

Bethel Mennonite Church

Celebrating 125 Years

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Newsletter

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Youth Nearing Goal For Convention

By Cheryl Shank, Youth Pastor

The youth have been working hard to earn their way to convention this summer and are nearing their goal of \$4500. Coffee sales have improved, and serving samples with some sweets helped introduce everyone to Menno's Best.

The big ticket items that still need to be paid for are the bus, the hotel rooms, meals and breakfast items. Estimating the cost of those, we need about \$4,500. The youth account currently has around \$3,400 and there's \$1,000 in the church budget for youth convention leaving approximately \$100 to raise.

The youth group has continued to meet every other week on Wed. nights. In March, I began 2 lessons with a 'sword drill' and they needed to see who could look up stated scripture the fastest, stand up and read it. They seemed to enjoy that activity, and then needed to try and guess what the focus for the discussion would be. One evening we talked about 'paradox of choices & choices without constraint can be paralyzing,' and the other evening the focus was 'who is my stranger?' and that lead to a discussion of immigration (which will be an issue at the convention this summer). The first Wed. in March, I had a Rob Bell DVD, "Bullhorn Guy" that we watched and then discussed. Todd Hostetler filled in as the other adult since Doug & Ellen and kids left for Canada after school.



In Sunday School we have been following another church publication book that is focusing on Wisdom literature.



In April, besides the youth group evening on the 15th, we served at Our Daily Bread on the 22nd and we had a progressive meal for the youth for the 29th. Also in April, the youth helped out with the Lapp's renovation project! (See the photos) Thank you to Steve & Miriam for your generous donation to our convention trip!

Thanks again for all the support as I work with the youth. God has been faithful and continues to walk with us as we seek to serve Him in all we do.

Announcements:

♦ **For the June Newsletter:** With Memorial Day coming, and because of our 125 Year Memories, we will be doing a "Memorial List" of Bethel members/attenders who have passed away. We have a list of those since the 19050's. However, if you know of past Bethelites prior to the 1950's who should be remembered, please put a note regarding them in Donna Lehman's mailbox or give her a call.

♦ **The Youth will offer "Father's Day" Greetings in the June Newsletter** as part of their fundraising efforts for convention. Suggested donation of \$1.25. Note: you can also make a memorial tribute to your mother or grandmother!

♦ **Vacation Bible School is coming and we need your help!** Please let Chuck Swartz know if you can be a part of this great children's ministry from June 8th through the 12th.

♦ **Community Movie Night is scheduled for May 15th at 7:30 pm. Movie TBA**

Bethel Summer Sunday School Combined Classes

by Larry Evans

For this summer we are planning two 6-week studies followed by the Church Picnic on August 30th. From June 5 to July 12 we will be looking at a series of lessons about the model of church life that the Restructuring Committee has been considering based on Ephesians 4. Then from July 19 to August 23 the Peace and Justice group will be leading a series of lessons on how to relate to returning veterans.

Ephesians 4 tells us that God has given every one of us grace, and that he gave some Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds and Teachers (APEST). The Bible tells us about the spiritual gifts that God has given to us (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; 1 Peter 4). However in Ephesians 4 we are the gifts God has given to the church. We will look at what it means to be called as an Apostle, Prophet ... in turn, followed by a discussion of what your personal APEST profile may mean to the life of Bethel. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Eph. 4 7, 11-12)

For the second series we will be looking at the Returning Veterans, Returning Hope: Seeking Peace Together Sunday-school curriculum! These lessons are designed to help congregations think both theologically and practically about healing from the trauma of war, and learning the meaning of Jesus' way of peace. The lessons assume that peace churches and military veterans could benefit greatly by walking this path together.



April Meeting of Bethel-Oak Grove Mennonite Women

by Donna Lehman



We had a busy day working on projects April 14th, sharing updates on what people have been doing now that winter weather is over, and enjoyed a Tex Mex meal. Thanks to Jeanie Swartz, Linda Roth and Eleanor Shumaker for Mexican style casseroles and those with last name initials M through Z for side dishes. We received notes from Hi Point Women's Center, Adriel and MCC thanking us for recent donations. Adriel's fall auction will be held October 17th, and they have

some quilt tops they would like completed.

