasted, laughed and shared stories, while listening to some awesome saxophone music courtesy of our friend, Rob Kesig. We ended the day with a celebratory dinner at Harold Seltzer's Steakhouse, where we have celebrated many anniversaries and occasions in the past.



We were blessed with a perfect day, so full of love and joy. With our hearts united anew, we begin our next quarter century trusting in God to guide our way.



-submitted by Ruth & Gerry Lamarre



May Birthdays:

Hans Wiebe: 82 (5/3/36)
Margaret Goerz: 80 (5/8/38)
Aran Koop: 88 (5/23/30)
Emilie Pauls: 92 (5/26/26)
Albert Riemland: 82 (5/29/36)

25th Wedding Anniversaries

Harold & Ramona Neufeld:
5/15/1993

50th Wedding Anniversaries

Werner & Irene Griese: 5/18/1968
Peter & Linda Wall: 6/1/1968



June Birthdays:

Justina Reimer: 89 (6/2/29)
Maria Dyck: 93 (6/5/25)
Mary Pompetzki: 81 (6/5/37)
Eckhard Schmidt: 83 (6/9/35)
Irene Epp: 80 (6/12/38)
Katharina Wiebe: 91 (6/13/27)
Henry Kopp: 90 (6/15/28)
Dietrich Claassen: 81 (6/19/37)
Gerald Enns: 95 (6/19/23)
Werner Fast: 84 (6/20/34)
Robert Hummel: 80 (6/23/38)
Ernie Pries: 83 (6/26/35)

60th Wedding Anniversaries

Eric & Margaret Goerz: 5/31/1958



CELEBRATIONS

Soon we will be celebrating Mother's Day and Father's Day, which made me think about my younger days and how much I enjoyed surprising my mother with a nice breakfast accompanied by a spray of lilacs! Or doing some of my chores and hers too, so we could have more time to be together. She was always very appreciative and remembered to praise us as well.

In thinking of celebrations, recently Ernie and I and our family, celebrated our 60th year of marriage. It seemed to have sneaked up on us and now it was here! One of our sons came home from the States where he's settled down, and the other picked us up with a flourish, which made us feel cherished and loved. We are not a large group! But we are all very close and love to be together. We went out to dine in a fine restaurant which serves delicious food and we each ordered our favourite dish. Later, I had to think of "young" Mary and now "older" Mary, and how I had changed over the years. And what I had learned or experienced during those years was more than I ever dreamed it would be.

Ernie and I are very compatible. He is very romantic, and often surprised me with little gifts, or sends me flowers. His favourite flowers are red roses, which I also love. But before you think all was sweet and lovely I must confess that it was not.

We each have strong personalities and sometimes clash hard over certain subjects that could be really surprising to a bystander. I usually gave in first because having a peaceful home was very important to me. If he would agree to that I'm not sure!

Overall though, what marriage has given me is just great! It's given me an understanding of and intimacy with another human being, which is still growing. I have a base from which to work. Through the love and acceptance I experienced it has allowed me to grow and given me confidence. I learned that it is possible to love someone - eventually - for the very things that used to annoy me most! So that now I feel contentment and pride in doing something that isn't easy year after year after year. And, finally, that with the Lord's help, anything is possible. Meanwhile, we'll continue together as long as our good Lord thinks it should be.

To young couples I would say that when you experience seemingly insurmountable differences, hang in there! Recall the early dating time you had. Look at pictures of great times and celebrations from the past, continue to have celebrations often with friends and also by yourselves. Above all, learn to pray together often and pray for your marriage. And celebrate every anniversary with verve and with great joy!

~ submitted by Mary Pries

Twenty Five Years Ago

On a bright, windy day in May 1993, Harold and I were married here at Niagara United Mennonite Church surrounded by family and friends. We both had attended this church with our families since childhood, participated in Sunday school and Young Peoples and were baptized upon our confession of faith in Jesus Christ in this very building.

