

CONESTOGA Connections



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Annual 2012 MYF Auction—Another Success!



THANK YOU from Conestoga's Youth!



The PASTORS CONNECTION

Who Decides?

But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, "No, we want a king to rule over us; even though the Lord your God was your King. I Samuel 12:12

It was when the Israelite people felt most threatened that they invested a person with authority to govern them, rather than trusting God to protect them through their collective strength. Anabaptist fore-parents' recognized the revivalist power of "the priesthood of believers." Only later did Mennonites empower "Bishops" to "rule over" them.

In light of current church-wide challenges, I hear anew "Why don't ACC or MC USA leaders discipline congregations not in line with our *Confession*?" The simple answer is that we have not given them that power.

Many of us admire former CMC leaders of the Ira Kurtz, Roy Glick, and Pastor Harvey generation—as we should. Should not our admiration trust their discernment to move away from a bishop model to one granting power to each congregation's leadership team?



CONESTOGA MENNONITE CHURCH

2779 Main Street, Morgantown, PA 19543
(610) 286-9124
www.conestogamc.com

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Editor: Lois Ann Mast
Assistant Editor: Elizabeth Petersheim
Reporters: Bonnie Beam and Sharon Stoltzfus

They had witnessed destruction when bishops outside a congregation misused "kingly" authority. Bishops, Popes, and Kings have authority to define dogma and discipline accordingly. But the New Testament shows leaders gathering in trust that God will reveal Himself through a messier Acts 15 meeting model.

In Matthew 5, Jesus redefines sin away from action to a condition of the heart. Following Christ's lead in a previous context meant advocating a divorced man be entrusted with church leadership; while also advocating removal of membership for another man pursuing divorce. The first man had been abandoned by his wife before he was a believer and was now a faithful Christian husband, father, and returned mission worker. Although he was grieved over past sins, his life now revealed a heart overflowing with godliness. The second man was a life-long "believer" whose heart was arrogant as he pursued making his lover a trophy wife "worthy of his station in life."

I would not want a church system that invested policy, or people outside the congregation with authority to keep an Elder Team from disciplining the arrogant man. Nor do I want a model where the first man could not be considered for leadership; for such a model would have tied God's hands from calling home-breaker Saul into Apostle Paul.

All my life I have sought to apply biblical values to moral and ethical questions. CMC members share that biblical practice. In spite of challenges alongside strengths in ACC and MC USA, I praise God that five years ago we discerned to remain connected to our family of faith. Connection partners us with the many persons who share biblical values as reflected in *The Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. Isolation would silence our voice. How would withdrawal accomplish prophetic witness?

As long as Mennonite polity grants the local congregation authority to apply pastoral ethics, I anticipate connection. And I embrace faith that God will provide wisdom to walk the journey. God does not hold CMC accountable for how other church leadership teams apply ethics. He does empower us to govern Conestoga's life together. We answer to Him accordingly.

I share that privilege with your Pastoral Team in joy,
Pastor Bob Petersheim



Sewing Circle

Sewing Circle met on November 7, 2012. There were 10 ladies present. Donated items included 10 school kits and 103 kit bags. Completed items included 2 relief kits, 6 comforters, 6 baby kimonas, and 13 baby blankets.

Our offering amounted to \$54.00.

For devotions, we sang, "Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus." This was followed by Psalms 33:1-9 and a reading entitled "Richly Blessed." Our closing song was "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

- Julia M. Yoder

NEIGHBORS caring & sharing

Neighbors meets on Tuesday mornings during the academic school year in our church fellowship hall from 9:15 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome for this time of fellowship!

— December 4 —

Spreading Joy to Residents at Sunny Crest Home

Meet at the church at 9:30 a.m.

— December 11 —

Who Are We Celebrating?

with Beth Bingaman

Christmas Break



Thirteen ladies participated in the 2012 "Dust Bunny Hunt" as we enjoyed lunch at the Inn at St. Peter's Village. The delicious lunch was complimented by engaging conversation around the table. Thank you, Cindy, for organizing the delicious lunch, tours of guest rooms, and a visit to the next-door bakery.



Josh Beam "blessed" us with a beautiful rendition during the offertory. Thanks,



Thomas has been enjoying taking lessons with Tim Avioli who is a gifted instructor. Thank you to both of you for enriching your talents!

Upcoming Jr. MYF Event



December 15 - Meet at the church at 6:00 p.m. to make fruit baskets for a few of our elderly members. Afterwards, we will return to the church for some

Christmas activities and snacks! Please bring a piece or two of fruit for the baskets, and invite your friends! Any questions, call Marilyn Beam at 610-406-7628.

Pastor's Day Adventures!

As Minister of Youth and Young Adults, I have the privilege of doing the very things that I saw other youth pastors do as I was growing up. And one of these things that I have gotten to experience was going to Pastors Day not as a student, but as a Youth Leader. I went to Lancaster Mennonite School's "Pastors Day" on October 18, and then Conestoga Christian School's "Pastor Appreciation Day" on November 6.

