

Youth Soon to be *Sharing with Appalachian People* By Pastor Rick Stoner

This June (23-28) 9 Bethelites and 18 Oak Grovites will be heading to Harlan, KY, to serve with SWAP (Sharing with Appalachian People). SWAP, which is a program of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), is an agency that partners with local people to provide improvements to their homes. MCC began its work in eastern Kentucky back in 1964 and later merged with Mennonite Board of Missions in their work in 1977. Today MCC Appalachia is part of the MCC Great Lakes Region and has a strong commitment to the people of Appalachia.

As volunteers, we will be split up into small work groups and venture out into the surrounding community to work on homes. Each group returns to the same home each day, which gives the groups a great opportunity to get to know the home owners and share with them. The work varies from site to site, so it is hard to say what we will do for sure. Before we go, we send in a form that lets the coordinators know the skill level of our group in the area of home repairs. They then line up the jobs accordingly. So, we might be roofing or painting or doing other carpentry jobs.

In addition to the physical labor, we will also have times of daily worship and small group times of thinking about how we are seeing the Lord in our work. The SWAP volunteers also do a great job on educating the youth about Appalachia life and the culture of the community. Finally we will have some time to unwind a bit. On Thursday afternoon we will have the opportunity to relax together since it is a free afternoon.

Overall, this is a great opportunity to learn more about God's kingdom movement and to learn about a different culture. We look forward to sharing with you all what we learn. And, I pray that the ripples of this trip will continue to impact each person involved and our congregation for years to come!

Right: Harlan SWAP site, high atop Pine Mountain



Winner of the Souptastic Event! Look throughout the rest of the newsletter for all recipes!

Broccoli/Cheese Soup By: Michael and Kathy Lehman

Makes 10-12 servings

Ingredients:

1 cup water
1 chicken bouillon cube
1 package (10 oz.) frozen chopped broccoli
1 medium carrot, grated
2 to 3 TBS butter
3 TBS flour
2 cups milk
1 pound processed American cheese, cubed
1 can (10 ¾ oz.) cream of chicken soup, undiluted
1 TBS minced onion flakes
1 TBS Worcestershire sauce
Pepper to taste

Heat water and bouillon cube to boiling.

Add broccoli and carrot; cook 5 minutes or until tender.

Remove from heat; do not drain.

In separate saucepan, melt butter; slowly stir in flour.

Gradually add milk; cook until thickened.

Stir in cheese, soup, onion, sauce and pepper.

Add broccoli/carrot mixture; heat and serve

Hearing from the Men's Sunday School class...

In light of Mother's and Father's day coming up, a few from our Men's Sunday School class responded to the following questions:

What is something you've always appreciated about your parents?

Dick Lindemer "They always had a work ethic, and after the work was finished it was time for family, fun, or free time."

Paul Hostetler "Mother loved to work. She had big gardens—preserved food and prepared delicious meals for us and guests. She took in laundry to do for others. Neighbors sometimes could hear her singing while hanging out the clothes."

Ken Hostetler—"My parents] taught me how to do things and showed me how to work."

What is a trait from your parents that you practice yourself?

Dick Lindemer "Honesty and helping neighbors, going to church."

Paul Hostetler "I learned how to work from my dad since we were usually together. He was my father and doctor. We always wanted daddy when we were sick."

Ken Hostetler—"How to take care of things and to appreciate what you have."

2014 F5: Folksy, Food, Fun, Friends, and Fellowship!



March hosts the youth's annual fundraiser for their summer trip, and this year was inspired by Appalachia in light of their upcoming SWAP adventure in Harlin, Kentucky with the Oak Grove Menonite youth group.

In my inaugural attendance for this event, I was able to get the scoop on the March fundraiser and its history. The organization has stayed the same: youth leaders are in charge of the food, and youth are the servers. There's much anticipation for the auction items. One standard in fundraiser history was Ruth Headings Elderberry Pie. For more recent auctions, Jan Smucker's notorious peanut butter pie brings out competition amongst bidders. Others have donated items or services. Chuck and Jeanie Swartz frequently donate a Texan style meal at their home.

