



*Above:
Sharon
working
at the
thrift shop.*

Arizona and New Mexico Trip Including SOOP Time in Carlsbad, New Mexico January 31-February 15, 2012

With prayers and blessings from our Conestoga church family, Gary and I flew from Philadelphia to Phoenix, Arizona. Arizona greeted us with bright sun, blooming shrubs and best of all, cousins. Joann and Marty Burkholder hosted us, showing us their beautiful neighborhood of Glendale, along with a hike on scenic Thunderbird Mountain. Jerry, Jim, and Ann Mast joined us for dinner. I took greetings to the Arizona Masts from former 1W service buddies Lemar Mast and Lester and Martha Stoltzfus.

Leaving Phoenix, we marveled at God's creation at Tonto Natural Bridge, the Painted Desert, and the Petrified Forest. February is off-season for these parks, so as we hiked in these areas, many times we felt like we were the only ones in the park.

As we drove through miles and miles of desert that comprise the Native American reservations and observed their tiny dilapidated homes, I have a lot of questions about culture and social justice.

We observed Albuquerque, New Mexico, from Sandia Peak, a 10,000 ft. mountain we accessed via tram during a gorgeous sunset. The next day we visited Old Town Albuquerque which provided a brief religious and cultural history of this area.

Our week of service with Mennonite Central Committee's SOOP (Service Opportunities for Older Persons) program began with a worship service and fellowship meal at Carlsbad Mennonite Church. This small congregation welcomed us warmly and we soon found some 'Mennonite Connections'. Three other couples are wintering in Carlsbad and also participate in the SOOP program. SOOP Directors are Ernie and Ellen Good. Ernie is brother of Conestoga member James Good.

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*Left: Gary
at work
in the
community
kitchen.*



*Left: Sharon
with her
Mast cousins
in Phoenix,
Arizona.*



The PASTORS CONNECTION

Faith and Faithfulness

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows... and by his wounds we are healed. Isaiah 53:4-5

From 2009 through 2011, CMC members experienced remarkable physical health. True, we had exceptions, and I don't want to minimize those traumas. And true, we grieved the passing of several members. Yet the numbers of hospital visits were few; and each of the members who passed away approached death in peace having lived a full life. This congregation has truly been blessed!

How then shall we respond to recent illnesses? We know subsequent generations have experienced Jesus' words in John 21, "When you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go. Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God."

God calls us to live Christ's story joyfully in life. That includes "glorifying" Him as age steals mobility; even as we die. Naming such is not culturally popular! You may even now find your fingers itching to turn this page.



CONESTOGA MENNONITE CHURCH

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

www.conestogamc.org

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Editor: Lois Ann Mast
Assistant Editor: Elizabeth Petersheim
Reporters: Bonnie Beam and Sharon Stoltzfus

Yet biblical people remain faithful through good and bad. So let us wrestle truth. God promises to heal wounds and carry sorrows. Our lobby shelf holds an excellent resource compiled by David Tennant of principles to build faith and strengthen prayer. I commend it to you.

While traveling together recently, I emphasized to David the gift God gave Conestoga with he and Pegge's training at Rhema and their healing witness. We recognized that every Spirit outpouring has some extremes. Reading the extremes in my treasured Anabaptist heritage still makes me uncomfortable. Yet God was advancing Christ's kingdom in each generation's revival. And faith is enlarged as we celebrate the positive fruit each revival releases.

Most of us know someone God has miraculously healed. We also know ones who, in spite of powerful, persistent, faithful prayers; live with brokenness, or died young. Since Jesus more than once tied the inability to heal to inadequate faith we must always check our own hearts. But to say the root is always inadequate faith would contribute to a works doctrine, as if God needs us to achieve adequate faith for Him to heal.

Gospel declares alternative reality: God is God; we are not. Therein remains mystery no simplistic slogan can capture.