My wedding day began with a visit to Udo Woelke's back yard to cut armfuls of lilac which would fill the decorative urns at the front of the church, then to the hairdresser's and then to don the gown which I had sewn in preparation for this, our day. Harold and his best men washed the family car and decorated it with Kleenex flowers. That was the custom of that day. They ate breakfast at McDonalds and took one last motorcycle ride.

We were married by Werner Fast. We chose to speak the traditional vows. The scripture we selected was from Ruth 1:16-17. 'Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people will be my people, and thy God my God:

Where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part me and thee.'

These words were not wedding vows in the biblical text but words spoken by a young woman to her mother-in-law, words filled with conviction and determination. One cannot say these words to another person without a deep love in your heart and a desire to fulfill that promise. And so we experienced a lovely day in all its finery and bliss.

'Whither thou goest' became a reality. Our first home was in St. David's in an apartment owned by my parents; then we made our home in the north end of St. Catharines in a semi which we renovated together; and then to our current home here in Niagara on the Lake. The last move actually detoured to the hospital where our son David was born. Two years later our lovely, little daughter Aliston was born. What a busy, happy household we were! But our family was not yet complete! Another beautiful, little girl, whom we named Andrea, joined our family!

Harold had always dreamed of farming. Although I had grown up in a home with plenty of yard work and helping in the garden, living on the farm was a completely new ball game. There was always something new to experience and plenty of obstacles to overcome. Our home was old and the machinery was old but we were young and full of zest and a desire to conquer this land. Harold continued going to work as a credit manager at Niagara Structural Steel Co. and we hired help as best we could to aid with the many tasks of farming. The early days certainly were a challenge! How gracious God is to wire us to look back and remember the good times, and not stumble over the unhappy ones.

In May 2005, when our children were 3, 6 and 8 I was diagnosed with leukemia. How that word changed our life! 'Whither thou goest' became my stays in the hospital and visits by Harold and the children to see me. This time was filled with fear and anguish, a desire to live and not knowing if that wish would be granted. Now 'thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God' became very evident. Family and friends surrounded us and carried us. Church family was filled with a desire to help, mobilized by compassion and their love for God. Philippians 4:13 became my theme verse 'I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.' God brought us through this time in his amazing way! We lift our hearts to Him in thanks at every remembrance of how he carried us.

We lived in different homes for a time while my health improved; the children and I lived with my parents while Harold lived in our home, and then on the weekend the children lived with Harold and I stayed with my parents. It was the best arrangement at the time and we are truly grateful to my parents for doing all they did to help us reassemble. After Easter we moved back to the farm to learn to be a family once more.



Along with our move home came the decision to rebuild our home to give us more space and comfort. And so the destruction of our old home began and we lived in a trailer parked in the back yard. Once more 'whither thou goest' came into play and we moved into a rental home on Mary St. to get through the winter months. God provided a place for us through our dear friends, the Michaels. Those were such happy days! The children still often speak of them with great enthusiasm and joy.

And then one day we moved 'home'. It was not finished and many obstacles awaited us, but it was home! Slowly we shaped this house into a home that welcomed family and friends. The September that David went to high school saw us opening our home to a young lady from Germany named Thurid who stayed with us for 6 months. She became one of us and was able to enjoy her stay in Canada with many happy memories. It was during her stay that



we again experienced God's provision and his presence in our lives. Harold had developed a heart murmur over the last years, most likely due to stress, which now needed to be surgically attended to. It was touch and go for a few days and our hearts were filled with fear. You'd think I would have learned by now that God could be trusted even if I could not imagine how he would do this. I am so grateful that God healed Harold's heart and allowed him to return to a full vigorous life. At the time when Harold needed his operation he also decided that his days of farming were now over. So the search for a new job began. And it should surprise no one that God led him to a stable job in Burlington. Isn't God good? Harold has worked there almost seven years and is able to provide for us and our needs.

And so the journey of our married life continues. We continue to dream and plan. The children are finding their way in this world, with jobs and education. God's presence and his provision in our lives have not left the children unaffected. We are confident that God will direct and guide our next 25 years!

