



An Amazing College Semester!

by
Mason Stoltzfus



Mason Stoltzfus, far right, with his family at his sister's high school graduation this past June! Left to right: Rodney Luke, Heidi, Natalie, Rodney, and Mason Stoltzfus.

During the 2016 Fall academic semester at Eastern Mennonite University, I was blessed to enjoy the opportunity to travel to the Middle East to study abroad as part of a cross-cultural experience. Students at Eastern Mennonite University are required to enroll in a cross-cultural program. I signed up for this trip over a year ago and it ended up as one of the most formative experiences of my life. The goal of this trip was to experience what it is like to live in a different culture for a longer period of time and to learn about biblical archaeology and history.

The Sea of Galilee taken from the top of the Horns of Hittin, an extinct volcano and site of multiple historical events including battles between Herod and the Zealots as well as Saladin and the Crusaders years later. The route of the Jesus Trail also climbs over the Horns of Hittin and down its cliffs. Credit: Mason Stoltzfus.



Our trip kicked off in August when we left from Harrisonburg, Virginia, and traveled to Cairo, Egypt. Cairo, with its ancient, bustling streets, is one of the most culturally rich and unique places that I will ever visit. We spent a little over a week in Cairo and visited the usual tourist attractions like the pyramids, Cairo Museum, and more. In the Cairo museum we got to see the extravagant King Tut treasure exhibit as well as the mummy of the Egyptian pharaoh that would have spoken to Moses and been ruling Egypt during the Exodus of the Hebrew slaves.

After leaving Cairo, we spent a week at a spiritual retreat center called Anafora in the desert a few hours from Egypt's capital. Once we were refreshed by our time at the oasis-like retreat center, we flew south to the ancient Egyptian city of Luxor. While in Luxor we saw the Valley of the Kings as well as some of the temples that would have been used by the Egyptians during the time of the Exodus.

From Luxor, we returned to Cairo and then journeyed into the barren Sinai Peninsula to Saint Catherine's Monastery. Saint Catherine's monastery was constructed around the year 550 AD and sits at the mouth of a gorge that lies at the foot of what is thought to be Mount Sinai. During our two-day stay at the monastery we climbed to the summit of Mount Sinai. The hike up Mount Sinai was one of the many highlights of the trip. We saw some

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On our morning walk from the hotel to the Convention Center wearing our “Love is a Verb” back packs!

Attending the biennial **Mennonite Church USA Convention** every other summer is like attending a family reunion for Lemar and I the past twelve years. Actually our first Mennonite Assembly was in 1983 when the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church met for their first joint convention in Bethlehem, Pa. We drove to Bethlehem, put our oldest child (and only child at that time) in a baby stroller while we attended seminars and meetings.

Then in 1993, we were in charge of the Exhibit Area at Philadelphia when our youngest child was seven years old! So, it just seems natural for us to now introduce these gatherings to our grandchildren! Consequently, this summer we enjoyed attending the MC USA Convention in Orlando, Fla., with our two granddaughters. We attended the Adult Convention while they attended the Children’s Convention and worshipped and played with children from all over the U.S.

Everytime we attend a Convention, we meet new people who we usually see again at the next Convention, so it “feels” like a family reunion for us! Of course, we also enjoy attending the worship sessions, the seminars, browsing through the exhibit hall, enjoying the variety of foods, and getting lots of exercise walking from one event to another!

This summer, we again heard excellent well-known speakers from not only the Mennonite Church, but from the broader Christian Church. We were challenged as Mennonite Anabaptists to *follow with joy* our heritage of standing as a peace



CONESTOGA MENNONITE CHURCH

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Contributing Editors: Anna Martin and Jill Waters

witness in our world today—to follow the New Testament teachings as our Anabaptist forefathers took a stand and made a sacrificial difference. It was humbling to hear these other denominational theologians thank us for our example as the denomination that they feel most closely follows the teachings of Jesus as given in the New Testament!

Each night the youth worship included the sound of a bass drum beating to the rhythm of a heartbeat. This was to resemble God’s heartbeat reminding the youth, “What does it mean to get in tune with the heartbeat of *God’s love*?”