The auction has created lasting memories. Some Bethel members take on the title of "Big Spenders." Harry Graber's name came up as one of these, and even though he wasn't able to attend this year, he sent his son Chuck Graber in his stead. Others keep the auction lively such as spouses bidding against each other! Cheryl Shank remembers specifically a year Carl Newcomer attempted to come to the event incognito in hopes to improve his bidding options. Apparently, other attendees weren't so easily fooled, so it became a great joke of the evening. The look of the evening has evolved. Years ago, it was a formal Valentine's meal titled "Special Night Out" where the youth were expected to dress as formal waiters. Yet in the last few years, the

auction has had enjoyable themes connecting with the event the youth would attend. Two years ago, the fifth F represented "French" with the anticipated trip to Montreal. Last year the F was phonetic for "Phoenix" with a western style meal for MC USA Convention in Arizona.

This year's "Folksy" theme brought out plaid shirts and straw hats all around. The about 50 in attendance enjoyed an authentic Appalachian evening. Donna Lehman and Miriam Lapp both mentioned the theme was fitting for the trip. Everyone sat at long tables, similarly to how they would at church gatherings. Janet Wilkins put together simple, nature themed center pieces with owl, hawk, and turkey feathers. Chefs Roger and Christy Headings prepared 17 pounds venison meat for the mountain classic "Shepherd's Pie." Christy explained potato, corn, and a "winter-over" (produce that holds well over the winter) were common ingredients. The "winter-cover" included cabbage or apples since they are a late harvest, and that corn is the main grain source in the mountains. Everyone ate family style with coleslaw and applesauce at each row of tables. Unique to this year, the entire meal was homemade.

As for the auction, the selling item and most competed over was the Hillbilly Hide Away weekend retreat. The Bittersweet Chocolate Cupcakes with caramel frosting went for the most money at the silent auction. With donations for the meal and the auction, the youth and leaders collected \$2665.47 for their trip! In addition to these funds, the F5 proves to be an invaluable opportunity for youth service and fellowship among a church family—all while enjoying a festive theme!

You are the Potter and we are the clay, please mold us into the Image of Christ!

Over the past weeks I have been exploring prayer in a different way by taking an adventure, a prayer adventure! On the Ignation Spirituality website (<http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-spiritual-exercises/an-ignatian-prayer-adventure/>) they have a seven week prayer adventure, which I have found both very insightful and challenging. One thing that stands out to me from that this prayer time that relates to our own year of discernment is that we cannot know our call unless we know the One calling us. Wow! This a huge claim because so many times we start out our thinking by asking what does God want us to do. But maybe we should start out the process with the prayer to know God more intimately and love God more intensely. In this way we begin to shift the focus from where does want *us* to go; to who is God and how can we love God. In other words we shift the focus from us to God.

Our year of discernment prayer begins to do this. The prayer says, “We recognize that you are the Potter and we are the clay, please continue to mold us into the image of Christ.” This is a dangerous thing to pray for those who want to be comfortable because when we put ourselves fully in hands of the Potter some amazing things can begin to happen. We must recognize that we will never be the same as a result of the Potter’s shaping force on our lives. (As an experiment, I would invite you to take a piece of clay and work it in your hands as you pray this part of the prayer

over and over. Don’t rush it. Just allow yourself to be “worked” by God as you place yourself in God’s hands).

Now there is an interesting aspect to this part of the prayer. We pray to be transformed more and more into the image of Christ. Essentially, we are asking to know the One calling us more. We have many images for Christ. Sometimes we think about Jesus as a healer, friend, teacher, or savior. We also recognize that Jesus is the most full picture and image we have for God. The apostle John states in 1 John 4:16 that God is love. Therefore, we can then make the case to say that Jesus is love—radical agape love—because Jesus and the Father are one! Now what does it mean for us to pray that we want to be shaped more and more into the image of Christ, who is love?