Barb Evans shared the theme "I Am the Resurrection" in our devotional time. Because of Christ's resurrection, we can have strength and hope in our lives. Attendance was 28. Work completed: 2 school kits, 5 infant bundles, 1 baby comforter and 3 comforters. Next month's project will be for newborn bundles and prefer sizes 6-9 months only.

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Next Newsletter Deadline: May 20, 2015

“King David, MC USA and Evana?”

by Pastor Dave Maurer

As we continue in our journey through the Bible, we have completed four months of reading which means that we are 1/3 of the way through! This brings us to the period of the kings. First it was Saul and then it was David, although this was not nearly a smooth transition. And even David, a man after God's own heart, had bumps along the way.

I am struck in the midst of this messy monarchy by David's approach to handling things. Saul knew that David was a threat and he tried repeatedly to kill David. In response, though David had at least two opportunities to kill Saul, he did not. Once Saul was dead, David was kind to Saul's descendant, Mephibosheth. David also killed those who came to him saying that they had killed Saul or his son, Ish-bosheth. Though David was a warrior, he also demonstrated benevolence.

Once David solidified his rule over all of Israel, he made mistakes with Bathsheba and killed her husband, Uriah, to cover things up. And all was not well in David's household either with the rape of his daughter, Tamar by his son Amnon, with Absalom taking revenge on Amnon, and eventually with Absalom's attempt to usurp David's throne. Yet even in all of this, as David left the city of Jerusalem; he left open the possibility that this was what God had in mind.

In fact, when Shimei cursed David, David's servants offered to kill Shimei; but David responded by saying, "If he is cursing because the LORD said to him, 'Curse David,' who can ask, 'Why do you do this?' David then said to Abishai and all his officials, 'My son, my own flesh and blood, is trying to kill me. How much more, then, this Benjamite! Leave him alone; let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. It may be that the LORD will look upon my misery and restore to me his covenant blessing instead of his curse today.'" (2 Sam. 16:10b-12) It seems that David was searching for where God was in the midst of all this.

Our denomination, Mennonite Church USA, is also in the midst of a lot that brings with it a great deal of uncertainty. What will happen to MC USA? What are we to make of the Anabaptist Renewal Circles that are calling for renewal within MC USA? How are we to understand Evana, a new network that will be separate from MC USA and yet open to partnerships? Where is God in the midst of all of this?

It is easy for people to choose one group or another and to proclaim that God is with that group while at the same time implying that God is not with the other group. But perhaps like David, we should step back and dwell with the question rather than charge ahead, certain of the answer. Perhaps God is doing things that we are as of yet still not able to fully grasp or comprehend.

I recently read an article from Christianity Today about Evana titled, "Evangelicals Unite as Mennonites Mull How to Keep Peace over Sexuality"[1] The title itself frames the discussion in terms of "us versus them." The author went on to say, "In a move reminiscent of the splintering of Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Lutherans in America, a new network of

churches is organizing itself as a conservative alternative to the Mennonite Church USA (MC USA)."

As I read this, I found myself even more disappointed than before. Like many of you, I find myself frustrated that we find ourselves here in the first place; but it becomes even more frustrating to me when I see how those on the "outside" of our tradition try to make sense of what is happening on the "inside" of it. Perhaps we really are just like all the other branches of Christianity. Perhaps we really aren't able to navigate this storm any better than other ships that have tried before us. But if that is true, I personally grieve even more deeply because my choice and my call to board this ship rather than another ship included the hope that we could do better.

And while each of us would likely evaluate the denomination's handling of these choppy waters with varying degrees of approval and dissatisfaction, I still hold out hope that we as a people of peace, of reconciliation, of deep community; can model a different way through this culture-wide storm. My hope for this was encouraged in reading a recent blog post by Tim Nafziger carried by The Mennonite, "Learning to love Evana in anger, grief and hope"[2]

In the article, Nafziger shared quite candidly about his own personal struggles with the circumstances of our present situation. But he also made an intentional effort to chart a different course. After having heated online debate with John Troyer, the only staff person for Evana, he decided to call him and talk to him personally. Nafziger shared that though he is still at a different place than Troyer, he respects him.

In the conversation Troyer noted, "I would rather see us interact with each other in a way draws out the best in each other," he said. "I'm hoping we can do something different together [with Mennonite Church USA] that can minimize the acrimony and allow us to be vulnerable and share our grief's and joys together. [That is why] we are focused on naming what we are for rather than what we are against." This also gives me hope.

