

## January 2009

### “The Gift of Winter”

*“You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth;  
you have made summer and winter...” - Ps. 74:17*

Some folks aren't very fond of the winter season. As soon as it gets below freezing or when winter coats become necessary, snowbirds migrate south for warmer temperatures and fun in the sun. Winter can be depressing because nothing is budding. Nothing is green. Nothing is springing forth. Everything is resting, gray and brown and buried in the frozen exile of winter.

Winter may not be your favorite season, but it is a gift to us all. Winter forces us to drive slower, move slower and often live slower and this is good for us. Winter enables us to spend more time indoors, have more conversations with loved ones, and play more games than we might in warmer months. Winter allows us to cuddle more often, read more regularly and sleep more hours in this season of short days and long nights.

Winter brings a beauty that no other season can bring. Stunning cloud formations and spectacular sunsets paint the sky in winter unlike any other season. Winter glazes our windows and windshields with frosty creations that bring wonder to the eye and joy to the spirit. Only winter offers the gift of gently falling snow as it creates a pure and white winter wonderland. Winter makes the land lie still in a frozen lifeless state with barren trees and muted wheat plants.

Winter weather can make us stop. When it raises its voice, schedules are altered, games are canceled, church is called off. Everything we plan is at the mercy of winter and its weather, for when it freezes and blows, it thwarts our activities as no other season can.

There are some productive moments in winter. We prepare for the season ahead by buying seeds for the garden. We work on what needs to be fixed for the spring season. We organize drawers, file records and make resolutions to do better. But mostly it seems, we hibernate to some degree, even in Kansas. We stay indoors. We curl up with a cup of hot chocolate. We have more time for thinking, reflecting and praying in the winter.

God has created all the seasons, including winter. Somehow God knew that this season was needed to give a perfect rhythm for His creation. What “God thoughts” will you have in these cold dark days of winter? What will God's spirit stir within you because you have more time to listen? What frozen parts of your heart will be attended to as you thaw out with God's Word? What words of hope will God speak to you in this new year? How will you reflect on your commitment to Christ and his church, particularly at Tabor in these days of quiet contemplation? How will you prepare for the new season ahead?

So let the snowbirds go and get their winter tan. May we all enjoy this unique, life-changing season of waiting and watching and warming, because it won't be long and a bloom will appear and winter will be over. Until then, let's enjoy it for the gift that it is! - Pastor Corey

## Worship Themes

**Jan. 4 - “The Welcoming Face of God”** Epiphany  
Isaiah 60, Psalm 72, Ephesians 3:1-12, Matthew 2:1-12  
Corey preaching

**Jan. 11 - “The Baptism of Jesus”** Genesis 1:1-5,  
Psalm 29, Ephesians 1:3-14, Mark 1:4-11 -Corey preaching

**Jan. 18 - “Follow Me”** Samuel 3:1-10, Psalm 139,  
John 1:43-51, I Corinthians 6:12-20 -Karen preaching

**Jan. 25-“Being an Anabaptist Church”** Jonah 3:1-5,10,  
Psalm 62, I Corinthians 7:29-31, Mark 1:14-20

-Corey preaching

## “Thank You” from your Tabor pastors

We pastors at Tabor have been blessed with your acts of kindness over these months of pastor appreciation and Christmas. Your gifts and goodies and cards have been energizing for us to receive and above all, your words of affirmation and encouragement and love are all very appreciated by us. We thank you all, our Tabor faith community, for helping to care for us even as we endeavor to care for you. May the light of Christ continue to shine in your lives in this Christmas season!

## Caring Group Ministry

### *A Caring Group Moment*

Our small group, consisting of Gary and Angie Duerksen and family, Steve and Bonnie Janzen, Jim and Diana Schmidt, Bill and Sherry Unruh and family, and Lewis and Carrie Unruh have enjoyed meeting together on a monthly basis for several years now. We usually meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month, but it can vary according to our schedules.