If we are truly willing to let go and fully embrace the prayer to allow the shaping hands of the Potter to transform our lives, then we must realize that our lives will be changed. This change will begin as we fall deeper into God, who is love, and get to know this God or radical love. For to be shaped into the image of Jesus, who embodied radical agape love, means that we cannot be static for love is active. It means that radical agape love will orient everything we do. And, it means that we can no longer hide behind a false self that we create so the world thinks we are good. If we are to know our call, then we must begin be truly, and intimately, *knowing* the God who is love!

What Youth are Doing This Spring

Alex Steiner is enjoying track this spring and meeting new people. He feels like the school year was pretty fun and went by fast. Michael Lehman is also in track and enjoying time with his teammates and improving his abilities. He felt the school year was challenging but he learned a lot (and it showed with good grades!) He also enjoyed going to state with the Cross Country team.

Both Alex and Michael would like to invite you to the Relient West Liberty Salem Invitational Friday, May 9th at 4:45pm.

Becky Wilkins’ spring has been full of the musical *Annie Get Your Gun*, drama club, and FFA judging. She and enjoys the musicals and dramas because she loves “hanging with those peeps.” She also enjoys looking at cows. Becky says this school year has been a blast and can’t believe high school is halfway over. She will miss this year’s senior class. **You are all invited to the next drama production May 22nd and 23rd.**

Annie Steiner has recently been in the musical and is preparing for the drama club’s

upcoming production. She enjoys the group dynamics and acting. She says fun is the best way to describe this year, “There were good parts, and not so good parts, but on the whole it was a lot of fun.”

Savannah Hostetler is currently preparing for the last Center Stage Production *Ramona Quimby*. She says, “I love acting and being on stage and being with people and developing new relationships.” **She would like to invite you to the production on May 2nd-3rd at 7pm.** She says this year has been very challenging. It was a struggle to balance school work, Bible quizzing, and drama club. She developed new relationships with people that she had never been close with before.



With the joy of warm weather comes the anticipation of another great year of Vacation Bible School! This year's theme is "Welcome: Give and Receive God's Great Love" from MennoMedia. Bible School coordinator for this year, Michelle Link explains the theme as "exploring hospitality as well as learning how to receive it." Some of the days discussions include Receiving Strangers, Caring for our Neighbors, and Making Friends. The week will conclude with showing hospitality by Seeking Peace and ultimately understanding hospitality because we have received it ourselves. VBS will be Monday through Thursday June 9-13th from 9:45am-11am. As with each year, VBS is only possible because of wonderful volunteers like *you* who make it happen. Please contact Michelle Link if you haven't already done so to see how you can make 2014 a success for our community youth!

2014 Vacation Bible School!



Chicken and Asparagus Chowder By: Barb Landes

Serve with cornbread, crusty rolls, or biscuits along with salad. Makes 12 servings (she did this recipe in a crock-pot).

Ingredients:

- 8 TBS butter or margarine
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 cup celery
- ½ cup green or red pepper
- ½ cup flour all purpose
- 6 cups of chicken broth (lower salt if desired)
- 2 large baking potatoes (peeled, cooked, and diced)
- 4 cups of diced cooked chicken
- 2 pounds of asparagus, woody ends removed in ½ inch lengths
- 4 cups of half and half (fat free if desired)
- 2 tsp of salt (or less)
- ½ tsp pepper
- 2 TBS parsley
- ½ tsp marjoram
- ½ tsp thyme
- Cheddar cheese (to your liking)

1. In a large sauce pan, heat butter over medium low heat.
2. Add bell pepper and cook for 1 minute. Stir in flour until well blended.

