

This Issue's Theme:

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER



MARCH 2015, VOLUME 2 EDITION 3

Life With Us

At Niagara United Mennonite Church

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Hymn of Promise

In the bulb there is a flower;
in the seed, an apple tree;
In cocoons, a hidden promise:
butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter
there's a spring that waits to be,
Unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.

There's a song in every silence,
seeking word and melody;
There's a dawn in every darkness,
bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future;
what it holds, a mystery,
Unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.

In our end is our beginning;
in our time, infinity;
In our doubt there is believing;
in our life, eternity,
In our death, a resurrection;
at the last, a victory,
Unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.

HYMN OF PROMISE (In the bulb there is a flower)
"All the promises of God." 2 Corinthians 1:20
Words and music: Natalie A. Sleeth, 1930 - 1992

She wrote this selection in February, 1985 as a choral anthem, and later adapted it as a hymn. She wrote that she was:

- pondering the death of a friend (life & death, death & resurrection)

- pondering winter and spring (seeming opposites)
- and a T.S. Eliot poem which had the phrase, 'in our end is our beginning.'

- These seemingly contradictory 'pairs' led to the thesis of the song and the hopeful message that out of one will come the other whenever God chooses to bring that about.

Her husband, Dr. Ronald Sleeth, heard Hymn of Promise shortly before he died, and asked that it be sung at his funeral.

~Natalie Sleeth
HWB #614

NUMC Ministries...

Pre-Marriage Preparation Course

How did the pre marriage classes get started? Well, Jake and I were asked if we were interested... so we took the marriage class first! We thought that was a good thing to do. Then we had some training on how the course was run. We enjoyed working with the senior youth so we thought: "Ok, we'll do it!" We had no idea how much we were going to learn ourselves! The marriage course touches on communication, resolving conflict, keeping love alive and shared goals and values. Jake and I facilitate the video series with putting on the video, and the couples have their own workbooks to follow along in. We have fun, laugh together and learn Biblical outlooks on love, and finances. We also have our breakfast and lunch made by our own Audrey Dau!

Submitted by Sylvia Tissen

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We share our recipe for Chocolate Covered Strawberries and hope you try it and like it as much as we do.

Chocolate Covered Strawberries

16 oz milk chocolate chips
2 tbs shortening
1 lb fresh strawberries with leaves



1. Insert toothpicks into tops of strawberries.
2. In double boiler melt chocolate and shortening stirring occasionally until smooth. Holding strawberries by toothpicks dip each one into chocolate mixture.
3. Turn strawberries upside down, insert toothpick into Styrofoam and let chocolate cool.
4. Enjoy!



Pioneer Club

Trailblazers are a group of (grade 5,6,7) 6 girls, 1 boy and sometimes 2 boys. Together we have great times— singing, playing games, making Apple Crisp, Blender Banana Drinks and Chocolate Covered Strawberries. We have crafted cards for seniors; are making aprons and we are scrapbooking to preserve our happy memories.



To fill our minds and hearts with best thoughts ever written we memorize Bible verses which advise us how we should think, feel, speak and act.

Working on Bible Awards— Important Choices, Family Living, and My Family we have learned many things and are trying to put them into practice.

Our group enjoyed performing our play for everyone at club. It was the story of Shedrach, Meshak and Abednigo found in Daniel 3:1-27. These young men knew the Ten Commandments and obeyed God no matter what. Do you know which commandment King Nebuchadnezzar disobeyed? And do you know how our amazing God took care of these three men? Romans 8:28 says: “And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into his plans.”

While working on our Family Living and My Family Awards, we studied the story of Joseph in Genesis 37-45 and the Abram and Lot story in Genesis 13-12. We learned that Our Family is God’s Classroom where we learn to put into practice God’s design for families. Here we are challenged everyday to be kind, helpful, forgiving and to solve problems peacefully. God wants our families to be cheerful and have fun together.

Please don’t judge us yet! There are too many unfinished parts. God is still working on us! Our God has big promises!

