

CONESTOGA Connections



February 2011
Vol. XXII, No. 2



Camp Deerpark in 2011

Eighteen persons from Conestoga spent their New Year's weekend at Camp Deerpark in a service trip cutting and stacking wood. Plus, three others (Dan Mast, Greg Petersheim, and Jerry Petersheim) went up for one day to assist in running the chain saws. Becky Yoder was not only the cook, but also proved that she can play a "mean game of piggy!" What fun!! The MYF especially thanks everyone who purchased something at the MYF Auction, because your contributions helped us with the expenses of the extended weekend (food, transportation, and camp).

Editorial Note: Thank you, Karen Horning, for taking these photos!





The PASTORS CONNECTION

Sensing God's Spirit On Campus

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses..." Acts 1:8

Last week I again participated in the annual School of Leadership Training hosted by Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS). Thank you for supporting me in this rewarding interaction with peers. Each year I come away stimulated to pursue God's purposes with excellence relevant to our generation.

The workshops and seminars are generally led by EMS staff, but the past three years the main speaker brought a prophetic perspective from outside the Mennonite faith. This year the theme was on the Holy Spirit. The guest speaker, Cheryl Bridges Johns, is ordained in the Pentecostal Church as a preacher and scholar. Her presentations were brilliant, challenging, and inspiring.

Dr. Johns noted with grief that although the Pentecostal movement originally shared with Mennonites a commitment to pacifism, that gospel application has been minimized in her faith tradition. She also noted gently that in the first generations of Anabaptist

Mennonite faith, we were dynamic witnesses who could not be silenced. Dr. Johns referred to current Pentecostals as the "power church" and current Mennonites as the "peace church" and stirred us to wonder how each movement might recapture our lost part of gospel.

Two of the four workshops I participated in were led by EMS staff that came to the Mennonite church from non-faith background. Each opened with a powerful testimony of God's Spirit convicting them of sin, healing them of deep brokenness, and leading them on a path that now includes teaching at EMS.

No family is perfect. Neither is any congregation. Nor is any church institution, including those with whom we partner in the Mennonite Church. But I am deeply grateful that current and future church leaders are sitting at the feet of scholars who "rightly divide the word of truth" and whose lives show abundant fruit of evidence that God's Word and God's Spirit radically transformed their lives.

As you read this article, our 2011 annual meeting should be history. But since I am writing three days prior to the meeting I don't know what you will discern concerning our recommended budget draft. All who review it will see a shift under the Mission category. There are literally thousands of excellent mission and ministry organizations with which we could partner. We are recommending that two priorities shape the mission portion of our budget in 2011 and forward: support of the mission and ministry efforts of the faith family to which we are directly connected (MCUSA), and other ministries in which CMC members are deeply invested by giving time and support.

As with each act of servant leadership, the Pastoral Teams' commitment is to think and pray as we shape policy. Then we hold our "wisdom" lightly as we submit it to the Body, recognizing God's dynamic Holy Spirit is within each member. When we gather together, the wisdom of the Spirit is multiplied in the collective group. As such, New Testament leaders dare never claim with dogmatic certainty "Thus saith the Lord," until the matter has been tested by the community of faith.

So once again I proclaim: Your counsel is welcome! We move forward with certainty of God's blessing when we can say with the believers of Acts 15: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."

Joyfully living His story with you, Pastor Bob

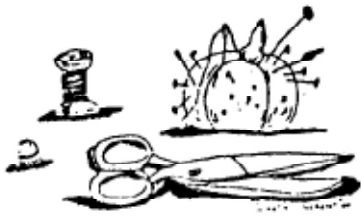


CONESTOGA MENNONITE CHURCH

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This is the monthly newsletter for Conestoga Mennonite Church, Morgantown, Pa., published since 1988. Deadline for articles and photos is the 20th of the preceding month of publication.

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Sewing Circle

Sewing Circle met on Wednesday, January 5, 2011.

