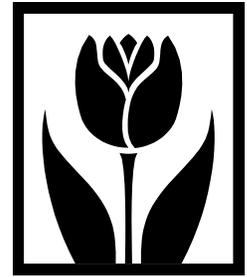


# Bethel Quarterly News



Spring 2010  
Volume 33, Issue 1

## COUPLE VOLUNTEERS AT KOINONIA FARM **BY BARB & BYRON KAUFFMAN**

*Editor's note: Byron and Barb Kauffman spent January 10-22 serving and working at Koinonia Farm, seven miles west of Americus, Georgia. They describe their experience and the history of Koinonia in this story.*

The Koinonia community was started by Clarence and Florence Jordan in 1942. Clarence, having earned a degree in agriculture and a doctorate in Greek, New Testament, pursued his vision to live out the teachings of Jesus in community. He purchased land in Sumter County where he “established an experiment in Christian communal living . . . and declared brotherhood, non-violence, and economic sharing to be its fundamental guidelines.” He employed both poor white and poor black persons.

This was one of the reasons that both his family and the Koinonia community endured much opposition and many hardships by the KKK in the 1950s and 1960s. Prominent citizens in Americus asked him to “move and leave us in peace.”

Over the following decades, there was a gradual easing of relationships. In November of 2009, 52 years after being asked to leave, Clarence was honored for his courageous life by having his name placed on the Walk of Fame in downtown Americus. The staff at Koinonia continue to live out the vision and celebrate the spirit of Clarence Jordan.

Habitat for Humanity was started by Koinonia in 1968 “to help neighbors afford decent, simple homes.” At this time, the Fuller Center works more closely with Koinonia than does Habitat for Humanity.

We lived in our own small apartment in the Jubilee House and enjoyed meeting the staff at Koinonia and hearing their stories about their decisions to live there. They showed us generous hospitality and eagerly answered our many questions. These Christians share a life of prayer, study, work, service, and fellowship. After each lunch, a “peace candle” is lit and thoughts or stories related to peacemaking are presented. Through gardening, raising their own meat supply, and recycling, they live sustainably, while sharing their resources with the wider community. *(continued on page 8)*

**RESERVE THIS DATE!**

**Sat - Sun, April 17-18**  
**Bethel Facilities Discernment Weekend**

*How does our facility empower our vision?  
This will be an opportunity to discern if and  
what changes may be important in our facility.*

## “HOLDING ON & LETTING GO!” IS LENTEN WORSHIP THEME

During the season of Lent we take time to meditate on Jesus’ life and mission, and draw near to God. This year’s worship theme is “Holding on & letting go!” and will focus on two parallel invitations found in the scripture readings: to hold on to what is important, and to let go of what gets in the way of further growth.

In planning this year’s Lenten worship services the Ministry of Worship is using the *Leader Magazine* resources written by a team from the New York Conference of Mennonite Church USA. Through readings, music, children’s stories, times of confession and reflection, and sermons we will celebrate those things that we want to hold on to, and begin to let go of things that keep us from drawing close to God. “Jesus’ self-giving on

the cross is a powerful metaphor for our call to turn away from the temptation to make ourselves the center of the universe and choose instead a life of sacrificial love in the world,” explains the writing team.

Holy Week activities begin with Palm Sunday services on March 28, and continue with a 6:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday supper and service on April 1, which will include communion and footwashing. A Community Good Friday service will be held at Green Hills at 6:30 p.m. on April 2.

Easter Sunday activities will begin with an early “sunrise” service and church breakfast, followed by worship and joyous celebration of Christ’s resurrection.

## Wilfred and Hilda Yoder will celebrate golden anniversary

Wilfred “Willy” Yoder and Hilda Lehman were united in marriage on May 1, 1960 at the Congregational Christian Church in West Liberty, with Willy’s brother, Forest Yoder, officiating. “I wanted to have organ music and a ring ceremony but neither was permitted at Bethel,” explains Hilda about their decision to have the wedding at another church.

Hilda purchased her lovely bouffant gown at Wren’s Department Store in downtown Springfield. Her sister, Mary Yoder, served as matron of honor and her niece, Suzan Yoder Hooper, was flower girl. Pink roses and lily of the valley carried out the spring theme. Willy’s brothers and a friend were groomsmen. “The preacher said, ‘Wilt thou?’ and I wilted,” jokes Willy.