This is the song we Trailblazers love and share with everyone. We hope you make it your song too.

**You Are My All In All
You are my strength, when I am weak
You are my treasure, that I seek
You Are my All in All**

**Seeking You, as a precious Jewel.
Lord to give up, I’d be a fool
You are my All in All**

**Taking my sin, my cross, my shame;
Rising again, I bless your name.
You are my All in All**

**When I am down, You pick me up,
When I am dry, You fill my cup.
You are my All in All.**

**Jesus, Lamb of God, Worthy is your name
Jesus, Lamb of God, Worthy is your name**



So we start out each morning with this prayer:

Take my hand, dear Jesus,
Walk with me today.
Then I’ll just go places
Where you wish me to.
I’ll be safe and happy
Hand in hand with you.

We are so happy to have found Isaiah 41:13:

I am holding you by your right hand— I the Lord your God—
and I say to you, “Don’t be afraid; I am here to help you.”

- Submitted by Adine Enns

JUNIOR YOUTH



AT THE WATERPARK!



WOMEN IN SERVICE POT-LUCK DINNER



On Tuesday, February 17th about 80 people attended our annual Women in Service Pot Luck Dinner. The tables were nicely decorated, the mood was joyous, our members and their guests were happy and the food was plentiful and delicious. Sharon Dirks was our guest speaker and what a speech she gave! The topic was love, the all encompassing love of God, our Father. After that we sang a verse of "Gottist die Liebe " which we all learned as children. Laury and Ruth Willms led us in song and as usual we learned a new song "Tony Chestnut knows I love you." Marg Goerz and Mary Pries closed the dinner meeting. We really enjoyed our evening.

Submitted by Mary Pompetzki



AGM January 27, 2015

For those who could not make our annual meeting, I would like to share some of my thoughts of our discussions. We encourage all of you to attend and ask questions or make comments.

Committee Reports

If you look at the **ACTIVITIES** that happen in our church it is amazing what we do. Besides Sunday services, the list goes on and on. There are times we drive by and the parking lot may appear empty but that is not true. **So it is wonderful to see an active church.**

Our membership now stands at 593.

We said our goodbyes to 12 loving individuals. We welcomed 6 new members, rejoiced in 7 new births, and celebrated the many weddings and wedding anniversaries.

Our pastoral reports all reflect on themes like “growing as a congregation, developing our gifts, respecting the need for REST, continued need of learning, and re-energizing us on a weekly basis and encouraging us.

Being on Church Council has allowed me some insights into our pastoral team. So I asked them what some of their goals might be for 2015? I won't share who said what, but here is a sampling of what they dream about hearing in our church:

“That was such a great sermon, I never noticed you went 25 minutes overtime!”

“I love it when we sing hymns I've never heard before.”

“Nothing inspires me and strengthens my commitment like our annual stewardship campaign.”

“I couldn't find a space to park outside today.”

“Hey! It's my turn to sit in the front pew!”

“I don't care about LIVE STREAMING!”

But in all honesty, ***I have the greatest respect for our leadership and we are truly blessed by having you minister to and lead us.*** Thank you.

I spoke to Linda Pankratz and we are both amazed at the ***“talent and gifts”*** we have within our Church. We thank the nominations committee for identifying these gifts and encouraging members to share them with the church family.

I would like to thank all the past volunteers and the incoming ones for their willingness to share their time and talents. It is sometimes work, but ultimately a very rewarding job and we appreciate it. With all of you it makes the work of our church such an encouraging place to attend.

Looking back on 2014 we met our Budget of \$ 416,000 with a small surplus of \$ 1,680. As we met to prepare the 2015 budget, it became very clear that no one wanted to see any kind of increase. But we ultimately decided that we needed to increase it in certain areas. We presented a budget of \$ 422,600 which represents an increase of 1.6 %. This was passed by you, our membership, and now represents a weekly need of \$ 8,127. Thank you to all those involved in reviewing your areas, making suggestions, and listening to your committees. Let us pray that 2015 is a “successful year” in our church.