I'm not sure yet what God is doing through all of this mess in which we find ourselves, but I am struck by King David's humble posture in which he considered quite vulnerably where God may have been in the midst of his circumstances. And I strive to be hopeful that while Mennonite Church USA will not look the same two months from now; that those who remain and those who leave have a vision for ongoing ministry together, all be it through redefined understandings and connections.

This is significant because it seems to me that none of us (on this side or that side of this or any other "issue") has the full perspective of what God intends to do in and through us. Rather it seems to me, that it is only through our community discernment together with people of various perspectives sharing vulnerably with each other, that we will be able to discover the fullest and the best of what God's kingdom purposes are in our midst. We are all a part of the body of Christ, and as Paul suggests the parts of the body need each other.

Noteworthy Dates

May Birthdays

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 – Andy Steiner | 18 – Peggy Wirick |
| 1 – Ken Hostetler | 19 – Savannah Hostetler |
| 3 – James Hostetler | 20 – Ruth Yoder |
| 4 – Mark Kauffman | 26 – Mary Jean Horn |
| 5 – Shirley King | 28 – Mary K. King |
| 8 – Paul Hostetler | 29 – Kathy Norviel |
| 13 – Joel Lehman | 29 – Hilda Yoder |
| 14 – Miles Hostetler | 30 – Jordy Robinaugh |
| 18 – Terri Steiner | |

May Anniversaries

- May 1, 1960 – Hilda & Wilfred Yoder
May 8, 1993 – Kathy & Gary Lehman
May 10, 1992 – Ellen & Doug Steiner
May 18, 1958 – Donna & Joel Lehman
May 27, 2000 – Christy & Roger Headings
May 27, 2000 – Beth & Dave Maurer

Progress Showing on the Pizza Oven

Now that spring weather has arrived, progress is being made on the pizza oven, and very soon, we will be enjoying community pizza nights with our West Liberty neighbors.

Keep a watchful eye behind Potter's Place for the progress, and set your tastebuds! Word has it that recipes are being gathered and instructional videos are being watched on how to bake tasty pizza pies in the outdoor oven.

If the weather cooperates, we might even be serving pizza this month!



In Memory of Hallie Jordan:

Thank you for loving and caring for all of us, for teaching us by example how to live a Christian life, and for making our home a happy one.

Lee Jordan



In Memory of Jean Brenneman:

Thank you for all you taught me, for siding with me when I wanted to bring foreign exchange students home to live with us, expanding our family globally, and for your prayers and love.

Tesa Jordan



Quasquicentennial Historical Highlights

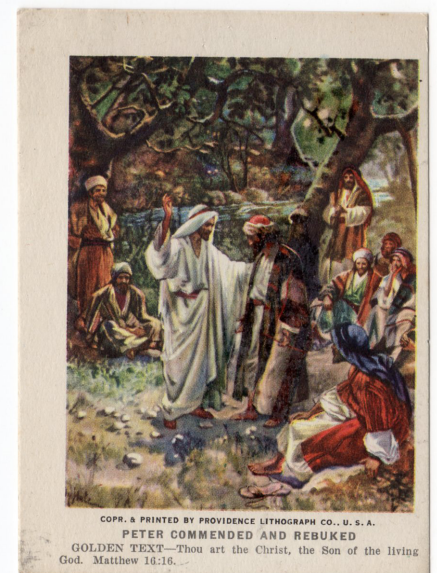
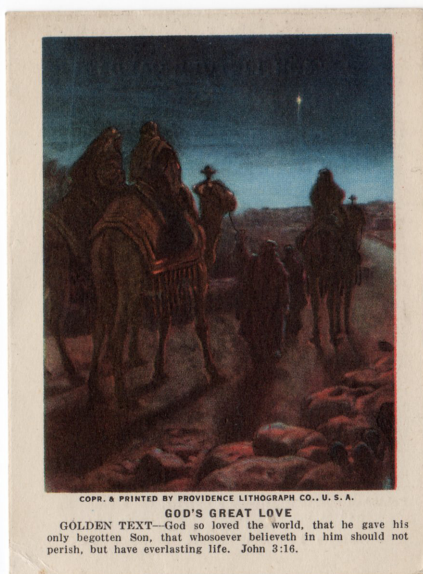
As we celebrate 125 years at Bethel, members have been sharing historical facts each Sunday during the sharing time. Our church historian, Donna Lehman has been researching and putting them together. In case you missed a Sunday in February, here are just a few of the highlights. Eventually, all of the facts shared will be on our church website: www.bethelchurchwl.org along with any graphics we have shown to accompany them.