The theme throughout the week for the adults, youth, and children, was “*Love is a Verb.*” Speakers shared, “If we are to be real as a church, we need to be honest that human *love* fails.” “Our *love* has strings attached which causes us to fail to *love* unconditionally.” “People will forget what you said and did, but they will never forget how you made them feel.” “Meet fear with *love* and do it with stubborn faithfulness!” “Move your feet with action, and wait for your heart to catch up.” “Wear kindness and *love* even when you would rather be right and not feel *loving*.” “Let us *love* one another for God is *love*.”

Knowing that my term of serving as “Director of Christian Education” at Conestoga would begin in September, I attended all the seminars I could on Sunday Schools; Inter-generational Ideas for Sunday Schools; Teacher Training; Understanding the Problem of ‘Missing Verses’ in the New Testament; How to Encourage Families; Hospitality That Points to Jesus; Your Church’s Welcome: Attracting and Including; and others.

One seminar I also enjoyed was how we relate with seniors in our churches. We all recognize that our life and culture is changing much faster than in years past. Do seniors today remember of their grandparents losing their phones? Did you know that 10,000 baby boomers are turning age 65 every day, and that 7,000 of these will be living at age 85? The church today is growing more rapidly with seniors than young adults—how can we encourage all generations to attend church?

Another seminar I attended challenged me to “Pray my faith; Story my faith; Display my faith; and Wear my faith.” God told the Israelites in Deut. 6:4-9 to “. . . put an emblem on so people know you are different.” We brainstormed ideas on how to do this effectively, and I could not wait to return and try some!

The adults compiled two lists of themes 1) themes that we lament and need transformed, and 2) themes that we affirm and take forward. It was a blessing to hear the ones we affirm: a Jesus-centered community that cares for each other; studies Scripture together; discerns the moving of the Holy Spirit; lives out our faith where we are planted; witnesses for peace in times of turmoil; be church in the world with mission-mindedness but yet cultural sensitivity; adapts over time while maintaining our distinctiveness; speaks the truth; lives simply; and learns to be constructive in living with differences. - Lois Ann Mast



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 to attend this time of fellowship!



Sewing Circle met on Wednesday, August 2, 2017. There were 15 ladies present. Completed were 11 comforters and 54 school kits. For devotions, we sang “He Loves Me.” Julia Yoder read Romans 8:38-39; Joshua 1:5; and Isaiah 49:15-16. Afterwards she read a devotional entitled “Enjoying Peace In His Presence” from *Jesus Calling*—a daily devotional book. The special offering amounted to \$66 intended for school kits. We sang “God, Be With You Until We Meet Again” before adjourning.

- Betty Cannell, Secretary

— September 19, 2017 —

Tea for Two

Bring a friend and your favorite tea cups. Cindy Petersheim will share a devotional as we re-connect with friends and make new lasting ones.

— September 26, 2107 —

Antiques and Heirlooms: Crafting a Legacy of Faith

by Carol Cool

All women, youth, and men—all ages—are invited to knot comforters for Mennonite Central Committee distribution worldwide! Come Thursday evening, November 16, in the fellowship hall under Violet Beam's assistance from 7:00-8:30 p.m. If you have never done this before, it is a fun time of fellowship and a blessing to others!



Enjoying the Lusengya Family . . .

The Lusengya family has been living in the States now for over three months and are learning English amazingly well! It has been a delight learning to know Salala and Veronica and their four children: Kashindi (entering sixth grade), Elizabeth (entering second grade), Malike (entering kindergarten), and Nguomoya (in preschool).

This past week, Salala began orientation working evenings until early morning at Tysons. He has rode the bus almost every weekday into Lancaster to attend English classes, and we are thankful for this job! The children have been learning English two days a week during this summer at the New Holland Learning Center, while Veronica has also taken English classes for several hours a week, plus is enjoying using the computer to learn English!

Dot Leatherman with Andy's help have provided amazing leadership and responded to a number of emergencies to assist the Lusengyas in adapting to our culture—not easy at all until you walk in the shoes of someone moving into a new country!

Andy recently recognized the need to install a shed to house the mower and gasoline and other items that could be hazardous to children. And then Austin Unruh organized a group of Conestoga young adults to erect the shed behind the Lusengya house!

With the suggestion of Janet Peachey and the follow-up of Austin Unruh, we found a free computer for the family to learn English.

Tina Essick, Janet Peachey, Dot Leatherman, and Ruth Miller have been teaching the children English on a weekly basis.

