

CONESTOGA Connections



February 2012
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January's life-celebrating events at Conestoga Mennonite



Hunter's Banquet at Conestoga was another enjoyable time of eating, music, and fun!



Celia and Rosa teaching Savannah how to walk!



Pastor Bob blessing and dedicating our new 2012 leaders.



Installation of Rachel Mast as Minister of Youth and Young Adults.



Above: Young adults enjoying dinner before Bible Study at Pastor Bob and Cindy's home.

Left: Mason taking the offering after Howard shares morning reflections and while Jill Waters plays a special version of "Jesus Loves Me" on the piano.





The PASTORS CONNECTION

God Cares For All His Creatures

Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people...and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned for that great city. - God to Jonah in 4:11

When Pastoral Team designated 2012 a year to “Stand Firm by Dwelling in the Word Together,” we identified monthly texts for sermons and Sunday worship reflections; plus personal and committee devotions. Many joined us in the Jeremiah 31:27-34 January “Contrasting Covenants” text. We invite you to invest some February time in Romans 10:8-15.

I have been inspired as others shared dwelling insights. Last week, my eyes settled on Jeremiahs’ promise in verse 27 that blessing would “plant the house of Judah with the offspring of men and of animals.”

This text does not definitively outline Gods’ care for animals. It could be read as God increasing productivity of livestock simply to bless His people. A couple in the Bible Study group that Cindy and I lead helps pay for private education by selling purebred puppies. A litter of ten is a significant blessing over three!



CONESTOGA MENNONITE CHURCH

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Reporters: Bonnie Beam and Sharon Stoltzfus

But the Jonah text clearly articulates God’s animal care. God’s rationale for offering grace towards repentant people who had brutally terrorized His chosen people included the reality that judgment would also destroy cattle. Many Christians would be offended by a declaration of God’s love toward the Taliban. Imagine the ridicule if we named the cattle of radical Muslims as reason to call forth God’s grace. Yet even before Christ taught enemy love, we find this profound declaration of God’s love for all creation.

Scripture opens with God declaring “good” each creation day. The day He fashioned, humans were “very good”. By the time of Noah, God regrets that declaration. In our throw-away culture, some use the instruction to, “Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish...” as justification to destroy created beauty. But a proper understanding reveals a Creator in love with creation commissioning humans to steward wisely His garden and His creatures. Sin led to distortion that Romans 8 applies to creation groaning for liberation “into the glorious freedom of the children of God (vv. 20-22).

Some believe creation care cannot be reconciled with hunting. I conclude otherwise. Hunting deepens my awe of creation, causing me to fall in love anew with clean water, fresh air, healthy soil, and majestic mountains. I do believe followers of Christ should challenge the tendency to kill God’s creatures simply for blood lust. I am grateful my Dad taught me the Native American discipline to only shoot when confident that a clean kill will avoid wounding or wasting an animal harvested.

Christians appropriately hold varied positions on issues of fracking, global warming, cancellation of a pipeline to transport Canadian oil to the Gulf of Mexico, offshore drilling, tax policies targeting renewable energy, and farming practices that increasingly rely on chemicals and modified seeds. But while a biblical people may disagree on how to apply stewardship principles; all should affirm with Psalm 24 that, “the earth is the Lords and everything in it,” and recognize that care of God’s earth is close to God’s heart.

God still invites we Jonahs to join him in concern for all His children, including our sworn enemies; “and for the cattle as well!”

*Joyfully Living Christ’s Story with You,
Pastor Bob Petersheim*



Sewing Circle

Sewing Circle met on Wednesday, January 4, 2012. There were 12 ladies present. Finished items included 2 comforters, 11 blankets, and 6 baby gowns. We also filled 14 health kits.

For devotions, we sang, "Will Jesus Find Us Watching?" I John 2:28-3:3 was read, followed by a meditation entitled, "Let's Be Ready." The special offering was \$33.00. We sang "Christ Returneth" before adjourning.

- Betty Cannell

NEIGHBORS caring & sharing

Neighbors meets on Tuesday mornings during the academic school year in our church fellowship hall from 9:15 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome for this time of fellowship!

— January 31 —

Humor—The Best Medicine
with Rita Richard

— February 7 —

Sister To Sister
with Loice Byler

— February 14 —

Encouraging Your Spouse
with Sharon Charles

— February 21 —

Creative Praying With Children
[Pre-register by today for next week.]
with Kathy Weaver Wenger

— February 28 —

Guess Who's Coming to Brunch?