Thank you again for your comments and concerns. As Church Council looks forward to 2015, we ask for your regular feedback. We are here as a church family, representing you our membership. Please feel free to contact anyone on Church Council or myself if you have any suggestions going forward. We ask for God's guidance and wisdom as we continue to do his work in our community.

Submitted by Lloyd Redekopp, Edited Version



Music & Worship Leaders Retreat at Laurelville Mennonite Retreat Center

Submitted by Will Friesen

In early January, I had the privilege of travelling to Laurelville Mennonite Retreat Center about an hour's drive east of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for the annual MC USA Music and Worship Leaders Weekend. Since its beginnings in 1987 as a venue to experiment with and test new music for the then-unpublished blue Hymnal: A Worship Book, the retreat continues to be a time many people from the USA and Canada look forward to. This year, I was joined by around 200 people from a wide spectrum of ages, including a group of 18 students who travelled across three states from Goshen College in Indiana.

The first gathering began Friday night with Bach's grand setting of "Jesus priceless treasure/Jesu meine Freude" sung in four parts, a cappella. I'd heard good things about the congregational singing here, and what I'd heard was spot on—I was a giant goose bump after that first hymn! We spent a lot of time singing familiar music, brand new hymns, and even a chorus from Handel's Messiah. When we weren't singing, we listened to two speakers. Lara Steinel, a cantor for a Kansas City Jewish congregation, spoke on a few Hebrew words—Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), Tikkun Ha-Nafesh (mending a soul), and Bikkurim (the Jewish way of thanksgiving)—as well as Jewish customs and traditions in worship. Our other speaker, David Miller, a professor at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Indiana, spoke on Matthew 11:28-30 "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and I will give you rest..." and on the weekend's theme "Good News! PastPresentFuture". Another treat was a production organized by Ted Swartz, a Mennonite playwright from Virginia.

A report was given by a few of the students from Goshen College who had, a few months earlier, organized a "Sing for Peace" hymn sing in which they sang continuously through every verse of all 658 songs in the blue hymnal as a fundraiser for Christian Peacemaker Teams. This awesome event had been attended by over 300 people who came and went over its 30-hour span, as well as by over 4000 people from 37 different countries across the world. The Goshen crew really lent a lot of life to our weekend at Laurelville.

Next Fall, as you prepare to hunker down for another long winter, think about registering for this event, especially if you'd value a weekend of great singing, speaking, and community with a definitive Anabaptist perspective. I know I'm planning a return trip!



Music Notes

The Music Committee is excited to start a new column in our Church Newsletter highlighting music during our church services and informing our congregation of any upcoming musical events.

March 1 Choir, led by Kenton Janzen

Musical Children's Moment with **Katrina**

March 8 Praise & Worship Band led by Peter Sawatzky

***Ella Hinz** and **Julia Bartel** will be serving us with special music during the offering.

March 15 Music with **Will Friesen** highlighting our "**Sing the Journey**" and "**Sing the Story**" song books. He will incorporate some ideas he picked up while at a MC USA music and worship leaders retreat in January.

Children's Moment with our pastor, **Rudy Dirks**

March 22 Choir, led by Kenton

March 29 - Palm Sunday Choir, Praise and Worship Band

Primary and Junior Sunday School choirs led by Donna Froese and Evelyn Finlay



Up Coming Events

The choir will be practicing for our **Easter service** and welcomes anyone who enjoys singing to join our 7:30 pm Thursday choir practices. We are especially looking for more tenor and bass voices, in other words...MEN



The **Niagara Community Male Chorus** is singing at Fairview M. B. Church on Good Friday, **April 3rd at 7:00 pm**. This choir is led by John and Kathy Rempel and includes many of our church congregation. As well, there will be a special ensemble joining to the Male Choir.