Lemar and Lois Ann Mast installed a DVD player and the family is enjoying watching a variety of movies and other DVDs which also teach them English.

Tina Essick and Bev Smucker took the children shopping for school clothes. Marilyn Gehman took all the children for their vaccinations and dental visits before school began! Marilyn is also helping Salala and Veronica to obtain their drivers permits. Other volunteers have also contributed in a variety of ways as we enjoy helping!



Moving the heavy box with the shed items in it to the Lusengyas—sorry we have no photos of the young adults erecting the shed! Thanks to all!



Lemar lighting Nguomoya and Salala's birthday cake made of bananas! Below, enjoying the birthday supper in their backyard!



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spectacular views along the way, and at the top we got to watch the sunset while we read the scriptures about God's revelations to Moses on Mount Sinai.

After our time in the Sinai we crossed through Israel and spent several days in Jordan where we had a great experience living in the desert with Bedouins.

After Jordan we crossed into Palestine, and lived in a town called Beit Sahour near Bethlehem, for three weeks. During our time in Beit Sahour we lived with Christian Palestinians, studied Arabic, learned about Palestinian culture and history, and examined the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a Palestinian perspective. After our stay in Palestine we moved into Israel where we lived with orthodox Jewish families on the Jewish settlement of Ephrat.

We shifted gears for the next stage of our trip and moved into the old city of Jerusalem where we stayed in dormitories at the Jerusalem University College (JUC). There we were enrolled in a program of intensive archaeological and historical studies of biblical sites in Israel. This program was a very special part of our trip because we were able to visit places all over Israel where biblical events occurred.

Once we had completed our two-week program with JUC we were given a week of free time to travel anywhere in the Middle East with groups of our choosing. I flew with four other students, two of whom were other Lancaster Mennonite School graduates, from Ben-Gurion airport in Israel to the coastal city of Antalya in Turkey. From Antalya we traveled via train and bus along the coast to the quaint harbor town of Kas, pinched between the feet of some mountains and the Mediterranean Sea. After a relaxing week spent fishing, enjoying time on the beach, and spending time in the house we rented, we flew back to Jerusalem, Israel.

In Jerusalem, we spent a little over a week living in the Arab quarter of the old city where we studied the Hebrew language and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from an Israeli perspective. Eventually we finished our time in Jerusalem and traveled to the fertile Jezreel valley in Northern Israel. There we lived on an Israeli kibbutz for a couple of days before moving to the old town of Nazareth. We stayed in a hostel in Nazareth and spent a week volunteering as actors for an Easter program put on by the Nazareth Village organization. The program was open to the public and was one of the best reenactments of Christ's death and resurrection that I have ever gotten to participate in.

Shortly after we finished helping with the Easter reenactment, our group left the town of Nazareth on foot and started a five-day hike on the Jesus trail. The Jesus trail is a 65-kilometer pilgrimage route from the town of Nazareth to the Sea of Galilee. While hiking the Jesus trail, we spent our nights in either hostels or kibbutzim. Once

we completed the Jesus Trail, we quickly prepared for a big step in our journey and boarded a flight to Athens, Greece.

Athens was a big switch from Israel! The city felt very dense and commercialized, but also housed some of the most amazing historical monuments I have ever seen. The ancient Greek acropolis built thousands of years ago on a mount that overlooks the city, was magnificent. The fact that Paul spread a religion that was sparked by the birth of a babe in the small town of Nazareth to the great, worldly city of Athens was astounding to me.

A ferry ship took us to the last country on our itinerary, Italy. After our ferry landed on the coast of Italy we took a bus into the city of Rome where we stayed in a hotel that was within walking distance of the ancient Roman forum, the coliseum, and the Vatican City. While in Rome we spent a lot of our time exploring ancient Roman historical sites as well as important religious sites including St. Peter's Basilica.

Before returning to the United States, we were allowed four more days of free travel. I traveled by train to a small town along the coast of southern Italy called Torre Del'orso. Our time in Torre Del'orso was very special because the town was not a big international tourist destination, but rather a place for Italians to spend their weekends at the beach; it was an authentic experience.

After returning to Rome, we packed up all our gear and boarded a flight home! Returning to the United States was a surreal experience after spending so much time in the Middle East.

