

CONESTOGA Connections



January 2015
Vol. XXVI
No. 1

Conestoga's Christmas Eve Service



The Christmas Eve service was great, but the juggling act by the Petersheim brothers afterwards was just as much fun!



Eating Christmas cookies.



Singing "Silent Night" with lit candles is a memory we will not forget!





Conestoga's Service Trip to Belize in February



Thirteen Conestogans are traveling to Spanish Lookout in Belize from Feb. 12-19. They will be installing drywall. Because of the generosity of church members at the Youth Auction (and since), 100 sheets of drywall will be purchased plus other supplies for drywall construction in a home for Rich and Rachel Deeds to be used as a hospitality house for the Life Change Institute.

The group has already begun praying about the connections they make and the work that they will be doing, but those of us back home also have the privilege to participate by praying for the following team members as they travel and make potential sister church connections:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Bob & Karen Horning | Mike Petersheim |
| Josh Beam | Gary & Sharon Stoltzfus |
| Mindy Beam | Luke Stoltzfus |
| Nelson Beam | Mason Stoltzfus |
| Ron Jenkins | Becky Yoder |
| Pastor Bob Petersheim | |



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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, December 3, 2014. We had 17 ladies present. There were two comforters donated and 11 comforters completed. Plus, 28 hygiene kits were assembled.

We sang “Joy to the World” for devotions followed by the reading of Luke 2:8-19. The devotional was entitled “Ponder and Wonder” with several of the ladies describing their most memorable Christmas.

The special offering was \$28.00 to be used for hygiene kits. We sang “O Little Town of Bethlehem” before adjourning.
~ Betty Cannell

— January 6 —
“The Quiet Voice of Courage”
by Jill Waters

— January 13 —
“Mourning Into Dancing”
by Rita Richard

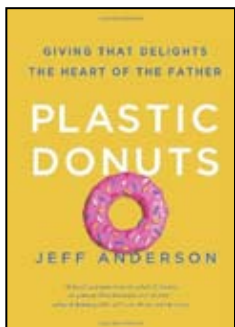
— January 20 —
“Cultivating an Undivided Heart”
by Beth Bingaman

— January 27 —
Knotting Comforts for MCC
Come and enjoy this service project.

New Books in our Church Library

Growing Community, 1994-2014—Landis Homes Celebrating 50 Years in 2014

Pictorial colorful book tracing the history of Landis Homes near Lititz, Lancaster Co., Pa. Five Conestoga members live here: Laura Kurtz, Harvey & Lillian Stoltzfus, Marian Stoltzfus, and Betty Zook.



Plastic Donuts—Giving That Delights the Heart of the Father
by Jeff Anderson

Plastic donuts are everywhere, but few things are more misunderstood. When they do come up in conversation, it feels awkward, even confusing. It’s like something’s missing. Plastic donuts show up in the stories of some of the biggest events in history. A man named Noah gave them after being stranded on an ark. God responded with a rainbow in the sky. Another man, named Solomon, gave some Donuts, and God visited him in a dream. This book is about the power of gifts, the way we give, and who we give to.

~ Meet the Stoltzfus Family ~



Each month in 2015, we will introduce a family who attends Conestoga Mennonite. **Brandon** and **Kristin Stoltzfus** and their six children live at Morgantown. First row, left to right: Gavin Buckwalter, Kayla Richardson, Marissa Buckwalter, Liana Stoltzfus, and Nick Stoltzfus. Second row, left to right: Brendan Richardson, Kristin Stoltzfus, and Brandon Stoltzfus.



LETTING OUR LIGHT SHINE

*Austin Unruh
preparing to rock climb
over the holidays.*

As many of you know, Kristy and I spent two months in Colorado this year, working with a secular nonprofit group with very lofty goals. Their noble aim was to lift young, single mothers out of poverty by helping them develop profitable businesses. During our time in Colorado, we not only fell in love with the mountains, but learned a host of valuable lessons. One of the most striking came through observing how absolutely wonderful and loving people can be, while also bearing the potential for seriously hurting themselves and others. In the process, it was made clear to us that the greatest way for us Christians to spread the Good News is by showing towards others the same depth and breadth of love we have received from Christ.

Our director, David, was a very spiritual and moral man, whom we got along well with. He did however, make it clear he was not a Christian. During our many conversations about religion, one thing in particular stood out. It was that he believed the human race is moving towards solving all our problems, towards reconciling all our differences, and ultimately moving towards a restored world. While being aware of the negative in our world, his belief was that we are making progress in the right direction.

I would love to ask him now whether he still holds this to be true. Towards the end of our time in

Colorado, David, his wife Jan, and their two young boys were treated very poorly by the organization's board chairman, who had once held very high humanitarian goals. At every turn, those individuals our director had trusted the most turned their backs on him, undoing the two years of work he had put into the project, and leaving his family stranded, far away from home without the funds to get back or restart their lives. Rather than helping others out of poverty, the actions of the board had literally put him into poverty.

It was then that Kristy and I noticed the most beautiful thing. There was one group who stayed loyal and supportive of David and Jan, a group of devoted Christians they had befriended. This close friend group overflowed with love and generosity towards the family, inviting them for meals, offering support and encouragement, even opening up their homes. And all was done very clearly out of genuine, selfless Christian love. This group of Christians used their words and actions in harmony to share the wonderful news of the gospel with David's family. And what a beautiful sermon it was.