*Children's Corner



Julia Bartel is 11 years old and is the daughter of Rick & Becky Bartel. She has been taking flute lessons for 2 years, and has just started piano lessons as well with Rachael Peters. She volunteers in the Kindergarten classes at Crossroads School during recesses. This is her first year in Junior Youth, and she is really enjoying all the activities. She also likes singing and learning more about God and Jesus in her Sunday School classes.

Ella Hinz is 11 years old and is the daughter of Herb & Jennifer Hinz. She has been taking flute lessons for 2 years, and is also playing the trombone in the Niagara District School Band. She volunteers at the YMCA and is always ready to help the instructors during their lessons. Ella loves to spend time with her family, and enjoys all the wonderful gifts from God.



When asked the congregational survey question:
 “What has been your most enjoyable volunteering experience?”
 these are the answers we received...

A number of years ago four women drove every Thursday afternoon to the Vine-land Home for the Aged to wash and set hair for the ladies there, which was very much appreciated by them and it was a blessing to us.

- Hannelore Enss

Cutting and putting squares together to create beautiful patterns for the MCC blankets, but working for the Benefit Shop comes close behind.

- Clara Siemens

I enjoy both working at the Benefit Shop and being a librarian at church.

- Marlies Boldt

That's too easy: Choir is the most enjoyable, German Worship team is probably the most useful.

- Udo Woelke

Serving as a deacon.

- Hilda Regier

Singing & soup kitchen.

- Rita Epp

My favourite experience volunteering was my first time with MDS in April, 2006 in Pass Christian, Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina. It felt good to be a part of something that gave some measure of hope to people who had been through such devastation.

- Kizzy Epp

Cross-cultural missions in Equador & soup kitchens

- Teri Fast

One of my favourite volunteer positions has been leading a Bible study. Gathering with people from different walks of life to study Scripture together taught me a lot, and it was so inspiring to see the growth of others as well!

- Jolien Koole

Singing in groups and choir, cooking jam, baking cookies.

- Annie Sawatzky

Flipping Russian Pancakes (Pflinzen) at the Kansas Mennonite Relief Sale. Each year a group of students from Tabor College would man the booth, and we'd often have quite an audience as we showed off our fancy pancake flipping.

- Will Friesen

My favourite volunteer work has been, and still is, volunteering at Ten Thousand Villages.

- Lucy Harder

Working at the Christian Benefit Shop. It was nice to work with a group of dedicated people interested in the same things as me. I felt like I was useful and could make customers' experiences at the Shop more pleasant.

- Kristina Nickel

I'm convinced of this: Good done anywhere is good done everywhere. For a change, start by speaking to people rather than walking by them like they're stones that don't matter. As long as you're breathing, it's never too late to do some good.

- Maya Angelou

The thing to do, it seems to me, is to prepare yourself so you can be a rainbow in somebody else's cloud.
- Maya Angelou

Everything that has to do with the blankets that the ladies group is sewing, setting up, putting together, sewing and shipping. But being in the Pleasant Manor auxiliary comes close behind.

- Hedy Kopeschny

I feel the blessings of being a worship leader, and I want to continue as long as God gives me the strength.

I also enjoyed helping in Guatemala in all aspects of the work there: school construction, communication with the locals.

- Gunnar Doerwald

In 1970, as a member of the National Secretaries Association (Int.), I was asked to be press secretary to the FISA organization (international rowing competition in St. Catharines), and had the opportunity to meet the late PM Pierre E. Trudeau at a reception on Henley Island.

- Martha Bartel

I really enjoyed volunteering on the Springfest Committee. What was really fun was the fact that Springfest was inter-generational, and it brought our church together as a community, reaching out to the broader community. I still cherish the friendships I made with the people on the committee, and the people I got to know so much better through working in the Garden Centre.

- Al Teichroeb

One of my most rewarding volunteer opportunities remain my weekly visits to the Thorold Detention Center. It is always an incredible experience to share the message received in preparation to be exactly what that person needed to hear at that moment in time. My participation in WTC is also very rewarding in that I am able to share with others how I have been able to overcome the idiosyncrasies of my life that prevents me from an intimate relationship with my Heavenly Father. On a more tangible endeavor, I am coming to quite enjoy my retirement hobby of bee keeping. The funds that are generated from selling the honey go to support an orphanage in Kenya.