There were 11 ladies present. Items completed included 48 diapers, 15 baby blankets, 6 gowns, 2 comforters, and 12 health kits.

For devotions, we sang "God Will Take Care of You." The scripture reading was from Rev. 7:9-17 followed by a devotional reading entitled "The Brightest Hope."

Our special offering amounted to \$65.00. We sang "God be With You Till we Meet Again" before adjourning.

- Julia Yoder, Acting Secretary

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!*

— February 1 —

"The Power of a Thankful Heart"

with Ann Gibble

— February 8 —

"Living in the Reality of the Scriptures"

with JoEl Rohrer

— February 15 —

"Valentine Dinner in the Evening"

with Larry and Sue Kingston from Focus on the Family

— February 22 —

"Variety With Veggies"

with Julie Koble



Ways to Strengthen Your Marriage

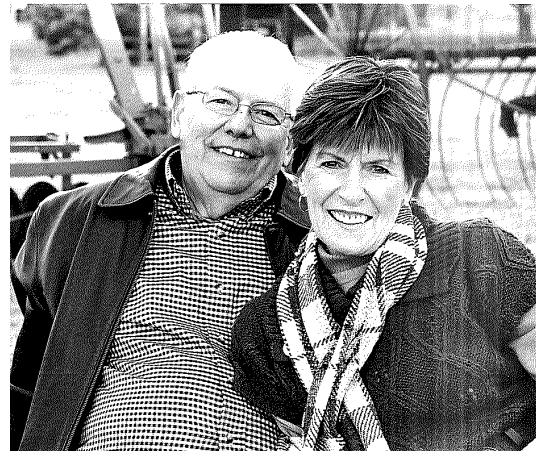
Tuesday evening, February 15

6:30 p.m.

The "Neighbors Caring and Sharing" program here at Conestoga is hosting an evening Valentine Dinner and is inviting couples at Conestoga to attend. Speakers are Larry and Sue Kingston from Focus on the Family. This is going to be a special evening, so come and join us!

A pot-luck dinner, there is no charge because everyone will bring a covered dish (hot or cold) to share with everyone else. Pre-registration with Tina Essick is required.

**Larry and Sue Kingston
from Focus on the Family**



Joy Through Adversity

by Kathy Mast McClure

Recently, Terri Roberts shared in Conestoga's Neighbors about how we all go through storms in our lives, I could only agree with her. Even though it seems like most of my storms are very small in comparison to some; throughout the years during those "small" hard times, I often related to how we are always going in a storm, going through a storm, or coming out of a storm.

I remember hearing Martin Luther King's daughter say this at a Mennonite Church USA conference back when I was in high school, and it has stuck with me ever since.

I could only imagine though what Terri has been through, as she shared how she hopes and prays none of us has to go through a tsunami like she did!

*Throughout life, we are always
going in a storm,
going through a storm,
or coming out of a storm.*

Terri was transparent with the women at the Neighbors meeting on January 4. You could see the joy that she chooses to accept in her life, despite the circumstances she has been through. In 2002 she was diagnosed with stage three breast cancer. At the time, she didn't know how serious that was, and just had faith that God would heal her and bring her through it. She had no idea that it is extremely rare to live through that! Not knowing anyone really close to me that has battled that, I feel like I probably would have had the same reaction as her, since I also had no idea how bad a stage three diagnosis was. Perhaps sometimes it is better to be a little ignorant and not know how bad it really is.

Terri's faith and determination helped her battle that cancer as she pursued multiple treatments of chemo, as well as a strict diet of only raw vegetables to detox her body and get the bad stuff out. This wasn't easy (as I'm sure it wouldn't be for me!), so she enrolled in a program in California. She shared how

the program was not Christian and how she was a little leery of being around this New Age environment. I was encouraged to hear her stories of how she remained a light on the hill during her time at that facility, just as Jesus would have wanted her to react.

One morning the leader read an excerpt from a book, and then changed the words of the scripture at the end. Terri was offended and told the leader how her faith was offended by this action. Would I have done the same? Or would I have remained quiet and just let it pass?