S. E. Allgyer was very involved throughout his years in church. He travelled to France in the WWI era to see how the relief work was developing. From his ordination in 1905 he was kept busy throughout the States and even Canada preaching at Evangelistic meetings. He was the father of eight children; one of those was Maude, who married Dan C. Yoder; and Jack Yoder was the son of Maude and Dan C. Samuel E. Allgyer passed away at the age of 94 -still active, as he was on his way to So. Union's dedication service when he had a fatal stroke. (For more on this photo, see: <http://allgyer.org/letter/WWIreliefforts.pdf> Samuel is seated

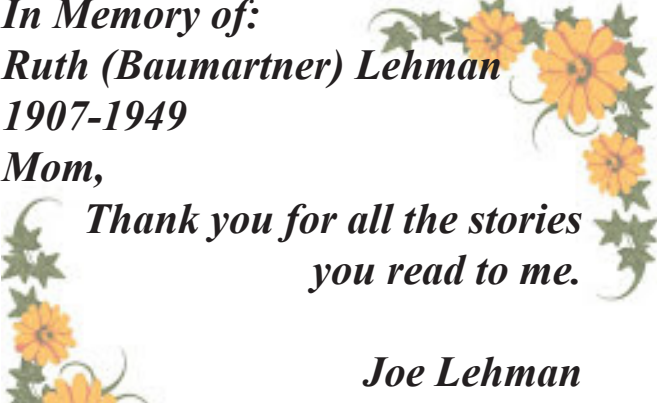


to the right of the gentleman wearing a light colored hat near the middle of the photo.

In the early days of Sunday School, every Sunday the children were given one of these little cards. On the front, there was a picture depicting the Bible Story along with a memory verse on the bottom; on the back it gave a short version of the story. The children were encouraged to memorize the verse for that week and repeat it the next Sunday.

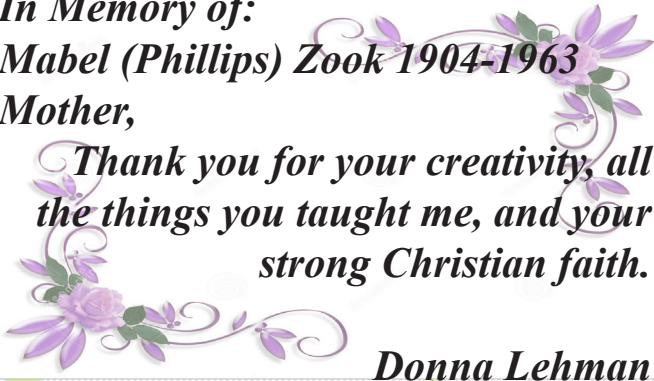


*In Memory of:
Ruth (Baumartner) Lehman
1907-1949
Mom,
Thank you for all the stories
you read to me.*



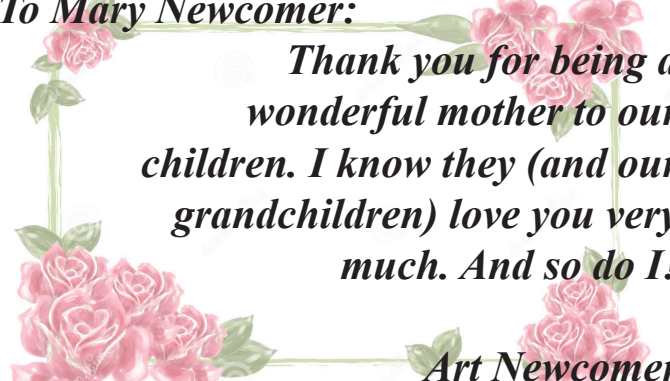
Joe Lehman

*In Memory of:
Mabel (Phillips) Zook 1904-1963
Mother,
Thank you for your creativity, all
the things you taught me, and your
strong Christian faith.*