3. Add chicken broth and stir to blend.
4. Add diced potato and bring to a boil.
5. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 or until done.
6. Add asparagus and chicken; cook until asparagus can be easily pierced with a fork
7. Add cream and the salt and pepper to taste.
8. Stir in the parsley just before serving

<p>May Birthdays</p>	<p>June Birthdays</p>
<p>1 – Ken Hostetler 3 – James Hostetler 4 – Mark Kauffman 5 – Shirley King 8 – Paul Hostetler 13 – Joel Lehman 14 – Miles Hostetler 18 – Terri Steiner 18 – Peggy Wirick 19 – Savannah Hostetler 20 – Ruth Yoder 26 – Mary Jean Horn 28 – Mary K. King 29 – Kathy Norviel 29 – Hilda Yoder 30 – Jordy Robinaugh</p>	<p>KJ Shrock 18 Sam C. Plank 21 Suzan Hooper 26 Lindsay Hostetler 6 Barbara Landes 25 Sara Ellen Stoltzfus 26</p>

Gluten Free Potato Soup
By: Savannah Hostetler and Beth Maurer

Made in a large crock pot

Ingredients:

5 pounds Russet Potatoes, washed but NOT peeled.
 Diced into 1/2 inch cubes
 1 large yellow onion, diced
 10 cloves of garlic, peeled and left whole
 8 cups gluten free chicken stock
 2 bars (16 oz) cream cheese
 Seasoning salt or steak seasoning
 Toppings: green onion, cooked bacon, cheddar cheese

Into the Crockpot: diced potatoes, onion,

Chicken Tortilla Soup
By: Becky and Janet Wilkins



Ingredients:

2 chicken breasts cooked and cut up or shredded
 1 can corn
 1 can black beans
 2 cans diced tomatoes (I used 1 Rotel)
 1 14 oz. can tomato sauce
 1 small onion diced
 1 garlic clove minced
 (I added some Hidden valley Ranch seasoning and maybe some taco seasoning.)

Put in crockpot on low 8 hours or high 4 hours.

Have these to add to soup;
 corn chips
 shredded cheese
 and sour cream

garlic, stock, and 1/2 tbsp. of your chosen seasoning.

Stir to combine. Cook on low for 10 hours or high for 6 hours.

Once it's cooked all day, you're ready for the last steps. Cube your cream cheese into 2 inch cubes, and stir in to the crock pot.

Using an immersion blender, carefully blend the soup in the crock pot.

Don't have an immersion blender? Don't add the cream cheese into the Crockpot, put in your blender with 1/3 of your soup and the garlic - blend. Then reincorporate back into the Crockpot.

Mysterious (because there is no exact recipe) Tomato and Venison Soup
By: Annie Steiner and Cheryl Shank

"I really don't have a recipe. The 'base' is about 1 quart of tomato juice and 1 can of V8 juice.

I brown the deer chunks and season with Montreal spice and salt, then cook in a crock pot in some of the tomato juice overnight on low. The next day I add the potato chunks, carrots, corn, green beans, onion (and mushrooms if it is our family) and cook in the crock pot on low for about 6-7 hours. Taste and season as necessary" (Cheryl Shank)

Plants for Sale! The Greenhouse on Adriel's campus is now open for business! With packs, flats, and hanging baskets of fruit and flowers available. Generally open everyday from 8-6pm.



White Bean Chicken Chili

By: Alex and Ellen Steiner

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 TBS olive oil
- 1 small onion—peeled/chopped fine
- 2 medium garlic gloves—peeled/chopped
- 1 medium red bell pepper—chopped fine
- 30 Oz. white beans, canned—undrained (two 15oz. cans)
- 4 Oz. green chilies—canned/diced
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 14 ½ oz. chicken broth—canned, low sodium

Guacamole Soup

By: Jessica and Rick Stoner

Makes 6-8 side-dish servings

Ingredients:

- 1 TBS cooking oil
- 1 TBS butter or margarine
- 1 Cup chopped red onion (large)
- 6 Cloves garlic, minced (2 TBS)
- 3 Medium avocados, halved, seeded, peeled, and mashed (1 ¾ cups)
- 1 14oz. can chicken broth or vegetable broth
- 1 ½ Cups whipping cream
- 1 Cup bottled salsa
- 2 TBS lime juice
- 2 TBS lemon juice
- 1 TBS ground cumin
- Assorted toppers (avocado slices, chopped red or yellow tomato, tortilla chips, lime slices, sour cream, and/or shrimp) (optional)

In a 3-quart saucepan heat oil and butter over medium heat; add onion and garlic. Cook and stir onion and garlic about 5 minutes or until tender. Stir in avocado, broth, whipping cream, salsa, lime juice, lemon juice, and cumin; through.

