

CONESTOGA Connections



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Our Life at Constoga Mennonite . . .



“Fellowship is a relationship of inner unity among believers that expresses itself in outer co-participation with Christ and one another in accomplishing God’s will on earth.”



Left: Commissioning of Conestoga’s two new elders last month included (standing in front row, left to right): Elder Jerry Petersheim with his wife Freda, and Elder Brendon Petersheim and his wife Blair. Also on that row are Heidi and Elder Rod Stoltzfus who was re-elected for a second term. Other elders and their wives are laying on of hands with Pastor Bob sharing in a prayer of blessing. Photo Credit: Sam Waters.



The PASTORS CONNECTION

Ministry to “Nones”

Each January, Rachel Mast, I, and several hundred other leaders gather at Eastern Mennonite Seminary's annual “School of Leadership Training” (SLT). Consistently, I am blessed by the rich fellowship, inspiring worship, and high quality of biblical input.

This year, the focus was on the growing portion of American society who when asked to list which religious tradition they affiliate with check “none.” Although many state they are spiritual, they have dropped out of congregational life.

Even many who “attend” church have radically changed their definition of active. Past generations understood “active” as present three Sundays a month. Currently many claim to be “active” with attendance once a month. These are sobering national statistics!

Part way through SLT, I realized I wasn't engaged as deeply as past years. I reflected on why and realized that the agenda was shaped by the many churches across



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America experiencing few or no young adults and young families; successive years of decreasing budgets; and declining attendance. None of these represent Conestoga today. Praise God!

Although we would be delighted with even more young adults and young families, we have a strong core and a growing base!

Although vision always exceeds resources (as I believe it should in a healthy ministry), our fund balances remain strong. Year after year, CMC members generously support the mission and ministry to which God has called us.

Although our sanctuary leaves room for growth, attendance remains strong. This is true even as CMC experiences significant generational change.

Once I figured out why the content had not engaged me deeply, I began to listen differently: less assuming it *describes* CMC; more assuming it could *inform* our outreach. I began to listen for how CMC might better reconnect the “nones” around us.

What I heard is that “nones” want church to be comfortable with asking tough questions without applying superficial religious answers. They want a church of people who are authentic; whose Sunday talk parallels their 24/7 walk.

They want a church that cares about the environment as the garden God created. They want a church that recognizes Jesus is big enough to save the cosmos AND people, destructive social systems, and dysfunctional individuals.

I came away from SLT encouraged! Although we can always grow in the above characteristics, these qualities are consistent with our CMC DNA! So let's speak up!

Let's keep aiming to live up to the big God we love and the cosmic Christ whose gospel we serve! And let's keep growing in our capacity to be a family of invitation, integrity, and connection!

*Joyfully Living HiStory Together with You,
Pastor Bob Petersheim*



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!*



Sewing Circle

Sewing Circle met on Wednesday, January 7, 2015. There were 14 ladies present. Donated were: 2 comforters and 2 comfort tops. Three comforters were completed.

For devotions, we sang “More About Jesus,” followed by a reading of James 4:11-17 and a devotional entitled “With Him Forever.”

The special offering was \$57.00. We sang “Jesus Loves Even Me” before adjourning.

- Betty Cannell

~ Meet the Parsons Family ~



February's Conestoga Family features the John and Marcia Parsons family. John is holding Cora and Marcia is holding Emma!

— February 3 —
“God Revealed in Ezekiel”
with Maya Thornton

— February 10 —
Sweet Valentine Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
with Jon & Loice Byler
Please pre-register with Tina Essick and
bring a dish for the pot-luck dinner.

— February 17 —
Bible Study
with Stan Deen

— February 24 —
“Mind Your Own Beeswax”
with Joyce Stoner



*February 10, 2015
6:30 p.m. in the Conestoga Fellowship Hall*

*Pre-register with Tina Essick, 610-864-7714,
or send an email to: tina.m.essick@gmail.com.*

*Jon & Loice Byler will share on
“Rekindling the Romance.”*



Volleyball Tournament



VOLLEYBALL FUNDRAISER . . .

Seven volleyball teams competed on Sat., Jan. 17 raising over \$1,000 for Conestoga's two future sand volleyball courts. This was a day filled with fun and competition towards the building of two sand courts intended to help make connections in our community! About \$6,000 is needed with \$3,772.75 raised so far. Contributions designated for "Volleyball" may be given in the Sunday morning offering. Thanks, Sonya Petersheim, for organizing this Tournament!





**Conestoga's Jr. Youth and Youth
will participate
in the Thirty-Hour Famine
on February 27-28.**

EVERYONE

at Conestoga is invited to consider sponsoring one of our Conestoga youth as they participate in the Thirty-Hour Famine!"

Did you know that

... \$35 will feed and care for a child for one month?

