

# CONESTOGA Connections



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## A Review of December Events at Conestoga . . .



**Children's Christmas Party on Saturday, December 19, was another exciting event here at Conestoga in December!**

*Photos by Andy Leatherman.*



# The PASTORS CONNECTION

## Jesus Came and Jesus Wept

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.* John 1:14

“Jesus wept.” John 11:35

I was in my forties before I recognized that although Jesus displayed the full range of emotions, my heart and head were disconnected. Jesus wept when friends mourned, seldom had I openly grieved. Jesus ran religious merchants out who were taking financial advantage of worshippers (Mt. 21); I suppressed anger at injustice. Jesus insulted arrogant leaders with truth (Lk. 11); I had found no such voice.

This gospel contrast led me to intercede for God to break my heart with the things that break His. After several years of this prayer, God connected head to heart; and a lifetime of tears poured out till I nearly regretted my prayer! But eventually, in God’s good timing, I was healed into a healthier place. I testify that life is better when emotions too are available as kingdom instruments!

Although Jesus was strong enough to die on the cross for our sins, He did not consider it weakness to emote while addressing local politics. Last week our nation experienced another horrendous act of violence by a mentally ill young man, likely desensitized to violence by use of video killing

games, with legal access to weapons whose sole design is rapid fire.

Repeatedly, I hear the tired phrase “guns don’t kill people, people do.” But if I were a dad whose seven-year-old was in a classroom that a deranged person was going to enter with intent to kill; and my sole power was to select which gun he would use, I would select the one-shot musket that took minutes to reload which was available when our forefathers framed the second amendment right “to bear arms.” It would be a no-brainer to withhold access to the current pistols and assault rifles we have been too politically weak the past decade to regulate.

The second amendment defines this right as a “well-regulated militia.” So . . . as an unapologetic gun owner and hunter, I add my voice to better regulate! Regulation cannot prevent all airplane crashes. Yet I relax when I fly, partly because I know regulations limit who has access to the controls, who sits in the air traffic tower, who does maintenance, etc., etc.

But regulation of guns is not the sole answer. Mental health workers tell me they have limited authority to detain delusional people. Army personnel acknowledge that the science used to desensitize soldiers so they can kill the enemy in war is eerily similar to the video games so many in our society spend hours “playing.”

I pray our national conversation will successfully address these realities. But a deeper reality recognizes that only the changing of hearts can truly transform a culture. Previous generations have witnessed God releasing revival that radically transformed society. Because we live in a democracy, I believe we must add our voice and our vote to shape policy. But alongside civic action, our higher calling is to intercede for spiritual revival.

Our Lord has commanded us to pray that “His kingdom would come and His will would be done on earth as it is in heaven.” When Jesus came, His time included weeping, and speaking up with a right balance of grace and truth. He invites us to now live HiStory to benefit others!! I pray he will give us the courage and the wisdom to disagree agreeably as we each find our voices, and the spiritual authority to help bring in the revival of His kingdom on earth.

I wish you a happy holiday and a secure and productive new year!

*- Pastor Bob Petersheim*



### CONESTOGA MENNONITE CHURCH

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## Sewing Circle

Sewing Circle met on December 5, 2012, with eight ladies present.

Donated were 13 kit bags.

Completed items included: 13 hygiene kits, 2 comforters, 5 baby gowns, and 13 baby blankets.

Luke 2 was read, followed by a devotional reading entitled, "God Truly Cares." Our special offering amounted to \$30.00. We sang "Christmas Time Is Here Again" before adjourning.

- Betty Cannell



# 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!*

— January 3 —  
**"New Beginnings"**  
*with Ruthie Dunkle*

— January 10 —  
**"Resting Like Martha"**  
*with Tami Horst*

— January 17 —  
**Lois Boyer will share about her experience of serving along with her husband, Wes, as hostess at Kenya's Mennonite Guest House in Nairobi.**

— January 24 —  
**Knots of Love For Mennonite Central Committee**  
 Time of fellowship while helping others as we knot needed comforters created by sisters Krista Petersheim and Carmen Weber.

— January 31 —  
**"Humor—The Best Medicine"**  
*with Rita Richard*



*Conestoga's  
Youth will go  
Hungry*

Conestoga's youth will participate in the February 22-23, 2013, 30-Hour Famine project. This national program helps to give youth a chance to help overcome hunger—by going without food so others don't have to. Youth will also learn about hunger, as well as do some fundraising to help feed and care for children living in poverty.

World Vision, the supporting organization, provides loads of activities to help make this a totally fun, educational, and life-changing experience.



*"Let us not love with words  
or tongue but with actions and in truth."*

—1 John 3:18 (NIV)

*~ Rachel Mast, Leader*



## Upcoming MYF Events

*MYF Bible Studies every Wednesday evening in our Youth Room.*

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



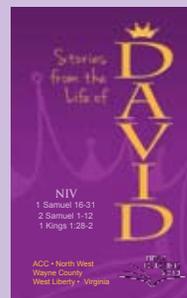
## 2013 Bible Quizzing Material

### Stories from the life of David

**1 Samuel 16 – 31,**

**2 Samuel 1 – 12,**

**1 Kings 1:28 – 2**



**Go  
Conestoga!**

## Conestoga's 2013 Quiz Team

Joy Beam

Josh Beam

Meredith Groff

Weston Caley

Mason Stoltzfus

Amanda Valentino

Sonya Petersheim, Coach



## Did You Know That . . .

. . . the following Conestoga hunters were successful this past fall in getting deer (with two lucky enough to get bear). And, thank you to those of you who shared your harvest with others in need here in our community. (Sorry if we missed someone!)

