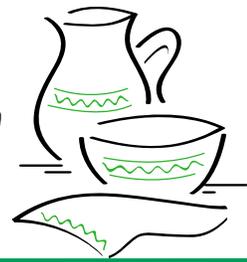


CONESTOGA Connections



December 2013
Vol. XXIV
No. 12

Church Life at Conestoga in November



Above: The King's Herald quartet gave an evening program of wonderful music praising God!

Left top: Visiting and checking out the items for the 2014 Youth Auction on November 29.

Left: Bell Choir praising God.

Left Bottom: Pegge Tennant sharing a Thanksgiving reading that she wrote for the Sr. Connections luncheon.

Right Bottom: Merle Weber and Matt Beam at work to help us worship together as God's people.





The PASTORS CONNECTION

Honest Sharing

But if we walk in the light with one another, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. I Jn. 1:7

Each fall the past several years the Pastoral Team gave time and prayer to discern how Christ would have CMC deepen our walk with him. In 2012 we identified twelve “dwelling texts” which shaped daily devotions, preaching themes, and Sunday worship member sharing. Last year we strengthened connection to Sunday School encouraging use of “Home Daily Bible Reading.”

Our discernment the past months has led me to identify 2014 as the year we claim God’s I John 1:7 promise that **honest sharing will strengthen faith**. I look forward to the good fruit this practice will release in our life together.

This meaning that minimally for the first quarter we will reshape “text and testimony” in our worship to “Story of Sensing God’s Presence.” We hope to move from “mini sermons” by members that

primarily engage thinking; to God encounter sharing emanating from, and touching, the heart.

To enhance this practice, I envision a mic being brought to where the member scheduled to share is seated. Our hope is that those hesitant to go to the platform will now say “Yes,” knowing we will come to you. Only one person—invited by Marilyn Beam, chair of our Worship Planning Team—will share each week.

I encourage leaders of our DNA Small Groups and Sunday School teachers to share with Marilyn when you hear a testimony in small group appropriate for the whole CMC body to hear. If/when you personally have a story of sensing God’s presence, please volunteer to Marilyn so she can discern whether and when to schedule your sharing. You are encouraged to honor her decision. Such is the way the people of God are blessed and grow towards maturity.

Now, let me clarify: moving from a text reflection is not diminishing time in the Word. It is my hope that we will each continue daily devotions enhanced by the past two years of corporate devotional reading. What we are now doing recognizes the appeal in Hebrews 6:1-2: *“Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundations of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.”*

This scripture is not telling us to abandon theological principles. It is calling us to grow deeper into the truth and ways of God. An accomplished pianist will review scales throughout life, but what sets them apart from amateurs is the capacity to use that foundation to play chords with growing vitality and skill. I believe that is what this scripture is calling us towards. Maturity in Christ moves beyond simply understanding theology correctly to a heart transforming into the very character of Christ.

It is towards this deeper CMC body life that I invite you to join in claiming for 2014 Christ’s promise that **honest sharing will strengthen faith**. Repeating anew verse two above *“And God permitting, we will do so!”*

Joyfully Living HiStory with you, Pastor Bob



CONESTOGA MENNONITE CHURCH

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Monthly newsletter for Conestoga Mennonite Church published since 1988. Deadline for articles and photos is the 20th of the preceding month of publication.

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



Sewing Circle

Sewing Circle met on November 6, 2013. There were 17 ladies present. Donated items included 92 kit bags and 2 comforter tops. Finished items included 5 comforters and 24 hygiene kits.

For devotions, we sang "Count Your Blessings." Psalm 103 was read, followed by a Thanksgiving devotion.

The special offering amounted to \$67.00 for hygiene kits. We sang "To God Be the Glory" before adjourning.

- Betty Cannell, Secretary



Christmas Celebration Brunch

— Sunday, Dec. 22, 2013 —

9:30 a.m. (during Sunday School)

Come and fellowship with your church family and be blessed. This fellowship time replaces the fourth Sunday noon meal.