In October 2006, Terri went through another tsunami. For lunch that day, Terri was sitting outside talking with a co-worker when they heard sirens. Terri remembers of saying a quick prayer as she always does when she hears sirens. She had no idea at the time, who the prayers were for.

When she returned to her office, the phone was ringing. Her husband's voice said, "Meet me at Charlie's house, now!" Only a ten-minute drive away, Terri headed for Charlie's and turned the radio on. There had been an incident at the Nickle Mines Amish School. She thought to herself, *That is where Charlie parks his truck.* As her heart pounded and blood rushed, she prayed that he was okay. Upon pulling in the driveway of Charlie's, she saw the state trooper and her husband. As any mother would do, she asked if her son was alive. The state trooper replied, "No, mam. He's not."

I felt my heart sink for Terri as she shared those words. But my heart sunk even further, and tears formed in my eyes as she then shared how she learned that not only was her son dead, but that he was responsible for this terrible shooting. With a son of my own now, I tried to imagine how that would have felt, but I just couldn't. All I could think of was how overwhelming that would be. How would I react?

As that terrible day went on, Terri shared how many people came to be with her and her husband—to pray for them, to hold their hands, and to comfort them.

Terri's husband was a retired policeman. In retirement, he drove the Amish. Wow!! My heart sank again as I felt like I could relate, but I knew I couldn't even begin to grasp the feelings he must have had. How could he ever drive for the Amish again after what his son just did?

It was a testimony to the Amish to learn what Terri shared next. Not only did pastors, and counselors and friends visit them that day, but so did their Amish

(continued on next page)

neighbors. One Amish man visited them, and repeated over and over again to her husband, “We love you. We love you.” Finally, her husband’s head lifted up slightly, after hanging low all day, as he replied, “Thank you.”

It was at that point that a light bulb went on, and Terri knew her husband would be okay. He would get through it, as would she.

A counselor asked Terri, “Do you have good memories of your son?”

“Of course, many of them! This wasn’t the son we knew—the son that we loved.”

The counselor asked Terri how old her son was. He was age 33. What the counselor said next was the second light-bulb moment of that day for Terri. The counselor lifted her hands and held them close together, as she explained that today was only this much of Charlie’s life. Spreading her hands out as wide as her arms would go, the counselor encouraged Terri to focus on and remember the majority of her good memories of Charlie.

I liked the way Terri anchors herself with scripture verses, and one could easily see that in her presentation.

Some quotes that I wrote down were:

- Everything we do has a ripple effect; it makes a difference in my future and the future of those I’m in contact with.
- Circumstances either make us better or bitter. A root of bitterness never brings peace.
- We need to allow others to participate in our sorrow.
- People who experience a tragedy in their life should plan times of refreshing for recovery.
- Write down or journal anything that zaps your energy.
- We can choose to praise God in our sadness.
- Terri felt that in the midst of all the troubles, God placed her in a “spacious place,” like being still in the center of a wheel which is spinning around.

- Dot Leatherman

It was inspiring to me to see that by the end of that October day, in spite of the devastating news, Terri was able to experience joy and peace in her God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Again, I thought about the feelings that I would have had. Shame was the one prominent in my mind. To know that my son, did something like that! And then guilt, wondering what I did wrong in raising my child to cause this to happen. What could I have changed? But Terri mentioned none of these things. She ended that day right, choosing to have joy in adversity.

We all have this choice—no matter how big or small the storm. We have the choice to be thankful when it seems there is absolutely nothing to be thankful for. And not only do we have the choice, but we have the responsibility to find that something to be thankful for, despite how difficult it may be to find.

Terri Roberts—who is she? Why did so many persons turn out for this program at Neighbors?

Dot Leatherman, who was sitting next to me at Neighbors, also wondered the same question, but both of us felt led of God to attend.

