

CONESTOGA Connections



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Conestoga's Mission Trip to Belize in February 2015 (continued on page 4)



Seeing God at Work

Mennonites today live in 83 different countries with only 26% living in America.

Three weeks ago on our way to Indiana, we were not sure how far we would drive before the snow would cause us to stop. As we kept checking weather.com on our cell phone, we saw lots of snow ahead of us. As we neared Pittsburgh, we realized that snow was falling on both sides of us and we were traveling in about a one-mile path with no snow. This took place for almost an hour until we finally reached intense snow for the last half-hour of our trip. When we stopped, I checked my emails and discovered that friends said they were praying. One of them in our small group wrote, "I was praying that God would give you a clear path." God did . . . it was almost like Moses going across the Red Sea with high waves (snow) on both sides while God gave us a clear path! Thank you, Dottie Martin!

We attended a four-day conference at Elkhart, Indiana, on the theme of "What is an Anabaptist Christian?" About half of the speakers were first-generation Anabaptists who in studying the Scriptures and studying history discovered that the New Testament teachings were practiced the closest by the Anabaptists.

Speaker Greg Boyd, author of 18 different books, shared that at least one person contacts him each week in person or via email saying that in reading his books and studying the Scriptures they recognize that at their core, they are true Anabaptists. So, what are the "sacred" core values of Anabaptist Christians?



- 1) *Jesus is the center of our faith.*
- 2) *Community is the center of our lives.*
- 3) *Reconciliation is the center of our work.*

We were reminded that being a Christian from an Anabaptist perspective is a combination of *believing* in Jesus, *belonging* to community, and *behaving* in a reconciling way. We heard speakers share the importance of following Jesus in everyday life. Christianity is *discipleship*. The church is a *brotherhood* or *family*. Members not only commit themselves to Christ, but also individually and voluntarily to each other. Followers of Jesus have an *ethic of love and nonresistance*.

These first-generation Anabaptists expressed deep appreciation for what the long-time Mennonites have stood for in past generations, but they also gently suggested that our view of Anabaptism may need to change. Are we so isolated that we look with suspicion on change? Our "normal" is not the same as other cultures . . . causing us to look at them as being abnormal and even ungodly. Are we willing to go outside of our comfort zone like the first Anabaptists who literally even died for their faith?

"There is a *flame* spreading across America," Greg continued as he called it "an *awakening* where Christians are becoming Anabaptist and beginning new churches. Anabaptism is a movement of the Spirit. We cannot hold it back.

"Is it possible that there are times that we have loved the church so much that we have forgotten that it is God's church? Has our love been so deep that we have been or now are threatened by views that are different from our ethnic culture? Is it possible that for centuries we have been sucking out the oxygen in the room as we attempted to guard the *flame*? Will we come through "such a time as this" with our own skin singed?

"As long-time Mennonites, we offer so much to fan the *flame* of the Holy Spirit today! Yes, there are fears, but there is also so much hope as the *flame* of God spreads in amazing ways . . . we really should speak into the *awakening* and celebrate the *beauty* that evolves. Where the Spirit of God is at work, the walls of Babel will be torn down.

"It is a journey though because we so often choose to minimize our own sins and maximize others—Jesus does the opposite! Instead, we need to say, 'I am the worst of sinners,' as we show love instead of judgement to those who think differently."

The Holy Spirit should do the convicting, not me.

- Lois Ann Mast, Editor



CONESTOGA MENNONITE CHURCH

2779 Main Street, Morgantown, PA 19543
(610) 286-9124

www.conestogamc.com

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Editor: Lois Ann Mast
Assistant Editor: Elizabeth Petersheim
Contributing Editor: Anna Martin



Sewing Circle

Sewing Circle met on Wednesday, February 4, 2015. There were 15 ladies present. Donations included: 5 comfort tops, 95 kit bags, and 2 small comforters. Completed items includes: 32 hygiene kits, 5 comforters, and the quilt for the annual Relief Sale.

For devotions, we sang “Jesus Loves Me,” followed by the reading of Mark 12: 28-34, and a devotional entitled “A Matter of Love.”