Bryce Petersheim (bear and deer)	Bronson Fox
Ryan Bostdorf (bear and deer)	Tim Aievoli
Laurell Stoltzfus	Joy Beam
Nate Spece	Josh Beam
Luke Stoltzfus	John Miller
Mason Stoltzfus	Bob Petersheim
Abe Oberholtzer	Austin Unruh
Brendon Petersheim	Gary Stoltzfus
Ryan Petersheim	Clyde Stoltzfus

***Luke Stoltzfus and his Dad  
with Luke's buck this past season!!***



## Christmas Greetings From Nepal

*Dale and Bethsaba Nafziger were past recipients of Conestoga's Elsie Zook Mission Fund.*

*Dear Friends:*

*Warmest greetings from "Boxing Day." The kaleidoscope of attached photographs (most taken over the past few days) clearly show that the Spirit of Christmas traverses all languages and all cultures.*



*Joy to the world,  
the Lord  
has come!*

*Sincerely,*

*Bethsaba & Dale*



# Forming Christian Habits in Post-Christendom

While traveling the eleven-hour drive to and from Charleston, S.C., Lemar and I read and discussed Alan and Eleanor Kreider's book titled *Forming Christian Habits in Post-Christendom* published in 2011 by Herald Press (a Mennonite publishing company).

In case you are wondering, Lemar drove while I read out loud . . . we frequently share books like this while we are traveling and it really does make the trip go faster PLUS we gain an amazing insight sharing it together!

Both authors, Alan and Eleanor Kreider, grew up in missionary families, in Japan and India, respectively. After studying English Reformation History (Alan received a PhD. from Harvard), and piano performance (Eleanor received a M.Mus.), they lived and worked for 30 years in England.

Initially, they directed the London Mennonite Centre and were pastors in the London Mennonite Fellowship. As teachers and professors, including Oxford University, they discovered that in post-Christendom (where we are today), the Anabaptist tradition provided welcomed resources for Christians of many traditions.

This book is different in that a topic is introduced by the Kreiders and then some 50+ Christians (not all Mennonite) around the world respond to the topic. Many of the responses are written by persons who became Anabaptists through encounters with the Kreiders.

Since the Kreiders have served as teachers around the world, contributors to this book are a global multivoiced choir—young and old, academic and community workers, new believers and veterans of the faith.

As we read about the Christian habits necessary for living faithfully in a world where the unraveling of Christendom has never been more apparent, topics included:

- Seeing God at work
- Listening for God's call
- Joining God's journey
- Pacifism as we cultivate God's peace
- Anabaptism as we follow in Jesus' footsteps
- Catechism and baptism: Learning to be disciples
- Friendship: Finding fellow travelers
- Peace church: Transforming the Christian community
- Early churches: Walking in the ancient paths
- Prayer: Imagining a new world

- Communion: Renewing the covenant
- Multivoiced worship: Letting all speak
- Worship and mission: Breathing in and out

Some of the tidbits that jumped out at us in our traveling included:

- God will not coerce worship or force obedience. Instead God's strategy and action are characterized by *sending*. Sending all Christians to enact the way of Jesus in the world.
- How satisfying it is when Christians see worship and mission not in competition, but as the integrated action of a body that is made whole. We can view it as a gathering and sending. We worship the Lord with gladness—and by breathing out—collaborating with God as God continues the story and brings the peaceable kingdom.
- God's mission is broader than evangelism: reconciliation between enemies, restorative justice, community building, caring for the earth, ending the arms trade, growing and distributing wholesome food, providing safe and ecologically modest transport, healing bodies and minds, . . .
- Beginning about a century ago and gaining momentum in the past 20 years, there has been a growing readiness on the part of many Christians to listen to the Anabaptists. At a time when Christianity manifestly is in trouble, at least in the Northern Hemisphere, a growing number of Christians are turning to the past, not out of nostalgia, but to reawaken subversive memories. Anabaptism's new influence today indicates the transforming potential of a repressed memory brought back into consciousness.
- In 2002, the U.S. advertising industry, whose business is evangelizing us, spent \$237 billion. How much in comparison did the church spend in shaping the views and longings of its members? If the church is to enable Christians to live creatively, it has got to ask what kinds of teaching, what alternative means of socialization can the churches use to form people who want to be Christians?
- Hospitality builds friendship. Friendship is at the heart of the life that we share in Christ.
- Peace is central to biblical faith. When people ask us, "Tell me about your church," we could say, "We're a culture of peace. God is a God of peace, and we're learning what peace means. It's exciting. Would you like to come and see?"
- We today are no longer living in Christendom; in fact, Christianity is on trial in the West. If the church survives, it will not be because of flattery or battery, but because of God's Spirit who is enabling Christians to emerge not as mere residents, but, as in the early centuries, as resident aliens, sharing the good news.

- Lois Ann Mast



Senior Connections met 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. The Seniors also gave each CCS student a bag of goodies to take along!



Pastor Bob blessed us with an impressive rendition of "O Holy Night" on Sunday morning, Dec. 23, with beautiful accompaniment by Jill Waters.



Left: Luke and Keshia Miller with newborn daughter, Alanna Nicole, in our church sanctuary. Above: All ages enjoyed the delicious Christmas brunch planned by our Activities Committee!



Conestoga's Christmas Eve service was also meaningful as we enjoyed the production of this chalk drawing and sang in candlelight.