After a cake and punch reception in the basement of the church, the newlyweds set out on their honeymoon in their green and cream 1956 Chevy. Willy had \$66 in his pocket. Several days, many miles (all the way to

Norfolk, VA), a few nights spent in motels and some restaurant meals later, they returned home with 16 cents to spare!

The Yoders moved into their first home on White Street and they both worked at Esch’s Meats. Hilda also worked at the United Telephone Company. Later they moved to West Baird Street and became parents to two daughters, Arnita, a high school math teacher in Delphos, and Melinda, an accountant supervisor for Urbana University.

In the mid-1960s Willy started his own business, Yoder’s Aluminum Products, in West Liberty, which he still owns and operates. Every morning his employees join him in their apartment above the store to discuss the day’s business.

For more on Hilda’s hobbies and collections, check out the story on page 4 of this issue.

Congratulations, Willy and Hilda, on this milestone wedding anniversary! May God continue to bless your marriage.

*“The preacher said, ‘Wilt thou?’ and I wilted.”*

*~Willy Yoder, joking about his wedding vows*



## Wedding trivia of our spring milestone anniversary couples

Four other couples at Bethel are celebrating milestone anniversaries this spring:

March 9 – Ken and Cheryl Shank (25<sup>th</sup>)

April 12 – Randy and Bridget Early (30<sup>th</sup>)

May 27 – Roger and Christy Headings (10<sup>th</sup>)

May 27 – Dave and Beth Maurer (10<sup>th</sup>)

*Answer the following wedding trivia questions with one of the above couples. Answers will be posted on the lobby bulletin board.*

1. Whose wedding party served communion to the whole congregation?
2. Who celebrated by high-fiving each other as they started down the aisle after the ceremony?
3. Who wrote their own wedding vows and had them memorized?
4. Who had a rainbow wedding with pastel green, yellow, blue, pink and orange bridesmaid gowns and matching shirts for the groomsmen?
5. Who went to a Cincinnati Reds game on their honeymoon and slept through the later innings?
6. Who saw the Broadway show, *The Lion King*, on their honeymoon?
7. Who visited the Biltmore House in Asheville, NC on their honeymoon?
8. Who went to King’s Island on their honeymoon?
9. Whose first home was a farmhouse outside of Harrisonburg, VA?
10. Who discovered goldfish swimming in their apartment bathtub when they returned from their honeymoon?
11. Whose wedding was Pastor Weldon Schloneger’s first at Bethel?
12. For which couple’s wedding did Stacey King play the piano?
13. Whose heart-shaped cake was knocked over two hours before the ceremony and the top layer replaced with iced cardboard?

## From Pastor Dave Maurer's desk

# God's Thread Weaves Our Worship Life Together

*I am encouraged that even in the times of struggle or wilderness that every congregation goes through, we can see the evidence of God's presence and His leading through it all.*  
~ Pastor Dave Maurer

Here's a little insider information of which the Ministry of Worship is aware but few others are. Recently I have received affirmation for my sermons and the way that they are hitting people where they are. This is both encouraging and humbling.

It is humbling because in reality I only have a small part in how these pieces come together. Last September I spent a day in retreat at Kirkmont Center, a Christian camp in Zanesfield. While there, I spent time in prayer with my Bible, a calendar, and a few other resources to consider what I might preach on this year. I wanted to be intentional about Sunday morning topics and also hoped this would assist in long-range worship planning.

I laid this out knowing that changes might be made along the way but trusting that God was guiding me in this plan. While on retreat I finalized the Anabaptist Identity series that we did in the fall, planned the series on worship that we just completed, and drafted the series on the Lord's Prayer that we will

do after Easter. I also chose to use the lectionary and the Mennonite Publishing Network themes for Advent and Lent.

When I planned these sermons, I had no idea what else might be going on in the lives of the people in the congregation or our body together. We had to make some minor adjustments because of winter weather, but I am humbled by the way that God's thread seems to weave through it all and knot together the quilt of our church community with its various squares and our multiple layers of interaction and discernment.

Certainly, there will be times that we will miss the movement of God. We must be vigilant and ever on the lookout for where God is moving and what God is calling us to. At the same time, I am encouraged that even in the times of struggle or wilderness that every congregation goes through, we can see the evidence of God's presence and His leading through it all. May God draw us ever closer to Him and lead us in His ways.

## Mennonite Women in Mission Highlights

The Bethel and Oak Grove Mennonite Women's group continues to meet on the second Tuesday of each month, unless the inclement weather causes a cancellation as it did on February 9.