DID YOU KNOW THAT . . .

. . . the **Activities Committee** will send boxes to all the college students in March? We would like to include various snacks, encouraging notes, and socks in the boxes, and are asking for donations. A sign-up sheet of what needs donated is located on the bulletin board in the foyer. A basket is under the MYF Bulletin Board to place donations. These care packages will be assembled during the Fellowship Meal in February. Thanks so much!

. . . **Gary and Sharon Stoltzfus** are leaving on Tuesday, January 31, for a term of service under SOOP at Carlsbad Mennonite Church in Carlsbad, New Mexico? SOOP is an organization of Mennonite Mission Network providing opportunities for adults to use their gifts to help others and make a difference in others' lives. Watch the March 2012 *Connections* for an article about their experience. They will return home on February 15.

. . . **Andy and Dot Leatherman** are leaving on February 2, for Alabama in their travel trailer to work at repairing homes damaged or destroyed by tornadoes. This service is with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). Watch the March 2012 *Connections* for an article about their experience. They will return home on March 3.



Until the end of March, the Penny Power jar is in our lobby to collect coins for MCC! Above are Penny Power contributors four years ago!



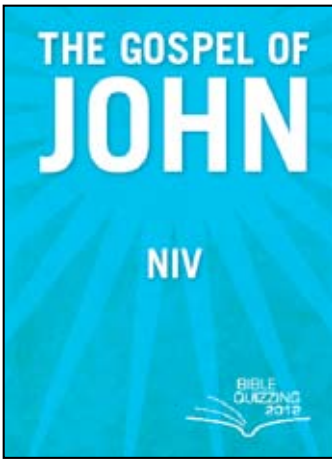
Camp Deer Park 2012

It was Friday, December 30, and just about everyone had arrived in the parking lot at Conestoga Mennonite Church. After loading the trailer with luggage, we all piled in and hit the road headed for Camp Deer Park. Once up at the camp, all of the youth and adults (23 total) that came shared a time of bonding and enjoyment of God's creation.

We spent a lot of the time cutting, hauling, and splitting wood for the camp to use. We also partook in many other activities including board games, football, kick the can, and "piggy wants a motion." Overall the weekend was a great time of praising God and enjoying each others' friendship.

We would also like thank all of the adults and young adults that helped to make this weekend possible.

- Mason Stoltzfus



Conestoga's Bible Quiz Team

in 2012 includes Joy Beam, Josh Beam, Mason Stoltzfus, Meredith Graff, and Weston Caley, along with Justin Pechart as coach. This year the quiz material for study is found in the Gospel of *John* as we participate in League A of ACC's Bible Quizzing. Everyone is invited to enjoy this with our Quiz Team!

MYF Bible Studies

Bible Studies each Wednesday night in the church Youth Room led by Rachel Mast.

MYF Ski Day . . .

Saturday, February 4, weather permitting. Bob Horning will teach the newbies!

MYF Super Bowl Party . . .

Sunday, February 5, after Quizzing at 2:00 p.m. at Elizabethtown Mennonite Church where Conestoga's Quiz Team will be quizzing Forest Hills, Petra 1, and Petra 3, the Super Bowl Party will be at Bob and Karen Horning's home.

MYF Kayaking Adventure . . .

Sunday, April 29, will find us on a kayaking adventure!



Tina Essick sharing a prayer of dedication for the new 2012 Conestoga Quiz Team: Josh Beam, Mason Stoltzfus, Joy Beam, and Justin Pechart as coach. Missing in photo are Meredith Graff and Weston Caley.

2012 Quizzing Schedule

- ♦ **January 29, 2012**, 6:30 p.m., on John 4-5 at Ephrata Mennonite Church, with Conestoga quizzing Media 1, Media 3, Timberline 3, and Ridgeview 2.
- ♦ **February 5, 2012**, 2:00 p.m., on John 6-7 at Elizabethtown Mennonite Church, with Conestoga quizzing Forest Hills, Petra 1, and Petra 3.
- ♦ **February 12, 2012**, 6:30 p.m., on John 8-10 at Forest Hills Mennonite Church, with Conestoga quizzing Slate Hill 2, Weaverland 1, and Strasburg 1.
- ♦ **February 19, 2012**, 6:30 p.m., on John 11-13: 17 at Lancaster Mennonite School, with Conestoga quizzing Bowmansville 2, and Hope Nations.
- ♦ **February 26, 2012**, 6:30 p.m., on John 13: 18-16, at Maple Grove Mennonite Church with Conestoga quizzing Timberline 1, Hinkletown 3, and Hinkletown 1.
- ♦ **March 4, 2012**, 6:30 p.m., on John 17-19 at Slate Hill Mennonite Church, with Conestoga quizzing Zion 1 and Living Truth.
- ♦ **March 11, 2012**, 6:30 p.m., on John 20-21 at Lancaster Mennonite School, with Conestoga quizzing Bowmansville 1.
- ♦ **March 18, 2012**, 1:00 p.m., on John 1-21—the ACC Tournament.
- ♦ **March 23-25, 2012**, Invitational Tournament at West Liberty, Ohio.