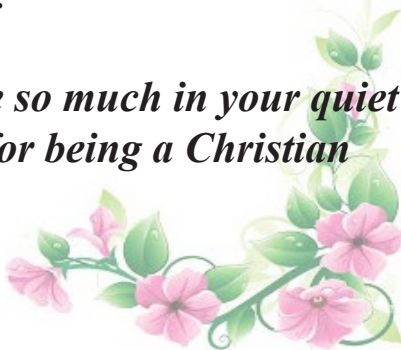
Donna Lehman

*To Mary Newcomer:
Thank you for being a
wonderful mother to our
children. I know they (and our
grandchildren) love you very
much. And so do I!*



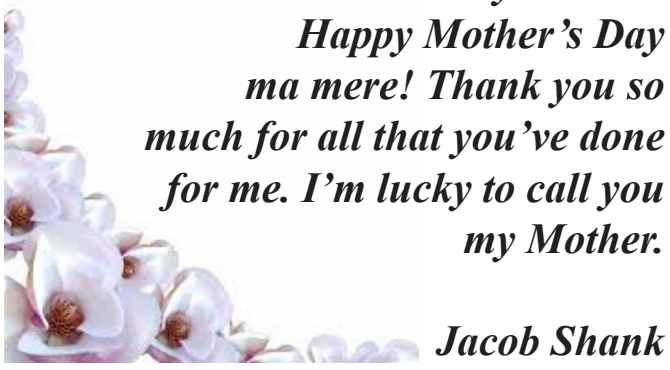
Art Newcomer

*In Memory of:
Nellie Fisher
You taught me so much in your quiet
way. Thanks for being a Christian
mom.*



Ruby Byler

*To Cheryl Shank:
Happy Mother's Day
ma mere! Thank you so
much for all that you've done
for me. I'm lucky to call you
my Mother.*



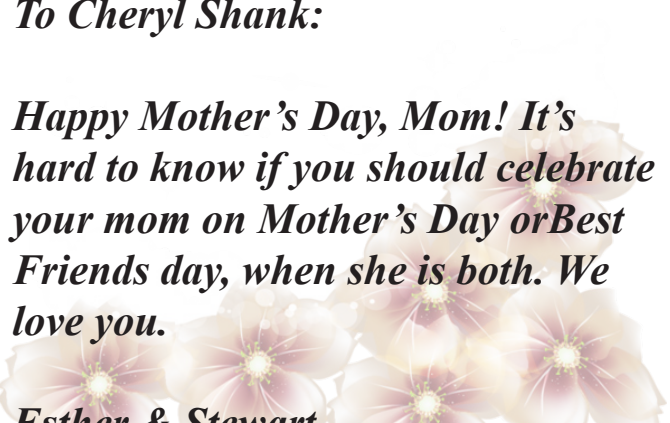
Jacob Shank

*To Cheryl Shank:
Happy Mother's Day Ma Mere!
Nous t'aimore beaucoup.*



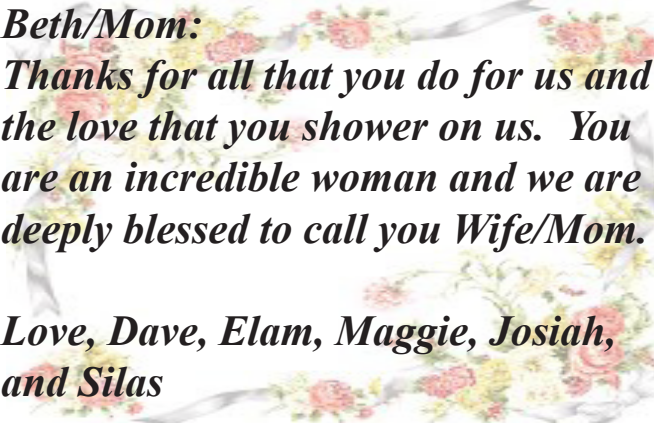
Benjamin & Sarah

*To Cheryl Shank:
Happy Mother's Day, Mom! It's
hard to know if you should celebrate
your mom on Mother's Day or Best
Friends day, when she is both. We
love you.*



Esther & Stewart

*Beth/Mom:
Thanks for all that you do for us and
the love that you shower on us. You
are an incredible woman and we are
deeply blessed to call you Wife/Mom.*



*Love, Dave, Elam, Maggie, Josiah,
and Silas*