I was very surprised but yet delighted to be invited to these events and I enjoyed every second of it! I first went to Lancaster Mennonite and I walked into the lunchroom and was handed a folder full of maps of Lancaster Mennonite as well as the schedules of all the students who go to Lancaster Mennonite from Conestoga.

I found four schedules in the folder: Mason Stoltzfus, Natalie Stoltzfus, Hope Miller, and Becky Miller. I arranged whose classroom I wanted to attend and at what time in the two periods before Chapel.

I first went to Natalie's science class where they were reviewing for a test. Then I went to visit Becky in her Math class. Next was Mason in his World History class. And finally I went to visit Hope in her photography class. I loved seeing each of these youth in their own element and being able to connect with them in a different setting! Plus, each class had me reminiscing about high school and middle school days!

Conestoga School's "Pastor Appreciation Day" took a different form, but was just as exciting! I walked into their lunchroom and was able to meet and talk to other church leaders in the area. Then Ken Parris spoke to us a bit and shared a short devotional. He shared how he wanted to encourage all the church leaders because we are all doing the

Upcoming MYF Events

Wednesday, Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m. - Bible Study in Youth Room led by Rachel Mast

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m. - Help to stock the Food Pantry.

Wednesday, Dec. 19, 7:30 p.m. - Bible Study in Youth Room led by Rachel Mast

December 30-January 1
Service Project at Camp Deerpark

February 22-23, 2013
30-Hour Famine

July 1-6, 2013
Mennonite Church USA Convention
at Phoenix, Arizona



same work. He wanted to encourage us by showcasing some of the incredible talent of the student body. One of the senior girls then performed a piece of music on piano, which sounded incredible! Then the choir performed a joyful song. After that encouragement, the students came in and we had lunch together! I had the privilege of eating lunch with Mindy Beam and Meredith Graff. I really enjoyed just being able to talk to them considering many times that I see the youth, there seem to be time constraints.

I am so thankful for the opportunities that this job gives to me. Thanks to the youth who allowed me to visit them in their territory. I look forward to Pastor's Day next year!

- Rachel Mast



Fifty different stuffed animals have been gathered and donated by Beta Starchild for the next Food Pantry distribution. Seniors at the December 13 Sr. Connections will enjoy a homecooked dinner and Christmas program by students from Conestoga Christian School before we decorate these stuffed animals with Christmas ribbons.

Senior Connections will meet on Thursday, December 13, for a Christmas dinner, a Christmas program by children from Conestoga Christian School, and time to stuff the Christmas bags plus decorate the stuffed animals to be distributed at the Food Pantry.



Bob Ebert with the Christmas book that Seniors from Senior Connections will be bagging with some other goodies to be distributed to all children ages 12 and under at the December 13 Connections in our church fellowship hall.

Christmas Still

Here we are again . . . another Christmas season brings the year to a close. This is the believer's celebration, the one we claim as our own. The beautiful remembrance of the Jesus child bundled up in a cloth of countless promises that we redeem daily and eternally.

Jesus came "special delivery," as the lyric goes, "wrapped up in love, bound by a promise, sealed by a dove and filled with the Spirit, carried by grace. . ." (*Evie Tornquist*)

This is a time of precious reflection and it requires an earnest effort to pause and pay attention to the essence of the miracle that unfolded in Bethlehem that most holy night. With life going 100 mph most of this busy season, it is time to stop, slow down, and be still. A real challenge, for sure.

"The voice of the soul is gentle and quiet. Therefore, we must allow ourselves moments of stillness in order to hear it." - *Lisa Frost*

There is beauty in stillness. When was the last time you had a true moment of quiet, with all demands absent from body and mind? We are tempted with distractions as the world and its whirlwind activities pull us away from the necessity of tranquility.

The bombardments attack in both obvious and subtle ways. They can rob us of balanced health with a disturbing diagnosis of "frantic overdoing." Psalm 46:10 gives us our prescription for the cure . . .

"Be still and know that I am God" . . .

We cannot multi-task with God. External activity needs to be seriously considered and given thoughtful priority for the power of peace to flourish in our lives. In the presence of stillness, we can find that peace. And, it is sweet.

May you savor sweet moments of stillness this Christmas. Sink into your favorite chair, wrap in a blanket, breathe deeply, and sip your hot beverage of choice (I suggest hot peppermint tea with honey!) Here begins your sweet, still moment.

This closing poem is my gift to you . . . with love.

CHRISTMAS STILL

by Jill Waters

Listen to the Christmas stillness.

Listen to the still, small sound.

Listen to the Christmas spirit.

The voice of God is all around.

Listen to the Christmas stillness.

Listen to the calm and still.

Time for rest and true reflection.

The voice of God is there to fill.