Please bring cut-up fresh fruit, deviled or hard boiled eggs, or muffins.

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 3 —

Spreading Christmas Cheer

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

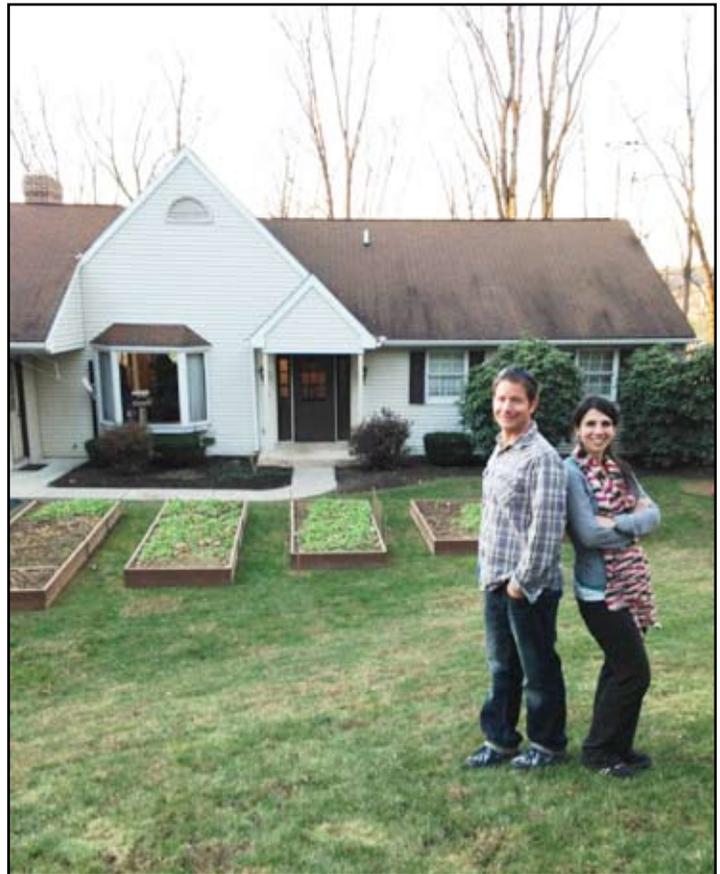
Pre-registration necessary.

— December 10 —

Cookie Exchange and Christmas Centerpiece Ideas

Bring three dozen of your favorite cookies to exchange.

CHRISTMAS BREAK



Congratulations Shawn and Jessica Petersheim! They recently purchased this house at 2582 Conestoga Creek Rd., Morgantown, and plan to move in January 2014!

Upcoming MYF Events

Wed., Dec. 4, 7:30 p.m. - Bible Study in the Youth Room led by Rachel Mast

Wed., Dec. 11, 7:00 p.m. - Stocking Food Pantry shelves in our church fellowship hall.

Wed., Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m. - Bible Study in the Youth Room led by Rachel Mast

Mon., Dec. 30-Wed., Jan. 1 - Service Trip to Camp Deerpark to cut wood.

Upcoming Jr. MYF Events

Friday, November 29 - Let's join the MYF at their annual Auction. Dinner begins at 5:30 p.m. and the auction begins at 6:30 p.m.

Watch your email and/or facebook for a December service activity over vacation.

Jr. Youth Barn Party

at

Nelson & Marilyn Beam's Farm



MARPOONED!

by Andy Leatherman

It was March 8, 1956. I had just turned 15 years old, and was on my way to the United States. My parents, John and Catharine Leatherman, were long-term missionaries in Tanzania, East Africa. I was born there and spent almost all my childhood years in that country. Now my parents were sending me back to the United States to settle permanently there.