- John Epp

Some of my favorite volunteer positions include being part of a board. I have been on Church Council twice now and have served nearly 6 years on the United Mennonite Home board. It has been very rewarding and a unique learning experience. You get to meet with different people and get to see other "points of view" rather than just the views or ideas from friends or family. I would encourage anyone and everyone to join a group of people or a board to really learn how the organization runs and see how the decisions are made.

- Don Willms

Together we shall go on

"As for the rest of you, dear brothers and sisters, never get tired of doing good."
2 Thessalonians 3:13

In the loving of neighbor and the sharing of love **together we shall go on**
In the celebration of life and the sharing of that life together **together we shall go on**
In the caring of the earth and the sharing of her harvest **together we shall go on**
In the variety of people and the sharing of our talents **together we shall go on**
In the laughter we make and the sharing of the journey **together we shall go on**
In the love of this community and the sharing of our faith **together we shall go on**

Written by Roddy Hamilton

Interview with the Pastoral Team

Steve's responses

April's responses

Sharon's responses

Rudy's responses

What is your favourite colour?

Red

Yellow & purple

Every shade of purple.

I've always loved blue. I don't know why-perhaps it's the cooler of a clear, sunny sky; or maybe it's the blue of deep, refreshing, beckoning water.

What is your favourite time of the day?

It's all good.

From mid-afternoon to sunset.

Whichever part of the day is sunny.

Mid-morning- it's when I have the most energy, the day is still young & bright, and there's lots of promise & mystery left for the rest of the day.

What is your favourite food?

Chicken & roast potatoes with salad... or Baconators

Cheese (all types)

Anything Asian. I love Indian food, and especially curries.

The traditional Russian Mennonite meal of; potato salad, meatballs, & pluma-mousse ties with a traditional Congo meal of; chicken mwamba (chicken cooked in palm nut oil and spiced with hot pili-pili), sachasacha (steamed green manioc leaves), & fu-fu (manioc powder cooked into a paste).

What is your favourite genre of book?

Fantasy/ Sci-Fi

Christian Living, contemporary literature & historical fiction.

I love inspirational and biographical. When on holidays I like fiction. The problem with reading fiction at other times is that I can't put the book down once I've started and I wouldn't get anything done.

I do enjoy reading spiritual/theology books for study, but for just plain reading I love biographies, autobiographies, and adventures. So I guess anything that tells an interesting story about life and people.

What is your most favourite book that you have read in the past year?

I read Ken Follet's Century Trilogy which was incredible. Fall of Giants, Winter of the World, Edge of Eternity.

The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls & Still Alice by Lisa Genova

Consumed by Love by Duncan Smith

"The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey" by Candice Millard. I love the wild adventure, the unknown journey, and the amazing character of this remarkable man. It pretty much killed him, but he just never quit, no matter how bad things got. That inspires me to press on against obstacles in my own life.

What is your guilty pleasure?

Video games.

Watching my soap opera: The Young & The Restless

POPCORN!! I can eat ridiculous amount of popcorn at a time. I don't share well.

A tie between potato chips and french fries. Salty, salty, salty. Especially when I dip them in a dip of mayonnaise and mustard.

What is your favourite Bible verse?

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

John 3:17

"Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity."

1 Timothy 4:12

Zephaniah 3:17 For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."

John 17: 24-26 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." I love the intimacy of Jesus' relationship with his heavenly Father, and his including us in that enfolding love.

What was your favourite class/subject in school?

Pastoral Theology was incredibly meaningful.

Grade school: English & Family Studies. University: Criminal Psychology & Counselling.

English. Ever since I read *Gone With the Wind* in Grade 6 I loved English literature. I even liked grammar!

