

MARCH 2007

Worship Themes

March 4 - *"God Gathers Us"* Lent 2

Genesis 15:1-12, Psalms 27,
Luke 13:31-35
Michelle Hershberger preaching

March 11 - *"God Pours Out Drink"*

Lent 3; Isaiah 55:1-9, Psalms 63:1-8,
I Corinthians 10:1-13, Luke 13:1-9
Corey preaching

March 18 - *"God Reaches Out"* Lent 4

Joshua 5:9-12, Psalms 32,
II Corinthians 5:16-21,
Luke 15:1-3, 11-32
Corey preaching

March 25 - *"God Makes a Way"* Lent 5

Isaiah 43:16-21, Psalms 126,
Philippians 3:4-14, John 12:1-8
Karen preaching

"Chattering at the Birds"

"Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt..." Colossians 4:6

I was astounded to learn the other day that our cats can talk. Well, sort of. When they look out our windows and see birds fluttering around, they begin chattering. They don't purr or meow. They chatter in a language that seems to be expressed only when they see birds! When I asked our local cat expert (Nancy) what this meant, she explained that it is a predator-like instinct that comes out whenever cats see birds flutter. Because our cats aren't usually outside, whenever they see bird activity, all they can do is chatter.

We are capable of chattering too. Words spill out of our mouths instinctively, sometimes building people up and sometimes tearing them down. Sometimes bringing peace and sometimes creating conflict. Who helps to interpret the things we say and why we say them? Paul urged the Colossians to let their speech be *"gracious and seasoned with salt."* (Col. 4:6). One of the ways that people will know of our love for Christ, is by how we talk to each other and with each other.

Sometimes we need an expert to help interpret our congregational chatterings. Over this next month we will have opportunities to reflect and review our congregational life and pastors. You will be asked to use words to evaluate both your involvement and the pastors' performances at Tabor.

WDC consultant Lee Lever will serve to be an interpreter to what you will say. You are encouraged to be honest and yet gracious, with the understanding that this experience is intended to bring growth to everyone involved.

Reviews do bring some anxiety for pastors. We don't know what kind of chatterings there may be, but we are grateful for those who can help interpret our findings. During this Lent season, may all our speech be seasoned with salt and may we pray for the day when cats and birds will lie down together, next to the lion and the lamb!

—Pastor Corey

Historical Moments

Mennonites have a rich and intriguing story. This story needs to be told and understood. It is a story of a particular kind of Christian faith. It is more than borscht, varenyky, and Low German. Rather, it is a story of how religious ideas and convictions have affected people and events. The Mennonite story would make a good television series. One filled with drama, action, tension, terror, persecution but most of all perseverance. Throughout the sixteenth century Mennonites faced extreme persecution but yet persevered and remained true to their beliefs. In the Netherlands they soon found a place for themselves in society, despite continued persecution. Mennonites who settled in Prussia soon gained a reputation for being good farmers and stewards of the land. However, throughout the seventeenth century leadership in Poland and Prussia was inconsistent. In 1789 an

Historical Moments Continued from Page 1

edict was issued which halted the rapid growth of the Mennonites and once again they began to look for a new home.

It is during this time period that some Mennonites began to look towards the United States and migrated into Pennsylvania. Yet, other groups of Mennonites began to look at migration to Russia. After meeting with Catherine the Great, a list of liberal concessions was established and agreed upon. Emigration began in 1788. The first years were difficult ones due to lack of supplies, farming a new type of terrain, a lack of leadership, and even bitterness and feelings of betrayal toward newly appointed leaders. With continued perseverance these problems were addressed and conditions improved. In 1803 a second migration from Prussia occurred with much less turmoil. This group became known as the Molotschna Colony.

Soon Mennonites began to prosper economically and culturally. Throughout the next ninety years the situation seemed ideal. Slowly but surely the winds of politics began to blow and shift. Special privileges originally agreed upon, were now taken away and once again the Mennonites prepared to emigrate. So yet another migration would occur, this time into the central part of the United States. About eighteen thousand Mennonites left Russia at that time. Although this seems like a large number, by 1914 there were approximately 120,000 Mennonites still living in Russia. These Mennonites eventually experienced terror, destruction of their farms, famine and disease.

