

Bethel Mennonite Church

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Newsletter

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Highlights from a Wednesday Night Youth Group

Lesson by Cheryl Shank

Micah 6:8 The Message (MSG) 8 But he's already made it plain how to live, what to do, what GOD is looking for in men and women. It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be compassionate and loyal in your love, And don't take yourself too seriously—take God seriously.

It's a New Year; 2016. A resolution, according to the dictionary is a firm decision to do or not do something; plan for something to be done. What might be the purpose for making a resolution? Did you happen to make any resolutions for this year?

We then watched a Rob Bell DVD clip, "Shells" and I asked the youth to reflect on a few questions that he addressed.

- How do you feel about the pace of your life?
- Do a cell phone / laptop / ipad, help you to get "it" done? Quicker? More efficiently?
- In what ways do you feel life is passing you by too quickly?
- Do other people or commitments often dictate what you do?
- Who or what might be suffering in your life because you are so busy doing so many good things?

Rob mentioned in the DVD that sometimes we have our hands tightly clasped around something (collecting seashells when walking along the beach) and when faced with something that might be better, or perhaps more 'interesting' we fail to reach out to grab it because we do not / or choose not to let go of what is in our clenched fist. What might we pass up?

What are the "shells" that keep you from grabbing hold of your "starfish, or colored sea glass, or.."? Jesus lived with the awareness that God is doing something, right here and now, and anybody can be a part of it. He inspired, challenged, provoked, comforted, and invited people to be open to God's work in this world. God is always inviting us to open our eyes and join in.

As this New Year begins, make a firm decision (a resolution) to say NO to some 'good things'. You can't be everything to everybody. What will you say 'YES' to? Or, as Rob Bell stated, you can't say no until you have said yes to something else. What 'yes' will you commit to this New Year?

1 Chronicles 16:11 (NIV) "Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always."



Left: Annie Steiner at her Dessert Duel Booth; Right: Bethelites enjoy the youth's chili dinner and dessert duel fundraiser on January 16, before the showing of "War Room."

Announcements:

♦ **Ash Wednesday Service at South Union** South Union will host the area Mennonite Churches in a joint Ash Wednesday Service at 7 pm on February 10, 2016.

♦ **Movie Night has something for everyone!** With MCC's request for more relief efforts in Syria and Iraq, February's movie for the adults will be "Inn of the Sixth Happiness." All her life Englishwoman Gladys Aylward knew that China was the place where she belonged. Not qualified to be sent there as a missionary, Gladys works as a domestic to earn the money to send herself to a poor, remote village. There she eventually lives a full and happy life: running the inn, acting as "foot inspector", advising the local Mandarin and even winning the heart of mixed race Captain Lin Nan. But Gladys discovers her real destiny when the country is invaded by Japan and the Chinese children need her to save their lives. Based on a true story. We will also have a children's movie TBA in the fellowship hall. Movie night is February 20th at 6:30 p.m.

♦ **Acting Call** The West Liberty Churches are joining together to produce "The Last Supper" drama at the Good Friday service at Green Hills. If you are interested, please contact Alex Dye at Oak Grove.

February is Heart Month

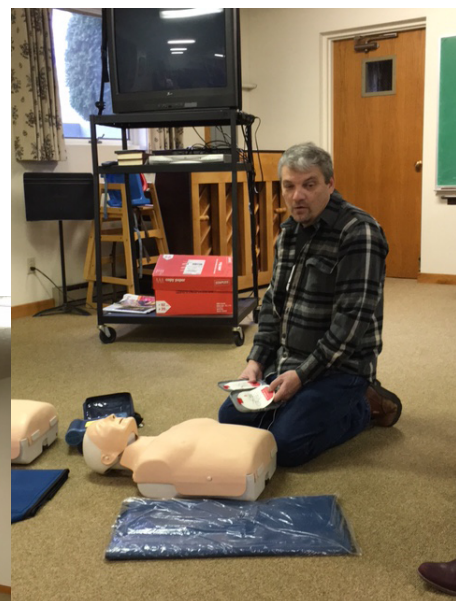
It seems appropriate that Bethel is ready for heart month. Darin Robinaugh held a CPR training for Bethelites in January. Six people attended the class and either learned or updated their skills. The emphasis now is on chest compressions.