Grade 12 English Literature. Our teacher set up a unique class called "Self Sufficiency". We read utopian books like "Walden Pond" by David Henry Thoreau, and since the school was next to a jungle (this was in the Congo) we designed and planned a bamboo, palm leaf house, and cleared a space in the jungle to build it and plant a garden. Our final exam was to live in this shelter for a week, eating only what we had planted and could find in the jungle. I've never had so much fun in a class -- and to think it counted as English Literature.

What has been your most memorable trip?

Going to Israel with the Yella Program (and my wife) has given me the richest and longest lasting memories. Go to the Holy Land if you can!

My missions trip to India, where we worked primarily with abandoned street children and the Jewels in a Crown organization who provides employment, English lessons and Bible study to former prostitutes. The experiences and sights on this trip were unlike anything I had experienced before, or still to this day. The things I saw and learned while there have left lasting impressions and have completely restructured the framework through which I live each day of my life, back here in Canada.

Tsilaka, South Africa, 1999 with our friends and colleagues the Borns and the Bertsches. Our vehicle was stolen that Christmas, but we had the most amazing time. We will never forget the blessings of that vacation, and the beauty of that remote beach where we stayed.

It's hard to choose just one, but probably the one that shaped me the most profoundly early in life would be our three-week trip on an ocean freighter from Corpus Christi, Texas, across the Atlantic to Matadi, Belgian Congo in 1963. I was five at the time and there were three missionary families travelling together including about ten children. We explored the entire ship, played games, wrote and performed a play for the crew and missionaries (and required payment for tickets for the performance to be paid in candies and chocolates). We crossed the equator and witnessed a weird/scary hazing initiation ceremony of a crew member's first crossing of the equator where he was locked into a dog house filled with a fire hose and rolled across the deck. We encountered a storm, a whale, saw sharks, and saw hippos in the mouth of the Congo River when we arrived at our destination. The anticipation of approaching the mysterious continent of Africa, and the experience of seeing the land and people for the first time rooted a love for Africa deep in my soul that remains to this day.

What has been your favourite volunteering experience?

MDS has always been a great experience. Also, the Young Adult Learning Tour to Israel was incredibly meaningful.

Everything Life Group! I have been a host, a leader and an assimilator, connecting with leaders and people to help people looking for groups find the best group fits for them. I have been greatly impacted through my involvement in Life Groups and am passionate about helping other adults to connect with one another in this way.

I started a "Mothers Who Pray" group with other moms in our neighbourhood in Thornhill in the early 90s. We prayed weekly for our children, our neighbourhood and the school where our children attended – Johnsvie Public School. I met with the principal regularly and she shared prayer requests with me. Several days a week I volunteered in the children's classroom and in the school office as a way of being connected.

Coaching soccer in Thornhill when our children were in grade school. I loved helping children (including my own) learn how to play a game which I had loved to play. I loved the excitement and intensity of the competition. I loved being out on the wide green playing fields on beautiful summer days. And I loved watching the children develop character in the rough and tumble of winning and losing.

P.S. I have been pondering this thing of "favourites", because, you see, as soon as I name my favourites, I feel boxed in by them, and then maybe they are not so favourite any more. Maybe some of you know what I mean. I once shared a favourite decorating theme in my house, and before I knew it, I was being bombarded with gifts on that thing in every shape and form. Soon it was no longer special. It lost the "favourite" status. However, ask me what my MOST favourite thing is, and I never want to stray from this - my MOST favourite of everything is Jesus. Hands down. I love Rudy SO much. I love my kids and their kids SO much, but mostly, my favourite is Jesus. :-) That's all!

Book Corner

Some inspirational readings to help you through the last bit of winter. It's been too cold to go outside, so pour yourself something warm to drink, grab one of the books you picked up from our library, find a comfy chair and enjoy!

You'll get through this
By Max Lucado

"Hope & help for your turbulent times. You fear you won't make it through. You fear that the depression will never lift, the yelling will never stop, the pain will never lessen. Will this gray sky ever brighten? This load ever lighten? You'll get through this. It won't be painless. It won't be quick. But God will use this mess for good. Don't be foolish or naïve. But don't despair either. With God's help, you'll get through this!"

