

CONESTOGA Connections



March 2018
Vol. XXIX
No. 2



Young Adult Retreat Weekend

with Ed Kurtz
as Resource Person
was informative,
thought-provoking,
and included great
fellowship!

Photos by Karen Horning.



Fun games!



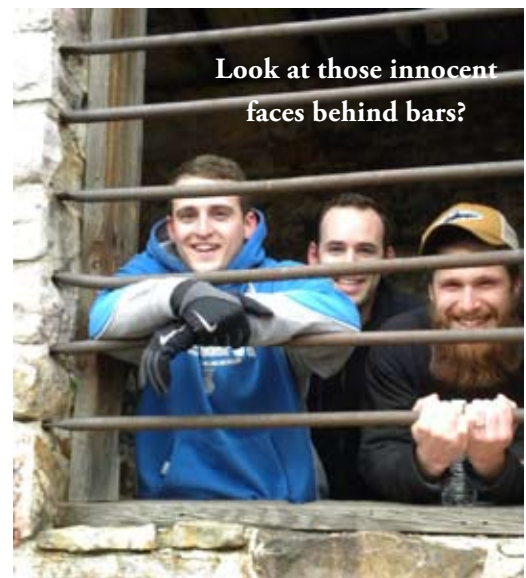
A winter
Olympic
Sport?



The Hikers!



Kristy Unruh
made sure we
enjoyed delicious
meals!



Look at those innocent
faces behind bars?

BEYOND OUR BUBBLES

by Jill Waters

*Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours.*

- St. Teresa of Avila, ca1550

This is what we offer to the world. Jesus. We are His gentle, healing hands, His listening ear, His steady feet, His loving eyes, His embracing heart. Our world has a gaping hole that cries out to fill its emptiness. Do our hearts yearn for the world to be saved and know eternal life? Or are they blocked with criticism and judgment? Have we motives that parallel Jesus?

Do we know someone who does not know our Savior? Do we connect with others who need peace, now and forever? If our personal worlds only consist of the church and there is no one who is unchurched in our lives, it is time to step out of our "comfort zone" bubble and embrace someone with deep spiritual needs. Are we uncomfortable doing that?

It is important to examine our lives and give honest evaluation to our tendencies of serving others who are lost. Let's be certain that we stretch and challenge ourselves to go beyond the bubble we are comfortable in and venture outside our "comfort zone".

Ask these questions:

- Is the world drawn to us?
- Do we offer a place of love where they can land?
- Do we judge and try to change or fix others?
- Are we working our spiritual muscles beyond what is familiar and convenient?

Serving those who have broken, shattered lives is what our Lord desires. Our motives are essential to our

service for Him. Staying in our protective bubbles is not profitable for the world around us when God has called us to that mission.

I grew up in a home without Jesus. No Christianity. I only knew the dark, blasphemous, worldly side of life.

And then a miracle happened.

I attended a high school with an enrollment of 2,500 students. In the midst of that huge number was a girl that became my friend and invited me to her church. And several months later, at the age of sixteen, I accepted Jesus into my life and all darkness was gone. I had never held a Bible in my hands and I could not imagine all that I was about to learn and all I did not know.

This was what I did know . . . people in church who gathered together every Sunday were different from what I had known . . . and I wanted what they had. Love. Peace. Acceptance. Joy. Kindness. I had been born into the opposite, and I surely was hungry for a change, and a faith that I could hold close that would not let me go.

My ancestors were anti-God, deeply into the occult with hellish addictions. God was never mentioned except in profanity. I am first generation Christian . . . the very first in a long line of ancestors to live in the light. And my faith means everything. Everything. Never to be taken for granted because I have seen the other side.

In those early years, every Sunday I would sit in the church pew with my friend with a Bible on my lap and she would help me find the book and chapter for the morning's message. I am wondering when the last time was that we helped a guest with no ties to faith locate a scripture during a worship service?

If my friend's faith had not been important enough to share with me, I would be lost, never knowing the "Light of the World." We should shout our faith from the mountain tops!

Why? Because the love of God is amazing!

What a privilege to share this gift with the world!

If we could know the horror of others' lives outside ourselves, we would wake up every morning with our arms wide open, ready to embrace those hurts. We are the hugs and smiles for those who live in misery. We can make the difference in someone's life for life or death. Our doing that is essential.

