

The Pastors Connection

March 2011

Aroma That Nurtures Life

*“For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing; to the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life.”
II Cor. 2:15-16*

As I write, the Neighbors Care and Share Planning Team is preparing for tonight's annual Valentines Dinner. A local farmer increased their challenge by spreading manure. Our facility is filled with aroma that the farm boy in me knows comes from material that nurtures life, but my nostrils tell me imitates the smell of death. I don't want to complain; but truly, it is rare!

A member of our Energy Audit Team gave us insight into why our facility so quickly reflects outside odor, and why our propane bill is high. Namely, law does not grant the option of a facility this size to simply raise the temperature of air already in the building. Rather, heaters must transfer a percentage of air from outside to inside. On a zero degree day we raise zero degree air to a temp required to heat the building. Consequently, when neighbor's burn trash or haul manure our building quickly reflects exterior aroma.

This impacts our options for managing energy use. What we are committed to doing is sealing exterior door cracks, closing sanctuary blinds, closing interior doors between zones when unoccupied, turning off lights, and only heating rooms as needed for effective ministry. We invite your active partnership.

But some are asking bigger questions. I was part of an informal conversation this week wondering if we might contract, as did Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), with a company willing to install solar panels on our roof or in our back field. If I understand it correctly, EMU absorbed neither the cost for material or installation. Yet they could advertize as reflecting cutting edge environmental concern, and sign a multiple year guarantee of fixed electricity costs.

Or we wondered: what if we could install wind turbines as did Turkey Hill dairy recently? This valley seems to have constant air movement. Previous generations powered machines and pumped water with wind mills. Might it be economically and prophetically beneficial to care for creation with technology relevant to our generation?

At our annual meeting our Stewardship Director invited us to brainstorm together how we might better steward the facility God has entrusted to us. Maybe research would reveal that none of the above options are fiscally viable; but what if not?

A lot of kingdom good goes on from this ministry center, and facility maintenance contributes as foundation. Gratefully, your generous giving helped us again meet budget

and carry into the New Year strong fiscal balances that supports our growing mission of joyfully living HiStory to benefit others.

The material giving off today's "smell of death" will help create new life this spring. A cycle of death to life is part of God's created order. Each generation finds passion to live creatively into that cycle. May God grant us wisdom to better steward His creation, even in practical applications such as energy use. To God be the glory as our ministry grows in this community.

Joyfully Living HisStory with you, Pastor Bob