A second cup of hot apple cider
By N.J. Lindquist & Wendy Elaine Nelles

"Words to stimulate the mind and delight the spirit. A collection of short stories, poetry and wisdom seeking to heal and mend the soul of the reader after difficult and stressful situations ... Highly recommended!" – Midwest Book Review

Return to me
The Restoration Chronicles, Book 1
By Lynn Austin

"After decades of exile, the prophecies are coming true – King Cyrus has declared the Jews may return to Jerusalem. Iddo, a priest, is sure this is a sign of God's renewed favor. For too long they've remained in Babylon, and many, including Iddo's sons, are losing the faith that sets them apart. And so only a few choose to leave everything to return – return to their home and their God.

Bringing the Old Testament to vibrant life, Return to Me, tells the compelling story of two men living by faith in the midst of doubt, the women who love them, and the faithful remnant struggling to rebuild their lives in obedience to the God who beckons them home."

A word from your Minister of Pastoral Care:

"Many times, in the years that Rudy and I have ministered at this church we have met with couples who are in crisis in their marriage. Our experience is that almost everyone wants things to be better in their marriages, but we sometimes lack the tools to get out of the rut we are in. Sometimes, it is because we are in such a rut that we have difficulty implementing even the tools we do have. Other marriages are already good, but can benefit from learning some new skills to grow even more deeply in love.

It is my belief, that God's intention for marriage is to be a beautiful picture of the intimacy that he wants to have with us. Both of these relationships can be deepened and made richer than we ever thought imaginable. As your Minister of Pastoral Care, I would encourage you to take a few minutes to think about whether the event below would be a good thing for you to attend, whether you have been married for one year or 50 years! We are never too old or too young to grow."

A weekend of discovery...a lifetime of love.

Sponsored by Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter.

What is Marriage Encounter?

It is an invitation to come away from the world, to spend an entire weekend focusing on your relationship with each other, working toward God's ideal for marriage. Encounter means "to meet again at a deeper level." You'll find the weekend to be orderly, informative, and structured. Marriage Encounter takes couples beyond the frustration, disappointments, or loneliness that can be a part of their everyday life.

What happens on a weekend?

The weekend begins Friday night and continues until Sunday evening. During the weekend a team of trained volunteer couples and clergy present a series of sharing times centred around their own real life experiences. The purpose of each sharing is to inspire couples to come to understand their own feelings about various aspects of their marriage.

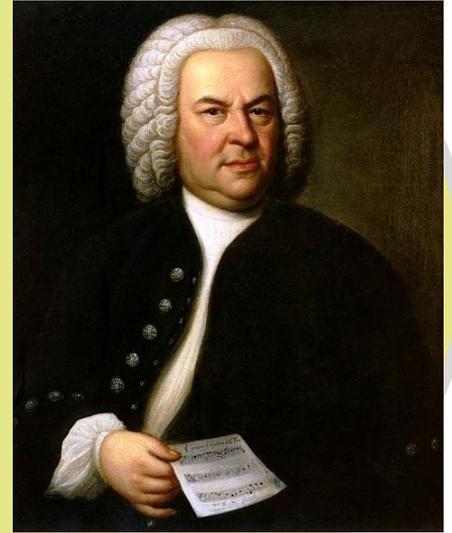
The second step, sharing these feelings with each other, is accomplished through a method called dialogue. Dialogue gives husband and wife a time for personal reflection and exchange. Exchanges between spouses are conducted away from the group, in the privacy of their own room.

At the end of the weekend, couples have experience in using the tools that will continue to enhance their relationship and communication when they return to their daily routines. Provision is made for ongoing contact with Marriage Encounter in order to renew incentive to keep maintaining the marriage.

In Wainfleet on May 29-31. Deadline for application is April 19. Contact Marjorie Roth (519)-669-8667, wwroth@rogers.com.

The cost is a tax-deductible donation.