Do you remember the moment you accepted Jesus into your heart? That day sealed your eternal life. Jesus said, "You must be born again." (John 3:3-5). Born twice . . . once physically and another spiritually. What do we do to seal those who are lost?

Maybe we can take one small step. Invite someone to church . . . your hair stylist, your mechanic, a sales clerk, a family member, a neighbor, a co-worker, an acquaintance at the gym. I am excited to invite others to our church because love is here.

(continued on the next page)



CONESTOGA MENNONITE CHURCH

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Editor: Lois Ann Mast Assistant Editor: Elizabeth Petersheim
Contributing Editors: Anna Martin and Jill Waters



Sewing Circle met on Wednesday, January 3, 2018. There were 18 ladies present. One comfort top and one comforter were donated. There were eight comforters completed, plus 16 hygiene kits were assembled. For devotions, we sang “The Solid Rock.” Barb Weiman led the devotions reading from a page from Oswald Chamber’s devotional book *My Utmost for His Highest* based on Isaiah 52:12 regarding security from yesterday and for tomorrow and for today, inviting us to step into the future with God. The special offering amounted to \$35.00 intended for hygiene kits. We adjourned at 2:00 p.m. to make room for Mabel Petersheim’s funeral service. - Betty Cannell, Secretary



(continued from the previous page) . . .

“In the Gospel texts that tell the story of Jesus, one thing is undeniable. Jesus called disciples. Do you ever wonder why Jesus said, “Follow me,” but never said, “Worship me”?

He said to some fishermen, “Follow me and I will teach you how to fish for people.” For whatever reason, he invited them to walk away from their vocation of trying to lure fish into a net and to pursue a calling that would involve luring people into a greater purpose and cause that Jesus called the kingdom of God.

Jesus says, “Follow me and I will teach you how to see so you can help others as well as yourself step out of the darkness of pride, prejudice, and hate into the light of humility, belonging, and love for all people.” (John 9).

Jesus says, “Follow me, and I will teach you how to break down the walls that divide us and treat everyone with dignity, respect, mercy, and grace.” Jesus was constantly in trouble with the religious leaders because he was so inclusive, welcoming all people to the table of fellowship.

It is easy to say prayers and sing songs to a Jesus “high and lifted up.” It is much more difficult to love like Jesus in the daily grind of life. No doubt about it. It is much easier to worship Jesus than to follow Jesus. Is there any doubt what Christ wants of us?” - Dr. Chuck Queen, Pastor

How do we serve the world? In our bubble or outside our bubble? Do we remain in our comfort zones or do

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 to attend this time of fellowship!

— **March 6, 2018** —

Chat & Knot Comforters for MCC
led by Krista Petersheim and Carmen Weber

— **March 13, 2018** —

Bread Baking Demonstrated
led by Sylvia Gearhart

— **March 20, 2018** —

Guess Who’s Coming to Brunch?
Pre-registration required.

— **March 27, 2018** —

Breaking Generational Bondages
led by Eleanor Isaacson

— **April 3, 2018** —

Develop Godly Character in Children Through Discipline
led by Bonnie Greiner

— **April 10, 2018** —

Sing to the Lord a New Song
led by Rick Taylor, Pastor of Worship at Hopewell Christian Fellowship

we step outside, even when uncomfortable, to touch the world? Jesus always stepped out of His culture’s boundaries. We must do the same and be to the world what our Lord represents . . . love, peace, and grace.

Every day, we each have a unique ministry beyond ourselves. God will use us and our special gifts to embrace those with whom we come in contact.

Any good in us is of God and the world is drawn to goodness. When the world is in the pit of despair with torn and shattered lives, it is the Christian community they reach out to. To touch others with encouraging compassion and deep love requires Jesus . . . without judgment or blame. Let’s remember that for us, as believers, our job is not to fix or change. That is God’s job. We are to offer a holy hope and a light that will never be extinguished.

A compassionate, loving world begins with us.

Thank you, Jill, for contributing this heartfelt and sincere reminder and challenge!! I read this several times and pray that it will effect others as it did me! - Lois Ann Mast, Editor

Serving in SOOP . . .