- ½ Lbs. roasted chicken breast meat—cut ½ inch cubes
- 2 TBS lime juice
- 2 TBS cilantro—minced
- 6 TBS salsa—optional

In a large pot heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, and red pepper. Saute 5 minutes. Stir the white beans, chilies, cumin, chili powder, and broth. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer 10 minutes. Stir in the chicken and simmer 5 minutes. Stir in the lime juice and cilantro. A tablespoon of salsa can be used to garnish each serving of chili, if desired

Bethel's History Transitions

By Donna Lehman, Historian

It was 50 years ago in May that our then Pastor, Ed Stoltzfus, got a call to serve as pastor to students at Goshen College. So, on May 24, 1964 Bethel held a farewell fellowship dinner for the Stoltzfus family. At that time, the Church followed council recommendations that Loren King (who was involved as Bethel Deacon, etc.) take over pastoral leadership until another pastor could be found. Ed had come to Bethel in the spring of 1952, after his graduation from college. The first year, he lived in a house trailer near the church; then in 1954, was married to Mildred Graber, and they resided in West Liberty; eventually having 4 children, Rebecca, Anita, Eric, and Philip. Ed was the first pastor of Bethel to be salaried; though meager. Ed had a nine month leave of absence in 1961-62 for studies at Princeton Theological Seminary; then his departure in 1964. Ed's wife Mildred passed away 2010, and Ed lives in Harrisonburg, VA. (note: Sara Ellen is a sister of Ed)

May & June

Wedding Anniversaries

- May 1 Hilda & Wilfred Yoder
- May 8 Kathy & Gary Lehman
- May 10 Ellen & Doug Steiner
- May 18 Donna & Joel Lehman
- May 27 Christy & Roger Headings
- May 27 Beth & Dave Maurer
- June 2 Dave and Michelle Link
- June 3 Bill and Eleanor Shumaker
- June 3 Dennis and Sharon Showalter
- June 12 Ken and Jeanette Hostetler
- June 16 Tim and Pam Lehman

The Movements of Consolation and Desolation

By Pastor Dave Maurer

Recently Rick and I were reflecting on John 2:1-11 in which we read of Jesus at the wedding in Cana. Jesus, His mother, and the disciples were guests at this wedding. And while they were there, a problem arose. The host ran out of wine.

Now to some of us, this may not seem like that big of a deal. And even Jesus didn't seem to be too concerned about it at first, or at least He questioned what this had to do with Him. Because when His mother pointed out the problem, He replied that His time had not yet come. But His mother was persistent and she told the servant to do whatever Jesus instructed him to do.

Jesus then directed the servants to fill six large stone jars with water. After they were filled, He instructed them to take a sample of the "water" to the master of the banquet. After tasting it, the master went to the bridegroom and complimented him on saving the best wine until the last, something that most hosts did not do.

As Rick and I reflected on this passage, we wondered if there may be some parallels in Jesus' first sign and our current realities at Bethel in the midst of our year of discernment. For instance we may feel at times like the old wine, like the way that we have been doing things is running out. And that sense of scarcity may cause us anxiety as it did Mary, and I presume the wedding host as well. Yet Jesus seemed unphased by the turn of events.

Perhaps this was because He knew God's greater plan. Perhaps it was because He was able to change the ordinary into the extraordinary. Either way, it is clear that Jesus had things well in hand; though His methods may be a bit unconventional at times. After all when running low on wine, we

would not get more by changing water into wine. We would buy more or we would make more the "old fashioned way," yet Jesus often has His own surprising methods.