However, the December and January meetings were held as scheduled, with good food and fellowship warming the women who worked on comforters, quilts and school kit bags. The December meeting featured a potluck meal, Christmas colors and candies, and a beautiful centerpiece manger scene.

Ruby Byler shared during the devotional time on the theme *Gleaning: Rural Creation Care*, based on Mark 2, in which Jesus gleaned on the Sabbath.

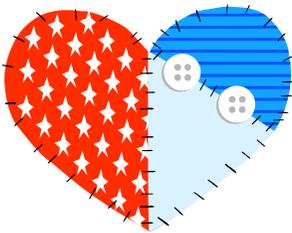
Three women shared during Show and Tell Time. Jeanie Swartz showed wooden items made by her grandfather, Janice Rabenstein

displayed a beautiful quilt she had completed for a great-grandchild, and Kathi Robinaugh told about her hobby business of altered art.

In January the hostesses served delicious puddings to top off the ladies' sack lunches. Ellen Steiner's devotions focused on Hebrews 11, the faith chapter. She pointed out the various persons who were noted for their 'by faith' actions, adding that by faith we take care of the earth because it is God's creation.

At both meetings various women also shared recent books from the church library they have enjoyed reading. Work completed at the two meetings included 4 comforters, 2 baby comforters, 39 school kit bags sewn, and 43 bags filled.

*(This article was compiled from reports by Donna Lehman, MW Secretary.)*



## Hilda Yoder shares collecting bug **By Marla Longenecker**

*Editor's note: I've known that Hilda Yoder collects Barbie dolls for a long time. In fact, one time she showed my daughters and me her extensive collection. As I was thinking about whom to feature next in our hobby/collector series, I thought of Hilda. Imagine my surprise then in a recent visit, when she told me about at least seven other collections and hobbies she maintains.*

No longer actively collecting Barbie dolls, Hilda still enjoys displaying and adding to her collections of angels, squirrels, fans, fairies, Crayola crayons, and pop-up books of all kinds. She has also crocheted many beautiful heirlooms over the years, notably a bedspread and tablecloth and doilies too numerous to count.

Hilda's daughters, Arnita and Melinda, encouraged her to begin collecting Barbies in

the 1980s. At the time, the girls enjoyed playing with dolls of all kinds and had their own play Barbies.

The whole family got into the hunt, going to doll auctions around the state to acquire dolls and accessories like cars, horses and houses. "Wilfred would buy dolls occasionally," says Hilda. "He was very supportive of my hobby." Her favorite dolls include the international Dolls of the World collectibles and the Holiday Barbies, many of which were purchased as department store specials.

Through the years Hilda displayed some of the dolls on shelves at their home on West Baird. For a time, she also had a display in the doll room at the House of Animation on the corner of Baird and Main in West Liberty. *(continued on page 8)*



**Italian Barbie**  
the first doll in the  
Dolls of the World  
collection

## Let's get acquainted with Dennis and Sharon Showalter

Dennis was born in Rockingham County, VA to Howard and Irene Showalter. He was the youngest of six children and entertained the family with his cute antics and fun-loving personality. Dennis lived at the Showalter homestead/farm and attended Trissels Mennonite Church until he left for college.

Sharon, the oldest of four children, was born in Lancaster County, PA to Isaac and Mary Frederick. She lived in Tampa, FL and Honduras, CA during her childhood years. She was a preacher's, missionary's, and principal's kid, attending a variety of Mennonite mission churches and living in 13 different houses by the time she went to college.

Dennis and Sharon met in college and dated for three years. They were married in an outdoor wedding at Highland Retreat (the first couple to be married there) in 1972. "Plain and simple, we just continue to love doing things together!" says Sharon.

After college, they went to Washington, DC in Voluntary Service. Dennis worked as a teacher at FLOC, then American University's Rose School while getting his Master's Degree. Sharon worked as an RN. They were members of Hyattsville Mennonite Church.

In 1977 the Showalters moved to Logan County. Dennis worked at Adriel School and Sharon at Green Hills. During their first winter in Ohio, the Blizzard of 1978 happened. Sharon was director of nursing at Green Hills and she experienced her first ride on a snowmobile as she was taken in to work by the National Guard. The scary part was being five months pregnant. "I was sure Green Hills was about to become

a nursing home with a delivery room," she recalls.

After taking several years off when the children were small, Sharon returned to Green Hills in 1982 and has worked part-time since then. Their two children, Daniel and Heather, both attended the Child Center at Green Hills and both were featured on TV newscasts for attending the first licensed child center in a nursing home in Ohio.