Gary and I chose to go to Kansas in January to serve with the Service Opportunities with Other Partners (SOOP). This is our fifth year to go to a location in the U.S. through Mennonite Mission Network. Usually we fly to a location, visit local attractions a few days, serve a week, and then travel a few more days before returning home.

The service opportunity in Kansas was with Hesston College, a two-year Mennonite college. Gary worked with the staff of the college's Dyck Arboretum of the Plains. This 13-acre garden of native plants, ponds, walkways, and event spaces is a busy area for recreation, tours, plant sales, weddings and concerts. Cutting ornamental grasses, repotting plants, greenhouse and event space maintenance kept Gary busy!

The Housekeeping Department of a college is a busy and a thankless job. My assignment with this department included deep cleaning of the building where prospective students stay, cleaning areas in the maintenance building, and cleaning floors.

We enjoyed the atmosphere of the campus. Lunchtime was spent in the dining hall with college faculty, I worshipped with the students at chapel, and spare time was spent walking the arboretum.

The local SOOP coordinator and our hosts James and Faith Wenger kept us busy after our service hours. We joined them at Whitestone Mennonite Church for Sunday morning worship and a Saturday evening outreach service with a potluck meal. We attended a Hesston basketball game, shopped at the Mennonite Central Committee Shoppe in Newton, toured the bookstore where Faith volunteers, served dinner beside our hosts at a homeless shelter, and toured the large Agco farm machinery plant in Hesston.

Our travels in Kansas included fun times touring the Harley Davidson plant, finding dairy stores, a Frontier Trails Museum, driving scenic byways, and time at a park where the only thing we could see was the land and bison.

A short drive took us to Pawhuska, Oklahoma- home of The Pioneer Woman. Yes, we spent time at the Merc (Let me tell you, the Cowboy Coffee with strong coffee, sarsaparilla, foamed milk, and smoked salt was fabulous!) and were able to tour the lodge where she films her cooking shows.

Another short drive brought us to Mountain Grove, Missouri, where my brother Ed and his family live. We got a tour of the farm they purchased last year. It was fun to see their animals and catch up with them. This visit is the main reason we chose to go to Kansas in January!

We completed our circle of travel by returning to Kansas City with time for one more delicious meal of KC Bar-B-Q!
- Sharon Stoltzfus



Upper Left: Each day, Kate gave projects to Gary to do at the Arboretum.

Upper Right: Sharon and her 'Deep cleaning' projects at the Hesston College Guest House.

Left: James and Faith Wenger on Main Street in Hesston.



Petersheim Costa Rica Anniversary Trip *by Cindy Petersheim*

When a 2013 Alaska trip was cancelled leading to a refund, we realized we could take our whole family of eleven to Costa Rica with this reimbursement. Immediately we began planning for a family vacation to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary. December 2017, was chosen as the date (so the youngest grandchild would be five years old). Our family arrived in Liberia, Costa Rica, as scheduled on December 16, flying from Florida, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

We had the dream vacation of a lifetime in Tamarinda (West Coast of Costa Rica) as we enjoyed a developing country culture while being in a safe and good environment for children. Activities included Costa Rican meals, attending a Rodeo, zip lining with a bungy cord drop, rain forest hike, animals such as monkey's-birds-ocelots-crocodiles, surfing, water taxi rides over the estuary, fishing for tuna, eating raw fish, and memorable six-inch grasshoppers that came out at night and would dive bomb you.

Our trip was a memory we believe that all eleven of us will retain for a lifetime. During our departure, the grandchildren wondered if we could please come back for our 45th anniversary. We are wondering if it was our daughters or our son-in-laws that put them up to this idea? We surely are thankful to God for family.



KITCHEN CLEANING



*The Kitchen sparkles after the hard work of this group on Friday February 9. Becky, Vida, Janet, Lyle, Sonya, Priscilla (friend from Food Pantry) and Tina. Pastor Bob stopped by to encourage their work **and** for a fun photo moment! Credit: Tina Essick.*



Conestoga's 2018 Bus Trip Museum of the Bible Thursday, July 19, 2018

- Board our chartered 56-passenger bus at 7:00 a.m. to travel to Washington, D.C., for the day to visit the amazing “Museum of the Bible.” We will return about 8:00 p.m. Cost is \$40 for adults and \$25 for children up to age 11 (payable to CMC and given to Lois Ann Mast).

