

Bethel Mennonite Church

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Newsletter

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Bethel Youth Fundraising for Mission Trip in 2016

Cheryl Shank

On Dec. 12th, some of the youth along with Dave & Michelle Link, Dena Hostetler and myself, spent a couple of hours helping Chuck Buck clean up branches in his yard after he cut down 3 trees. Who would have thought that in mid-December, one could work outside with just sweatshirts!

The youth group and youth Sunday school class has been reflecting on the meaning of Advent and how we can prepare our heart for this wonderful season for celebrating God's gift of love that was wrapped in swaddling clothes, and then later died for our sins on the cross. I think these two holiday celebrations need to be united spiritually. I enjoy hearing the youth share their thoughts.

We are planning our first official fundraiser for our service trip this upcoming summer. It will be on January 16th, so mark your calendars. At 5:30 pm, we will provide a chili supper along with a youth dessert duel competition. Which youth will have 1) the most creative display for their food item, and 2) which dessert appeals to your palette? After the 'dessert duel' everyone is invited to go to the sanctuary to view the movie "War Room". This movie focuses on the need for prayer in fighting the spiritual battles around us. I personally recommend this movie.



The Maurer's final Sunday worship service with us concluded with members of congregation going forward to pray with them as they head to Pigeon River Mennonite.

A gift to remember us by...Beth & Dave Maurer display the woven throw blanket with all four seasons of Bethel on it at their noon farewell potluck. Many people shared fond memories and well wishes after the meal.



Announcements:

♦ **War Room Prayer Warriors Needed!** January 16th will be our first public showing of the War Room. Please pray that this becomes a powerful ministry for Bethel's community outreach. Invite friends and neighbors to attend. (See more detail on page 1)

♦ **The Next Red Cross Blood Drive will be held January 29th** from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. We need volunteers to help load in and out, and to host the snack table. A sign-up sheet is in the lobby.

♦ **A Congregational Meeting will be held January 24th** at noon following a meal. The Elder Leadership Team invites you to attend and discuss/ask questions regarding the transitional pastorate process. Please plan to attend this important meeting.

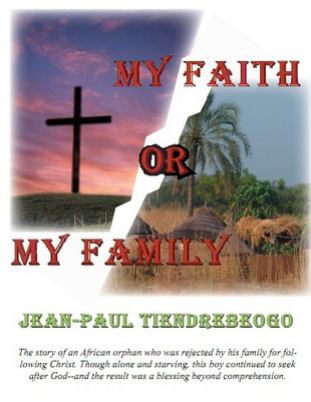
Book Review

by Mary Kay King

Mary Kay King recently read "My Faith or My Family" by Jean-Paul Tiendrebeogo and shares the following review:

A powerful story about the life of the African-American speaker who preached for us during Mission Month in November.

The book goes into detail about the trials he endured during his youth seeking God. But through it all he continued to seek God. A must read!



Breakfast Egg & Hash Brown Casserole

Carole Barrett

If you missed Carole's delicious casserole at the Christmas Sunday breakfast, or you had it and would like to make it in your own kitchen, here's the recipe!

Do this evening before you need the casserole:

- ♦ Press 24 ounces frozen hash brown potatoes into a greased 9 x 13 pan.
- ♦ Pour 1 stick melted margarine (or butter) over all
- ♦ Bake at 425 for 25 minutes.

In the morning:

- ♦ Mix 2 cups shredded cheese, 2 cups diced ham and 2 Tablespoons mushrooms (optional) spread over hash browns.
- ♦ Beat 8-10 eggs and then mix in 2 cups milk, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 2 Tablespoons onion flakes in with them.
- ♦ Pour over mixture in the pan.
- ♦ Bake at 350 for 45-60 minutes. Let sit 15-20 minutes before serving.

News from the Byler Family

Debbie Byler, daughter of Ruby Byler, graduated on Dec 11 with a Doctor of Ministry degree from Columbia International University in Columbia, S. C. Rose Rosanova was in attendance at the graduation. Debbie will continue her work at Mennonite Mission Network in Elkhart, IN.

