

**April 2008**

## “Practice Makes Progress”

“Set your minds on things that are above . . .”

- Colossians 3:2a

Having been a former piano teacher, the old adage “practice makes perfect” was never a favorite of mine. I never had a perfect performance. I would much rather say “practice makes progress.” By practicing, I had confidence that if I made a mistake, I could continue on. But practice is also something we talk about in our spiritual lives. The Mennonite Church, for instance, has practices of baptism, communion, and foot washing to name a few. We speak of these as corporate practices but individual practices are also important to the body of Christ. One example is stewardship, (the topic for April sermons).

The Bible talks about stewardship as sharing the gospel and as managing our time, material things, and money. Since beliefs and practices go together, we acknowledge that everything belongs to God and that God calls us to be faithful stewards of all that is entrusted to us. Being Christian, however, does not mean that good practices will automatically happen. We may have to practice things like caring for creation, living simply, or mutual aid. Practicing being good stewards will help us make progress in our dependence on God and bring the message of reconciliation to the whole world.

How can we be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us? Know that we will make mistakes but we can continue on if we set our minds on the things of God. Remember, practice may or may not make perfect, but it does make progress.  
—Pastor Karen

## Worship Themes

### **April 6 - Stewardship of Mind**

Psalm 26:1-3 Romans 12:1-2, Colossians 3:1-4, 9-17 -Karen preaching

### **April 13 - Stewardship of Money**

Psalm 24, Luke 16:1-13,  
Hebrews 13:5  
- Corey Preaching

### **April 20 - Stewardship of Time**

Psalm 34:1-8, Ecclesiastes 3:1ff, Colossians 4:2-6, Luke 1:38-42  
-Corey preaching

### **April 27 - Stewardship of Body**

Genesis 2:18-25,  
I Corinthians 6:12-20, Mark 5:35-43 -Todd Lehman preaching

## Historical Moments

Was Isch Dini Nahme?~What Is Your Name?

Our surnames are what give each of us our own style and individuality. They help tell the story of our families. Surnames help identify who we are and where we come from. Our surnames can come from all areas of the world, each with a specific meaning that links us to our family history. As one begins to look back into history we begin to notice that some surnames have stayed the same while others have undergone changes, leaving some confusion and doubt about their origin.

In Mennonite history there can be several spellings of one surname. An example of this would be the surname Duerksen which can also be spelled, Doerksen, Dirksen, and Dircksen. Historians give several reasons for these differences in spelling. Some suggest that they may have originated in different areas of the Netherlands. Others say that when the Mennonites arrived in the United States, immigrant officials oftentimes were unable to understand what was being stated and therefore composed their own spelling of a surname on official documents

Tabor Church is filled with surnames common to Mennonite heritage. In 1908 the charter membership listed only 23 different surnames. The four most common surnames at that time were; Schmidt-37, Voth-13, Hiebert-11 and Frey-10. By 1921 only 19 different surnames were present in a membership of 200. Diversity does begin to present itself and by 1960, 60 surnames were listed. The church has continued to grow and the 2007 church directory lists 94 surnames. The Schmidt's still top the list at 41, Voth's at 18, and the Unruh's number 15.

Will Tabor Church continue to grow and change? Will there eventually be fewer Schmidt's and more Ajquejay's? In the past we asked, was isch dini nahme, in the present we ask, what is your name; in the future will we be asking, Cual es tu nombre? Even though our surnames are slowly becoming more diverse, perhaps more importantly is our response to this change. Will Tabor Church be willing to work together as a congregation, united in Christ? And continue to extend the invitation to all people, regardless of name, to experience the salvation of Christ.

-Ilona Abrahams

## Prayer/Envisioning Team Continues to Meet

The prayer/envisioning team has met with consultant John Simmering for two sessions now and we are looking at how systems work in general. Whether we are talking about families, or churches or communities, there is a general life cycle that occurs within any system. There is birth and life as we know it. Then there are conflicts and changes (which are inevitable in life) that can lead to chaos. When a family or a marriage or a church finds itself in chaos, it is stressful to be sure, but it is also a moment of opportunity to evolve into new life, new understandings, new insights, into a new reality. Chaos can bring death if it isn't managed well, but it can lead to life.