Here is what we know: Our Creator God has power to re-create. Jesus is victor over sin and death. Jesus talked often about the importance of faith. He commissions followers to continue his healing acts. The Hebrews 11 faith chapter applauds those who live and die in faith without receiving what was promised. We tend to define life as birth to death; scripture defines it as eternal.

God promises healing. We best achieve faithfulness by remembering His time frames for fulfillment include immediate options to eternal. That is wisdom to pray towards, and shalom within which to live.

*Joyfully Living Christ's Story with You,
Pastor Bob Petersheim*



Sewing Circle

Sewing Circle met on February 1, 2012. There were eight ladies present. Finished items included: 1 comforter, 13 baby blankets, 8 health kits, and 1 quilt for the Relief Sale.

For devotions, we sang “Anywhere With Jesus,” followed by the reading of Psalm 121 and a meditation entitled “The Eye That Never Sleeps.” The special offering was \$65.00. We sang “Christ Returneth” before adjourning.

- Betty Cannell

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!

— March 6 —

Being a Woman of Faith Today

with Bonnie Greiner

— March 13 —

Joys of Raising a Seeing Eye Puppy

with Joyce Martin

— March 20 —

Gardening With Children

with Dot Leatherman

— March 27 —

Learning to Live With Pain

with Mary Boll

UPCOMING EVENTS . . .



PENNY POWER! Don't forget to bring your loose change to help fill the Penny Power jug in the foyer. During the month of March, we will pass the cans every Sunday morning after the regular offering is collected. Coins will be delivered to the Pennsylvania Relief Sale on April 13-14, 2012. This year's

Penny Power collection benefits MCC's Global Family education projects around the world. Global Family supports schools and school children in nearly 100 settings in over 40 countries. For more information, check out the Penny Power website at www.pennypower.org

Saturday, March 10, 2012 - Ping-Pong Tournament here at Conestoga beginning at 9:00 a.m. For all ages and no charge for participating, there will also be refreshments and prizes. Participants need to bring their own paddle. Registration is required by contacting Carol in the church office (610-286-9124; conestogamc@dejazzd.com. Additional ping-pong tables are needed—pick-up can be provided. Contact Carol in the church office.



Thursday, April 12, 2012 - A group of 20 Conestogans are going to see “Jonah” at Sight & Sound Millennium Theatre in Lancaster. There are still several tickets available. Sign-up in our church foyer. Participants will leave the church parking lot at 11:30 a.m. after a light lunch. Tickets are \$47.00 per prson which should be payable to Lois Ann Mast.

Thursday, April 15, 2012 - Maundy Thursday service from 6:45 to 8:15 p.m. with a Passover Seder. (See article on page 5.)

Monday, April 23, 2012 - Swiss Alphorn and Yodeling Concert here at Conestoga at 7:00 p.m. Ernst Baenninger and Lorenz Schwarz from Wattwil, Switzerland, will play the alphorn, sing, yodel, and share their testimony of transformation from singing in bars to singing praises to God!



Mid-June 2012 - Fishing Derby for fathers/sons/children to honor fathers. Plan now to participate in this cross-generational family fun activity.



Valentine's Day wildflowers

Arizona and New Mexico Trip

(continued from page 1)

The service assignments we chose were:

1. A day working with the horticulturalist at the Living Desert Zoo and Garden State Park. Gary and I loved getting our hands in the sandy soil, pulling invasive grass around native cacti in a display garden. A tour of the zoo was included!

2. Several shifts at a local thrift store. The store benefits a residential facility for people with mental handicaps. This shop raised \$100,000 last year. We received donations from the dock, processed donations, straightened clothing racks and operated the cash register.

3. A day at the Carlsbad Community Kitchen. Each weekday a free noon meal is prepared for 70-100 community folks. We helped prepare meats and salad, and then enjoyed the meal of chili stew (with more than a hint of jalapeno!).

Special thanks to the pastors and director of SOOP in Carlsbad for meals, tours and encouragement!