... or \$425 will feed and care for a child for just over a year?

... or \$840 will feed and care for two children for an entire year?

... nearly one in five persons in the developing world survive on LESS THAN \$1.25 A DAY?

When injustice hits with 800 million plus hungry, we can hope someone else handles it, or we can answer God's call and make it our fight.

Thanks, youth, for giving us the privilege to participate in this with you!

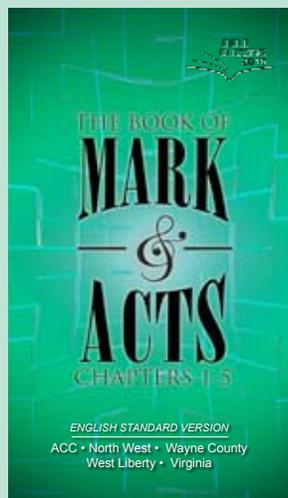
Upcoming MYF Events

In addition to Quizzing each Sunday (see schedule listed below), there are also Wednesday evening Bible Studies followed by quiz practice.

February 12-19 - Belize Mission Trip

February 27-28 - Thirty-Hour Famine with the Jr. Youth (see column on the left)

Quiz Schedule



Feb. 1, 2:00 p.m. - Blainsport

Feb. 8, 6:30 p.m. - Calvary Monument

Feb. 15, 6:30 p.m. - Chiques Church of the Brethren

Feb. 22, 6:30 p.m. - Conestoga Mennonite

Conestoga's Quiz Team: Josh Beam, Mindy Beam, Weston Caley, Rodney Luke Stoltzfus, James Valentino, Coach Sonya Petersheim.

Upcoming Young Adult Events

— February 3 —

7:30 p.m. at Pastor Bob and Cindy's lower level.
Bible Study will finish the study of James.

— February 17 —

7:30 p.m. at Pastor Bob and Cindy's lower level
Dottie Martin will share her testimony.

Conestoga Happenings . . .



Mason Stoltzfus was one of five seniors from Lancaster Mennonite School to receive their Keystone Degree at the Farm Show last month. They had to keep records on a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) project that showed they had worked over 600 hours and had earned and productively invested \$1,000. They also had to be involved with local and state FFA activities, prepare an agricultural speech and participate in 25 hours of community service. Pictured (left to right: Cierra King, Kaleigh Gerringer, Tyler Weaver, Dylan Coleman, and Mason Stoltzfus.



it effective, efficient, and farmer-driven. The soy checkoff describes Freedom to operate as follows: The final variables in U.S. soybean farmer profitability are the obstacles that affect a farmer's freedom to operate. And there are definitely obstacles. Some of the issues the soy checkoff monitors involve biotechnology acceptance, sustainability demands, transportation infrastructure breakdowns and public opinion of today's farming practices. These issues are critical, and the checkoff is there to address them on behalf of farmers and their customers. Thanks, Bill!



Shell and Henry Johnson with Bishop Pauline Peifer at Henry's ordination in January at the Harrisburg Brethren in Christ Church where Henry serves as Pastor of Discipleship & Youth Ministries. Shell is the daughter of **Gary and Sharon Stoltzfus**.



The **Wandering Shepherds Bible Study** surprised **Harvey Stoltzfus** with a birthday cake for his 80th birthday in their home last month. The cake was baked and decorated by Rebecca Beam!

The "**Tuition Assistance Fund**" for Conestoga children to attend private schools was blessed at the end of last year with two different contributions by descendants of Ruth Stauffer. After hearing what was done with Ruth's estate money donated to Conestoga Mennonite Church, a son and granddaughter both added another contribution. When this fund reaches \$100,000, five percent annually will be distributed to Conestoga members who have children attending private schools. Thank you for considering adding contributions now or placing it in your will for the benefit of future generations.

Bill Beam volunteers his time as an appointed member of the Executive Committee of the United Soybean Board (USB). He was one of the 70 volunteer farmer-directors of the United Soybean Board who oversee all the U.S. soybean farmers. USB states that the purpose of the executive committee is to oversee the checkoff and keep



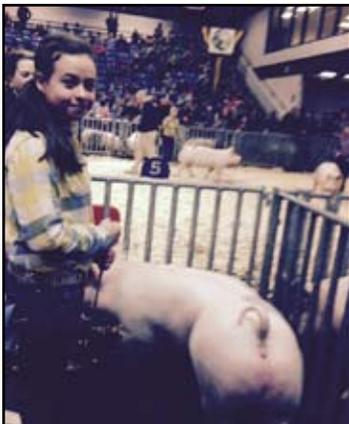
Five-generation photo of **Karen Horning** holding her granddaughter, her daughter Maray (standing behind her), her mother (on the left) and her grandmother (in the bed).