Senior Connections

Thursday,
February 9, 2012

Join us for a noon meal followed by “*I Can’t Find my Car Keys—Does That Mean I Have Alzheimer’s Disease?*” by Faith R Hoover, Director of Home & Community Services at Landis Homes. We will look at the warning signs of Alzheimer’s Disease and related forms of memory loss. Through the use of story, we will identify helpful—and not so helpful—ways of relating to people with memory loss. Time for questions and answers too.

A Secret Message on an Old Church Bench

by Lemar Mast

It was Fall 1923 when Conestoga Mennonite members were busy contemplating building a new church building. In September, the old church building was moved across the Conestoga Turnpike (Route 23).

On Saturday, October 13, a number of members cleaned out the new building preparing to paint it and install the benches. Five days later on October 17, two trustees, David M. Mast and John M. Hertzler, and probably others began removing the benches and preparing them for installation in the new building. Interestingly, they left a message for future discovery inscribed on the underside of one of the benches.

Just this fall, some of Allen and Ed Weaver’s employees at Weaver’s Orchard discovered **this old bench**. There was a message on the underside of a bench. Is this the first time that this message has been read since 1923?

The words written on the bench appears in the brown box on the right.

David M. Mast, John M. Hertzler, and Jacob Hartz were the three church trustees in 1923.

David M. Mast was the grandfather of Paul, Oliver (father of Freda Petersheim), Westley, and Miriam Mast (late wife of Allen Weaver). Allen Weaver remembers when his father served as church trustee for years!

John M. Hertzler was the grandfather of Jim Hertzler, our former co-pastor.

Jacob Hartz was the third trustee, apparently not present, and thus did not get in on the graffiti.

The painter Robert E. Simpson was the retired school-teacher from Churchtown who co-authored the book *Annals of the Conestoga Valley*. He was also one of C.Z. Mast’s school-teachers.

On Tuesday, November 3, the congregation held a frolic



Allen Weaver holding the underside of a bench that was in our old church building. His son, Ed Weaver, is pointing to the words.

David M. Mast, Oct. 17, 1923

Nice warm day.

Farmers are commencing to husk corn.

I am 55 years old tearing out old benches out of the old church to place in the new.

John M. Hertzler went to Kinzers Millwork to lengthen benches.

Robert E. Simpson, Painter

Samuel Edwards, Painter

Hansel Simpson, Painter



Lemar sharing what is inscribed on the underside of the old church bench at a recent Visitation Team meeting.

to prepare the building and grounds for the dedication service of this new church building which took place four days later on November 17, 1923. Total building cost was \$11,290.74.



The front view of the Japara ship that was wrecked!

Surviving a Shipwreck *(continued from page 8)*

they ate, not hotel fare by any standard.

Half way across the Atlantic, the first disaster happened. The ship's boiler broke down. For a day or two, we did not know what would happen as we just drifted along at low power until they finally made the necessary repairs. Who was in a hurry anyway!

After a week, we completed the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, and approached the Straits of Gibraltar, an eight to 27-mile-wide channel connecting the Atlantic Ocean with the Mediterranean Sea. On one side was Europe (Spain) and on the other side was Africa (Morocco). Here our second disaster occurred.

I remember that night as clear as a bell. It was so foggy! All night long, every 20 to 30 seconds as I went to sleep in my cabin, I could hear the huge fog horns of the ship blaring out their message—"we're here, we're here". Up in the captain's quarters on the radar, all of a sudden there suddenly appeared another ship coming straight for us! Our captain sent messages, took evasive action, but that boat kept coming. No matter what our captain did, he could not get away from that ship. Finally it was on top of us and there was a tremendous crash!!!!