Perhaps as we come to grips with our circumstances and make plans for a way forward, we too may find ourselves trying to "fix our situation" with our typical methodologies when Jesus has His own surprising approach to offer instead. Perhaps we, like Mary suggested, just need to do whatever Jesus tells us to do; even though this may lead us to do some pretty outside the box things.

Because while no one at the party would have expected it to work, Jesus' approach did "solve the problem." It met their needs for being good hosts to their guests. But what's more is that Jesus not only "solved the problem," but He also went above and beyond people's expectations. Jesus not only made wine out of water, a significant feat in itself; but He also made the best wine. And perhaps as we journey through this time, as we set aside our anxiety, look to Jesus for direction, and follow His unconventional instructions, we will find not only an adequate solution; but also an overwhelming "success" of God's kingdom work in our midst.

As we journey forward in the coming months, may we release our anxiety to Jesus who tells us in Matthew 6 that we should not worry but seek first His kingdom. May we look to Jesus for direction about how we should proceed, even when His methods may be rather unorthodox. And may we experience not only God's adequate provision, but also God's abundant supply of not only simple sustenance but also delectable delicacies.

Bethel/Oak Grove Mennonite Women

This group met in March and April and enjoyed working on projects, but we also enjoy our fellowship with one another. At the March meeting, we enjoyed brown bag lunches with 'green' theme decorations...spring arriving? At the April meeting, we had a vegetarian meal with veggie burgers (consisting of black beans, sweet potatoes and spices) with salads and cookies. Again we were made aware of changing seasons with cardinals among Easter baskets decorating the tables...Easter arriving?

In the pursuit of who were 'Courageous

Women of the Bible' we looked at Priscilla (familiarily with spouse Aquila), they were supporters of Paul and the early church; the Woman at the Well (a Samaritan, but accepted by Jesus, and Mary and Martha, brave friends of Jesus). Devotional leaders Donna, Christy and Elaine.

Average attendance 22. Work completed: 4 comforters, 2 baby comforters, 1 health kit, 1 newborn bundle. 6 baby comforters and 4 package of diapers were delivered to Hi-Point Women's Center.

SOOP at Koinonia Farms

By Jim and Kay Burkett

On a cold Saturday morning in early January we began our trip to South Georgia. As we traveled south the temperature gradually rose. After a day and a half traveling we arrived at Koinonia Farms near Americus, Georgia on a mild Sunday afternoon. We received our room assignment. Stepping out the back door of the apartment we were greeted by a daffodil blooming in all its glory – a refreshing reprieve from the cold we left the day before.

Koinonia Farms is a group of Christians called to live together in intentional community sharing a life of prayer, work, study, service and fellowship. They seek to embody peacemaking, sustainability, and radical sharing. While honoring people of all backgrounds and faiths, they strive to demonstrate the way of Jesus as an alternative to materialism, militarism and racism. Koinonia was founded in 1942 by Clarence & Florence Jordan and Martin & Mabel England. It is home of the Cotton Patch Gospel, birthplace of Habitat for Humanity, Jubilee Partners, Prison Jail Project, Fuller Center for Housing and other ministries. They grow pecans, welcome visitors, and live the "demonstration plot for the Kingdom of God."

A number of people live and work at Koinonia. The seven stewards share the common purse. Partners of Koinonia are people who may work at the farm and actively support the Koinonia mission in some manner. Nine to twelve interns come for one or two years to live in community with others and grow spiritually. Volunteers (or guests) are peoples like us who come to Koinonia for a visit or short term work assignment. We joined another couple from Michigan as the only volunteers that stayed for any length of time. Other guests came and stayed for a week or only a day or two.