Mennonites have always relied upon the scriptures as a base for their life and thought. In Joshua, chapter 24 the story of the wandering Israelites and their faith in God is recounted by Joshua. He admonishes them to serve the Lord and be faithful regardless of past or current situations. He continues to remind them it was the Lord who traveled with them and protected them throughout their entire journey. In verse 18 the Israelites respond to Joshua with these words, "We too will serve the Lord, for he is our God." Certainly the Lord traveled with the Mennonites. And without a doubt he has traveled with Tabor Church for nearly the last 100 years. The historical committee and the pastors have decided to embrace Joshua, chapter 24 and particularly verse 18 as our focus for worship throughout our 100th year celebration. Join with us in showing people that, "**We too will serve the Lord, for he is OUR God.**"

-Ilona Abrahams

Pastoral Congregational Review 2007

It is hard to believe, but the time has come again for a pastor/ congregational review. This is typically done in the third year of a term and that is where we are at with Corey's term. This time we will also be reviewing Karen and Doug in their respective roles as Associate and Youth Pastor. Western District Conference consultant Lee Lever is working with the review committee which includes: Barb Abrahams, chair, Jim Schmidt, Fred Unruh, Sheri Schmidt, Donavon

Schmidt and Rosie Jantz. The review will be in your mailboxes on March 4 and needs to be returned by March 18th. There will be a report of the findings on April 15th during the Sunday school hour by Lee Lever. Let us all enter into this time of review with prayer and expectation that this process will benefit both our pastors and ministries.

“If you have what you want, your rich. If you can do without it, you’re richer.”

Praying and Acting for Peace

On Friday, March 16, you will have opportunity to participate in a number of ways in a Peace Witness at Tabor Mennonite. March 16 is the fourth anniversary of the war in Iraq. Over 3000 US soldiers have died and thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians. As followers of Jesus, we are convinced that peace in Iraq cannot be won militarily. It is time to bring the troops home and support a comprehensive peace process there.

1. All day, you are welcome to come to the South SS room - which will be set up with a candle and with some guided prayers. You are invited to come and spend time in prayer for peace in the world.
2. At 5:30pm, (if the weather cooperates), we will gather at the Peace Pole at the church and walk the mile to our Pray for Peace/Act for Peace sign by the highway. We encourage you to stop by after work and participate in this public peace witness.
3. Placards will be available to anyone who would like to place them in their yards or by their houses. These will be available on March 11. We invite you to participate in any one of these events.

Local Events

Kansas Friends of MCC

Excitement is growing about this new event, the **Comforter Blitz**, planned by the Kansas Friends of Mennonite Central Committee in support of MCC. Amish and Mennonites from all over Kansas are preparing to come to the Amish Community building Thursday, March 8 from 9 am to 5 pm, to knot and bind comforters together. Several quilts will also be set up for avid quilters. The comforters will be distributed by MCC to people in need around the world with a few being sold at the MCC sale. *More information posted on bulletin board.*

Mennonite Heritage Museum

Be sure and schedule your calendar for the Goessel Mennonite Heritage Museum Dinner on Saturday, March 24 at 6:30 p.m. at the Tabor Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall. “Sisters Forever” will entertain us with several musical selections. Ann Richardson, an exceptional speaker, will follow with the presentation “Signatures from History.” Ann inherited a collection of autographed handkerchiefs from her grandmother in 1986. Signatures from many celebrities like presidents, athletes, comedians, etc. are included in her collection. Sixty-five dollar (\$65.00) tickets will be for sale in March and may be purchased from board members in church lobbies on March 11 and 18 or call the Museum Gift Shop at 367-8200. Museum memberships may also be purchased at this time. Support the Museum and get your tickets soon! You won’t want to miss this fascinating evening!

Red Cross Blood Drive

The Goessel Blood Drive will be Monday, March 19 at the Goessel Mennonite Church from 12:00 noon till 6:00 p.m. The American Red Cross will be calling for appointments. Walk-ins welcome. If you are interested in helping at the Blood Drive, call Agatha Duerksen at 367-2399.

Western District News

Tulsa--here we come!

The WDC and SCC Program Committee has begun planning for the joint **annual conference** sessions to be held at the DoubleTree Warren Place Hotel in Tulsa, OK, **July 27-29**. The WDC Reference Council will meet 1-4 p.m. on July 27; registration is 4-7 p.m.; opening worship is 7 p.m. Separate delegate sessions will be Saturday a.m.; workshops/seminars Saturday afternoon; a youth musical in the evening. All sessions will end by 11 a.m. Sunday. Hotel rates are \$89 per night (1-4 persons per room); package of meals/snacks/ ice cream social will be \$80 per person (less for children) which waives costs for use of ballrooms, seminar rooms; registration fee of \$50 per person (less for children).

Begin selecting delegates, marking your calendar, and praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance in all preparations. Brochures will be available in late spring.

TGYF

In January, the Tabor Goessel Youth Fellowship spent two weeks discussing family conflict. Another Wednesday, we invited Nita and Trenae Wilson to come and share about their Dental Missions Trip to El Salvador. They talked to us about the work they did and had a slideshow prepared too. They pulled teeth, and took pictures of the people. In February we spent a couple of weeks preparing for Youth Sunday. The theme for Youth Sunday was Anabaptists and the tradition behind our faith. Carol Duerksen willingly wrote a wonderful script for us. On February 15, a group of highschoolers traveled to Wichita for a Counter Recruitment Event. Here they talked about the draft and watched a film called "Before you Enlist." Fun times were had by all during these past two months.

~Kristin Unruh, Reporter

Mennonite Church USA

The King is going to San Jose!