Submitted by Ramona and Harold Neufeld

From the Archives ~ Harold Neufeld

From the June 2, 1953 Bulletin... "A Service in Honour of the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II". This event was held at 4:00 P.M. at the Queen's Royal Park in Niagara-On-The-Lake. The order of service opened with the well-known doxology:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him All creatures here below;
Praise Him above ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen

Secondly, a Prayer of Invocation by our own Rev J.A. Dyck, followed eventually by an Act of Dedication that read: "Our Queen is anointed and crowned for the service of God, and of her Realm and Commonwealth. We, her people, are summoned to dedicate ourselves with her to the same high purpose. Wherefore let us offer ourselves anew to Almighty God, first making confession of our faith before Him saying the Apostles' Creed and Prayer." I have no idea how many of our people attended this celebration in Niagara-On-The-Lake as no count is given in the following week's bulletin.

We Mennonites though had more practical concerns than "Realm and Commonwealth" though: the May 16, 1954 bulletin announced a unanimous resolution of the congregation that the financial goal of the year would be the liquidation of the \$14,000.00 "Kirchenbauschuld" or Building Fund.

Finally from the June 8, 1956 bulletin: "The Radio Program Committee for the Messengers for Christ has a good used piano for sale. It is not needed anymore. It is now in the basement at the St. Catharines United Mennonite Church on Garnet Street in St. Catharines. Contact Henry Dirks (Virgil) if you are interested."

Once upon a Time

Who are we?



Senior's Tea, March 2018

1. "I still love my little sister Lilo."
Who am I?



2. My acting debut was in my teens, and I played Minna von Barnhelm.
Who am I?



3. I enjoy traveling to hot places, & drinking Matte with my friends.
Who am I?

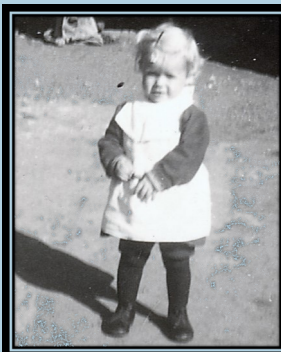


4. On my second day in Canada, I learned to drive tractor for Mr. Epp.
Who am I?



How well do you know our congregation?
Try to match the pictures & the clues to the names below.

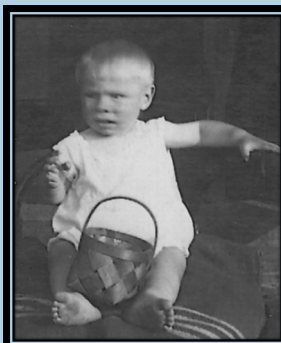
Answers on back page.



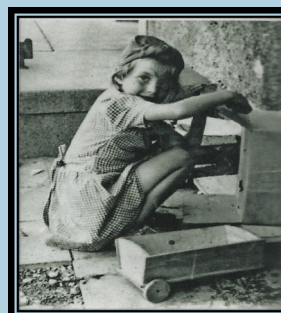
5. I didn't like aprons when I was a little girl, & I still don't like them.
Who am I?



