

The Pastors Connection

Nov. 2012

Investing in Our Future

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believer in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” I Tim. 4:12

Here at Conestoga we are blessed with members of each generation. Different age groups bring unique strengths and needs.

I am humbled by our older members! They offer wise counsel, encouragement, generous financial contributions, and active service. They also have unique needs. As such we have developed three new ministries the past two years for older members.

The first was a Visitation Team to minister to any member in the hospital as well as our older members in their homes. The second, developed by visionary members, supplements the Wandering Shepherds Bible Study with a monthly Senior Connections with a meal, stimulating input, games and fellowship. The third, Meals from the Heart, creates nutritious meals for distribution to any in need.

When Cindy and I began ministry with you we recognized the young adults as a second age group of strength. They also had natural leaders. Because the congregation recognized that discovering and equipping these gifts was central to the CMC mission we were affirmed in making investment in this group priority. It has been a delight to host them in our home and participate in their Bible studies and fellowship events.

A strong future also requires young families. When God brought Andy and Dot Leatherman to CMC the congregation commissioned Dot onto our Pastoral Team to help shape our ministries toward the priorities of young families. We praise God for the fruit as we see more young families making Conestoga their home! In March Andy and Dot made the sacrifice to continue her investment, now as a volunteer, so the next staffing priority could be our youth. God has now brought Rachel Kolb Mast to us with gifts and enthusiasm to strengthen our ministry to youth and young adults.

In 1975, one month before my twentieth birthday, the Elders of Neffsville Mennonite Church confirmed their offer for me to join their staff part time giving leadership to their youth ministry. The older I get the more their action amazes me. It says more about their commitment to growing young leaders than about my maturity. The congregation was consistently affirmative and God was gracious to cover with His favor the mistakes from my inexperience.

In my early months of service I came across the above verse. I wasn’t sure how I was to keep others from looking down on me if they so choose. What I resolved was that I would give my all to set an example. Looking back I realize it was the congregation who challenged each other to not let anyone look down on me because of my young age.

Two weeks ago Pastoral Team introduced a proposal to invest in our future by commissioning Rachel as Minister of Youth and Young Adults. As a Pastoral Team we have seen Rachel's commitment to "*set an example for the believer in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.*" As the congregation affirms this recommendation we look forward to partnering together so our youth can add their testimony to mine of experiencing a congregation who won't "*look down on them because they were young.*"

If you've not read the proposal I invite you to do so. Engage your Pastoral Team with questions. Make this a matter of prayer. Let's together watch what God will do when old, middle aged, and young "set an example" together!

Living His story with you, Pastor Bob Petersheim