

Bethel Mennonite Church

Vol. 39
Issue 3
March 2016

Newsletter

Highlights From The Youth Group by Cheryl Shank

The months of January and February have flown by, and I guess it is time to have an update on the goings and comings of some of the youth. On January 16th, the youth held a Chili supper / "Dessert Dual" fundraiser before the showing of the movie "War Room". There were many tasty treats available for sampling, and plenty of conversation around the tables. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and the fellowship among adults and youth was a blessing. A net amount of \$545.00 was raised for the service trip this summer.

Here is a bit more information regarding the summer trip. We are presently scheduled to go to Detroit, MI and serve at an MDS site. We are presently looking at the week of June 26th, but might consider joining the Oak Grove group if there is room. If that is the case, the week of service would be June 5th through the 10th. The co-coordinator for the service placement said there needs to be adults with construction skills for every 3 youth. Dick Lindemer is helping me try to organize this. If you are interested in a) a one week MDS assignment, or b) getting to know the youth better in a different setting, let Dick or I know. A non-refundable fee per person is due my March 30th.

These past few weeks the youth have been providing coffee and sweets before Sunday School. Thanks to Dean Horn who willingly makes the coffee for us. So far \$178 has been earned for this project.

The end of January we were able to pack up and send 8 care packages on their way to the different college youth from the congregation. Thanks to everyone who so generously supplied items or monetary means. What a great way to encourage and remind the young adults that we keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

In Sunday School, the youth chose to continue having a topic of discussion every other week. Becky led a discussion on love. She began with a definition of Love - Feeling of strong and constant affection. Then she asked questions: What do we love? / Who do you love? / How do we show this love? Scripture verse focus was: John 13:34 - A new command ...love one another as I have loved you.

Discussion centered on: What do you do when you don't love someone?; Does the way I treat acquaintances reflect Christ's love?; How do you treat someone you don't love anymore?; How do I treat friends or families that grow apart?; Do you have a fear of losing your loved ones?

Annie's topic focused on God creating the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and the idea of choice. I am sorry, but the discussion was moving very quickly that notes did not get taken. Maybe this would give you an opportunity to talk to Annie about comments that were made in class.

As spring rolls around, and you find odd jobs that might need done around the house or yard, let us know. When time and school / work schedules allow, we can help get the task done.

Thanks again for you support of the youth.
Cheryl

"Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."
1 Thessalonians 5:11

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Announcements:

♦ **Community Movie Night** is March 19th at 7:30 p.m. We will show “Friendly Persuasion.” Popcorn, cookie and bottled water donations are appreciated, and a sign up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board.

♦ **Good Friday, (March 25) at 7:00 p.m.** The West Liberty Ministerium presents The Living Last Supper at Green Hills. Members of all the West Liberty Churches have parts in the drama, which depicts the thoughts going through the minds of those at the Last Supper just after Jesus announces that someone there will betray him. Set much like DaVinci’s painting, each character steps out of the scene and talks to the audience, wondering, “Is it I? Is it I?” From Bethel, Kim Lehman and Tesa Jordan will portray Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene, respectively.

♦ **Easter Breakfast (March 27) at 9:00 a.m.** Please bring fruit to share. Breakfast casseroles will be provided.

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Youth Pastor: Cheryl Shank

Administrative Assistant: Tesa Jordan

Next Newsletter Deadline: Mar 20, 2016

Bethel/Oak Grove Mennonite Women by Donna Lehman

Last month’s meeting was called off because of the snow, so plans for the ‘stone soup’ luncheon were carried forward to this month. Stone soup consists of broth and cups of donated veggies—and Voilà!—delicious soup! Along with the soup, our hostesses served desserts: cherry and strawberry delight, cupcakes and of course, Valentine candies. Hostesses were Kyle VanOsdol, Barb Schulz, Jan Smucker, and Elaine Newcomer.

We received a note from Dave and Beth Maurer thanking the group for the comforter we gave them—and Dave said he appreciated all the meals we had shared with him. Also Hi Point Women’s Center thank us for a donation and baby comforters. According to Jeanie Swartz, there are plans to have a Blanket Blitz comforter project set for April 23rd at Green Hills Foundation Hall. This is to make comforters for the refugees through MCC.