Dennis continued at Adriel until 1992 when he was employed by Bellefontaine City Schools, first as Director of Special Education, then as principal, and currently as Director of Instructional Services.

The Showalters have attended Bethel since 1977, serving in a variety of positions – nursery coordinator, youth group leaders, SS teachers, Ministry of Worship, Life Planning coordinator, youth mentors, congregational chair, pastoral care, WMSC, area group leader, MC USA delegate, Student Aid, Abraham's Lot, God's Girls, small group coordinator, welcoming visitors, Sunday fellowship meals, gifts discernment, small groups, and Homework Help board.

Dennis enjoys ball card collecting, watching the Cleveland Indians, old black and white TV shows, and has an interest in peace and justice issues. Sharon enjoys homemade things, nature, herb gardening, reading, and watching people while Dennis watches the ball games.

We're glad you're part of our Bethel Church family, Dennis and Sharon. Thank you for giving us your time, talents, and friendship these past 33 years.

***From the church historian*****Br-r-r cold: A look back to the winter of 1977** By Donna Lehman

*“It was a memorable time – the month with no conventional services.”*

*~Donna Lehman*

In my history blurbs last year for the newsletter, I related times when Bethel practiced “being green” ecologically. One winter we needed to be green because of fuel usage.

It happened in 1977. January of that year was VERY cold, one night hitting 20 degrees below zero. Ohio’s governor even considered closing the schools for 30 days because the state and country were running low on natural gas. (That school thing didn’t happen, but I know some kids who would have been happy if it had!)

President Jimmy Carter was inaugurated on January 20, and the next day he urged people to set their thermostats no higher than 65 degrees because of the energy crisis.

Bethel received notice from Dayton Power and Light Company that our gas usage was being cut back and our allotment was about finished. So, for five weeks from the last Sunday of January to February 27, Bethel did not meet at the church.

One of these Sundays there was no church

because of winter weather. The church members were divided geographically and on two of the Sundays were urged to meet and fellowship in one of the area group member’s homes.

The remaining two Sundays were joint community services at the old West Liberty High School building on West Columbus Street. The Mennonite, Methodist, Congregational Christian and Presbyterian churches took part in these joint services.

It was a memorable time – the month with no conventional services. Before the process, Pastor Duane Beck urged the church family to “take advantage of doing church differently and use it as an opportunity for growth.”

It’s not known if the Sundays with no churches heating their buildings and the 65-degree thing helped the energy crisis, but it did make us aware of the blessing of having heat when needed and the possibility of not having adequate resources.

**Remembering “kind and gentle” Mildred “Milly” Stoltzfus**

*Mildred Stoltzfus, sister-in-law of Sara Ellen Stoltzfus and wife of former Bethel pastor, Ed Stoltzfus, passed away on January 29, 2010. Following are some memories by Sara Ellen and excerpts from Mildred’s obituary.*

“Milly, how pleasant to remember you as pastor’s wife and teacher to all of us,” begins Sara Ellen. “One of the first things I learned from her during the two years I lived with Milly and Ed in my early days in West Liberty was the way she pronounced “Stoltzfuses” when answering the phone. She made it sound more German and much more beautiful.

I still hear people remembering Milly teaching music to the children Sunday evenings. One occasion I had to lead the hymns until she completed her assignment. The difference was so startling, I knew I would not do that again. What a kind and gentle Mildred!”

Mildred Irene Graber Stoltzfus, 77, passed away of complications from cardiac arrest Fri., January 29, 2010, surrounded in song by family members. She was born May 5, 1932 in a farmhouse in Wayland, IA, the daughter of Christian L. and Mina Roth Graber.

Mildred graduated from Goshen College with a BA in English and elementary education. She married Edward B. Stoltzfus, from Aurora, OH on July 31, 1954. They moved to West Liberty, OH, where she was a teacher and mother of two

sons and two daughters, Eric and Cynthia (Lapp) Stoltzfus of Mount Ranier, MD; Philip and Candace (Lautt) Stoltzfus of Northfield, MN; Rebecca Stoltzfus of Suagerties, NY; and Anita and David Breckbill of Lincoln, NE. Eight grandchildren complete the family.

The family later lived in Goshen and Iowa City, before moving to Harrisonburg, VA, in 1979, where Mildred also taught school. She was an active member of the Park View Mennonite Church, including ministry as elder, S.S. teacher, President of Mennonite Women, and choir member. Her small group from church and book group were a source of joy, and she also volunteered at Gift and Thrift.