The long nine-week trip to the U.S. began for me in Nairobi, Kenya, from the Eastleigh Airport. I said goodbye to my parents, not to see them for several years, and then flew alone to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where I met my Aunt Lois Garber (now Kauffman), missionary to Ethiopia. We planned to travel together to Khartoum, Sudan, cross the Nubian Desert by train, float down the Nile on a river boat, sightsee in greater Egypt and its capital city Cairo, before flying to Beirut, Lebanon. From there we would visit Israel, Rome, the Vatican, Switzerland, Holland, England, and then on to New York City by boat on the *Queen Elizabeth*.

Two weeks later after a delightful boat trip down the Nile River and seeing the pyramids and other sights of Egypt, we arrived in Beirut, Lebanon. There disaster struck. My Aunt became desperately ill as we checked into our hotel. The only available doctor examined her, and diagnosed hepatitis. She needed immediate hospitalization and was taken to the local hospital. We didn't know it then, but she wouldn't get out for almost three weeks. What was a young Christian fellow like me to do, stuck alone in a Muslim city for three weeks? Could I survive? Only four months before, I had devoted my life to God in a commitment that forever changed my life. I believed that God guarded his children. But now I was marooned in a foreign country. Would God help me?

Help came quickly. A Mennonite family lived in Beirut. Owen Gingerich was a young astronomer/professor at the American University in the city. He and his kind wife offered to take me in, giving me room and board. The rest of the time I was largely on my own.

The fact that those 19 days went by so smoothly without serious incident is by itself an amazing fact, a sign that God

was watching over this young fellow. Every day I would get up, and after breakfast leave the Gingerich home to wander through this city that in 20 years would be torn apart by civil war. It was peaceful then. I had my regular daily visits with my Aunt in the hospital, telling her what I was doing, planning for the future. I had errands to run for her, visa and money exchange jobs to do. In between I would wander the city. In the evening I would eat with the Gingerichs, play games with them, write in my diary, read books, etc.



Andy as a teenager.

I was never frightened—well, mostly never frightened! When a Lebanese shop owner grabbed my hand, my finger, and began dragging me into his shop, I was frightened! Was he going to kill or rob or kidnap me? In the store, I feigned interest in his show case near the door, planning to pull and jerk as hard as I could while near the door. He let me look, never relaxing his grip on my hand. I desperately jerked and pulled, got loose, and ran! I was much more cautious after that.

There were many kind persons in that city. The day I boarded the tram (a trolley), I had forgotten to take along Lebanese money to pay the five piastres (1½ American cents) fare. What would I do when the conductor worked his way through the tram and came to me? What could I do except to try paying the small fare with my American dollar bills. I was not surprised when he would not accept it. There was a big fuss on that tram until a kind Lebanese person stepped forward and paid it for me.

I remember witnessing a pickpocket at work on another tram, seeing him slyly reach into the pocket of another passenger, only to be caught in the act. He leaped off the tram before anybody could catch and hold him.

Every day there were kind people who helped me in one way or another, giving me directions, or good advice. I shopped, I went sightseeing, I simply wandered about, and never had a serious problem.

On April 10, 1956, 19 days later, my aunt was released from the hospital. We boarded a plane that same day for Jerusalem, only to be told to get off again since they had forgotten to refuel the plane! After refueling, we continued on our trip, grateful for the Lord's continual protection from known and unknown dangers.

To this day, I continue to experience that protection from the Lord, often from dangers I do not even know about. I am glad that the angels of the Lord surround his people. I was definitely surrounded. Psalm 91:11-12 says "For He orders his angels to protect you wherever you go. They will hold you with their hands to keep you from striking your foot on a stone."



Aunt Lois Garber Kauffman



A
Sailing
Adventure
on a
Tall Ship
in the
New York City
Harbor



Conestoga's Annual Bus Trip for 2014 is to New York City to sail on a "tall ship" as we pass the Statue of Liberty, Brooklyn Bridge, Ellis Island, and other sites. All participants will be given the opportunity to help raise the sails and take a turn at the helm as we sail in this majestic topsail's schooner's spacious main deck or raised quarter deck. See breathtaking views of New York City in a way you never have before! If you think you may be interested in this bus trip leaving Conestoga at 7:15 a.m. and returning at 7:30 p.m. in the evening—on Friday, June 27, 2014—please tell Lois Ann Mast so we know how many seats we will need. Cost for adults is \$78 and for children ages 12 and under is \$54.