6. I once struck it rich with an oil well in my back yard (or so I thought).
Who am I?



7. I planted the cherry trees in front of the church.
Who am I?



8. Christmas wreaths are one of my passions.
Who am I?



9. I shooshed my mother out of the kitchen at a very early age.
Who am I?

Audrey Dau

Adine Enns

Clara Siemens

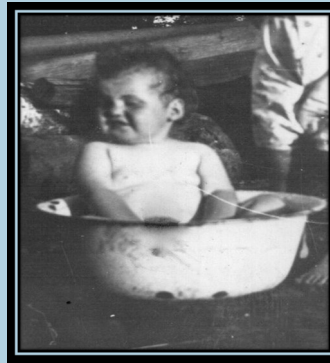
Dave Wall

Gertraut Doerwald

Hans Hermann Dau

Gunnar Doerwald

10. I love to tell stories of unseen things above & share crafts with young & old.
Who am I?



15. Water, water everywhere, but how to get it out of the ground.
Who am I?

11. I have to do all my cooking in the garage, but it sure smells sweet.
Who am I?



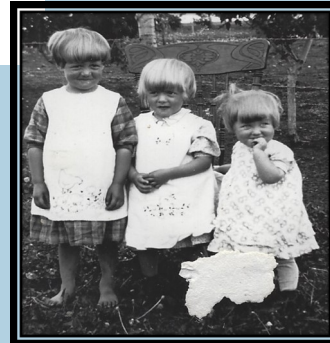
16. I am a poet & a hunter.
Who am I?

12. My father was a photographer, & I taught my husband all he knows about taking pictures.
Who am I?



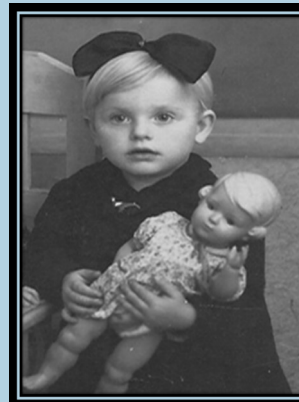
17. In my youth I was a farmer, but I spent most of my career on my knees.
Who am I?

13. My first overseas trip, but why this scratchy head to toe outfit?
Who am I?



18. I taught all grades in a country school in Wabasheen.
Who am I?

14. I had bed & breakfast for tropical birds for many years.
Who am I?



19. Some years ago, my sisters & I went to find our roots, & we found pictures of our family on the walls of the Chaco Hotel.
Who am I?

Justina Bartel

Lani Gade

Manfred Runge

Helen Wall

Sina Enns

Tina Runge

Waldemar Gade

Reinhard Gau

Henry Siemens

Ingrid Regier

Ingrid Dau

Jake Enns

YOUTH PROGRESSIVE SUPPER - April 6, 2018

Aloha! E Komo Mai!

That is 'WELCOME' in Hawaiian.

We were happy to welcome one of the travelling youth groups to our home for a Hawaiian dessert course, an experience that has become a bit of a tradition. We offered a lei greeting, listened to the "Doxology" in Hawaiian, and enjoyed tropical flavors of pies and fruit. We also took time to "talk story" which is the Hawaiian practice of just hearing about what is significant in each other's lives. As is also tradition, we told the story of the Sand Dollar sea shell and how it symbolizes the life of Christ. The youth, including 3 students from the Royal Elite Academy, were a great group of kids with very different interests and talents. Their sponsors were fun to get to know too. Coincidentally, our 2 grandsons were with us for a sleepover that night, so we had a very diverse group around the table! To everyone's delight, Stuart, one of the students from China, picked up our ukulele and played it like a master musician! Alex, from Nigeria, kindly indulged our Karter's request to do the "Cup Song", and enthusiastically sang along with him while Dylan accompanied them on the ukelele. What a happy, noisy bunch!

It was fun for us to get ready for the visit and found the evening to be really rewarding. We especially appreciate the extra bright smiles from our guests when we now see them in church. The progressive supper is such a great way for our youth to get to know their congregation!

Dick and Marlene Heidebrecht



Palm Sunday



SNAP SHOTS



Lighthouse Family



Farewell Lunch for Pastor Dave & Janie Lewis



Who's Who? Answers to Once Upon a Time Matching Game

1. Hans Hermann Dau
2. Lani Gade
3. Reinhard Gau
4. Justina Bartel
5. Ingrid Dau
6. Waldemar Gade
7. Jake Enns
8. Clara Siemens
9. Audrey Dau
10. Adine Enns
11. Henry Siemens
12. Sina Enns
13. Ingrid Regier
14. Gertraut Doerwald
15. Gunnar Doerwald
16. Dave Wall
17. Manfred Runge
18. Helen Wall
19. Tina Runge

LIFE WITH US NEWSLETTER

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