We also had several who shared projects and other interesting things they’ve been making/doing/or celebrating, and input on books to read. Then Barb S. and Jeanie shared in the devotional time for both Jan. & Feb. Barb’s topic was “Jesus was an Artist”. You don’t have to paint or draw to be an artist. How about story telling? Jesus was good at that with his parables! And, Jeanie shared on Jesus’ creativity based on Faithfulness and Joy.

Attendance was 21. Work completed—5 health kits. Next month’s meeting is March 8, and the project is Newborn Kits (preferred size 6 months) The meal will be a Taco Luncheon.

Bethel History Notes by Donna Lehman

45 years ago (1971) We were experiencing a time like the present. We didn’t have a Pastor. So we were having guest speakers each Sunday. Some of these were Pastors from area churches: Roy Koch (So. Union) and Nelson Kanagy (Oak Grove). Past Bethel Pastors such as Ed Stoltzfus, Newton Weber and Chauncey Kauffman. Also, others from the community such as Spence Cunningham, the Youth for Christ Director. Then in March of 1971, we had a speaker from Elkhart Mennonite Seminary, Duane Beck. After his second message, he was given strong affirmation to be called to Bethel as minister. However, he was not able to start as Pastor until the fall (September) of that year, after his graduation from the Seminary.

30 years ago (1986) The last Saturday of January, Bethel, Oak Grove and South Union had a dinner meeting at Bethel with farmers of the community to view videos and discuss what were the financial difficulties in the farming industry at that time. There were people losing their farms as interest rates had soared and loan companies were foreclosing.

25 years ago (1991) Feb. 22nd and 24th. The children put on a musical, directed by Bill Barrett, “All We Like Sheep.”

20 years ago (1996) Bethel had a quiz team that travelled to PA and did very well up to the end when their team was eliminated. The team consisted of Daniel & Heather Showalter, Rachel Lapp, Mandie Benson, Stacey King and Russell Krabill. The team was coached by Dennis Showalter and Sam Joe Plank.

Peace and Justice

by Bill Shumaker

Today, there are roughly 200,000 Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land, descendants of some of the oldest Christian communities in the world. The number of violent attacks by Jewish settlers against Palestinians, including Christians, and their property has risen by about 150% each year since 2008, with 154 attacks in the first half of 2012, according to the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights.

A resolution at the Mennonite USA 2015 convention at Kansas City called for an end to the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, an occupation that has caused immense suffering to 200,000 Christians as well as others living in this part of the Middle East. Much to the sore disappointment of us who have been following the events in Palestine, instead of passing the resolution there was a vote to delay it for two years. My understanding is that the resistance to the resolution was in the words of one "many were confused about the resolution" and as a matter of job security for those involved with Caterpillar of Peoria, Ill. The resolution calls withdrawing investments. The resolution to be considered in two years says "we have much work to do over the next two years." That work is informing Mennonites of the conditions in Palestine. That is the purpose of this article.

This resolution was written in response to a document called Kairos, written by a group of Christian Palestinians, "after prayer, reflection and an exchange of opinion. We cry out from within the suffering in our country, under the Israeli occupation, suffering that includes the separation that has turned our towns and villages into prisons, separating them from one another, Israeli settlements ravage our land in the name of God and in the name of force, controlling our natural resources, including water and agricultural land, thus depriving hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, and constituting an obstacle to any political solution, reality of the daily humiliation to which we are subjected at the military checkpoints, as we make our way to jobs, schools or hospitals, reality of the separation between members of the same family, making family life impossible for thousands of Palestinians, refugees are also part of our reality. Most of them are still living in camps under difficult circumstances. They have been waiting for their right of return, generation after generation."

The Imbalance of Power

I frequently hear people say they don't want to take sides. Taking sides is often a good policy but I suggest we carefully look at the facts before making a judgment about taking sides. The problem with the philosophy of not taking sides is that our government has already taken sides by the unspeakable support of \$10.2 million per day in military aid to Israel and \$0 in military aid to Palestine (the chart put out by the national summit to reassess the U.S.-Israeli relationship).