Music was an important part of Mildred’s life. She sang with her family and in choirs, and encouraged her children in their musical pursuits. Over the years she hosted friends, church workers, and guests from abroad in her home and enjoyed traveling internationally with her husband.

Mildred’s students and friends knew her kind and gentle spirit, though she was also a tenacious player of word and logic games. She was an avid swimmer, and her countless laps, hours, and miles were part of a disciplined regimen of self-care, diet, and exercise she commenced upon contracting diabetes 23 years ago. She kept her body strong and supple despite her years. Mildred’s ashes will later be returned to the earth at Weaver’s Mennonite Church Cemetery, west of Harrisonburg.

## Getting to know Jacob Shank **By Rick Stoner**

Jacob Shank, a junior at West Liberty-Salem, is an active member of our youth group. He has a deep faith in the Lord and, as I have found out, is really great at foosball. So I would like you all to get to know Jacob.

When Jacob has free time, he enjoys hanging out with friends, playing soccer, and hunting/trapping. His dream for the future is to travel across the United States. So if you are adventurous perhaps you could join him in his journey.

If you were to invite Jacob over for a meal it would be wise to fix chicken, Jacob's favorite food. During dinner you could listen

to alternative/indie (independent) rock. And afterwards you all could watch either *Hitch* or *Inside Man*, his favorite movies.

Jacob appreciates how the members at Bethel are very welcoming. He says that he has learned a lot about what it means to be a Mennonite and how to live out his faith as a Mennonite. If he could teach those at Bethel anything it would boil down to one thing: don't fear change. He says that this is a changing generation and people's worship styles are changing too. He wants us to know that change isn't always bad, and sometimes it can cause a different style or thing you may like. So we should be open to change.

## Junior high youth attend Camp Luz winter retreat

On a snowy weekend in January, five members of the junior high class, along with their teacher and sponsor, James Lochridge, attended the Junior High retreat at Camp Luz near Kidron. They shared their experiences during the sharing time on January 31.

The featured speaker was Dr. Don Bartlette who shared part of his testimony each night in the worship services. "He had a remarkable testimony that moved me in a way that I had not been moved in many years," said James.

Dr. Bartlette was born with a severe cleft palate in 1939 to poor Native American parents. For years he was abused and picked on and didn't have anyone to show him love. But then one person did. "His testimony shows that one person can make a difference," said James. "We, as Christians, should be the ones who are reaching out to those who aren't particularly lovely and to those who are not popular."

Alex Steiner reported that each night the speaker gave them a memory verse to learn that related to his life story. The three verses about forgiveness and love were Matthew 16:19, Luke 23:34, and John 13:34.

Michael Lehman's favorite part of the weekend was having snowball fights. He also

enjoyed the other activities like games, eating good food and the good speaker. "I had a good time with my friends and learning about God," he said.

Everyone who attended the retreat seemed to enjoy the snow and outdoor activities. Annie Steiner mentioned the Camp Luz Winter Olympic games on Saturday morning. "We had a team snow sculpture contest after lunch," she adds. "That was really fun!"

James added that our Bethel youth "really shone" among the others. "They were the ones who had the Bible verses memorized. They were the ones who were eager to participate. I hear the girls were even staying up late reading their Bibles," he reported, adding that "we are blessed" to have this group of young people at Bethel.

### Spring Youth Activities

**Elite F.C. Soccer**  
Jacob Shank, Patrick Graber,  
Lindsey Hostetler

**WL-S Track and Field**  
Kelsey Oakley

**WL-S Band and Choir**  
Concert (March 9)  
Jessica Rabenstein  
Lindsey Hostetler

**WL-S Musical**  
**CINDERELLA**  
(March 25-27)  
Jessica Rabenstein



You can also hear  
Dr. Don Bartlette's testimony,  
***Macaroni at Midnight!***

Thanks to Annie Steiner, the CD of his powerful story has been placed in our church library. Check it out today.

## From the youth pastor's desk

### Living the life of love this Lenten season By Rick Stoner

Our modern media tend to mirror back to us who we really are. For instance, in the TV show, *Survivor*, the contestants must fake relationships in order to play a game of deceit to win a prize. Through alliances and deals with other players, a good contestant can manipulate his way to the top. Though we may think that *Survivor* is just a TV show, I want to suggest that it mirrors our culture and in a way shapes us. The message is that we must scrap and claw our way to the top and the only one who really matters in the long run is “me.”