I continue to thank the Lord for keeping us safe during our trip, and was immensely blessed by this opportunity!

HOUSEWARMING OPPORTUNITY

Sunday, September 10



Following our morning worship services, a light lunch will be served—this is a combined Dust Bunny Hunt/Mother-Daughter activity for 2017. Immediately after the lunch, we will break into four groups and enjoy a Progressive Housewarming Tour to four young adult homes: Sonya Petersheim, Dan & Rachel Mast, Shane Petersheim, and Ryan Petersheim. No admission fee except hand-canned items or gardening tools which will be placed in baskets for each homeowner. Please sign up in the lobby before Sept. 4 to participate so we can properly prepare for lunch. Everyone is welcome.

~ Cindy Petersheim

September 8-9, 2017

The New Holland Early Learning Center will host its annual fundraiser with 1) Chicken BBQ, 2) Yard Sale, and 3) Car Cruise.

1) The Chicken BBQ will be held on Friday, September 8 with meals picked up between 11:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. The meals are \$10.00 each and include a chicken leg/thigh quarter, roll, applesauce, chips, cookie, and a drink.

2) The Yard Sale will be held Saturday, September 9, from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. There will be a variety of items from kids clothing, toys, games, books, household goods, and much more.

3) The Cruisin' for Kids Car Cruise will be also be held Saturday, September 9, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. All makes and models are welcome—come and show off your car or check out others. There will be door prizes, food, drinks, music, and free activities for kids. Something new this year is that the Lickity Split Ice Cream Truck from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

For more information, contact: Wanda Coleman or Bethany Crane Jacke at 717-354-4440 or nhelc@frontiernet.net. Visit our website at creatingcommunityforkids.com.

Bonus Events: From 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, free activities and games will be available for all children!

New Holland Early Learning Center
18 Western Avenue
New Holland, PA 17557



One of **Lemar Mast's** hobbies is raising vegetables in his garden. Here he is holding one of the onions he recently harvested, and of course, we are enjoying eating! This inspired Lois Ann to lead a Bible Study on “onions” at the August Wandering Shepherds Bible Study.

Of course, each participant received an onion. Many of us who have left a cut onion in the fridge, or perhaps a sealed container came open, and have discovered how an onion permeates and saturates everything. So, as an onion influences everything, we discussed qualities that we can use to influence those whom we meet: peace, shalom, good cheer, love, joy, forgiveness, and doing good deeds.

Did you know that in ancient Egypt onions were considered an object to be worshipped? I love onions; but I certainly do not worship them, but when you think about it . . . the onion is a circle within a circle; it has a similar structure to how the earth is made with many layers as well as a core. Scripture mentions the onion in Numbers 11:5-6: “We remember . . . the cucumbers, melons, leeks, **onions**, and garlic. But now our appetites are gone. All we ever see is this manna!”

Onions are rooted in the ground just like we as followers of Jesus are to be rooted in God! Sometimes I end up crying when I cut onions (never with Lemar's onions!) while I peel back the layers. Just like an onion, sometimes the most valuable lessons are the ones which expose our inner layers and bring tears to our eyes. At times, God has made me peel off a few layers as I grew in my relationship with Him—sometimes quite painful too which also made me cry. Just as an onion changes how other foods taste, so Jesus' love changes how we are known—everything we do in life, no matter our age, is influenced by the love of Christ. ~ Lois Ann Mast



The Celtic Martins

The Celtic Martins, a family band from Newmanstown, Pennsylvania is an exciting, energetic group that features traditional Celtic music as well as Irish step dancing.

Still Waters Ministries Presents

The Celtic Martins in Concert

7:00 PM- Friday, October 6, 2017

Doors open at 6:00 PM

A Love Offering Will Be Taken

(All Proceeds to benefit Still Waters No-Cost Counseling Ministries)

Conestoga Mennonite Church

2779 Main Street, Morgantown, PA



A dessert reception & Meet & Greet the Martins will follow the concert, along with a Silent Auction.

"Quality items will be accepted for the silent auction. Please sign up on sheet in the lobby. Items may be dropped off at the church office the week before the fundraiser concert (Oct. 3-4, from 9-3)." Thanks!