The farm consists of nearly 600 acres which until recently operated like most industrial farms in the United States. A couple of years ago the leaders at Koinonia intentionally decided to refocus the farm toward more sustainable production and support of those who live there. Today a herd of over 60 Piney Wood cattle graze the pastures. A large herd of hogs roam other pastures. Nearly 200 chickens provide an abundance of eggs. A couple of milk cows provide milk. Organic gardens sustain the community. 90 acres of pecan, a blueberry patch and a vineyard all grown organically provide the primary earnings for Koinonia. Eggs and meat products as well as pecans

and items from the Koinonia bakery are available at the Koinonia store and through mail order.

Each weekday at Koinonia starts with chapel at 7:50. The chapel is located on Koinonia property across the highway from the apartments and houses. Following a short time of silence a scripture is read; the group sings a song without accompaniment after which one of the interns, partners, or stewards gives a short meditation. Additionally the Koinonia bell rings at 10:30 am, 3:30 pm, and 8:30 pm for all to fall silent for a brief period of meditation and contemplation.

After Chapel folks receive their work assignments for the day. We were assigned to the pecan sorting room. They harvested the pecans in the fall bringing them into the pecan plant in large grain wagons. The pecans are then sized and shelled following which they are dried. After shelling and drying the pecans come to the pecan sorting room. Here the pecans are hand sorted into nice halves and pieces. Amber pecans (ones that got too hot in the drying process) and bad pieces are taken out. Ambers will be used in the bakery; bad pieces go to the pigs which "hog out" on them. One has to look at each pecan in the sorting process.

Several other people regularly sorted pecans. We learned to know Kathleen, a community member/steward at Koinonia who supervises the pecan sorting room and Donnie, a retired older woman who lives nearby and works for Koinonia. Kathleen put us on the automated sorting line with Donnie. Donnie has sorted pecans for nearly ten years so she is good at it. She taught us the art of quickly sorting pecans. It wasn't long until the three of us were telling stories, joking, and laughing together.

The community shares a common meal at noon. The meal is followed by a daily reading from a book that tells of peacemakers in the world, sharing of concerns and prayer. Meal preparation and cleanup rotates among those living at Koinonia. On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evening the community shares the meal as well. On Sunday evening the group gathers for a potluck meal and worship.

We quickly slipped into the routines of the community. It was easy to learn to know the others who lived there and they quickly came to accept us as part of the community.

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Each person living at Koinonia had a special gift which they contributed to the life of Koinonia. Elizabeth gave a meditation in chapel about Jesus' ministering to the demonic man in the cemetery, noting that Jesus accepted and loved "lunatics." She shared her lengthy struggle with bipolar disorder describing how she has found the love of Jesus at Koinonia. Sharing her vulnerabilities and fears and relating how God has touched her was powerful. Hannah a young lady from Germany lived in the same building as us. In the evenings we could hear her singing with the "voice of an angel". Matt gave some very thought provoking meditations in chapel. In these and many other ways we felt nurtured and surrounded by God's presence.

Work at Koinonia began after morning chapel about 8:30. We had a 15 minute break in the morning and stopped for lunch at noon. Work began again at 1:00 with another 15 minute afternoon break. The workday ended at 5:00. For the entire month of January we sorted pecans. When volunteering, one has to approach the assignment with the attitude that one will assist where the organization most needs the help. At Koinonia in January that is in the pecan sorting room. Some asked whether we got bored with the assignment. As the winter would have it, Georgia weather turned cold a few days after we arrived. We were happy to work in a heated space the entire time we were there.

Weekends were free at Koinonia. The first weekend we went to hear Jimmy Carter teach Sunday School at Maranatha Baptist Church. Other weekends were spent visiting and exploring nearby state parks. We attended Americus Mennonite Church a couple of Sundays and went to the local Presbyterian Church two evenings to hear a professor from a nearby seminary speak on the "Wonder of Genesis" and the "Wrath of God." We also checked out the local bluegrass music scene.