I would not be nearly as concerned, if at all, if the playing (war) field was even. When we say "we don't take sides

in a situation of oppression we are ultimately taking the side of the oppressor. I was asked once if I would support Israel if conditions were reversed, that is if Palestine was oppressing Israel as Israel is presently oppressing Palestine. The answer is absolutely. I do not favor one ethnic group over another. I do support the oppressed!! I can do no other and claim to be a follower of Jesus ("The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring release for the oppressed" Luke 4:18 Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow. Isaiah 1:17) I have gone through the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem and I have tremendous sympathy for and became aware of the terrible suffering the Jews experienced through those terrible war years but my sympathy does not go so far as to justify their oppressing another people. A Jewish Rabbi, Michael Lerner said it very well, "We jumped from the burning buildings of Europe onto the backs of the Palestine's. We were hurting so bad that we could not feel the pain we were causing them. The point is that it is misplaced anger. They are taking it out on Palestinians who had nothing to do with the Holocaust.

I hear a lot of talk about: All the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. Genesis 13:15 the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob Gen. 50:24

But What about: Isaiah 49:6 "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

And Deut.24:17-18 "But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and that the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing. Do not deny justice to a foreigner or fatherless child, and do not take a widow's garment as security."

See reading list for more information

Articles from The Mennonite

- * July 3, 2007 Delegation visits Palestine/Israel p.19
 - * October 2, 2007 The Idol in Our Midst p.18
 - * November 6, 2007 Applauding Israeli Occupation p.4
 - * December 2, 2008 Soldiers Attack Shepherds p.6
 - * September 2010, Holy or Unholy Land p.36
 - * January 2012 Army Demolishes House p.6
 - * August 2015 Three Lessons from Israeli "Balagan" p.32
 - * October 2015 Combatant for a Just Peace
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- * Articles from Tikkun Magazine
Tikkun, a Jewish Magazine Founded and Edited by a Jewish Rabbi, Michael Lerner
 - * Tekkun, A Hebrew word meaning to mend, repair and transform the world
 - * Israel 60 Years Later, Michael Lerner
 - * This is Not the Israel Our Young People Died for, Uri Avery

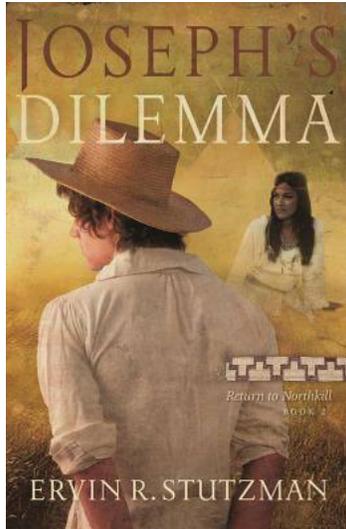
(Continued on page 4)

“Joseph’s Dilemma” by Ervin Stutzman

A Book Review by Sara Ellen Stoltzfus

Editor’s note: One Sunday morning before Sunday School classes started, Sara Ellen walked in carrying a book and she began telling me about it. She said, “It’s very good!” I asked if she would write a book review for the newsletter, and she agreed.

The Hostetler descendents will want to read book 2 of Evan Stutzman’s trilogy, “Joseph’s Dilemma.” Here is the story of Jacob Hostetler’s son Joseph, who learns to live with the Delaware Indians after his capture. The events begin early in American History (1740-1765 in the Mennonite community of Northkill located in Eastern Pennsylvania.



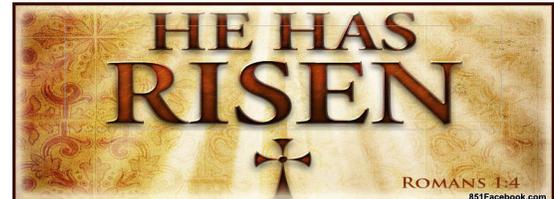
The family was attacked by Indians who destroyed their home and farm, killed three members of the family and captured three persons, including Joseph.

Joseph, a young teenager was soon separated from his father Jacob, and his brother, Chris. For years, Joseph lived with the Indians. He accepted his adopted mother, his new friends and the relaxed life close to nature.

Therein is the dilemma. What will Joseph do when the French and Indian War comes close to their settlement? He treasures the strength of the Indians with their love and care for him, but he is removed from the faith and love of his true family.