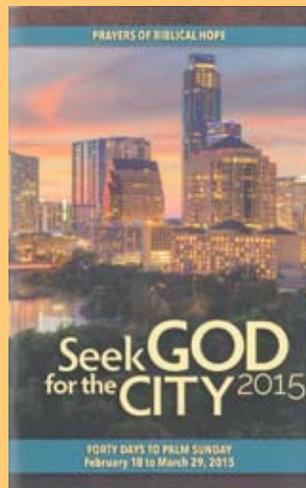
Senior Connections will meet on Thursday, February 12, in our church fellowship hall. Following a home-cooked meal, David Tennant will share some special music. Bring your friends!

Conestoga's Quiz Team accomplished an unheard-of-feat of having four of our quizzers quiz out in the same match on Sunday January 25. This means our team answered (correctly!!) twelve of the fifteen questions!

Ask **Nathan Smucker** about his competition on his school's wrestling team that won a special award! Go Nathan!



The **Nelson and Marilyn Beam** family had an excellent year in state pig competition at the Farm Show last month. Ask Josh or Mindy about their successes with the line the family has developed. Mindy is pictured in the above photo at the Farm Show.



***Seek God
for the City
2015—
Forty Days to
Palm Sunday
is a . . .***

. . . daily devotional guide placed in our church mailboxes this morning. Everyone is invited to use this during the upcoming Lent season. It is especially meaningful because other persons attending other churches here in the Morgantown and Elverson area are also using this same devotional guide.

The starting date is 40 days from Ash Wednesday until Easter—from Wednesday, February 18, 2015, until Palm Sunday, March 29, 2015.

As we share this experience with each other here at Conestoga and with our neighbors in other churches, we also will have the privilege of attending each other's churches for Thursday evening prayer times. Watch for announced occasions, and put Thursday evening, March 12, on your calendar for here at Conestoga. These prayer times will occur between February 18 and March 29.

Mennonite World Conference



Have you ever wondered about the beliefs that we share as 1.7 million Anabaptists around the world? Mennonite World Conference is coming to Harrisburg, Pa., on July 21-26, 2015.

Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Assembly meets every six years on a different continent and this year, it is coming to Harrisburg, Pa., in the Farm Show Complex. This reunion of the Anabaptist-Mennonite family worldwide is an amazing experience that everyone should experience at least once in their lifetime!

The last time an Assembly was in North America was in 1990. Since then it has been in India, Zimbabwe, and Paraguay. The next MWC Assembly is in 2021 in Indonesia.

Planned for all ages, MWC Assembly helps break down cultural stereotypes as we learn about the global church. It widens our understanding of what it means to be a Christian and part of God's big beautiful church as a Mennonite.

Conestoga's annual church bus trip this summer will be to experience one day of MWC. We will board our chartered bus in the church parking lot and travel to Harrisburg to mingle and worship with 7,000+ other Mennonites and Brethren from around the world!

Worship begins at 9:30 a.m. with singing led by an international choir followed by a variety of speakers around the world! At 10:15 a.m., two separate programs are available for children ages 4-11 and 12-17 years of age.

Lunch is served at 12:15 a.m. followed by a number of activities relating with brothers and sisters from around the world including:

- **Global Church Village** is a large display area and meeting place on the Assembly site, features continental displays of culture and church life (artifacts, videos, recorded music, games, storytelling from Anabaptist churches around the world, and a stage giving drama performances from around the world.

- **Service Projects** on-site include building a house with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS); preparing corn for

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC); and cutting and knotting comforters for MCC. Off-site projects in the city of Harrisburg will include painting, small repairs, and other tasks at nonprofit organizations.

- **Anabaptist World Cup** consists of players from different countries, gender, and age levels forming teams and playing futbol/soccer each afternoon. Cost is \$20 which includes a Pa. 2015 t-shirt! Spectators can also participate for a cost of \$15 which includes a t-shirt and shuttle transportation to the playing field.

- Other **sports, games, and fun** are also available during each afternoon.

- Between 160-200 **workshops** are offered each afternoon on a variety of topics: theological, historical, cultural, and creative.

Supper will take place between 4:30 and 6:30 p.m.

Evening worship begins at 6:45 p.m. and will conclude at 8:30 p.m. so that we arrive home in our church parking lot about 10:00 p.m.

Global Youth Summit for young adults ages 18+ will be held from July 17-19, 2015, on the campus of Messiah College with about 1,000 young adults around the world! Check out: www.mwc-cmm.org/pennsylvania-2015/global-youth-summit

NOTE: MWC is releasing the fee for one-day attendance in about a month, so we do not yet know what this will cost. We are thinking that the bus will go up on Wednesday, July 22, but that will be determined when the fee schedule is set. The cost for the entire five-day Assembly (includes lunches and suppers) is \$575 per person (less if you live outside the U.S.)