Noteworthy Dates

January Anniversaries

- Jan. 14, 1966 – Nellie & Dick Lindemer
- Jan. 16, 1965 – Jeannette & Jim Hostetler
- Jan. 25, 1980 – Deanna & Mark Kauffman

January Birthdays

- 5 – Chuck Swartz
- 8 – Bill Barrett
- 10 – Bob VanOsdol
- 12 – Kyle VanOsdol
- 14 – Steve Rabenstein
- 19 – Kathi Robinaugh
- 19 – Tara Sanford
- 21 – Trace Robinaugh
- 22 – Jeanette Hostetler
- 26 – Wanda Shumaker
- 31 – Pat Yoder

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Youth Pastor: Cheryl Shank
Administrative Assistant: Tesa Jordan

Next Newsletter Deadline: Jan. 20, 2016

“Go Forth in Love”

by Pastor Dave Maurer



My time here as pastor of Bethel has come to a close and we are deeply thankful to the congregation for the ways that you have supported my family and me over the last seven and a half years. There have been ups and downs but through it all we have appreciated your love, friendship and prayers. Thank you.

As I reflect on the season of Advent and Christmas that have just recently passed, I am reminded that God did all of this out of God's love for us. And that God's love has continued and will continue in the days, weeks, months and years ahead. His love will be us as we go to that state up north (yes, I believe God even loves them. ;) I figure that even Nineveh needed their Jonah, right?); and His love will continue to dwell richly with this congregation and each one of you.

John 3:16 declares, “For God so loved the world, that God sent his one and only son that whosoever believes in Him, might not perish but have everlasting life.” It's all been done in love, but that's not as simple as one might at first think. Of course God did this because God loves us; you may say. But God's love for us models a love that is far deeper than the “oowie gooie” love that gets thrown around today. God's love is far more all encompassing than simply spending time with people that you like. God's love is far more sacrificial than it

is self serving. In fact, God's path of love is what Paul described in I Corinthians 13:4-8.

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”

The love of God is patient. It is kind. We are the ones who are often impatient. We are the ones who are often unkind. God has exercised tremendous patience with humanity. One of the ways that we express love for those we take care of is through patience and kindness. There are times when we wonder, “Is he ever going to get this?” There are times when we experience unkind words from others. And in our humanness, we sometimes fall short; but God's path of love calls us to patience and kindness. This is true of our biological family as well as our spiritual family, our Bethel brothers and sisters. In the months ahead, show love to one another in patience and kindness.

Love does not envy. It is not boastful or proud. In our humanness, we are the ones who find ourselves envying one another. If only I had her gift of singing. If only I had his ability to fix things. In our humanness, we are the ones who boast of ourselves at the expense of others. We are the ones who, sometimes not so subtly, slip in a reminder about how great we are. We are the ones who take it personally when our part in something does not receive the acknowledgement that we think that it should.

In God's path of love, this is true for each one of us as well. In our families of origin, in the various aspects of life, and in our Bethel body, our call is to decrease so that Christ might increase. We are to be more concerned with lifting one another up rather than ourselves so that God might more fully work through those around us. In the months ahead, show love to one another by lifting one another up rather than yourself.

And love does not keep record of wrong. In our humanness, our natural response is tit for tat, eye for eye, and tooth for tooth. Our view of justice is often more about causing others the pain that we have felt than it is about balancing the scales; whereas God's path of love is to forgive and to move on. Jesus called us not even to remain angry with one another. Moreover, Jesus moved on from those who had wronged Him. On the cross, he declared, “Forgive them for they know not what they do.” This is the path of love that God calls us to.

God calls us to a love that sets aside the wrongs that we have experienced. God calls us to a love that forgives one another for the things that happen in life. This is as true for our enemies out there that threaten our safety as it is for our friends in here who at times wrong us in one way or another. Each of us have been wronged. Each of us will be wronged again. In the months ahead, show one another love by letting go of these records of wrong.

Though I go from you now, I continue to pray God's blessings of the path of love upon this body. That in this time of transition as you relate to one another, you would be patient and kind with each other. That in this time of transition that you would not envy one another or boast of yourself, but that you would go out of your way to lift up one another. That in this time of transition that you would let go of any record of wrong that you may hold against one another. Choose instead to live into the path of love that is offered to us in I Cor. 13, the path of love that is modeled to us in our relationship with God and in the life and teachings of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Go forth in love.