After spending a month at Koinonia we traveled further south to Lakewood Retreat near Brooksville, Florida for another two week SOOP assignment. This was a very different experience from Koinonia. At Lakewood, a retreat center for the Southeast Mennonite Conference, we joined 7 other SOOP couples and an individual. Immediately we found ourselves immersed into Mennonite culture and quickly discovered many connections with the others who volunteered.

Lakewood had been a camp, much like Camp Luz, where different groups came for camping experiences led by the Lakewood staff. Because this model was not financially sustainable, Lakewood moved away from providing programming to merely providing the facilities for groups looking for a place to retreat. A minimal number of staff operates the facility. The organization depends heavily upon volunteers to provide

manpower for major maintenance and upgrades to the facilities.

Lakewood is located on the shores of a small lake about one hour north of Tampa and 20 minutes from the gulf. The wooded terrain setting among groves of orange and grapefruit trees provides a sense of peace. We immensely enjoyed the extensive bird life especially seeing Sandhill Cranes every day. Sometimes they even walked through the camp grounds. There were many other waterfowl as well, some new to our bird list.

The first week we were at Lakewood we assisted in rebuilding the main commercial kitchen. Nothing had been done to upgrade the kitchen since it was built nearly 40 years ago. The previous week the volunteers had taken everything in the kitchen back to the walls. The kitchen was receiving a new ceiling, rewiring, new wall covering, and new paint along with the scrubbing of everything that had been in the area and upgrading of some of the cabinets. A tight timeline existed for getting the job finished – Friday morning because 500 people were descending on the camp for the upcoming weekend.

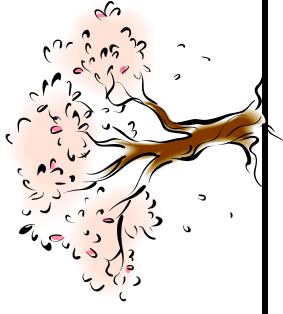
Everyone worked hard to assist in the kitchen project under the direction of Tony, the maintenance supervisor. At first we thought there was no way the project would be completed. But after several days we saw the light at the end of the tunnel.

At Lakewood the SOOP volunteers work from 8:00 am until 3:30 pm with an hour break for lunch and a 15 minute morning break. We also worked only 4 days a week. That first week several of us ended up working longer hours and a couple of us even went in on Friday morning to insure that the kitchen project was completed to the point the kitchen could be used later that day. It was rewarding to see the "new kitchen" on Friday morning.

The second week Kay helped paint trash receptacles and clean up some of the landscaping. Jim and 3 new volunteers built an archery shelter in the athletic field. By Thursday evening they finished the 12 foot by 16 foot open structure with a metal roof, four archery lanes, and a closet with a concrete floor in one of the back corners (to store the archery equipment). Amazingly, the building was actually square!

Again the weekends at Lakewood were free. So we spent the time bird watching and exploring the west central Florida region.

As with the Koinonia experience the people we met at Lakewood enriched our lives. We had fun working and playing together while we assisted an important organization to have the resources to carry out its mission.



May 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <p>4 Guess Who's Coming to Dinner? 3p God's GIRLS & Abraham's Lot</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 9:15 a Women's BS 12p P&J lunch 7p JOICO</p>	<p>7 6:30pm Pastor Rick shares at Adriel Live</p>	<p>8 9a Pastor Peer @ Bethel</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 8am Men's Breakfast</p>
<p>11 Mother's Day</p>	<p>12 (Erin away)</p>	<p>13 9a Menno W</p>	<p>14 7p Youth BS</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>9 (Pastor Rick Away)</p>	<p>10 8a King's Daughters</p>
<p>18 12p Congregational meeting 6p Youth & Mentors</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 9:15 a Women's BS 12p P&J lunch</p>	<p>21 7p Youth BS</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 8am Men's Breakfast Fire Sale</p>
<p>25</p>	<p>26 Memorial Day</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 4:15 Our Daily Bread</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>
					<p>30 7:30p Community Movie Night</p> 	<p>31</p>

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 1 Peter 1:18-19 (NIV)