- The six floors are an amazing collection of high-tech interactive exhibits intermingled with ancient manuscripts including an early Psalms translated into Greek plus the second-largest private collection of Dead Sea Scroll fragments—all focusing on Bible stories, history, and impact.

- A special interactive children’s area will appeal to families with children! Called “Courageous Pages,” it is for toddlers up to age 9 and provides interactive games and a play area to explore.

- Everyone will receive a pre-loaded, personalized, individual digital guide (special ones available for the children)!

- Each person will also receive a 20% discount to the gift shop.

- For lunch, “Milk and Honey” features sandwiches, salads, and baked goods. “Manna,” the sit-down café, serves Mediterranean cuisine offering various soups, flat breads, pitas, and desserts. (No outside food is allowed in the Museum.)

Sign up on the church lobby bulletin board shelf!



Wilderness Wanderings at Night
Conestoga Bible School
August 25-26, 2018

Save these dates now!

From 6:30 p.m. on Saturday evening to 2:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoon, learn and grow as we Wander in the Wilderness at Night!

For ages 5 through Jr. High—Parents Welcome.

Follow the pillar of fire, grumble in the GaGa, swim, and enjoy the outdoor church worship (Sunday a.m. with the congregation) plus much more. Outdoor church worship at Tel Hai Camp this year.

You will not want to miss it! (10 community friends will be welcome to participate this year).



Packing College Care Boxes



Stop in at our Church Library to see the new collection of **music books and sheet music** donated to our library by **Jill Waters**. And thanks, **Carmen Weber**, as one of our Librarians for working with Jill to organize and display this for use by our church pianists and accompanists. Lots of good music!!!!

You are invited to attend Senior Connections this Thursday noon, March 8, for a "Penguin Lunch" followed by an illustrated presentation by Lemar and Lois Ann Mast on their recent trip to South America and Antarctica!

Radical Pardon

by Anna Martin

There is an article about a man, Ricky (the man on the right) who was behind bars for 40 years. Eddie (the man on the left) was responsible for his being there. He was not speaking out about the truth that would acquit him.

Eddie had been pressured by police into speaking an untruth about who the killer was when he himself did not actually know. So for 40 years, Ricky, an innocent man, remained imprisoned and was on death row until the state outlawed the death penalty. When Eddie could no longer live because of the burden he bore and the depression he faced, he came forward with the truth.

Meanwhile the inmate was full of hate and loathing. But when the two men met, things changed. Ricky said, "When I saw you, I could hardly remember the things I used to think about you. And it may have been my imagination, but when we embraced, it felt like you just got lighter in my arms."

"Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it," stated Mark Twain.

Anne Lamot says, "Revenge is like drinking rat poison and waiting for the rat to die."

The Bible talks much about forgiveness. In fact, it is the central theme of Jesus' work on the cross. God could not have a meaningful relationship with his creation without it.

Before the foundation of the world, God knew that this was so. Perhaps the dialogue went something like this:

Jesus: "Father, I have an idea. Let's make a world. We can make it very beautiful with trees, flowers and

animals. Then let's make people to enjoy it. The people will be like us—able to think, plan, create, love, and laugh with us. We will show them how to rule the world and they will love us and we will love them."

Father: "Son, you have a beautiful plan. However, Satan with all his hatred will be there. He will try to persuade the people to hate us. He will not only try but he will succeed in turning them from us. This will bring much sorrow to us. Son, if we make a world with people we must also have a plan for restoring them to us after Satan steals their loyalty."

Jesus: "What can we do when that happens?"

Father: There is only one thing we can do if you are willing. You would need to go to the earth and

live as a man showing them how to live without listening to Satan. You will need to be willing to die in their place so they can be set free from Satan's bondage and live forever with us. What do you think?"

Jesus: "You mean I would have to become like the people I create in order to win their love?"

Father: "You would need to give

up all the splendor and glory you have with me and become a helpless little baby. But I will give you a human mother to take care of you."

HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING,
GLORY TO THE NEWBORN KING!

Father: "Then let's get to work and make a world!"
And they did.

As we embrace the Father, may we too get lighter in His arms, the creator of forgiveness!



Thanks so much, Anna, for sharing from your heart about the power of forgiveness—a gift to each of us that we definitely should be giving and accepting! - Editor