We have received word that "**The Upside-down King--a rock and roots musical on the ministry of Jesus**" with music by Doug and Jude Krehbiel and script by Duane Johnson (Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, KS) will be presented twice at San Jose MCUSA convention--and once at the joint conference of WDC and SCC at Tulsa this summer. Cast members are youth from Goessel, KS area; director is Greg Bontrager (First Mennonite/Newton). There will be a premier concert fundraiser in late June--watch for dates and dream up ways to financially support this huge project. (Send contributions to WDC and mark "musical" in memo line.)

Spend the Summer Somewhere New: Are you interested in traveling to Germany, Northern Ireland, Israel or somewhere in North America? Do you want to serve others and have new experiences? Plan a summer of service with Youth Venture. Youth Venture, a program of Mennonite Mission Network, provides summer service opportunities for individual youth and young adults, ages 14-25, both in North America and Internationally. To find out more visit our website: Service.MennoniteMission.net, e-mail: YouthVenture@MennoniteMission.net or call 1-866-866-2872.

Peace Connections

Join the next Nonviolent Communication study group at Peace Connections, 612 N. Main Newton. Four sessions meet on March 7, 14, April 4, & 18 from 10-11:30 am. Learn how to observe without criticism, connect feelings to basic needs, make clear requests, respond with empathy, and how to come back to life when angry. Call 316-284-0000 or email info@peaceconnections.org to register. Class size is limited. Suggested donation \$20-40/4 sessions.

GWCA

Goessel Women's Christian Association will meet March 26 in the Bethesda Home meeting room. Rachel Mohn will give us "Panicdotes."

Recycle Cell Phones

Did you know that every day each of us will send the equivalent of 4.5 pounds (2.04 kg) of trash or garbage into our landfill sites? Cell phones and their batteries contain hazardous materials that can harm the environment if not disposed of properly.

MCC is providing a win-win opportunity for you to recycle your old cell phones and ink jet cartridges. The proceeds from this recycling project will provide income for MCC projects such as: education and support for persons affected by HIV / AIDS in Zambia and British Columbia refugee support and employment counseling in New York many other initiatives which are part of MCC's development work around the world in areas such as health, agriculture, peace and justice issues, and relief work.

All you need to do is drop off your used cell phones and ink jet cartridges at the Newton Et Cetera Shop, 619 N Main.

Thank you for your global stewardship in supporting this project!

Caring Group Ministry

Leaders meet

Caring Group leaders met on February 4 for a noon potluck and a time of sharing what is happening in their groups. They were asked to share one positive thing and one thing that is a challenge in the group. Time commitment seems to be something each group struggles with. Most groups meet once a month and have a set time for meeting. Positive things include groups gaining trust to share at a deeper level, having fun and fellowship together, and Bible study. Thanks to the leaders who take the initiative to gather groups together. Thanks also to people who brought wonderful food to share at the potluck!

Resources from the Caring Group resources shelf:

-*Forty-Sixty – A study for midlife adults who want to make a difference*
by Gentzler & Miller

-*Keeping the Promise* – video series for married people by Dr. Kevin Leman

-*Living from the heart Jesus gave you - the essentials of Christian Living*
by Friesen/Wilder

If your group is looking for something to study, see Pastor Karen. There are many resources available.

A Study of Mennonites

Conrad Kanagy has supervised a new study - a Mennonite Member Profile 2006.

- There are fewer Mennonite farmers today. While 42% of members grew up on a farm, only 12% live on a farm today. This is a decline from 34% in 1972 to 25% in 1989, to 12% today.
- A change from rural life does not mean we are more mobile than in 1972. The percent of church members who have lived in the same community for 20 years or more was 55% in 1972 and is 53% today.
- Mennonites are more highly educated today. Compared to 21% in 1972 and 31% in 1989, 38% of Mennonites today have a college degree.
- Our beliefs and practices are connected to demographic changes. As traditional "Anglo" Mennonites become more upwardly mobile - highly educated, living in the suburbs and

professionally employed - the pattern of our common values, beliefs and commitments keep changing.

Racial/Ethnic Members in Mennonite Church USA

- Nearly 18% of Mennonite Church USA congregations are racial/ethnic, representing nearly 11% of our membership.
- 50% of racial/ethnic members are born outside of the U. S.
- Racial/ethnic members are more likely than other Mennonites to rent, rather than own, their homes.
- Racial/ethnic members are more mobile than other Mennonites, living in the same community for shorter periods than other Mennonites.
- Racial/ethnic members are more likely to attend church several times a week as compared to other Mennonites, who attend only once weekly.
- Racial/ethnic members spend twice as much time as other Mennonites in church-related volunteer work.
- Racial/ethnic members are more likely to believe that their congregation has a strong commitment to serve the local community.

Racial/ethnic demographic reality shows them to often be less affluent, but more mobile. At the same time, their level of church commitment and engagement with their communities is greater than other Mennonites.