The special offering was \$38.00 to be used for hygiene kits. We sang “God Be With You Till We Meet Again” before adjourning.

- Betty Cannell

~ Meet the Martin Family ~



Jeremiah and Shaelagh Martin (pronounced Shala—first “a” is a long “a.”) will be worshipping with us here at Conestoga from March through May 2015, and then again in July before they return to France where they serve as missionaries with World Venture based in Colorado. Jeremiah is the son of Nevin and Anna Martin. They have two daughters: Annalise/Annie, age 9, and Miriam, age 6. Welcome Martins! We are eager to learn to know you!

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.

— March 3 —

Knot comforters with Carmen Weber and Krista Petersheim.

— March 10 —

Honduras Family Mission Trip

with Mary Breidigan

Hear about this MAMA family mission trip to Honduras.

— March 17 —

Bible Study

with Tracy McGuire, Leader

— March 24 —

Homeschooling Panel

— March 31 —

Creating Appetizers

with Lucas Ho, Food Service Director at Tel Hai Camp

Pre-registration necessary for this Appetizers demonstration.

Fellowship Meal Recipe

Chicken Divan

- 2 - 10 oz. pkgs of frozen, chopped broccoli (florets are the best)
- 1 can of cream of chicken soup (Campbell's is consistently good)
- 2 Tbsps. fresh lemon juice
- 1 cup extra-sharp, white, grated cheddar cheese—I love Cracker Barrel
- 3 large chicken breasts (skinned and boned)
 - meat stays moist if skin is removed after baking)
- 1 cup mayonnaise (I prefer Hellman's)
- 1/2 tsp. curry powder (I love curry, so I add much more!)

1. Cook chicken either by boiling or baking (if baking, do not allow it to dry out too much)
2. Allow chicken to cool, then cut or tear into bite-sized pieces.
3. Steam frozen broccoli and drain.
4. Prepare sauce by combining soup (do not add water or milk), mayonnaise, lemon juice, and grated cheese. Warm slowly until cheese is melted and thoroughly blended into sauce.
5. Butter a casserole dish and line it with the following, in this order: layer of broccoli, layer of chicken, and a layer of sauce. Keep layering until all ingredients are used up.
6. Bake casserole at 350 degrees, for 45 mins. to 1 hour.

Optional: You can top with cooked wild rice and mushroom dressing or seasoned croutons, with or without extra cheese added to the top before baking. Enjoy my mom's recipe, as we have for many wonderful occasions.

- contributed by Lisa Rebecca Ridley



Mission Trip to Belize



Thursday, Feb. 12—We planned to be at the church at 1:30 a.m. and by 1:33 a.m., the three vehicles were loaded and headed toward Phila airport. Lots of excitement even at that crazy hour. By 5:00 a.m., we were through security and eating Becky's hoagies. After a layover in Atlanta, we landed in Belize City. Did you know you cannot take pictures of the beautiful warm sunshine when you get off a plane? Getting 14 bodies, 50+ lbs of tools, and luggage for 13 into a van was a bit of a challenge. We had a 1.5 hr drive to Spanish Lookout. The group is off to a really good start! God is with us! I'm psyched about digging into the work.

Friday, Feb. 13—Painting, insulation, dry-wall, framing, and plumbing —r-us. Mirta is an amazing cook and she has lunch and supper ready for us when we make the short drive back to Fountain of Life Retreat Center (FOL) for meals. By afternoon we are really into the swing, and materials are now flying. The couples were treated to a FOL Valentine's banquet in the evening. Rich, Alisha, and Randy are super hosts. Bob and I missed the memo about how to get hot shower water. Also learning how Mennonite is a culture not a denomination here.

Saturday, Feb. 14—Team is really working together and digging into work quickly in the mornings. Alisha and Randy and little Josiah took us to the bush/jungle for an afternoon adventure. Don't touch the poison trees!

Sunday, Feb. 15—Powerful praise and a spirit-filled sermon—woot woot! Praise God! Fellowship at different homes. My heart breaks for these dear people who are experiencing a recent painful church split. Pastor Bob (aka "Pete") timing here is a God thing. The Deeds and church leaders are in my heart and prayers. So good to be able to fellowship around a table and talk about church, family, and how Americans are not represented well by movies/TV or

our government. Kids played games with the FOL youth.

