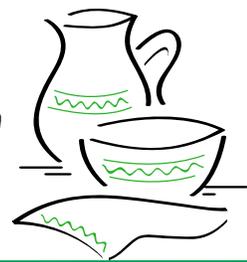


CONESTOGA Connections



April 2014
Vol. XXV
No. 4

Lots of fun activities in March for Conestogans



Austin Unruh supervised an overnight campout in the woods for young and old guys during March—it sure was worth the cold!



Left: Becky Yoder's willing workers helping to serve the New Person Center fundraiser dinner.



Right: Kathleen Weaver continuing to oversee the monthly Food Pantry evening meal served to 300+ persons once a month. Here Clyde Stoltzfus is helping.

On their college spring break, Austin and Kristy enjoyed hiking the Shenandoah Trail!



What a "blessing" our tractor and truck snow plower church members were this winter! Thank You!



Reflection Reminds Us of What God Has Done For Us

by Elder Howard Moss

Several weeks ago when I was in Colorado, I attended our previous church to worship with them. Centennial Covenant Church started in a small shopping center in Littleton, Colorado, with about 40 members. Over the last 30 years, CCC has grown to a “Spirit Filled Church” of more the 400 members in a beautiful facility servicing many ministries.

The service was reflecting on its first generation (30+ years) standing on Ephesians 3:17-21, *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power is at work with us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever, Amen.* They reflected through pictures, quotes, and events how the church had grown, planted new churches in the Colorado area, and established a strong bond with a village church in Kenya. The two church plants are being led by children of the current members—a new generation. It was rewarding to see pictures of Dad during his tenure as “Chairman of the Church Council” and the work he led in establishing the church building in use today.

It was especially nice to see old friends and share memories, mourn losses, discuss new missions, and now—share pictures of grandchildren. Pastor Steve Thulson had pictures of some the youth in the 80’s and 90’s—and laughed about their adventuresome ways—but smiled

proudly that several were now leaders in the church plants. When we reflect on the future, we know that in our belief, Jesus can do “immeasurably more” than we could ever imagine, but we don’t always get it. He gives us what we need at the time. But when we reflect on our past, we can see God’s plan in our life. The Lord knows what we need, and we trust in Him, and over our life time He gives us “immeasurably more” than we could ever imagine. He transforms us, if we are willing.

The scripture (both Old and New Testaments) constantly reminds:

Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV) *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

Proverbs 3: 5-6 (ESV) *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

Romans 8: 28 (ESV) *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

Isaiah 58:11 (ESV) *And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.*

Proverbs 16:9 (ESV) *The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.*

1 Corinthians 2:9 (ESV) *But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”*

In this busy world, we rarely take the time to reflect on our journey in Christ. Reflection reminds us exactly what He has done for us (and our families) and strengthens our Faith Foundation. Remembering where we came from is healthy for our faith, gives us reassuring hope, the feelings of love—but more than anything, demonstrates that Christ can do “immeasurably more” than we could ever imagine. God Bless.



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
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Contributing Editor: Anna Martin



Sewing Circle

Sewing Circle met on March 5, 2014. There were 14 ladies present. Due to an ice storm, there was no sewing circle in February. One comfort top was donated. Completed items included 5 comforters, 22 kit bags, 21 baby blankets, and 22 baby gowns. Twenty hygiene kits were also completed.

For devotions, we sang "Take My Life and Let It Be" followed by the reading of Romans 14:17-19 and a devotional explaining why spiritual life is more important than material life.

The special offering amounted to \$92.00 intended for hygiene kits. Before adjourning, we sang "Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus."

- Betty Cannell, Secretary

My Story of "Miracle Monday"

by Anna Martin

In order to not expose the real people who are involved in this story (no one in this congregation), I will not use the actual names but made-up names instead. This is a true story and happened about two months ago.

It has to do with a mother and her son. Her son is not married and is somewhere around the age of his early 40s. The situation was such that the mother and father were very concerned about their son whose life had become difficult because of physical illness, spiritual attacks, depression, loneliness, loss of self worth, and personal motivation.

One day the son left home where he lived with his parents, and for several weeks they did not know where he was. He only told them he would go to a friend's house. When they tried to contact him, the emails or phone messages would always be intercepted and replied to in his name. However, the mother knew her son well enough to know that the message had been returned by someone other than him.