Our Lenten theme of letting go of self challenges us to live in a radically different way. This lifestyle of letting go and embracing the way of Christ is marked by its commitment to love others in a visible way. 1 John 4:16b-17 says, “God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.” So, if we are to be like Christ in the world we cannot grasp for self-security. Instead, we must let go and love as Christ loved.

One person that truly lived this out in her life was Corrie ten Boom. As a political prisoner under the Nazi regime, Corrie had been arrested for hiding Jews in her home. If anyone had the right to be angry it would have been her. Yet instead of anger she let go of herself and found God in the prison walls. In *A Prisoner and Yet*, she writes, “I was a prisoner—and yet...how free!” (p. 30) This freedom in the Lord allowed her to live out the love of Christ in prison, a place where she felt called to minister.

A shining example of this lived love took place after Corrie had been “released” and was waiting in the hospital barracks

of Ravensbruck for final approval that she could leave. In this place, crowded with sick and dying people, Corrie could have easily and justifiably looked out only for herself. Instead, she cared for those who needed help, telling them about Jesus and his love for them. Corrie let go of her own security and held on to the love of Christ, which spilled over to the sick and dying around her and gave them hope.

In the end we must realize that WE are our message. We can claim to let go and live in love, and we can talk about how great love is and how God is love. But unless we begin to live that love out, it will be no more than words. We can see this in the story of Corrie ten Boom. It was one thing for her to talk about the love of Christ and how Christ was the Victor and Healer. But it was quite another thing for her to live that out for the people in the concentration camp to see.

As missional writers Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch remind us in *The Shaping of Things to Come*, “Living in ideas is the very contradiction to living in actuality.” (p. 154) This Lenten season we are seeking to live in actuality. We are seeking to live out the message of non-grasping love to which Jesus calls us.

In other words we are the living story of Lent, which means our existence is our communication and our life journey tells the story. Pastor Tim Lehman reminds us in his book, *Seeking the Wilderness*, “Journeying means getting off the padded pew and walking into the company of God, perhaps dancing to the music of worship...Journeying is not comfortable.” (p. 73)

Let us begin the journey of living the life of love this Lenten season.

## Mark your calendars for upcoming youth events



### Coming in April: The Flamingo Infestation

**F<sup>4</sup> (Fun, Food, and Fellowship with Friends)** – Remember that F<sup>4</sup> is coming Saturday, March 13 at 6:00 p.m. in the Bethel Fellowship Room.

If you are interested in donating a dessert for the dessert auction just let Pastor Rick know. This evening will be for adults only; however childcare will be provided. Everyone is welcome to this great evening of fun and food.

**Beware the Flamingo Infestation!** – This April a flamingo infestation is going to hit

Bethel courtesy of the Bethel youth. This is a fundraiser where you have the opportunity to decorate someone else's yard with plastic pink flamingos; for a small fee, of course!

The way this works is that you can purchase the flamingos to be planted in someone's yard for 24 hours (they must attend Bethel regularly). If you don't want any flamingos hanging out in your yard, you can purchase flamingo insurance for a small fee.

Make sure you are ready for the flamingo infestation.

## **Kauffmans serve in Americus, Georgia (cont. from page 1)**

We participated in the daily life of Koinonia by attending chapel and eating lunch during the week, eating evening meals together Tuesday through Thursday, and assisting occasionally with cleanup after meals. "Coffee breaks" were spent with Koinonia staff, enjoying snacks from the farm bakery. We attended the weekly Taize service and participated in the Sunday evening carry-in meal, which began with communion and ended with worship and sharing.

Our assignments were varied. Barb worked at hand sorting shelled pecans (the farm has 90 acres of pecan trees), and also loaded cardboard for recycling, cleaned the kitchen pantry, and helped prepare donor mailings. Byron helped sort shelled pecans and also assembled boxes, and weighed and

packaged pecans for shipment. In addition, he painted window frames, helped build a wood storage shed, and unloaded housing materials for the Fuller Center in Americus.

An added dimension for us this year was the joy of having two other volunteer couples with whom to work and fellowship, the Shantz's and Beuhler's from Canada. The six of us sang together on two occasions.

We definitely recommend participation in Mennonite Mission Network service opportunities. For us, in addition to making a contribution to the community of choice, we like making new friends, broadening our horizons, changing our routine, and traveling. Contact Mennonite Mission Network online at [www.mennonitemission.net](http://www.mennonitemission.net) for more information. You can also learn more about Koinonia Farm at [www.koinoniapartners.org](http://www.koinoniapartners.org).