Memorable sites we visited near Carlsbad included the oil fields, open range cattle (Gary used his cow-calling skills to collect a large herd around him!), Lincoln National Forest, Carlsbad Caverns, and White Sands National Monument.

As we began our travel towards Phoenix, former Pennsylvania residents, Ed and Karen Breneman, hosted us on their Wilcox, Ariz., farm. This family farms 1,300 acres of corn, wheat, and oats using pivot irrigation. Ed provided an opportunity for Gary to plant wheat using GPS technology. They showed us local farms that included pistachios, pecans, cotton, pinto beans, and a 6,500-cow dairy. Ed and Karen helped us learn about U.S./Mexican border policies and local history along with treating us to wonderful homecooked meals.



Above: Hiking at White Sands National Monument Park.

Right: Gary and Bob (both SOOP volunteers) at Living Desert.

Cool sunny weather (30 to 65 degrees) accompanied us as we traveled this circle through Arizona and New Mexico. We had two brief episodes of high altitude snow.

This circle of travel came to completion as we again reached the Phoenix area. I marvel that Gary found Valentine's Day flowers for me—blooming desert wildflowers! As we hiked in Lost Dutchman State Park we reviewed our trip. We recalled the blessings of support from home, personal safety, opportunities to visit family and friends, learn more about the nature God created, and the chance to support fellow volunteers in New Mexico.

Thank you for your support,

Sharon with Gary





The MYF from Zion Mennonite recently joined Conestoga's MYF for a "Soup Slop Soda Slurp" activity in our church fellowship hall. What fun to combine and eat soups of all kinds and sodas of all kinds—or was it fun?



MYF Bible Studies

Bible Studies each Wednesday night in the Youth Room led by Rachel Mast.

MYF Kayaking Adventure . . .

♦ April 29 - Kayaking

2012 Quizzing Schedule . . .

- ♦ **March 4, 2012**, 6:30 p.m., on John 17-19 at Slate Hill Mennonite Church, with Conestoga quizzing Zion 1 and Living Truth.
- ♦ **March 11, 2012**, 6:30 p.m., on John 20-21 at Lancaster Mennonite School, with Conestoga quizzing Bowmansville 1.
- ♦ **March 18, 2012**, 1:00 p.m., on John 1-21—the ACC Tournament.
- ♦ **March 23-25, 2012**, Invitational Tournament at West Liberty, Ohio.

Maundy Thursday Service With a Passover Seder

Chosen People Ministries and members of Conestoga will present the message of the Jewish Passover Seder in the Maundy Thursday Service on Thursday evening, April 5 from 6:45 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. This service will worship Jesus through the elements used in the Seder meal. The elements will be explained by Chosen People Ministries. This will not be the actual Seder dinner, but the "Messiah in the Passover" and the relevance to Christianity, particularly over the Easter Season. Chosen People Ministries is an international organization founded in Brooklyn, New York in 1894 by Rabbi Leopold Cohn, a Hungarian Jewish immigrant with a zeal to share the knowledge of *Yeshua* (Jesus) the Messiah with God's chosen people. The Ministry exists to pray for, evangelize, disciple, and serve Jewish people everywhere, and to help fellow believers do the same. - *Pegge Tennant*



On the left is the house pictured before we began working on it (Amish had put on a new roof). On the right is the finished house.

MDS Service Mission to Alabama

by Andy and Dot Leatherman

A four-week mission adventure? We never did that before! Can we last four weeks? Dot and I (Andy) signed up for a Mennonite Disaster Service senior RV program in Alabama, in one of the many areas hit last year by devastating tornadoes. For a full month, until March 1, we are living in our 20-foot travel trailer at the Sleepy Holler Campground near Cordova, 25 miles northwest of Birmingham, Alabama. We work about seven hours a day four days a week repairing homes of destitute people affected by the tornadoes that swept through Alabama last year. The “senior” part of this program plans for us to work four days a week instead of five, and a slightly shorter day, enabling us “older folks” to handle the energy requirements more suitable to our age!