Bethel History Corner by Donna Lehman, Historian

Christmas Activities Throughout the Years:

The Messiah was first sung in the community (South Union) in 1939.

West Liberty had its own special Santa Claus. Right out of high school (at age 18) Wilfred (Willie) Yoder started being "Santa Claus." He was asked by the local drug store (Ross's) to dress as Santa for a local promotion and for 50 years, Willie played the part, going to schools, parties, Senior Centers and parades. 50 years of Ho Ho Ho!



Bethel children have been involved in Christmas musicals. Along with So. Union and Oak Grove in 1978 they did "It's Cool in the Furnace." (This was repeated in

more recent years.) Others have been "We Like Sheep," "The Angel's Song," "Christmas in cricket Country," "Wise Guys and Starry Skies", and "The Gift Goes On." (Thanks to the leadership of Cindy King, Kim Lehman, Bill Barrett and Peggy Wirick for their leadership.) And of course, many Christmas Eves, the children have portrayed "The Christmas Story."

The Sojourner's SS Class has met annually for about 10 years at some point in december at Byron and Barbara Kauffman's for singing of Christmas hymns and carols--along with some good eats.

For several years, Bethel had a float in the West Liberty Christmas Parade, such as "Jesus the Light of the World" a float with angels and shepherds on a very cold night.

Advent Christmas candles appeared in children's mailboxes since the early '70's, originally made by Dorcas Kauffman, then by Susie Krabill and now by Nellie Lindemer.

In December 2001 Bethel boys (Gr 3-6) had a camp-out at the Graber's cabin with a wind chill of -5 degrees! (A little different temp than we're having in 2015!)

Photos above: Arnita Yoder with her dad, Willie as Santa, Beth Maurer with the children after a Christmas pageant.

Bethel/Oak Grove Mennonite Women

by Donna Lehman

The Mennonite Women's group met for a busy day on December 8th. It was 'cookie decorating'—400 cookies decorated! They were delivered to Adriel, shut-ins and attenders! Also, before our mealtime, Pastor Dave was given a warm, cozy comforter as a thanks and farewell. Our meal time was a potluck with hostesses Susie Krabill, Kathy Graber and Janice Rabenstein, and a birthday was noted, Eleanor Shumaker.

We have a balance in our treasury of \$446. A donation of \$100 was given to the Mike Hostetler family (plus a \$100 anonymous donation!) Barb Kauffman said MCC is in need of blankets, health kits and relief kits. She hopes to have a 'comforter project' in the spring to add to the blanket supply. Also if anyone has interest in serving on the State's Mennonite Women Board, they need a V. President and Secretary. Talk to Roxanne Kauffman.

Several people showed creative projects they have made and shared books they read. In a devotional, Sara Ellen shared "God's Creativity in Scripture" and how He is to be praised through the shortest chapter—only 2 verses (Psalms 117) and His faithfulness in the longest chapter—176 verses (Psalms 119).

Besides the cookies, other works completed include 4 comforters, 2 baby comforters, 3 health kits; and 9 baby comforters were delivered to Hi Point Women's Health Center.

A Note From Peace & Justice by Barbara Kauffman

Hopefully, you have noted the prayer requests in the bulletin related to the Israel-Palestine ongoing conflict. More information is available on the websites that have been



included with these requests.

These are prepared by Bill Shumaker and as a Peace and Justice group, we all encourage you to read, learn more and keep current with this ongoing dilemma.

In the Spring of 2016, we will help host a "Comforter Blitz" to benefit MCC and their work with refugees in many locations.

More details will follow at a later date.

MENNONITE ARTS WEEKEND “TRANSFORMATION: RESEEING, RESHAPING, RE- NEWING”

FEBRUARY 5-7, 2016

Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship will be bringing Mennonite Arts Weekend in February.