Down in my cabin, I was thrown against the wall that my bunk bed stood against. I remember to this day seeing the drawers of the dresser come tumbling out onto the floor, while the suitcases and other belongings and furniture sliding across the floor. My poor brother, Steve, happened to be going to the bathroom at the time, and that made a mess! I jumped up, looked out my cabin window, and there, sliding alongside our ship was another big ship. Alarms sounded and we were all ordered to put on our life jackets and move out onto the deck. My, were we children excited! Maybe we

will sink! We were in a shipwreck!

The adults and captain had another concern as all this took place. Down in the hold were 20 train car loads of dynamite, part of our cargo. That is a lot of dynamite! If that were hit, it would blow us up, literally destroying both ships and all of us in the process. *Would we make it or not*, they desperately wondered. The other ship hit the front of our ship and then slid off missing the cargo area entirely. And we did not explode! Had that French passenger boat been even one or two seconds delayed in hitting us, it would have struck us right in the middle, right into the dynamite, and we would all be gone.

To this day, I think about that. God was watching over us. Even though I had not committed my life to the Lord yet, God was watching over me, and our family. That is very comforting to me. It reminds me, as well, of the importance of praying parents. God pays attention to praying parents, and maybe protects the children because of their prayers.

So there we were, all of us out on the deck of the ship; and the ship was leaning to one side. We were soon assured that our boat would not sink (to my disappointment), but we would immediately have to head for the nearest harbor, the port of Gibraltar. It took hours for us to get there at low power, only to find that the harbor refused to let us in. If we blew up in the harbor, they said, it would destroy the whole harbor. So instead, we were forced to dock at the breakwater, half a mile out. The only way to get off the ship and into the town of Gibraltar was by our lifeboats. So I got to ride the life boats after all!

The rest of our trip was uneventful. We spent days wandering the winding streets of the town of Gibraltar until we connected with one of the Castle Line passenger ships passing through. That ship carried us through the Mediterranean, through the Suez Canal to the Red Sea, into the Indian Ocean, and then on to East Africa, and home.

God is so merciful to us. I think about this trip, about other trips, and dangers since then. God has always been a defense and a protector, and knows our steps into danger even before we know. On other occasions, I have been in serious danger. The evidence is there that God is our strength, our ever-present help in trouble, as Scripture says. I have personally experienced the truth of this Scripture, and am alive today because of God's mercy.



*Andy Leatherman
as a teenager.*

Surviving a Shipwreck with 20 Train-Car Loads of Dynamite on Board

by Andrew Leatherman

I hated working on my Grandfather Henry Garber's farm in Mt. Joy. Hour after thirsty hour, I stood in the hot blazing sun with a hoe in hand, chopping the weeds out of the half-mile long cornfield. The farm was rented out to tenants' and I was hoeing their corn. It was 1952.

I was only 11 years old, and my parents, John and Catharine Leatherman who were missionaries to East Africa, were on a year's furlough in the U.S. I could not wait to return to Africa. I did not like this life in the U.S. My heart was in Tanganyika (Tanzania today) where I was born and grew up. The U.S. was not anything like Africa, and I missed it.

But, for a little money, I worked on my grandfather's farm over the summer. Then the good news finally came! We received a date when our boat would leave from New York City and sail to Africa. This was back in the days when missionaries went by boat, not by airplane—much too expensive. I was so excited! Finally we were heading back to Africa! But what a keen disappointment when the first postponement came, and then the second. Why couldn't they get that boat loaded on time? And I was out in the blazing sun dig-



ging those miserable weeds!!

Finally, the *Japara* was loaded, a Japanese freighter; and the long-anticipated departure day arrived. Our family: my parents, my older brother Bill, and younger brother Steve, and myself, were driven to New York City harbor by our extended family. My sister Lois had to stay in America to attend school, a sad day for her. We boarded the *Japara* and were assigned to the few passenger cabins on the boat. The *Japara* was a freighter and only had half a dozen cabins for passengers. I got one all to myself, overlooking the front small deck. We had no idea as we boarded that we were in for the most exciting trip of our lives!

This ship was no luxury passenger boat or cruise ship by any means. There were no mid-morning "teas" or snacks, no swimming pools, or exercise decks, or deck games. In fact, there was little deck place to walk, since this was a freighter dedicated to carrying cargo, not passengers. We ate with the crewmen in a dingy dining room, and had the same food that

(continued on page 7)

VALENTINE BANQUET

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

6:30-8:30 P.M.

*A fun evening and dinner for all ages
Free childcare. Tropical shirts and
dresses welcomed (but not necessary).*

*Cost is \$10 per person payable to
Jill Waters or
Lois Ann Mast*