Terri was the Godly mother of Charles Roberts connected with the murders at Nickel Mine School in 2007. I can’t imagine the thoughts that ran through her mind that day. Her husband kept his head lowered until an Amish man spoke forgiveness to him. Terri called him the “angel in black.”

The theme that overshadowed the tragedy was forgiveness. Unknown to Terri, her son harbored bitterness at God over the death of his infant daughter. She encouraged all of us to rid ourselves of bitterness and practice forgiveness.

- Lillian Stoltzfus

Forgiveness is costly! Both the one who is forgiven and the one who is forgiving needs to forgive. We all make mistakes. We don’t want to, but we do anyhow.

Jesus instructs us in the disciples’ prayer in Matthew 6, “To forgive as we are forgiven.” Forgiveness is a common experience

- Harvey Z. Stoltzfus

February 27 Fellowship Dinner

Haystacks will be served at Conestoga's February Fellowship Dinner by the Activities Committee. Thank you for signing up to contribute something (either a dessert or a non-food item) and look forward to a "fun" time as we enjoy a delicious lunch followed by the assembling of "Care Packages" for our college students.

In the next two weeks, contributions to the eleven college "Care Packages" should be placed in the box marked as such in the church lobby." Thank you for bringing them before the Fellowship Dinner.

In addition, we invite anyone to write notes of encouragement and blessing to one or several of Conestoga's eleven college students (especially the five who are graduating this Spring)!

Thank you for your help in sending this "blessing" to our college students!



Did You Know That . . .

. . . the **Men's Bible Study** at Conestoga is studying the book of James? All men, any age, are welcome to attend the first Tuesday evening of each month.

. . . **Becky Yoder** created over 80 cheese balls as Christmas gifts this past Christmas? Yeah, Becky!!!

. . . over **200 packs of ground beef and venison** were donated by different Conestoga members for distribution at the January Food Pantry? Recent money gifts have also been received from local business organizations.

. . . one of our **famous hunters at Conestoga** brought a crockpot of potatoes and vegetables to the Wild Game Dinner, but there was no meat in it, because in his words, "I did not get anything this year!" Can you guess who? Well, just ask Jerry Petersheim who it was!

. . . our **Summer Bible School** program here at Conestoga will take place from July 18-22 featuring a five-night program ending with an exciting concert on Saturday evening? Kathleen Weaver is our Bible School Superintendent!

CONESTOGA'S COLLEGE STUDENTS

COLLEGE FRESHMEN

Denise Beam is majoring in Animal Science at Penn State Berks Campus, Reading, Pa.

Kristy Petersheim is majoring in Camping Ministry at Wisconsin Wilderness Campus, Cable, Wisc. (an extension of Philadelphia Biblical University).

Sonya Petersheim is majoring in Dental Hygiene at Northampton Community College, Bethlehem, Pa.

COLLEGE SOPHOMORE

Mattie Horning is majoring in Radiologic Technology at Lancaster General School of Health Sciences, Lancaster, Pa.

COLLEGE JUNIORS

Christine Ebert is majoring in Marketing at La Salle University, Philadelphia, Pa.

Jody Essick is majoring in Kinesiology at Penn State University majoring in State College, Pa.

COLLEGE SENIORS

Shawn Beam is majoring in Marketing at Penn State University. His address is 348 Blue Course Road, Apt. 235, State College, Pa.

Beth Grab is majoring in Family and Consumer Science Education at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa.

Melissa Horning is majoring in Occupational Therapy to get her Masters in Occupational Therapy at Alvernia College, Reading, Pa.

Sabrina Jordan is majoring in Computer Information Systems specializing in Software Engineering at the University of Phoenix.

Rachel Kolb is majoring in Congregational and Youth Ministries at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Shane Petersheim is majoring in Accounting at Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pa.



Senior Connections at Conestoga

Thank you, Andy and Dot Leatherman for sharing not only your experience working with Habitat for Humanity at the Jan. Senior Connections, but also challenging us in our daily walk with Jesus.