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!

— April 1 —

"The A-Z's of Perennial Gardening From Planning to Maintaining"

Fieldtrip to Espenshade's Greenhouse at Mohnton to hear Suzanne. Meet at the church at 9:15 a.m. Pre-registration required.

— April 8 —

"Sorry Instead of Shame"

by Joyce Stoner

— April 15 —

"Sew and Tell + Potluck Brunch"

Share your highlights of your sewing projects.

— April 22 and 29 —

No meetings due to Easter.

Finally, it was confirmed that the interceptor was the person they had feared it was—a woman who seemed to have a stronghold on his life and who manipulated him and threatened him and his family. If he did not do as she wanted, she would threaten him to make life miserable for him. He did not have the ability to stand up for himself. It was as if she had a power over him. Yet he was drawn back to her in the name of a very distorted "love".

This time he had become so emotionally and physically weak that he was not able to leave her place. At times she would leave him alone and go out with her friends. One such time when she was not there, he called his mother and told her he must get out of there. She could tell he was in bad shape and deeply depressed, and was fearful for his life.

The mother is my dear friend, so she asked if I would be willing to go with her and try to find him. All we knew was that he was in a certain town north of Lancaster. We also knew that one time that she, his mother, had picked him up at a service station near the town where his friend lived. That time this woman had thrown him out of her house and he had called his mother to come and get him. That was all we knew.

(continued on page 4)

My Story of Miracle Monday *(continued from p. 2)*

We decided to drive to the service station and try to locate him from there. So on a recent Monday morning, we headed out. We started our pursuit by driving to the service station where she had met him before. It was at a crossroad. She said, "Lets go that way" We did, but ended up out in the country, so we turned around and went back. She then said, "Lets go that way," and pointed to some row homes. It ended up being a whole development of row homes, one right after the other. We drove back into the development and she said "Lets look for his truck."

Ok, now there's a thought, but look at all the trucks in this huge parking lot, plus many more on the streets. Well, it's a blue truck, so let's look for a blue truck.

She then said, "This is probably a wild goose chase. I thought . . . yeah! But at least I could let her know I cared by driving around for a few hours and then go home.

Then, there was a blue truck in front of us, but not the right shade of blue.

We headed back out toward the entrance. "There's another blue one." "Okay," I said, "Let's go see."

As we got closer, she said, "I think that's his!"

"Oh really?" I thought. "What kind of truck does he drive?" She said what kind it was and that was written on the back of the truck bed.

"Now what?" I asked. "How about if we get out and walk over and see if you can identify anything on the bed?"

She did and her face turned pale. "The sandbags, they are his sandbags on the bed!"

She asked, "What do we do now?"

I knew I had to be strong for her. We silently prayed, but that was not the first time!

I said, "Well, let's park here behind the truck and start walking down the street." We did. There were rows and rows of entryways that led to more doorways than I have ever seen.

"Let's try the first entryway, let's try the first door in that entryway," she said hoping.

I rang the doorbell. A lady with her dog came to the door, and I asked for a lady by the name of (false name of Susan Ward).

"No," she said, "I never heard of her."

"Okay . . . thanks . . . sorry to have bothered you." I remember saying, "Lets try some more doorbells."

She responded, "Take your pick . . . there are so many."

I tried two more. "No one at home," I said.

I felt like we should go up, so I suggested, "Let's go to the second floor." I rang another doorbell, taking my pick out of ten. No answer!

So then I said, "Let's go up to the third floor. There was yet another row of ten. *Where should we start?* I thought. I walked all the way to the end. *Hummm . . . we should try to find something on the door that would remind me of her. But I don't know her. Okay, there's a door that reminds me of her, it has some left over greens from Christmas! . . . but I don't know her. Ring the doorbell. Okay.*

Oh my goodness, the door opened! Oh my goodness, it's him! *Oh Lord . . . Oh Lord. You are right here,* I thought. My feelings and thoughts were one in the same. His eyes were big when he saw his mother and said to her, "Come in." She didn't have to ask.

"Is she home?" she wondered.

"No," he answered.

"Do you want to come home?" she asked hoping.

"Yes," he emotionally said.

We gathered his things, but he could not find his wallet. "I cannot leave my wallet here."