This past September the ladies from our group enjoyed attending Women's Retreat at Camp Menno'scah together. The weekend was about friendship, so it was a special time to be together and reflect on that topic as well as other meaningful topics. On the drive home from camp we decided that we would like to continue to meet together as women. The following month we began a once-a-month Saturday morning breakfast time together. For December we changed it to a Christmas shopping outing to Yoder and Buhler, with lunch at the Carriage Crossing restaurant while in Yoder.

We always try to do something special together as couples for Christmas. To the joy and delight of our husbands, it was while at one of these breakfasts that we decided to have a Sunday fasha together on Dec. 14th, and then go to Wichita for a Christmas Lights tour in the luxury of a limousine! Unfortunately the evening we chose it was 9 degrees outside, and it was difficult to keep the windows of the limo from fogging up, so the Christmas lights were a bit of a blur at times. Overall, though, it was an evening we'll long remember, and one we'll definitely talk about for years to come!

## Wednesday Evenings

Adult Bible Study will resume on January 14, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. We will be meeting at the east end of the basement. Watch for details concerning our time together. All adults are welcome.

On January 7th, Tabor's fellowship hall will be flooded with parents and children enjoying the warm delights of pizza fellowship and games! This event is for all our children - from infants up to senior high youth, and for their parents. There will be great food, wild entertainment and some fun with jell-o! Don't miss out on this chance for a free pizza supper and a chance to meet those who are teaching your children on Wednesday nights. The supper will begin at 6:30pm and our activities will begin at 7:00pm.

All regular programs will resume January 14.

## Know Jesus at Hesston College

On January 17-18, our Youth Explorers will be attending Know Jesus 2009 at Hesston College. The theme is "Jump In" and Kevin Wilder will be speaking. Our youth will travel there on Saturday afternoon, spend the night and return back to the church by noon on Sunday. The event is sponsored by Western District Conference.

## Area Junior High Lock In

January 9 and 10 are the dates for the Area Junior High Lock-in! It will begin at 9:30 pm at the Goessel Elementary building. Everyone bring your sleeping gear, guys bring pop to share and girls bring snacks to share. Parents should pick up their children by 8 am Saturday morning.

Coming on February 22: Camp WaShunGa fundraiser meal at noon.

## WDC News

Expand your knowledge of the Book of Isaiah!

Ben Ollenburger, PhD, professor of biblical theology at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, is coming to Kansas to teach Isaiah during January Interterm **January 6-22, 2009**. Classes will be held Tuesday and Thursdays evenings, 6:45 to 9:30 p.m., and Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at 2500 Place, North Newton. For more information, contact Lois Barrett, Director, AMBS--Great Plains, PO Box 306, North Newton, KS 67117; phone: 316-283-7098. Spring classes, starting in February, include: Gospel of Matthew; Foundations of Worship and Preaching; Social and Cultural Contexts of the Missional Congregation.

## Agri-Urban

All Agri-Urban participants are invited to the annual meeting and banquet on **January 17, 2009, 6 p.m.** at Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS. Let your church representative know if you plan to attend.

TENTATIVE youth camp schedule at Camp Mennoscah:

- Junior High I--May 31-June 6
- Junior I--June 7-13
- Pre-Junior I--June 14-18
- First Camp--June 18-20
- Junior II--June 21-27
- \*\* June 28-July 4--NO CAMP during MC USA Convention in Columbus, OH\*\*
- Pre-Junior II--July 5-9
- Junior High II--July 12-18
- Junior High III--July 19-25
- Senior High--July 26-31

KIPCOR offers course

Bethel College's Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (KIPCOR) offers "**Managing Differences within Faith Communities**", a course to examine how to transform conflict into spiritual and community renewal on **February 24-25, 2009**. Cost: \$325 (\$300 if received by February 3). Academic credit is available. Contact: [kipcor@bethelks.edu](mailto:kipcor@bethelks.edu) or 316-284-5217.