This book was a challenge for the writer to be faithful to the history of the era, as well as the faith community of Northkill. Enjoy this second book in the trilogy!

-Sara Ellen Stoltzfus



(Continued from page 3)

- New Voices of Sanity, Theodore Bikel
- Beyond Tribalism, Bradley Burston
- Historical Consciousness, Hilell Cohen
- If I Forget, Harvey Cox
- Older and Wiser, Sidra DeCoven Ezrahi
- Israel’s Dilemma, Riane Eisler

Other Informative Writings

- Healing Israel/Palestine, A Path to Middle East Peace, 60 page booklet put out by the Tikkun community, promoting a compassionate vision of Middle East peace that is both pro-Palestine and pro-Israel
- My Journey to Palestine, a day by day journal of Bill Shumaker’s 10 days in Palestine
- Kairos Palestine Document, Palestinian Christians representing a variety of churches and church related organizations

Books

- Hebron Journal; Stories of Non-Violent Peacemaking, Arthur M. Gish
- The Body and the Blood; The Middle East’s Vanishing Christians, Charles Sennott
- On the Brink; Israel and Palestine on the Eve Of the 2014 Gaza Invasion
- This Side of Peace, Hanan Ashrawi
- Refusing to Be Enemies, Lynn Gottlieb
- Teshuva: Our only Hope, Joshua Levine Grater
- Liberating Zionism, Bonna Devora Haberman
- Chosen for What? Brian McLaren

A CHART PUT OUT BY THE NATIONAL SUMMIT TO REASSESS THE U.S.- ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP

Noteworthy Dates

March Birthdays

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 7 -- Kim Lehman | 18 -- Jeanie Swartz |
| 8 -- Tim Horn | 19 -- Neil Wirick |
| 10 -- Janice Rabenstein | 22 -- Becky Wilkins |
| 10 -- Josephine Hostetler | 25 -- Bob Rabenstein Sr. |
| 12 -- Steve Lapp | 26 -- Carol Buck |
| 13 -- Stephen Hostetler | 26 -- Polly Thomas |
| 13 -- Elizabeth Lochridge | 30 -- Michael Lehman |
| 14 -- Todd Hostetler | 30 -- Robert Psolla |
| 15 -- Jerry Landes | 31 -- Wilfred Yoder |

March Anniversaries

- March 9, 1985 – Ken & Cheryl Shank
 March 17, 1973 – Chuck & Carol Buck

Listen System is Running Again

Technical Coordinator, Lee Jordan has been spending some weekday mornings getting familiar with all of the equipment relating to the sound and visuals used in the sanctuary.

As a result, he has been able to restore 2 of our four Listen System units to working order. The unit is a small battery operated receiver that looks much like an old hand-held transistor radio. The headset is different though, and rests over the top of the ear and does not go into the ear at all, making it compatible with hearing aids. Each unit's volume is personally adjustable.

Several of our members have been using them with ease and report that the service is much easier for them to hear.

Two of the four units are still not in working order. Plans are to either repair them, or replace them. If you would like a unit to use during the service, please let Lee know before the service starts.

We hope to have the other two units available within a week or two (Mid March).



Senior Celebration Tea Set for April 2, 2016

In January, as I sat listening to Sarah's family and friends reminisce about her life, and her influence, I was suddenly aware that there was so much I would have liked to talk to her about if I had only known what I was hearing at her funeral service. I pondered about how great it would have been if Sarah had heard the words being spoken about her by her loved ones. By the accounts they gave however, I'm pretty sure they openly shared their love for her at every opportunity. But it still nagged at me that now, there was so much I wanted to ask and no longer could. For several days, it weighed on my mind, and became an idea that developed into the upcoming event. It made me smile, that even though she isn't physically with us anymore, Sarah is still very present and influencing us still.

When I approached Mary Newcomer and Donna Lehman with the idea of a Senior Celebration Tea, they both initially thought I was talking about our soon to be graduating high school seniors. Then I explained that no, I thought we should celebrate the rich heritage, experience and wisdom we have right here in the Bethel Church Community-The real seniors of our group! We took a look and discovered that we have 26 people in the congregation who are age 80 and above! What an opportunity to find out so many things about their lives, and how they feel about the world, etc.!