The class also got a demonstration on how to use a defibrillator, similar to the unit we have that is located in the elevator alcove.

Thank you Darin, for offering us the opportunity for this class, and for all that you and Robinaugh EMS do to serve Logan County!

Right: Darin demonstrates the defibrillator.

Left: class practices chest compressions in CPR class.



Noteworthy Dates

February Anniversaries

February 3, 1985 – Jeff & Terri Steiner
February 9, 1969 – Paul & Linda Hostetler
February 15, 1975 – Ed & Kim Lehman

February Birthdays

1 Paul Harshbarger
1 Royce Link
6 Nellie Lindemer
8 Tim Lehman
9 Lee Jordan
11 Dennis Showalter
17 Lori Lehman
27 Donna Lehman

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Youth Pastor: Cheryl Shank
Administrative Assistant: Tesa Jordan
Next Newsletter Deadline: Feb. 20, 2016

Transitional Pastor or Transitional Consultant?

by Stephen Lapp

When a pastor leaves a congregation in the Mennonite Church it is a common practice for that congregation to hire a transitional pastor for a term of 9-18 months. The transitional pastor assumes all duties of a full time pastor plus works to resolve recent problematic issues or situations. Because the tenure of a transitional pastor is short term, both the transitional pastor and the congregation can more easily deal with sensitive but important matters.

During November, December, and early January the Elder Leadership Team worked with a transitional pastor candidate hoping to hire him as transitional pastor for Bethel in early 2016. On January 12, 2016 the candidate sent an email saying he was bowing out of consideration for the job and would not be coming to Bethel because of another job offer. It was a difficult decision because he wanted to work with Bethel but had to choose between the two jobs.

Ralph Reinford, Ohio Conference Regional Pastor, and the ELT began considering a newer model of transitional ministry called a transitional consultant. The consultant works with the congregation on its issues but does not assume the full time duties of the pastor and is only hired part-time. Another person, a retired minister or a lay person in the congregation is hired, also part-time, to assume preaching and some administrative and pastoral care duties. The consultant would be on-site two or three weeks at a time and would assume preaching duties when he was on-site. In addition a transitional team of lay people from the congregation would be chosen to advise and work with the consultant.

At the congregational meeting January 24, 2016, the ELT reported that there were potential candidates available for transitional consultant but not for transitional pastor. The doorway to transitional pastor seemed to be closing and the doorway to transitional consultant was opening up. It was agreed that the ELT would put together a plan using the consultant model including part-time consultant and part-time preacher, then return to the congregation for approval.

Sometimes our path forward is determined more by trial and error than by setting a goal and determinedly heading toward the goal. Part of the dynamic of life is carrying the embryonic tension of not yet knowing. William Cowper (1731-1800) writes,

“God moves in mysterious ways,
His wonders to perform,
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.”

When I recited this poem to Miriam she replied with a question, “So are you drowning or are you flying?” And you know, each of us get to decide which it will be for us as we move together down this path at Bethel.

MCC Requests Aid for Refugees of Syria & Iraq

Byron Kauffman, with excerpts from mcc.org

Information from MCC continues to highlight the plight of refugees from Syria and Iraq. The choice for refugees is to attempt the very dangerous trip to Europe or stay where they are and face starvation and inadequate housing.

Relief supplies are dwindling and many refugees are desperate. MCC is in need of more funds to continue their relief efforts.