The message I received is that while we as Christians are still deeply flawed, we are also being restored by our Maker, and are capable of loving deeds that our world is unfamiliar with, deeds that will make others think twice about us. We won't ever fully restore this world (that is for Christ), but we can act to preserve it and make it taste better, like salt does (Matthew 5:13-16).

As we show others the love of God through our actions, we open doors to share of the hope we have that our world will be made new, restored; not by our actions, but by Christ, who is already at work.

*In the same way,
let your light shine before others,
that they may see your good deeds
and glorify your Father in heaven.*

(Matthew 5:16)

Upcoming Jr. MYF Events



Conestoga's Jr. Youth and Youth will be participating in the February 27-28 Thirty-Hour Famine.

The theme for 2015 is:

“David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword . . . - 1 Samuel 17:50”

You have a choice.
You always have a choice.
When something happens,
you can sit out, or stand up.

The world can stay the same,
or you can help shape it.

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

In the Bible story of David and Goliath,
David was the youngest.
Inexperienced.
“Not good enough.”
Made fun of.

Yet he chose to stand up—
chose to make Goliath his fight.
And he won . . . because the battle was God's.

We have a choice too.
To do the 30 Hour Famine
and stand up for hungry children.
To represent the hungry by going hungry.
To fight for the justice God loves.

The battle has always been His,
He's just waiting for us to volunteer.
He wants to use us.
And you know what?
We. Can. Do. This.

Upcoming MYF Events

January 7, 7:30 p.m. - Bible Study led by Rachel Mast

January 14, 7:30 p.m. - Bible Study led by Rachel Mast

January 18, 6:30 p.m. - First ACC Bible Quizzing at Lancaster Mennonite School on Mark 1-4:20

January 21, 7:30 p.m. - Bible Study led by Rachel Mast

January 25, 6:30 p.m. - ACC Bible Quizzing at either Hinkletown or Landisville Mennonite Church

January 28, 7:30 p.m. - Bible Study led by Rachel Mast

February 1 - ACC Bible Quizzing at 2:00 p.m.

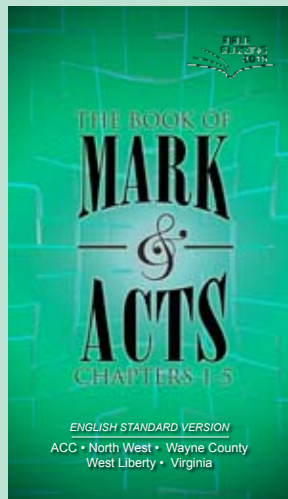
February 12-19 - Belize Mission Trip

February 27-28 - Thirty-Hour Famine with the Jr. Youth

Quizzing is Here

Secret sponsors are needed for Conestoga's five awesome quizzers to pray for them and “bless” them with a gift each Sunday morning. Our quizzers this year are:

Josh Beam
Mindy Beam
Weston Caley
Rodney Luke Stoltzfus
James Valentino



Please email Quiz Coach Sonya Petersheim at slpetersheim@gmail.com or call her at 484-876-1839 to let her know if you would like to be a secret sponsor this year!

Conestoga Happenings . . .



Thank you **Susan Johnson** and **Trisha Harrop** for decorating our church building for Christmas!



First snow of the season came to us on November 28—it did not take the Parsons family long to build an early snowman! Great job, **Emma** and **Cora** . . . and **John**!



Marian Stoltzfus (first person sitting on the left in the front row) enjoys singing with other Landis Homes residents. Over the Christmas season, they traveled off campus spreading *joy*.

Eleven persons met on December 18 to pray and discuss how God might want us to provide women and children with places of safety, dignity, and hope. **Sam and Jill Waters** shared the needs of women and children at risk here in our tri-county area. A nearby home has come available for use, but, of course, the expenses of rent and administrative costs also need to come. Pray for this ministry and those who are seeking God's leading.

The Conestoga Mennonite archives accepted a number of donations in 2014 including diaries from the late Emma Yoder, wife of Minister David Yoder (donated by their daughter **Julia Yoder**); papers and books from the late Bishop Omar Kurtz (donated by Ed Kurtz who is the brother of **Dottie Martin**); papers of Emma Petersheim donated by Richard and Ruth Glick (Richard is the son of the late Deacon Roy Glick); 2014 scrapbook of pertinent newspaper articles and other items on Conestoga members and obituaries donated by **Ruth Stoltzfus**; sermon notes of retired Pastor **Harvey Z. Stoltzfus** (donated by Harvey Z. Stoltzfus); miscellaneous donations from **Ada Fisher**. Contributions for our church archives may be given to Ruth Stoltzfus or Lemar Mast.

Another November 28 snowman for our early winter season created by **Hannah** and **Mark** and **Liz Petersheim**.





Senior Connections will meet on Thursday, January 8, in our church fellowship hall. Following a home-cooked meal, Bob Ebert has a special game for us to enjoy. HAPPY NEW YEAR!



**On
January 8,
Senior
Connections
will enjoy
a noon
home-cooked
meal plus
a game
led by
Bob Ebert.**



The December Sr. Connections Christmas Dinner included delightful dramas and music by students from Conestoga Christian School. Then, the seniors distributed gifts to the children.





Annual Youth Auction

Thank you to everyone who attended, contributed, and purchased items at the Nov. 28, 2014, Youth Auction! For the first time ever, all proceeds went to the upcoming "Belize Mission Trip" that 13 youth and others are taking in February 2015. We chuckled when Rodney Luke prayed in the beginning that "Everyone would go home with empty pockets!"