Miss Me

But Let Me Go

When I come to the end of the road,
And the sun has set for me,
I want no rites in a gloom-filled room.
Why cry for a soul set free?

Miss me a little, but not too long,
And not with your head bowed low.
Remember the love we shared,
Miss me, but let me go.

For this is a journey we all must take,
And each must go alone.
It's all a part of the Master's plan
A step on the road to home.

When you are lonely and sad of heart,
Go to the friends we know,
And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds.
Miss me, but let me go.

Ellen Gunning was looking through her mother Ruth Stauffer's diary from the year that her father, Richard Stauffer, died. She found this poem folded up between the pages.

Continuing to Influence Your Loved Ones

. . . *Beyond Your Life*

Statistics confirm that you will live longer if you give yourself back to God through time and money. The reasons to be charitable go beyond what this article can outline! However, one of the strongest reasons for leaving a legacy I have witnessed is the impact you can have on your descendants.

Through this article, I am inviting you to consider including your church and Conference (ACC) in your Will or Estate (Retirement Funds). Such legacy gifts allow one generation to continue stating and strengthening their values to the next generation from the grave.

I have been privileged to witness some individuals who accomplish this influence by recognizing the church/conference as one of “their children” for an equal share in estate distribution. Others discern to simply leave a dollar amount or a percentage. Whether small or large, the gift bears good fruit in the remaining family and church alike.

No matter how you plan for your future and the distribution of your assets, I encourage you to bless your descendants, professionals, and your church family by including them in asset distribution.

One example at Conestoga Mennonite (CMC) was Simeon and Elsie Zook who gave a gift to the church through their Will designated to strengthen mission. CMC has had the privilege of blessing with support multiple mission workers impacting hundreds of lives on the mission field. The congregation has also been blessed as they worked to be good stewards of this gift.

Please consider how God would have you leave a final blessing to your church teaching your descendants about your love of God. I invite you to join the growing “cloud of witnesses” who yet speak from the other side of glory through their strategic asset designation.

Everence Financial (a ministry of the church) offers a Will Preparation Benefit—which is a partial financial reimbursement for Will Preparation (excellent for all ages but especially young parents). Lois Ann Mast, Everence Advocate, will be happy to put you in contact with Everence or check out their website at www.everence.com or call 1-800-348-7568 for information.

- *Cindy Petersheim, adapted from article for Atlantic Coast Conference Currents*



Senior Connections on Thursday, December 11

Following a Christmas luncheon at 12:00 noon, enjoy a Christmas program by the second grade class at Conestoga Christian School taught by Janet Petersheim Caley.

**“But the angel said to them,
Do not be afraid. I bring you good news
that will cause great joy for all the people.”
Luke 2:10**

Did You Know That . . .

. . . at a recent **Young Adult Bible Study** when the lights went out, it never stopped them from continuing their Bible Study? They simply got out their cell phones and used them like flashlights to read the book they were studying! Who says we need electric?

. . . **Pastor Bob** got his first wild turkey to “bless” a surprised **Cindy** . . . who now admits that wild turkey is definitely better than any other turkey! Cindy, you will never be too old to try something new!

. . . **Greg Petersheim** spread 3,000 pounds of lime (three tons) on his property in just one day last month? Amazing! We have a strong elder in our midst!

Join us in Celebrating Christmas

AT CONESTOGA MENNONITE CURCH



Christmas Eve Service



Donna Godshall

FEATURING:

PROFESSIONAL MUSICIAN
DONNA GODSHALL

READINGS AND CANDLE LIGHTING

DECEMBER 24, 2013

7:00-8:00 P.M.

Everyone is welcome!

For more information, call
CONESTOGA MENNONITE CHURCH
(610) 286-9124 • www.conestogamc.org