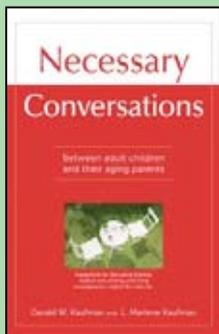
We prayed silently! He found the wallet! We left the house . . . his mom drove his truck with him beside her and I followed in my car.

Nothing mattered to me at that moment. God had never ever been so near doing His miracle and with me involved. If we had crashed and burned on our way home . . . I was okay. God was never more real and maybe will never be, but from that day forward I will never be the same.

His mother shares this same testimony and her son continues to live at home and is healing.

Thank you God!

Book Review . . .



One of the recent additions to our church library is *Necessary Conversations Between Adult Children and Their Aging Parents*. Andy and I have found this book to be an excellent resource for anyone facing decisions that come in our senior years. As we age, our world will inevitably become too complex for us to handle by ourselves. Before we get to that point, we should share with our adult children concerning our wishes (and invite their input) as we consider decisions regarding where we'll live, our finances, and various end-of-life issues.

This book had a huge impact on us, motivating us to begin by sharing full details of our finances with our children. This included banking, investment and retirement account information, insurances, passwords, etc. We are also working on a list of conversation topics for the next time we are all together, inviting their input. Most of this book is written from the perspective of the "aging parents," likely with the intent that parents take the initiative in these conversations. The exception is chapter 4, which is written to the adult children.

- Dot Leatherman

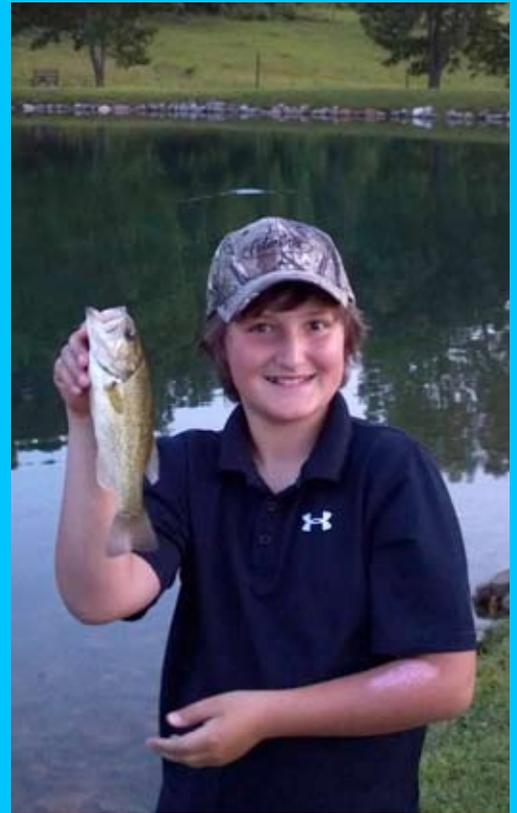


**Father/Children
(cross the generations)
Fishing Derby**
on
Friday, June 6, 2014,
after 6:00 p.m.
at Pastor Bob & Cindy
Petersheim's Pond.

*A light supper will
be provided, plus prizes!*

Sign-up
on the church
bulletin board
by May 26, 2014.

Coordinators for this
2014 Fishing Derby
are Mason Stoltzfus,
Bronson Fox, Abe
Oberholtzer, and
Cindy Petersheim.



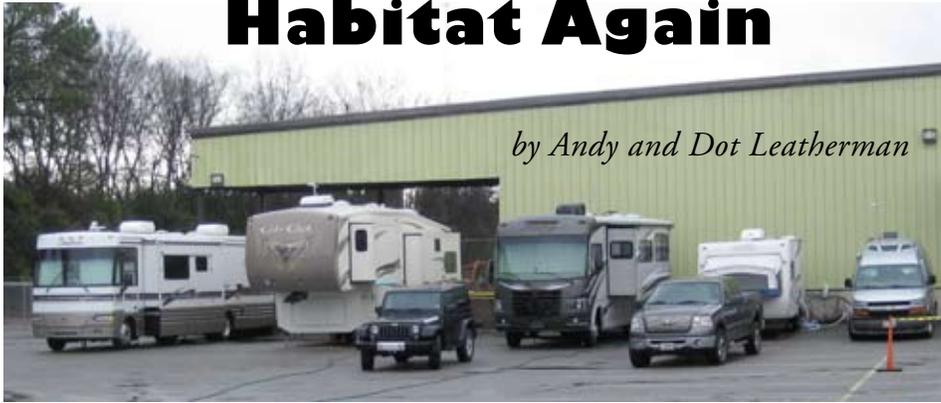
Photos taken at the June 2012 Fishing Derby.