Monday, Feb. 16—I do look forward to not having to boil water to wash dishes again. More painting, insulation, drywall, framing, and plumbing. God continues to bless us with safety. Our evening game times and meal times are shared with our Belize friends. Leanne shared with us ladies how God is using Life Change Institute experience in her life. Mason led a powerful team devotional.

Tuesday, Feb. 17—Pancakes without extra protein for breakfast today. Temps of 80-85 degrees and hard work make for one stinky van when we pile in and return to the retreat center. I understand the guys dorm room is really beginning to take on a life all its own. Youth drove to FOL church for youth group and the Scum bunch hung at the retreat center. Lizards are becoming part of the environmental charm, but that critter with a tail is not an invited kitchen guest!

Wednesday, Feb. 18—Is it really Wednesday already? We tried to get as much work done as possible on the Deed's hospitality home by lunchtime. Rich took our team on a bumpy ride to Big Rock waterfalls. We hiked, splashed in the water, and some took great leaps of faith off the cliffs. Our final supper by Mirta was another un-belize-able meal! Great devotional time and sharing led by Josh. Much needed showers and more Scum. Becky for President! Youth played with Belize youth til 2:30AM.

Thursday, Feb. 19—Do we have to leave? How blessed to serve on an intergenerational team to a people who love deeply and trust God completely. I have much to learn from the Deeds and these beautiful Belizians. So thankful to the Conestoga church for sending us and for the amazing team to work with.

- journaled by Karen Horning



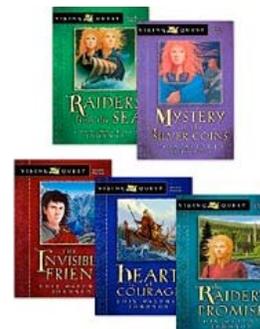


Conestoga's Jr. Youth and Youth participated in the Thirty-Hour Famine on February 27-28.

Watch for photos in the next issue!

New Books in our Church Library

We are grateful that \$600 from the Stauffer estate gift has been designated for library purchases. Some of this is currently being used to purchase resources for children.



The first of these is a series of five novels called the *Viking Quest* series. This is great Christian historical fiction from an era most of us know little about. The plot runs smoothly with lots of adventure, suspense, and a reminder of what can happen when we put our trust in God. Spiritual themes such as forgiveness, honesty, and trust are clearly portrayed as experienced by a young Irish girl and her brother who were taken into captivity by the Vikings.

This series is considered juvenile fiction for ages ten and up, but it is also a wonderful series to be enjoyed by the whole family. I thoroughly enjoyed it myself!

- Dot Leatherman



College Care Packages were assembled for Conestoga's nine college students on Sunday, Feb. 22! Thanks everyone for your contributions, and thanks, Rachel, for coordinating and mailing these boxes!



A recent Young Adult Bible Study was blessed with Dottie Martin sharing her testimony. After her testimony, it was time for more sharing, playing games, and snacks! This study was held at Blair and Brendon Petersheim's home.



The February 2015 Scrapbooking Fundraiser raised over \$8,000 for the Food Pantry. A happy day for these hard workers!

Conestoga Happenings . . .

Congratulations to **Marilyn Gehman** and **Krista Petersheim** who were honored at a New Grandma Shower. What fun to watch the two dress and undress a doll before they opened their shower gifts. On the far right, are (left to right) Grandma Krista Petersheim, her son **Brendon** holding the Grandma Shower cake, and his wife **Blair**.



Howard Moss (right) enjoyed his trip to the Johnson Space Center in Houston with his grandson, **Preston Meadors**, where they got to try out one of the ORION Space Capsules that **Carol Moss** worked so hard to get off the ground! Howard admits that the capsule was a bit snug!



Congratulations to sixth-grader **Preston Meadors** who won fourth place in the Twin Valley Middle School Spelling Bee between all the 5th-8th graders!