Some of us are familiar with how Facebook works. It is a social network on the internet, where people 'friend' each other and then engage in chats, sharing photos and memes, debating political issues, sharing recipes, videos, and the list goes on. For some people, this is a great way to stay in touch particularly with friends that live at a distance. So we set the tea up a little like that. We approached members in the congregation who are below the age of 80, and they have agreed to 'friend' one or more of our seniors. They will be spending some time with them, as both parties agree, and get to know one another.

Then on April 2nd, we will have a Celebration Tea in honor of our Seniors, and their friends will share a few things they've learned about their new Senior Friend. This can really go both ways, if the seniors want to share in turn!

Following the tea, I hope to glean a bit more from the friends about the seniors to include in a "Senior Spotlight" column in our newsletter. We haven't finalized all the details just yet, so watch for more in the bulletins, and listen for announcements at church on Sunday mornings!

**IT'S NOT
THE YEARS
IN YOUR LIFE
THAT COUNT.
IT'S THE LIFE
IN YOUR
YEARS!**

**-ABRAHAM
LINCOLN**

Thoughts to Ponder

by Steve Lapp

This is a time of tension and stress in most Mennonite Churches and the churches in the Ohio Conference in particular. West Central and Southwest Ohio delegates to the Ohio Conference met at Oak Grove Mennonite Church on February 18, 2016. Delegates, Elders, and others from Bethel attended the open cluster meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to present and discuss three documents: a one year covenant to stay together, a proposed membership resolution, and a statement on remaining with MCUSA. These documents are available from Tesa or on the Ohio Conference website. For those receiving this electronically, here is the link and scroll down: <http://ohiomennoniteconference.org/annual-assembly/delegates/>

George O'Reilly lead the meeting and in his devotional he quoted the Ninth Commandment of the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20: "Thou shalt not bear false witness" Exodus 20:16. Or in the New Living Translation, "You must not testify falsely against your neighbor." George suggested that in times of stress and tension we are tempted to testify falsely against each other. What did George mean? What does the commandment mean?

Matthew Henry (1662-1714) wrote a Bible commentary that helps us understand this verse. Matthew suggested that bearing false witness does not just mean telling lies by speaking falsely in order to deceive someone, nor does it just mean speaking unjustly to damage someone's reputation, but also includes accusing someone of things, most anything, without the other person's knowledge. We know this as talking about the person "behind their back." Matthew Henry describes this third meaning graphically: "slandering, backbiting, tale bearing, aggravating what is done amiss (a mistake) by making it worse than it is, and in any way endeavoring to raise our own reputation upon the ruin (at the expense of) our neighbor (the other person)." Whoa, this sounds too severe. How do we understand these words written in the 17th century?

We understand or respond by thinking about appropriate ways to speak and communicate rather than what is wrong with how we speak or communicate. That is exactly what George did. George suggested four things to do when communicating with someone:

- o Check the facts, are they real?
- o If you have a question or issue about what the other person said, have a conversation with the other person about your question or issue.
- o Allow the other person to tell us or explain what they meant and have respect for that when taken at face value.
- o Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." Matt. 7:12 NIV.

This code of conduct works individually and corporately to give us CPR, God's breath of life breathed into us. Remember Cheryl Shank in her Sunday sermon borrowing the acronym CPR for cardio pulmonary resuscitation and changing it to Christ's Power Revives, CPR. Maybe it seems over simplified but how we communicate is one way that allows Christ's power to come into our lives both individually and corporately. That is what we want to happen at Bethel especially during the upcoming transition ministry time. One goal the ELT drafted is "Foster an atmosphere where people are open to talk and listen with each other." It is not an end in itself to talk and listen to each other but to come to an understanding of what kind of a people and church Bethel is and can be.

But, you say, the Ten Commandments were in the Old Testament and Christ was in the New Testament. And you are claiming CPR, Christ's Power Revives. But remember Christ said, "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the Prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose." Matt. 5:17 NLT.

May we be more diligent in following the code of conduct above in the days ahead, be revived in our lives and relationships, and have hope for the future.

Steve, for the Elder Leadership Team