*"For us, in addition to making a contribution to the community of choice, we like making new friends, broadening our horizons, changing our routine, and traveling."*

*~ Byron & Barb Kauffman  
on their recent service  
experience*

## **Sharing a prized doll collection (cont. from page 4)**

After they sold their home and moved to the apartment above the family business, Yoder's Aluminum Products, a few blocks east, Hilda sometimes set up displays of Barbies in the store window for the enjoyment of folks passing by. "My original dream was to have a doll museum, but that never worked out," she explains. "If there was a doll museum in West Liberty, I would love to donate my collection."

The entire collection, which has been inventoried and packed for sale to an auction house, consists of over 260 dolls and over 300 related accessory items including the first Barbie house.

Hilda is not the only doll collector at Bethel. Elaine Newcomer, Jeannette Hostetler, and Marla Longenecker have their own collections of a variety of dolls. Perhaps they can be featured another time.

*If you have a collection or hobby you would like to share with the Bethel family, please talk to Marla Longenecker.*

## **Three students are SAF recipients in 2010-2011**

The purpose of our Bethel Student Aid Fund (SAF) is to expose youth and adults from our congregation to faith-based education and service opportunities, preparing them for participation in the life and mission of the church. Scholarships from the SAF lessen the difference in cost between a church college and secular schools.

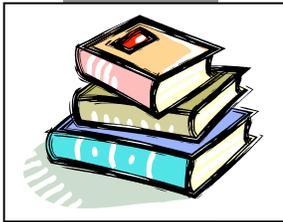
Three students (or soon-to-be students) have received approval from the SAF Committee for assistance in 2010-2011. Esther Shank, a scholarship recipient these past two years is approaching the halfway point in her college career at Eastern Mennonite University. "The past two years have brought much thought and introspection on issues of faith, the environment, the role of the church, and my role as an Anabaptist Christian," writes Esther. "This campus has provided a safe space for me to discuss such issues with professors and friends and has challenged me to grow and learn in Christ."

James Lochridge plans to return to college at Bluffton University in September, majoring in Youth Ministry & Recreation, hoping to complete his bachelor's degree and enter full-time ministry in two years.

Lane Thomas, after two years at Hesston College and two years of service, has been accepted at both Bluffton and Goshen College. "I know that many of the unique course offerings, professor-student relationships, global-mindedness, and faith-emphasis in the academic realm are aspects of Mennonite education that I would greatly relish," says Lane in her application for assistance from the fund. "They are aspects that I really do not want to miss."

Won't you please consider a pledge to this important fund this year? Forms have been distributed to church mailboxes and should be returned to Mary Newcomer by Sunday, April 4. Jerry Landes and Randy Longenecker are other members of the committee.

## New librarian proposes changes By Jeannette Hostetler



I have spent the last several months getting acquainted with our church library and its details of organization. Thank you to the previous librarians who have written procedures and information in notebooks, and a continuing thank you to Carole Barrett who processes the check-ins and outs on Sundays.

I have several ideas that perhaps you would give me your thoughts about. The culture has shifted from videos to DVDs, and I am wondering if it may be time to change out the children's videos. I've thought of perhaps setting them out on a hall table for folks to take home, or giving them to the food pantry to give to the families that come for food.

The church library receives many donations of really good books, but our library shelves are getting very full. Instead of processing all of them into the library, perhaps maybe we should have space on a hall table for people to take or exchange books without keeping a record. I have several books that I have finished and will place them out for anyone to take and return, only if they wish to return them.

I am interested in knowing what type of books folks would like to see purchased for our church library. Thank you in advance for your responses.

## Elective class studies issues of human sexuality

In late January, Bethel began an elective study of issues around the topic of human sexuality and homosexuality with an average attendance of 55-70 persons. The first three Sunday School sessions laid the groundwork for our dialogue, discussed methods of Biblical interpretation in general, and examined relevant scripture texts.

On Saturday evenings the input so far has presented the topic from a wider perspective. Several videos and personal sharing have given us a variety of snapshots of people's lives and experiences to broaden the scope of our insights.

A study book was prepared and distributed to participants to provide resources and new reading materials. Historical documents include Mennonite Church USA statements on human sexuality. Readings include magazine articles, a glossary, and chapters from two books (*Stumbling Toward a Genuine Conversation of Homosexuality*, edited by Michael A. King and *To Continue the Dialogue: Biblical Interpretation and Homosexuality*, edited by C. Norman Kraus).