Bev Smucker recently organized a pleasant tea luncheon with three Conestoga members who are residents at Landis Homes: Laura Kurtz, Marian Stoltzfus, and Betty Zook. Six ladies from Conestoga contributed to the luncheon. Pictured above, left to right: Julia Yoder, Laura Kurtz, Louise Kurtz, Bev Smucker, Anna Martin, Marian Stoltzfus, Betty Zook, Becky Yoder, Vida Beiler, with Lois Ann Mast (behind the camera).

Habitat Again

by Andy and Dot Leatherman



Early Saturday morning, February 1, 2014, Dot and I stepped into our Ford F150 pickup. Slowly we drove the truck out our driveway out to the main road, towing our 20-foot camper trailer. Our destination was Macon, Georgia, to join a group of seven other RV-ers. We were all eager to begin our construction assignment on a home for a single mother and her children under Habitat for Humanity.

Two days later, we pulled into the large empty parking lot of the Habitat ReStore in Macon and backed into our assigned space. What a surprise! Usually our little trailer is the smallest of all the giant 30-40 foot RVs, and we laugh at that and rather enjoy the contrasts. But beside us, as we parked, was a small customized Chevy van with a 70 year-old woman from Chicago—and her pit bull!

For two weeks, nine of us volunteers with a paid construction supervisor from Habitat worked on this house.

We hung and nailed siding, installed windows, and painted. What joy to work with other volunteers, each of us contributing whatever skills we had, and learning new ones. Our group was fun to work with. We ate half of our meal times together, each of us taking turns preparing the food for the group.

We continue to be impressed with Habitat's methods of operation. While ours was a rehab house, most of Habitat's buildings are new, small, well insulated, sturdy, low-cost homes. The future owners must take classes in financial management, home care, etc.; and must give many hours of sweat equity. They then get a mortgage from Habitat which is interest free. Habitat's pattern is to create communities of homes near each other. We drove through some of the most depressed housing areas of Macon, many abandoned homes, some falling down, and saw the groups of Habitat homes in the middle of all that, transforming the entire area. With Habitat's excellent reputation, businesses, governments, Walgreens, and Lowes freely give excess paint, abandoned houses, lumber, siding, and other construction supplies to Habitat.

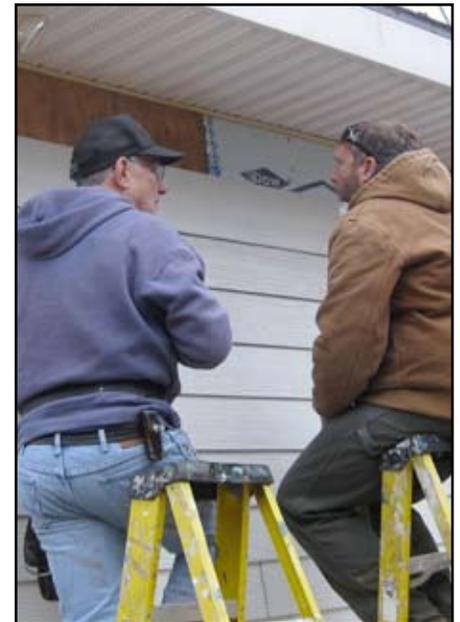
One very interesting adventure for us was to visit the Global Village in Americas, Georgia. We walked through the slum housing segment of the tour (see pictures), and then walked through the array of sample Habitat houses that are built to replace slum housing in many different countries (see pictures).

These houses in foreign countries are built at a fraction of the cost of American houses, but with the same methods of operation (sturdiness, sweat

equity, interest free mortgages, training of new owners, etc.).

While Mennonite Disaster Service, with whom we have served, works primarily in disaster relief, Habitat seeks to provide simple low-cost stable new housing for the poorest of poor and thus to improve communities. Both kinds of organizations are desperately needed worldwide. What a privilege we Christians have to serve the needy of our world in these ways. We thank the Lord for those who have built these organizations to give us these opportunities of service. We appreciate as well the prayers and support of our home congregation here at Conestoga!