Our group is praying and discerning and thinking about what this process means for us at Tabor. How are we responding to the conditions of change that continue to happen to us whether we want them or not. How have we been able to avoid extreme chaos in our 100 years and how has that helped us or prevented us from the new thing that is waiting to be birthed?

Furthermore, how does any of this help us know what to do about Sunday school attendance issues, an aging facility with some needs, and the ever increasing role of technology in our lives, just to name a few. Our group has been praying that God would reveal His good and perfect will for us here at Tabor. We all assume there will be a future, but we are not sure what that future will look like. We invite you to join us in praying and sometime down the road, we will invite the congregation to have meaningful conversations about these issues we are sorting through. We look forward to walking together and discovering together what God wants us to learn at this time.

## Focus on Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee (Kris Schmidt, Harlin Unruh, Gayle Funk, John Schmidt, Richard Drake, Brandon Unruh) recently met with Pete Flaming of MMA to learn more about new MMA Stewardship Resource Materials. MMA has many great books and educational materials in all areas of stewardship—money, time, talent, health. During 2008, MMA is specifically focusing on stewardship of health and has produced new materials. Since the April worship services have stewardship focuses, we would like to take this opportunity to introduce our congregation to various MMA health resources. One booklet that we will make available the first of April is "Healthy Bodies, Grateful Hearts". It begins with scripture and then focuses on 5 key areas which are Nutrition, Exercise, Rest, Relationships, Prevention. The booklet then takes you through 5 simple steps:

- ◆ Health Inventory (rating yourself in the 5 key areas)
- ◆ Goal Setting (2 pages of great suggestions on how to improve the 5 key areas)
- ◆ Accountability (encourages you to choose a friend to process your goals and progress)
- ◆ Success Check (after 3 months compare your results of improvement)
- ◆ Acknowledgments (as a congregation, we will recognize & celebrate all participating individuals)

During **the Sunday School hours on April 20 and 27**, we will have speakers on nutrition and exercise and have available many other MMA resource materials. **Please join us!**

## Caring Group Ministry

Caring groups have been invited to participate in opportunities for ministry through *Adopt-a-friend* and *Adopt-a-project* programs. One group has chosen to adopt Joe and Anna Sawatzky as a way to keep our congregation in relationship with them. We are adding another program called *Adopt-a-practice*. This involves adopting a practice (or discipline) which helps us grow in our spiritual lives. Such practices could include prayer, Bible reading, discernment, care giving, etc. The possibilities are limitless. The groups decide which practice they would like to engage in for a period of time. Pastor Karen is making herself available to meet with groups to talk about how this could happen. Feel free to contact her if your group is interested in participating in this or any of these programs.

## TMYF (Tabor Mennonite Youth Fellowship)

March was a fun month for the youth group, doing things from traveling to planning and many things in between. Before heading off to Rocky Mountain Mennonite Snow Camp, some of the youth went to Anna Unruh's house to make some snacks for the trip. Both making and eating the food was very enjoyable. Our speaker at snow camp this year was Rachel Swartzendruber, who works with the Mennonite Church USA in planning conventions. The youth had a lot of fun, but were definitely exhausted by the end of the weekend. Thanks to Doug Krehbiel, and Justin and Carrie Sommerfeld for driving and being our youth pastor and sponsors for this event!

Keeping up with our plan of doing service once a month, we went to the MCC Center in Newton the second to last Wednesday in March. While there, some of us folded blankets and others made the blankets and other clothing into bales to be sent off. We were also busy planning the Easter Sunrise Service. We prepared two skits and the youth band also prepared a few songs for the early service. Thanks for your continued support and we ask for your prayers as we figure out our plans for our summer service trip!

-Laura Unruh

## Willing Helpers

All Ladies are invited to the Willing Helpers meeting on Monday evening, April 21, at 7:00 p.m. Laurie Oswald Robinson will be the speaker on *Change Happens: From Hot Tub Weekends to Bathtub Nights*.

Laurie is the editor to the "Timbrel", a magazine published bimonthly by Mennonite Women USA. Sisters Forever will sing. Our devotional is "Spirit-God's Gift of Growth".

Willing Helpers participated in the Comforter Blitz near Yoder March 3-4. Six ladies from Tabor attended and together tied 135 comforters for MCC.