Mennonite Heritage Museum

### What's been going on at Mennonite Heritage Museum?

And what are some plans for next year? Exciting things. Come to the museum's annual meeting at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 18, 2009, at Tabor Mennonite Church to find out what they are. The special speaker this year will be Dr. Isaias J. McCaffrey, professor of history at Independence Community College in Independence, Kan., and chair of the college's Humanities and Social Sciences Division. Dr. McCaffrey has a keen interest in Low German. It is so keen that he recently published two books: "Wi Leahre Plautdietsch: A Beginner's Guide to Mennonite Low German" and "Mennonite Low German Proverbs from Kansas." And he loves MHM; he has assigned all on-line royalties from the books to the museum. Both books will be available for purchase and Dr. McCaffrey's autograph at the meeting. You are also encouraged to become a member of the Museum on this day. The afternoon's activities will end with faspä.

**What would Goessel lose if it lost its museum?** We need board members to help carry on the work of the museum and breathe new life into it. Being a board member involves once a month meetings and helping to carry out fund raisers, but it's much more than that. We need board members who can provide ideas and input into how to revitalize the treasure we have, members who are effective in working with others in the community and building relationships, members who believe in the importance of preserving history and making it attractive so others want to learn more about it. We need your help and your input. If you are interested in serving on the board, call Donavon Schmidt at 367-2391.

*Regrettably, the following devotional by Nola Schmidt was omitted from the Tabor Centennial Devotional book, but here it is for you all to enjoy.  
Thanks Nola.*

## Finding the Right Direction

Read Jeremiah 29: 4-14

After seven years of widowhood, I was growing restless in my "aloneness", wondering what was ahead, but fearful of what a new relationship might bring. Determined not to go outside my own comfort zone of Christians I knew, I told myself I would wait for the Lord to bring someone to me if that was right. My life was full of many things - keeping tabs on the farm operation which my son and grandson had taken over, cooking for them occasionally, being involved with the church, the local MCC shop and the retirement home, etc.

One beautiful sunny morning as I walked to the road to pick up my mail, enjoying the warmth and beauty of early spring, I hesitated with my hand on the box --- hoping---maybe--- for some word from a new male acquaintance I'd met on a recent bus tour. Nah-----nothing there! Disappointed, I took my hand full of mail and walked back to the house and as I sorted through it, the last piece of mail was some literature from Back to the Bible. Something fell to the floor but I ignored it. As I finished reading and got up to go about my day, I stooped to retrieve what had fallen; it was a small calling card on which was printed Jeremiah 29:11:

*" For I know the plans I have for you, saith the Lord. They are plans for good and not evil, that you may have a future and a hope."*

I read it several times with chills going up my spine. It struck me immediately as a personal word from the Lord. I said thank you Lord! It's your move. And I had peace.

In Jeremiah 29 verses 5 through 14, God tells the captives to keep on praying for their captors and living, by having children and planting orchards. They were to not sit idly by. In today's language, they were to "*bloom where you are planted*", for God would take care of their needs. "In those days when you pray I will listen, and you will find me when you seek me with your whole heart." I have learned to lay back in Gods arms and let Him do the Arrangements. I love this little chorus "My Lord knows the way through the wilderness, all I have to do is follow, Strength for the day is mine allway and all I need for tomorrow, My Lord knows the way through the wilderness, all I have to do is follow."

Several weeks later at the mail box again, there was the long awaited letter with an invitation. This was the beginning of an ongoing relationship with a kindred spirit who also experienced "going it alone." Rudy Schmidt and I were married in November 1994 and we were confident that this was the Lord's doing! Every morning blessings are new!

- by Nola Kremer Schmidt

## Words to start the New Year

"Shut off the future as tightly as the past. The future is today; there is no tomorrow. Waste of energy, mental distress, nervous worries, all dog the steps of a person who is anxious about the future. The best possible way to prepare for tomorrow is to concentrate with all your intelligence, all your enthusiasm, on doing today's work superbly today."

-Sir William Osler