(continued on next page)

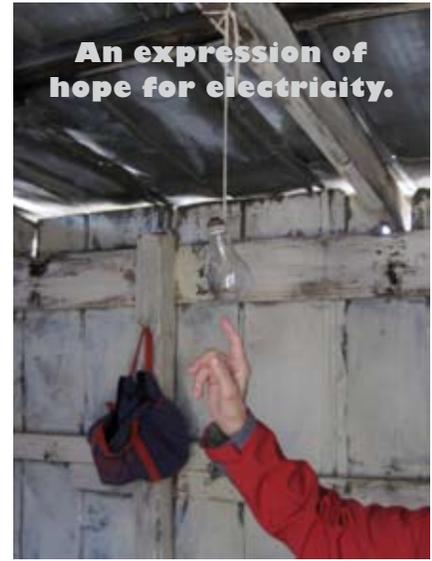




Visitor Welcome Center
Global Village & Discovery Center



Haiti



An expression of hope for electricity.

Poverty Housing: A Global Epidemic

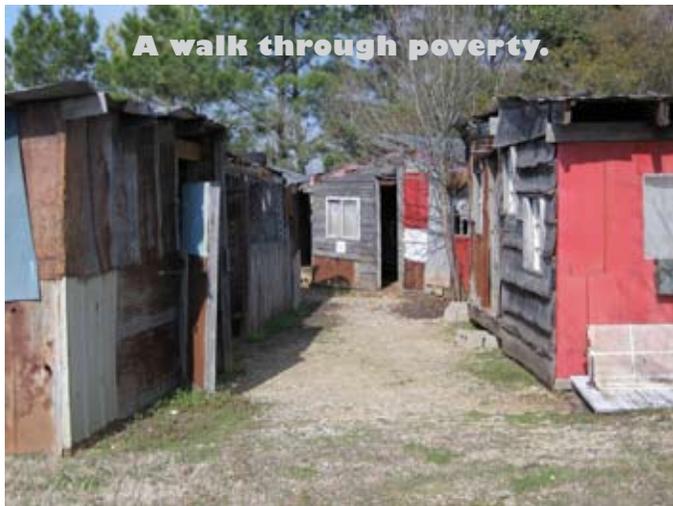
- An estimated 1.2 billion people in the world today live on less than \$1 per day.
- Nearly 3 billion people—close to half of the world's population—live on less than \$2 per day.
- Home, for many families, looks something like the structures you are about to see; or worse.



Congo, Africa



A Habitat home in Papua New Guinea



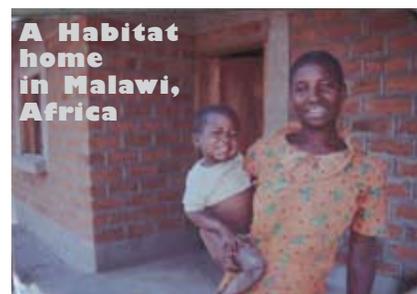
A walk through poverty.



A Habitat home in India.



A Habitat home in South Africa.



A Habitat home in Malawi, Africa

What If Your Family Lived Here?

Imagine trying to build a future for yourself and your family while living here. Imagine watching your spouse and children suffer exposure to freezing temperatures, sweltering heat, insects and disease. Imagine feeling helpless against it all.



Typical slum housing to be transformed by Habitat



A Habitat home in Tanzania, Africa

People who would live like this must be lazy, they must not want to work to better themselves ... do you find yourself thinking that?

The reverse usually is true: Families often find themselves in such settlements only because they have come from rural areas to the city hoping and praying to find jobs.



Chatter

(fellowship)

Chow &

(bring soup to share)



Cheerful Service

(work at MCC Material Resource Center, 517 Trout Run Rd., Ephrata)

Saturday, May 3, 2014, 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Hosted by Atlantic Coast & Lancaster Conference Mennonite Women

*Invite a friend... all ages are welcome.
Teen and Young Adult participation encouraged!*

Go Green

*Bring a mug,
bowl & spoon,
and a pint of
Chicken Corn or
Vegetable Soup
to share!*



*Sisters in Christ, sharing & working together
Ages 12-99 welcome*

Save the date for: ACC-Fall Ladies Dinner - Friday Oct. 24, 2014 - details to follow