A local committee has screened the families who need the most help, and raises the money for the supplies. MDS provides the free labor, expertise, and supervision on the job. Please look at the before and after pictures of the house we have been working on. It looks so much better, and is giving the couple living there new hope! We were surprised to see

Amish people from Pennsylvania on a nearby house putting on a roof, and learned that we may soon be working on the interior of that home. The couple living in the house we are currently working on still cannot get over the Amish putting on the roof of their house several weeks ago, and seeing women working up on the roof with their long skirts! The Amish are here under their program called C.A.R.E., mostly putting on roofs. We met one Amish girl from Honey Brook. I am impressed by the way Amish and Mennonites are coordinating their independent organizations with a local committee to give help to those in need.

What exactly are we doing these days? Dot has earned a new title, the “female carpenter!” The other women in our group are cautious of the power equipment or the details of miscellaneous measurement and minor carpentry repairs. Dot enjoys her work the most when doing woodwork rather



*Left:
A recent
tornado
damage
picture.*



*Right: Andy
screwing on
drywall.*



Our campground—the right camper is ours; the second RV is a single woman who has been living at the campground for a year; the third RV from the right is the MDS office trailer; and the fourth RV is our leader couple’s rig with the MDS’s truck parked in front.



The couple who owns the house we worked at repairing: Dot, Sandy, and Steve.

er than hour-after-hour scraping paint on the dilapidated porch. She is also trying to give time to hear the woes of the sick Christian woman living in the home and provide some spiritual support. Andy is learning the new skill of installing drywall, taping, corners, etc. He spent numbers of days in the large only bathroom in the house working on the walls, and exiting when the bathroom was needed by anyone until the Porta Potty arrived. He is also becoming friends with the handicapped man of the house and encouraging him to give his life to the Lord. He claims he is not yet ready! We appreciate prayers on our behalf and for the couple of this house.

Our team members who are here for two months told a story of a home they worked on last month. The home was a total mess, looking awfully cluttered and dirty when MDS began their work. Soon the MDS workers noticed that as they made structural improvements to the home, that the owners began to clean up and do what they could to improve their home. The husband was disabled, but suddenly the wife had the courage and energy to get up and begin looking for a job. She found one, enabling this family to survive better on its own. The disaster relief was the key to helping them change their own lives.

This MDS adventure is quite an experience rubbing shoulders with Mennonites from Canada! There are six of us couples in our unit. One couple is from Vermont, us from Pennsylvania, and four couples from Canada (British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan). The Canadian Mennonites, with their Russian background, have very different foods! We had a soup potluck supper on Thursday, and we were treated to Borscht and Pluma Mousse, a very delicious dessert soup of dried fruits.

We appreciate our team leaders as well as the structure and support MDS provides in this setting. MDS works hard to generate a good community spirit among its volunteers. Every morning we gather together for devotions, prayer, and singing. On Sunday, we all attend a local church and then to our weekly MDS-paid “outing” at a local restaurant (\$10 per person). With low-cost restaurant meals in this area, the full cost is covered.

We learned that Canadian Mennonites can laugh! We were told that MDS stands for “Make Do Somehow,” since we “make do” with the materials on hand in any kind of repairs! We learned that when MDS was in Alaska using supplies from FEMA, they loved the hardworking resourceful Mennonites so much they claimed that FEMA stands for “Find Every Mennonite Available!”



Senior Connections

Thursday,
March 8, 2012

Come at 12:00 noon to enjoy a homecooked meal followed by a two-part illustrated presentation by Lisa Heft on what happens at Mennonite Central Committee’s Material Resources Center at Ephrata and Lisa’s recent trip to Tanzania. Lisa is an Administrative Assistant of the Material Resources Center.



Conestoga's Valentine Banquet
was a Hawaiian event for 70 persons who
enjoyed a pineapple menu and fun games!
[Photos by Sam Waters]

