

## *The Pastors Connection*

January 2010

*“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die...a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time...” Ecclesiastes 3:1-4*

It is hard for me to fathom that a full decade has gone by since we transitioned from the twentieth century into the twenty first. So, let's reflect a bit. What was life like for you ten years ago? Cindy and I were still seeking approval of our three year rezoning journey that eventually allowed us to build our current home on a corner of my home farm. Our daughters were yet single; Erica a junior at Eastern Mennonite University, Jana a senior at Lancaster Mennonite. I was serving in the first of what would be a decade of meaningful interims; and LEAD Ministries, engagements. Cindy had recently transitioned into her current fulfilling role with Messiah College. Both of our dads were still living.

When I reflect on society; my first recollection of December 1999 was of the “pending” Y2K catastrophe. The hype was another example of our cultures need for fear. When there is inadequate reality to fear; someone manufactures a crisis. It is easy to be unglued from faith while glued to the news.

This reality is not new to our day. Generations past fought the same demons. They sat around the village fire at night and recited stories and myths to strengthen their community or increase their power.

In the biblical record the “Teacher, son of David” (author of Ecclesiastes) opens his writing sounding depressed. “Everything is meaningless” he declares. By chapter three he reflects a more nuanced perspective as quoted above concluding that good and bad is seasonal; it comes and goes. By the end of his writing his mood has lifted even more. He gives a positive “conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandment, for this is the whole duty of man...”

In a recent Pastoral Team meeting we were alerted by historians Lemar and Lois Ann Mast that 2010 is the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this congregation. Ground work is being done to celebrate this reality. We have a rich heritage. Exodus 20:12 is a commandment with promise (the first!) that as we honor father and mother, life will go well for us. We rest and plan in that promise.

When I reflect upon our congregational history I am struck by the relevance of past generations to this community. Our passion remains the same today. We want to partner with God's purposes for this generation. We know accomplishing this goal will not mean living the same way as did previous generations (they didn't live the same way as their parents!). It will mean an honoring of the values that shaped our community of faith such that God's Holy Spirit keeps flowing through us as we live Christ's story to benefit our generation.

It will be interesting to see what the future brings. Some weeks I find myself resonating with the whole range of the “Teachers” moods. I only pray that I, and we as a people of faith, will share his conclusion. May it be true of us in 2010 that we “feared God and kept His commandments.” May it be true of each of us privileged with life January 2020. If Christ tarries; may it be true in 2260 when future generations celebrate Conestoga’s 500 year anniversary!

Joyfully living Christ’s story with you, Pastor Bob