Senior Connections*

Thursday September 14

12:00 noon in the church
fellowship hall with lunch
coordinated by Carrie Shumway

"Music, Singing, and Reflections"

by David Tennant



"MAKING SURE THAT A PRAYER REQUEST IS NOT GOSSIP"

This is the opening topic discussed in "The Value of You" class on Tuesday, Sept. 19, at 7:00 p.m. All ladies of the church and community are invited to be a part of this book study, *Keeping it Shut...What to Say, How to Say it and When to Say Nothing at All* by Karen Ehman. The class is taught by Jill Waters and will meet every other Tuesday night. Class is held in the church conference room. For more information, call 610-286-9555 (Still Waters Ministries).



Conestoga's 2017 Softball Team

It was an exciting year for our softball team this summer coached by Mike Petersheim. They knew what losses felt like, but then one week, they won both games, and then they also won the first two games of the Playoff! What fun! Playing with others is rewarding!

Great Job Team!



Conestoga Goes Back to School . . .

PRESCHOOL

Nguomoya - New Holland Learning Center
Bronson - Kinderhaus Preschool

KINDERGARTEN

Hailey - Conestoga Christian School
Malike - Brecknock Elementary School
Hannah - Conestoga Christian School

FIRST GRADER

Gavin - Conestoga Christian School

SECOND GRADERS

Tyler - Conestoga Christian School
Elizabeth - Brecknock Elementary School
Mark - Conestoga Christian School

THIRD GRADERS

Cameron - Conestoga Christian School
Emma - Blue Ball Elementary School
Rosene - Hinkletown Mennonite School

FOURTH GRADER

Anthony - Hinkletown Mennonite School

FIFTH GRADERS

Cora - Blue Ball Elementary School
Liana - Birdsboro Elementary School

SIXTH GRADER

Marissa - Leola Elementary School
Kashindi - Brecknock Elementary School

SEVENTH GRADER

Madison - Garden Spot Middle School

EIGHTH GRADERS

Celia - Conestoga Christian School
Rosa - Conestoga Christian School
Joshua - Garden Spot Middle School
Kayla - Conestoga Valley Middle School
Nick - Daniel Boone Middle School
Chloee - Garden Spot Middle School

NINTH GRADER

Brendan - Conestoga Valley High School

TENTH GRADERS

Zachary - Conestoga Christian School
Jacob - Twin Valley High School
Domanik - Garden Spot High School

ELEVENTH GRADER

Rodney Luke - Lancaster Mennonite School

TWELFTH GRADERS

Nathan - Garden Spot High School
Thomas - Garden Spot High School

COLLEGE FRESHMAN

Mindy is majoring in Animal Science at Penn State University, University Park, Pa.
Natalie is majoring in Nursing at Eastern Mennonite Univ., 1200 Park Rd., Harrisonburg, Va.
James is majoring in Cinematic Arts at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Va.

COLLEGE SOPHOMORE

Weston is majoring in Mechanical Engineering at LeTourneau University, Longview, TX.

COLLEGE JUNIORS

Joshua is majoring in Animal Science at Penn State University, University Park, Pa.
Mason is majoring in Pre-Med at Eastern Mennonite Univ., 1200 Park Rd., Harrisonburg, Va.

COLLEGE SENIORS

Jonathan is majoring in Nuclear Engineering at Penn State University, University Park, Pa.
Heidi is majoring in Counseling at Lancaster Bible College, Lancaster, Pa.
Josiah is majoring in Business at Kutztown University, Kutztown, Pa.
Ian is double-majoring in Physics and Electrical and Computer Engineering at Lafayette College

TEACHERS

Kelly teaches third grade at Corl Elem. School, State College School District.
Justin and Sarah both teach at Conestoga Christian School; Justin teaches high school science and calculus, and Sarah teaches civics and sociology.
Keith and Ruth both teach at Kansas State University with Keith teaching a Geology class on "Natural Disasters" and Ruth teaching Solar/Wind Energy.
Carrie is the Transition Coordinator at Simon Gratz Mastery Charter School. Address: 1648 S. Bancroft St., Philadelphia, PA 19145; stoltzfus.carrie@gmail.com

SCHOOL-RELATED EMPLOYEES

Linda drives school bus for Garden Spot School.
Lisa is Executive Secretary for the Twin Valley School District, Elverson, Pa.
Heidi is Director of Advancement at Lancaster Mennonite School, Lancaster, Pa.