The Sunset Supper held March 13, at the Eden Mennonite Church was well attended. Eighteen ladies from Tabor Church enjoyed the meal and an interesting meeting on the *Days of the Dust Bowl*, sponsored by Western District Women in Mission and South Central Conference Mennonite Women.

Women in Conversation '08 - Daring to Let Our Spirits Soar- is coming up April 18-20 at the Airport Hilton, Wichita. You can still register for that if you would like to go. Registration forms are on the bulletin board. This is co-sponsored by Mennonite Women USA. -Norma Graber

## *Praying and Acting for Peace*

The Mennonite Churches of Colombia will be involved with the Days of Prayer and Action for Peace in Colombia on April 27 and 28. Possible action steps include signing up as a congregation at [www.mcc.org/colombia](http://www.mcc.org/colombia) by March 31. Our Peace and Justice Committees will give us more information with regard to how we will support these days of prayer and action.

**Taxes, Taxes.** April is the month when Taxes are due. It is staggering to know that 54% of all your income tax goes to support the military (past and present). Did you know that the U.S. military spending (\$500 billion) is equal to the military spending of the next 15 countries **combined**: The Netherlands (16), Indonesia (15), Canada (14), Australia (13), Italy (12), Brazil (11), India (10), South Korea (9), Saudi Arabia (8), Germany (7), Japan (6), France (5), Britain (4), Russia (3), China (2). On the table in the foyer is a sheet that describes where our tax dollars are really going based on information from War Resisters League. It is sobering but it is necessary that we know so that we may strive to respond faithfully.

## **Mennonite Church USA News**

### **"Reforming and Unifying"**

*In a recent meeting with the executive directors and board chairs of Mennonite Education Agency, Mennonite Mission Network, MMA and Mennonite Publishing Network, the moderator and moderator-elect of Mennonite Church USA shared the Executive Board's vision for a **reformed** and **unified** churchwide organization.*

*Moderator Sharon Waltner and moderator-elect Ed Diller expressed the board's concerns to the group stating that the denomination's vision and call "is not adequately supported by our present relationships, behaviors and organization."*

*To support the vision of Mennonite Church USA, the Executive Board is calling for a **unified churchwide communication and identity system** and a **simple and cohesive funding system**. Finally, the Executive Board supports the development of one, integrated board of directors for the denomination that would replace the individual boards for each agency.*

*The impetus for these proposed changes was stirred by delegate responses at San José 2007 calling for the Executive Board to take a more prominent role in vision and leadership for the whole of the denomination.*

## Camp Mennoscah

**Retirees' Retreat** is April 14-16 with the theme "Caretakers of Creation". Jim and Ann Dunn will lead the Bible study/singing. There will be time for fellowship, fun and relaxation.

### **Men and Boy's Campout:**

Mark your calendars for April 25-27 for the annual retreat and campout, sponsored by the Mennonite Men of the Plains. This is a great opportunity to start a tradition with your son or invite someone to "church" in a relaxed atmosphere. Don't put it off another year...come see why this event has been successful for over 50 years! Email [bcvoran@cox.net](mailto:bcvoran@cox.net) or call 316-284-2657 with questions.

**Camp Mennoscah Camping Season** Registrations are arriving at Camp Mennoscah by the handful! Our theme for the summer is "The Bible: Digging for Treasure," and there is a \$10 discount if registration and FULL payment is received by May 16. We can't wait to see you at Camp Mennoscah this summer. The camp schedule is on the bulletin board and extra catalogs are on the table in the foyer. *Sign up on the bulletin board to receive a camp scholarship from Tabor.*

**Needed: nurses and kitchen staff!**We're looking for folks who like camp and kids and have a week or two to give. Our camping season starts June 1<sup>st</sup> and ends August 1<sup>st</sup>. Check out our 2008 camp schedule or catalog for details about each camp week. (Only have a few days? How about our First Camp or a Pre-Junior camp?) It's a great way to spend time with fun people, rejuvenate, and see what is going on at Camp Mennoscah. We'll even give you a camp tee shirt. Contact us at 620-297-3290 or [campmno@mennowdc.org](mailto:campmno@mennowdc.org).