Artist-Presenters will be:

Andreas Baumgartner – mixed-media artist

Anthony Brown – baritone soloist

Dan Charles – writer, NPR correspondent

Allan Rudy Froese – worship planner

Scott Holland – theologian

Mike Horner – puppetry

Mark Nafziger – artist (ceramics)

Zachary Nafziger – artist (stained glass)

Elizabeth Pixley-Fink – singer/songwriter

Keith Ratzlaff – poet

Kris Shenk – worship artist

Rebecca Slough – music leader/worship planner

Randy Spaulding – accompanist/composer

Early registration must be sent in by January 15.

More information and registration forms can be found online at:

www.mennoniteartsweekend.org

or beside the church mailboxes or see Lori Lehman

The weekend is designed for artists and non-artists alike, to encourage creative expression in Mennonite communities.

Submitted by: Lori Lehman

Elder Leadership Team

by Kathy Lehman

Editor's note: I asked the Elders to share an update on the new APEST Team structure and their progress. Thank you to Kathy Lehman for providing an answer.

What do you get when you bring together five people who look at the world from five very different perspectives, and tell them to be a team? You get a challenge! And hopefully you also get a group that will serve and represent the congregation at Bethel with energy and integrity.

The new Elder Leadership Team (ELT) represents the five roles outlined in the APEST model. These giftings suggested in the Ephesians 4 passage include Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds, and Teachers. The ELT benefits from having these varying perspectives as we discern together how God is leading us and the congregation at Bethel. Steve Lapp, representing the role of Apostle, is functioning as the congregational chairperson. Additional team members include Larry Evans (Prophet role), KJ Schrock (Evangelist role), Barbara Landes (Shepherd role) and Kathy Lehman (Teacher role).

What do you get when on the first night these five met together they learned their trusted leader is leaving for that state up north? You get another challenge! Together we are working, with the resources and guidance of the Ohio Conference, to seek new leadership for Bethel that will serve the needs of each one in the congregation. We hope to lead Bethel through this time of transition and help our family of believers grow in faith and unity.

We ask for your prayers for our team's discernment and decisions, for yourselves as servants in the Lord's work at Bethel, and for our congregation as we move ahead in hope and anticipation of what Christ has in store for us!



Commissioning of the Elder Leadership Team

Holiday Greetings from the Schlonegers

Have a Joyous Christmas and a Blessed New Year! Some highlights of our year have been:

- *Celebrating 50 year since high school graduation. Weldon was able to drive to Ohio to attend his reunion and then a gathering of his siblings and their families.
- * Spending two weeks in a beach house in Prince Edward Island.
- *Singing in the Bethel College Mennonite Church Chancel Choir. Weldon joined the Newton Community Choir for a fall concert.
- *Piano and pottery lessons for Florence as well as writing poetry.
- *Enjoying making new friends and keeping in touch with family.
- *Thankful for returning health after Florence's difficult spring with low thyroid function.
- *Keeping funny hours with Weldon's continuing work schedule from 4:30 a.m.-7:00 every morning with the computer-based newsletter business he has with Tim and Matt.

Below is a recent poem based on the text for Advent I. Sending our love and best wishes, Weldon and Florence Schloneger

The tree stands barren in the wind,
leaves scattered by a bitter gale
that shrieks with violence of war,
howls with icy prejudice and fear,
exposes summer's gaping hole
in earth's white poles and atmosphere.

We huddle down in fear,
batten down our insulating, biased cloaks,
chase away anxiety with warming drinks,
hedge our futures at the bank.
We will beat this winter's cold,
dance its tune until it has to melt
beneath our frantic moves.

The trap snaps shut.
Our gyrations are the cause and not solution.

Yet hope lies in the silent, swelling branch.
Watch and wait.
Guard your heart against the lies.
The Son of Love comes quietly and steadily,
warming earth and melting snow.
The leaves push out and open wide.
Fruit ripens, nourishing and sweet.

Taste abundance of an ever-widening love.
Stand tall in humble, holy lives--
rev'rence all created things.
And tune your eye to understand eternal signs.

--Florence Schloneger, Advent 2015



Above: Maurer Family Christmas photos; **Top right:** Bethelites caroling at Green Hills; **Middle & Bottom right:** Christmas Day Dinner. So many people came together in West Liberty to serve 350 delivered meals plus 100+ meals in house.