Karen Horning was recently honored for her 20 years of working at Garden Spot Village Retirement Community!



The annual **New Person Ministries Banquet** will be held here at Conestoga on Tuesday evening, March 10. Jeffrey K. Sprecher, judge of the Berks County Court of Common Pleas, is the featured speaker with testimonies of NPM men. Reservations for the banquet are required (no cost for tickets, but free-will offering will be taken). Call 610-777-2222, or send written reservation requests to P.O. Box 223, Reading, PA 19607 or by e-mail to info@newperson.org.



Conestoga's "**Teddy Bear Club**" is up and running with a slimmer crowd lately due to weather and a mother returning to work. Above are some of the mothers enjoying fellowship while their children are having fun!



Conestoga's Quiz Team is on the right after Josh Beam quizzes out (seated with his back to us next to Coach Sonya). Great job!!!



Those who attended the February 12 Sr. Connections were blessed with David Tennant leading us in singing.

Senior Connections will meet on Thursday, March 12, in our church fellowship hall. Following a home-cooked meal served at 11:30 a.m. (note the earlier time), Dr. Donaldson will share an interesting program! This is a week before the first day of Spring, so let's hope the weather is okay . . . we missed many of our usual attendees the past two months.

Knowing What it Is To Truly Live

A few months ago, I met a grandpa whom I will never forget. His name is Edwin Koryan. And he is a pharmacist in Voinjama, Liberia. Edwin remembers the moment he felt the first symptoms of Ebola. He was taking care of his five-year-old granddaughter Komasa. They were sharing a room and a bed.

Edwin rushed to the treatment center. But his blood was already flooded with virus. Edwin Koryan suffered through the hardships of Ebola treatment twice: once for himself and once for his five-year-old granddaughter Komasa.

Edwin pulled through. After two weeks of living in the treatment tent, alone, Edwin could finally go home.

But just as he was leaving the clinic: "My granddaughter was brought in the treatment center," Edwin says.

The little girl was very sick. She had caught Ebola from her grandpa.

Edwin did not hesitate. "That same night, I came back to stay with my granddaughter."

He knew how lonely it was in the treatment center. How little help there was. He remembers being thirsty in the middle of the night. And there was no one around.

Edwin didn't want that for Komasa. So he went back into the treatment tent with her. He slept next to her. Bathed her. Cleaned the vomit from her face. And encouraged her to eat food.

Little by little, Komasa got better. And then: "She took two spoons of rice. Edwin was so excited," Yoshimoto says.

Komasa recovered. And the moment Edwin found out



A health worker with "Doctors Without Borders" carries a child suspected of having Ebola at the treatment center in Paynesville, Liberia, last October. Ebola is especially deadly for young children and babies. About four in five infected die. Credit: John Moore/Getty.

she was Ebola-free, "I cried," he says. "Because the joy in me, my tears start running." (excerpted from NPR News)

* * * *

As I read this story of a grandpa willing to risk his life for this precious child, I am reminded of another father/grandfather who was so horrified at the thought of us being alone in our suffering that He came to the rescue. He, like this grandpa, risked his life and caught the disease of the human race. Because he too has felt every pain of the disease that sin has caused his beloved creation, He can identify with us. He too became infected, but this father gave His life for us. For He so loved His creation that He gave himself for it that if we trust HIS love **we will know what it is to truly live.**

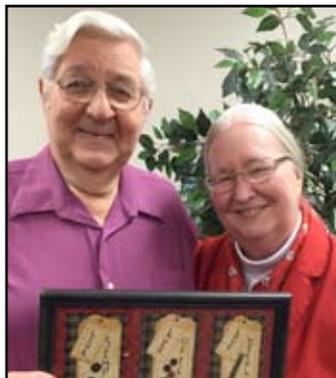
- contributed by Anna Martin



Rachel is thinking while Dan is worried!



Which foot does this shoe go on?



Neighbor's Valentine Dinner

was a lot of fun games, fellowship, food, plus an inspiring program on:

- R**emember the good
- O**rganize time
- M**ake love
- A**void routines
- N**otice needs
- C**ommunicate constantly
- E**ncourage daily