Next Senior Connections

Thursday, February 10, 2011, at 12:00 noon

Lunch followed by "Bible Facts—How Many Do We Know?"



Conestoga Members At Work

Sharon Stoltzfus is one of the managers at Morgantown's ReUzit Shoppe

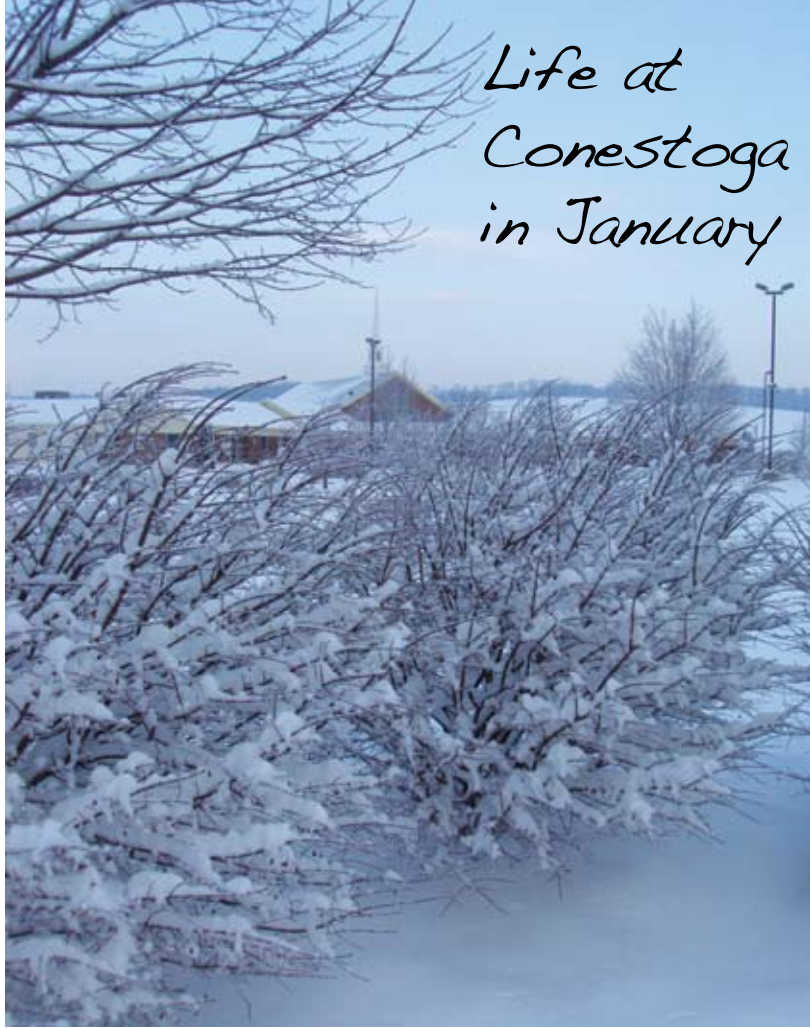
As a manager of the Morgantown ReUzit Shoppe, it is my privilege to empower volunteers, provide customer service, and maintain a safe and comfortable facility. It is an honor to be part of a group whose proceeds enable Mennonite Central Committee to continue their relief efforts around the world. I feel a special connection to this work because I have attended Conestoga Church my entire life. It is fun for me to point to the spot in the Shoppe where my baptism and marriage took place. If you are interested in joining us, I will provide you with a volunteer application!

- Sharon Stoltzfus

Sharon with some of her volunteers (left to right): Sharon, Cindy Shoup, and Marian Stoltzfus



*Life at
Conestoga
in January*



The Beams training their pigs in preparation for the Farm Show (left to right): Dylan Beam, Denise Beam, Mindy Beam, and Josh Beam.



Above: Ten pallets of food were delivered for the Jan. Food Pantry distribution. More Food Pantry below.

Above: Snow in January! Below: Sixty persons showed up at the Wild Game Dinner in January even though it was icy and snowy! The food was delicious!!