Lost in all the rush and flurry,

Time gone by in wasted speed.

Days are blurred by constant hurry.

Christmas spirit, bruised with greed.

Bow the head.

Bow the heart.

Be still. Be still.

Come before Him, see what's missing.

Take it back, your place of peace.

The heart is speaking, yearns retreating.

All He wants is our release.

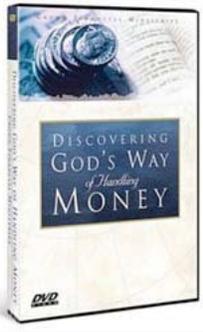
Listen to the Christmas stillness.

Listen to the simple sound.

Listen to the Christmas spirit.

God's sweet presence will abound.

New
Elective
Sunday
School
Coming
Soon . . .



Discovering God's Way of Handling Money

Beginning in January 2013 there will be an elective Sunday School class meeting in the Sanctuary for approximately 8 weeks. "**Discovering God's Way of Handling Money**", a Crown Financial publication, will be the study source. Each week there will be a short video review of one chapter and questions in a workbook to prompt discussion. If you are interested in participating in this class, please sign up on the bulletin board in the lobby before December 16.



A Counselor's Prayer

by Sam Waters

Give me Your eyes that I might see
everything I might be missing
And give me Your ears that I might hear
true meaning in their words
And give me Your heart that I might feel
the pain of those I meet with
And give me Your mind that I might understand
Those things beyond my comprehension
And grant me Your wisdom and Your counsel
for I dare not make this journey alone
Amen.



Andy and Dot Leatherman recently returned from two weeks of service with "Habitat for Humanity" in Dry Ridge, Kentucky. They were helping to build a house for a family of six who lost their home in a tornado earlier this year.



A new Sunday School Quarter Has Begun . . .

*We invite you to join a Sunday School class—there are classes available for all ages with young adults and young marrieds reading and discussing issues written about in *The Mennonite* (monthly periodical). Other classes are beginning a new quarter titled "Jesus Is Lord" studying Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Focus is on the early church's teachings as we are drawn into a deeper understanding of who Christ is and what it might mean for us to imitate Christ in our lives. Come and join us!*

Food Pantry at Conestoga Is Three Years Old

Three years ago in November 2009, Carol and I were privileged to open the Twin Valley Food Pantry. We had no idea where the Lord was going to take us—there were so many unanswered questions.

We were extremely thankful for all the volunteers who stepped alongside us in the journey—without their help and dedication to this Mission, we could not have stewarded this need in our community. God has entrusted Conestoga with this responsibility to serve those in need and in return has blessed everyone—volunteers and clients alike. I especially want to thank this congregation for your support in this Mission, your flexibility as it grew (out of control sometimes), your patience in dealing with the conflict periodically, but overall your generosity of support (volunteer hours and financially) and most of all your prayers.

Let me share some of the observations from the last three years:

- Churches (seven to nine different ones) coming together in our community as the “Hands of Christ” working together.
- Organizations and business support:
 - Boy and Girl Scouts, Twin Valley High School, Conestoga Christian School, Rotary Club, Lion’s Club, Morgantown Area Business Association, Tel Hai and other retirement communities, local banks, grocery stores, trucking companies, ...
- About 60 volunteers assist each distribution evening



- We have NEVER called and asked for help—everyone shows up
 - ages range from five years to seniors in their late 80s
- We have NEVER run out of Food (even when we thought we would)—“fishes and loaves” at work
- We serve a meal to volunteers and clients each night encouraging them to share the time together.
- We have seen many outreach activities come alongside:
 - Gideons (one year now)
 - Beta hosts a table for sharing ReUzit clothing
 - Prayer Teams actively offering support
 - Girl Scouts provided “Back to School Items”
 - PA Dept. of Health offered free flu shots
 - Social Services from Lancaster and Berks County
 - Sunday School classes offered children presents at Christmas time
 - Tel Hai and the Lion’s Club served meals
- We have grown from 25 families to over 120 families (supporting about 450 clients per month).
- We typically distribute about 12,000 pounds of food in 2½ hours.

Where the Lord will take us in the future—we do not know—but we don’t have to know. We are all blessed to serve and work together in His Name.

- Howard Moss



Volunteers getting a few bites to eat before 149 clients were assisted at the November Food Pantry distribution. Howard Moss is on the far left.

December 2, 2012

Annual Christmas Hymn Sing

6:30 p.m.
here at Conestoga



December 24, 2012

Christmas Eve 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Snyder Chalk Talk
here at Conestoga



Thank you

Lyle Essick,
John Miller,
Greg Petersheim,
Becky Yoder

for spending two days cleaning
and waxing the kitchen and
both bathroom floors!

This meant not just one waxing,
but four waxings!

We appreciate your
"servant hearts"
that produced hard work
and saved the church
a lot of money!

May God bless you for this!