The intent of the study is to look at a variety of perspectives on homosexuality and the Bible. In the process, we are considering the origin of our views on this topic. Have our perspectives come from the church, society, science, personal experience, TV shows? Assignments include selected readings and examining the Bible.

Participants have begun sharing their stories and how their beliefs have evolved, beginning with members of the Ad Hoc committee. This creates opportunities to respect and learn from each other in new areas we may not have discussed before. As we become more vulnerable with each other, may we graciously offer a safe environment in which to dialogue.

The study continues in March and will focus on the gospels and Jesus' life, concluding with a discussion on how we might faithfully minister to others around this difficult and controversial issue. May the Holy Spirit direct our thoughts and feelings as we dialogue and interact together.

### March Sexuality Course Schedule

**Sun, March 14, 9:30 a.m.**

Session 6:

Personal Stories of Discerning  
Homosexuality 3

**Sat, March 20, 6:30 p.m.**

Sexuality from a  
Christian Perspective

**Sun, March 21, 9:30 a.m.**

Session 7: Considering  
Jesus on this topic

**Sat, March 27, 6:30 p.m.**

Videos: Winkey Pratney  
& Growing Up Gay

**Sun, March 28, 9:30 a.m.**

Session 8: Ministry  
Potential & Wrap-up



## Bethel Mennonite Church

416 Washington  
P.O. Box 549  
West Liberty, OH  
43357

**Phone:**  
937.465.4587

**Email:**  
Pastor Dave Maurer  
bethelpastor@  
2access.net

Pastor Rick Stoner  
bethelyp@2access.net

Secretary  
bethelsecretary@  
2access.net

We're on the Web!  
See us at:  
[bethelchurchwl.org](http://bethelchurchwl.org)

### About the newsletter:

This newsletter is published quarterly in March, June, September and December by the church secretary.

Its purpose is three-fold:

~**Inform** the church about events

~**Acquaint** persons who attend Bethel with each other

~**Inspire** us to Christ-like living

## Music and Worship Leaders Conference Report By Bill Barrett

On January 8, I drove to western Pennsylvania with my bass for the Laurelville Music and Worship Leaders Conference. This conference has been a mainstay for the Mennonite Church for more than 20 years, but I think I was the first from Bethel to attend. The accommodations at the conference center were very nice, and it felt just like home with more than a foot of snow on the ground.

Marilyn Houser-Hamm, an outstanding pianist from Canada, was in charge of instrumental music. Marlene Kropf, from the Elkhart area, was the worship leader. Ken Nafziger and Ted Swartz from Harrisonburg, VA were in charge of singing and drama. Brian McLaren was the featured speaker.

Each day began and ended with a prayer service. After the morning service we went to breakfast (good food -- all you could eat). The morning and afternoon sessions focused on different Sundays in Lent. We sang (excellent singing) and had readings and dramas. Brian McLaren gave a sermon and following the sermon everyone broke into discussion groups. There wasn't much free time. Every minute seemed to be packed full.

Many of the over 200 attendees participated in the different worship services. Some just sang from the congregation, some were readers, and some were in the dramas. There were several violinists, a

harpist, and a few people played on one drum or another. One guy played the mandolin, but I got to play the bass.

Most of the people were from Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia, with a few from other states and Canada. Nancy Roynon was the only one I knew when I got there since I wasn't related to anyone, but I met several very nice people.

It was obvious that a lot of planning and pre-conference preparation was made, but the spontaneity of having someone say, "Would you play for this song," or "Would you do this reading" was fun. The leaders would ask and people would "jump right in."

Saturday night was a hymn sing, but not the kind where everyone chooses their favorite. Ken Nafziger had a list of 15 or 17 different hymns from *Hymnal Worship Book*, *Sing the Journey* and *Sing the Story* that pertained to the theme of the weekend.

After the worship and communion service on Sunday, everyone returned to their own church to begin planning for their own Lenten services. I'm planning to attend the conference again next year, and would like to have a few others from Bethel go with me.

Did I mention the food and the music were really great?

### March is Bethel's month at WL Cares Food Pantry!

You can help by:  
**Volunteering to work**  
*(Sign up on the  
lobby bulletin board)*

**Donating money**  
*(to buy food to  
re-stock the shelves)*

**Buying food for the pantry**

### Wall Busting Service

Sunday, April 11, 6:00 p.m.  
Bethel Mennonite Church

Theme: *It's all about Jesus!*

Pastor Rick Stoner  
will bring the message

Pie and ice cream will be served  
following the service.

*Hosted by Bethel, Oak Grove,  
and the United Methodist Church*