As Bethel’s representative for MCC, I’m suggesting that we set aside February as a time to give to this cause. You have been very generous in the past. Thank you—let’s do it again! Make checks payable to Bethel Church and mark your gift for MCC Syrian relief. See the bulletin insert for more information. Thank you—Byron Kauffman

More from MCC:

Every morning, before Samer al Laham goes to work, he checks to make sure it’s safe to go outside. That’s because in Syria there are some days when “people wake up in the morning and then see that there are a lot of mortars falling,” said al Laham, country and program director with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) partner Middle East Council of Churches (MECC).

But mornings like that don’t halt work for long. “Maybe after a few hours, when things become much more stable, people begin going out and really doing their business,” he said.

That’s the unpredictable reality of life in Syria after more than four years of conflict. In Daraa, where one of MECC’s offices is located, they might only get water once or twice a week. Unreliable electricity means they need generators to charge computers and cell phones, and deliveries of relief supplies are more expensive because of high gas prices.

And yet hours after mortars have fallen, MCC’s local partners head back to work.

In this difficult context, MECC continues to provide much needed humanitarian relief to both internally displaced people and the communities hosting them. Since 2012 MCC has partnered with MECC in Syria to distribute hygiene supplies, blankets, winter clothing and heaters. In Daraa Governorate from June to September MECC provided hygiene kits, children’s clothing and feminine hygiene supplies to 4,300 households.

In countries like Syria it’s only through partnerships with local organizations that MCC is able to do this work.

“The cornerstone of our program is to depend on people who are really living in the hardship conditions, and really to know exactly what kind of support they need,” said al Laham.

Those needs continue to grow faster than the resources are available.

In Memory of Sarah Hostetler

by Tesa Jordan

On January 19th, I received an early morning phone call to activate our prayer chain. The news was that our dear sister, Sarah Hostetler had passed away in the early morning hours. Although I knew that she was in frail health, the words still stung me with the realization that a bright light in Bethel's congregation had gone out. Only three days before, she and David had attended the youth fundraiser and movie night, and they had both cheerily occupied their regular pew up front on Sunday morning.

Just before leaving his office for the last time, Pastor Maurer directed me to a special section of files. It was funeral plans that several Bethelites placed in his care. One of those files belonged to Sarah, making the rest of the week and the planning that ensued, so much easier. She had chosen her favorite hymns, who would give devotions, speak and even the theme of the message. To those who knew her well, that should come as no surprise.

What follows are just a few paraphrases from her service on January 23rd, shared by family, friends and loved ones.

Sarah enjoyed life. She was always ready to enjoy the moment, no matter what the circumstances. She was beloved by her step-children and grandchildren. Sarah was very good at caring for people, and traveled to Newfoundland to care for a grandchild when a new grandchild was due to be born, and then the whole family once the mama and new grandchild came home from the hospital. She enjoyed hiking and camping with her family as well. Her first marriage came with a ready-made family of 6 and many grandchildren. Then, after 10 years as a widow, she married into David's family and managed to blend both her first and second families into one.

Sarah was a good listener, and always ready to share God's love. She served as a nurse in eastern Kentucky for MCC. She remembered birthdays and never failed at sending cards, and was always ready to lend a hand when needed. She openly expressed her opinions and beliefs and was a positive influence on those around her.

Sarah taught me a lesson just a month ago, when after several attempts by various people to get a shy guest to join them at their table for Bethel's Christmas breakfast failed, David & Sarah instead joined her at her table, meeting her where she was. Sarah shared with me later that she had been worried the girl would be 'dry,' but that indeed, 'she was very interesting and fun to talk to, and I enjoyed our visit very much.' It never occurred to me that morning to go and join Makayla. But it occurred to Sarah.

In a thank you note written just four days before she passed, Sarah ended with the words "...Never forget to thank God for all his great gifts, mostly Jesus."

And we will thank God, for sending us Sarah.

Editor's notes: If you were unable to attend her service, see the office for a dvd of the service. If you would like a copy of the planner that Sarah used as a guide, please see the office as well.



*Top right: David & Sarah Hostetler
Bottom right: Sarah enjoying dessert with Eleanor Shumaker at the youth fundraiser on January 16th.*