



The PASTORS CONNECTION

Walking the Valley

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me. Psalm 23: 4

As is standard practice with our Summer Ministry Intern, Jody Essick and I read a book this summer and discussed its content. We chose John Piper’s *Don’t Waste Your Life*.

John tells his childhood story of witnessing an elderly man for whom John’s church had prayed for decades, who when he gave his life to Christ, wept with the words, “I’ve wasted it (my life). I’ve wasted it.”

Piper was profoundly impacted such that his driving life force has been to daily give back to God the life God entrusts to him. Piper is grateful that due to the man’s death bed conversion, they will now both

share eternity together. But he is passionate to have his life story be different.

God has called Conestoga Mennonite Church (CMC) to live Christ’s story to benefit others. We are blessed as we raise up the next generation of young leaders. It is a rich encouragement to see young families joining our fellowship. It is empowering to see new ministries such as the Food Pantry, Still Waters no cost counseling, DNA Small Groups, and Teddy Bear Club complementing the many other excellent ministries with deeper roots.

The spiritual discipline I practice of praying through our CMC Directory made me aware soon after God called me to CMC that serving till retirement meant I would be entrusted with the sacred privilege of walking with a whole generation as they joined the Hebrews 12 “great cloud of witnesses.” In June it was John Petersheim; several weeks ago Ruth Stauffer; today Horace Mast. Although none of us gets to practice death before it is our turn, I witness one after the next “fearing no evil.”

Karen Horning reflected in our last Pastoral Team meeting of her work observation that although persons can naturally be anxious early in the dying process; at some point they begin to sense peace. We recognized as a Team that this reality is our Good Shepherd “with us, his rod and staff comforting us” promise fulfilled.

I am in awe to witness so many who are unlike the man in Piper’s life with nothing but regrets on his death bed. I am surrounded by a community of people who “fear no evil” because over a lifetime they have been loving and serving their Lord.

What a great God we serve! What an awesome church tradition we are privileged to steward. May our generation and those who follow so walk the journey of life!

Joyfully living HiStory with you, Pastor Bob



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