J.S. Bach has also contributed to our Hymnal a Worship Book. The following nine hymns have been harmonized by Bach: #83, 203, 252, 376, 424, 470, 473, 595, 604. Most of these hymns have never been sung by our congregation, mainly because the harmonizations are too difficult to sing without practice time. They are probably best suited for choirs or ensembles. The hymn that is most familiar to us is #252, *O sacred Head, now wounded*, and would be appropriate for the present Lent season. Another hymn which is probably the most singable of the nine hymns is #83, *With happy voices singing*. It is not a very familiar hymn for us, but would be worth trying in the near future – maybe some time in March to celebrate Bach's 330th birthday!



A look back to this day in our history...

March 5, 1526

Zurich authorities commence a trial which eventuates in sentences of life imprisonment for the Anabaptists Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz and Georg Blaurock. Two weeks later on, March 21st, they escape from prison down a rope. Pacifist Anabaptists who believed Christians should not hold power, they had been condemned to life imprisonment on flimsy charges of fomenting revolution.

March 21, 1965

Baptist minister Martin Luther King, Jr. leads more than three thousand civil right demonstrators on a march from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery. By the time they reach their destination four days later, the number of protesters will have swelled to twenty-five-thousand.

March 21, 1685

Birthday of J.S. Bach. Few names in music are as revered as Bach's. He was a member of a seven-generation family of talented composers and instrumentalists. He grew up surrounded by music. Bach was orphaned at age 10 and was raised by an uncle. Although he traveled frequently, Bach never ventured beyond a 150-mile radius of his birthplace and never left Germany. He fathered 20 children but only nine of them survived him. In his own words: "The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul. If heed is not paid to this, it is not true music but a diabolical bawling and twanging."

Milestones

Join us as we celebrate one another's special milestones!

The following members, who are 80 years of age and older are celebrating birthdays this month:

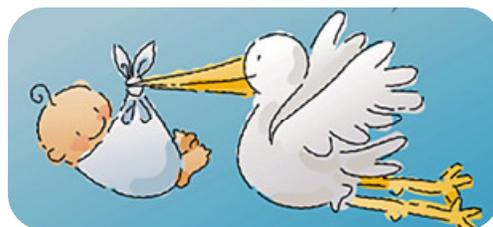


Franz Neufeld turns 85 on March 6th
Franz Friesen turns 87 on March 8th
Jacob Enns turns 84 on March 12th
John Harder turns 81 on March 12th
Maria Enns turns 82 on March 19th
Jacob Friesen turns 80 on March 23rd
Arno Bartel turns 86 on March 25th
Erika Martens turns 80 on March 30th
Peter Siemens turns 86 on March 30th



We wish you all much happiness and health on your special days!

Jonathan, Michelle, and Aria Bradnam are thrilled to announce the birth of their son and baby brother, **Leyton Scott**, who was born on **January 20th**. Proud grandparents are Alex & Alice Bradnam, Scott & Diane Farrell, Lynne & Frank Vraets.



Scott and Yvonne Vanderlee are pleased to announce the arrival of their third child **Jeremy Joseph**. Jeremy was born on **February 10th**, weighing a healthy 8lbs 9ounces. Joshua and Hannah are both very excited about the newest addition to the family.



On February 1st, we celebrated the dedication of two new children:

Keira Vis – parents: Jason & Elysia Vis
Carston Cox – parents: Stephen & Christina Cox

Peter and Wendy Janzen are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter Jennifer to Rainer Jabs of Toronto. He is the son of Ed and Alma Jabs of Kingston, Ontario.



On March 3rd, Peter & Wendy Janzen celebrate 25 years of marriage! They were married on March 3, 1990.

On March 6th, Wilhelm & Hannelore Harder celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary! They were married on Mar 6, 1965.



Contributions

Sharing the stories behind the Milestones

Franz Friesen – March 8, 1928 It's hard to believe that Dad turns 87 this March! Franz's life, like so many others from his era, has been a remarkable journey filled with situations and challenges that the later generations find difficult to imagine. There was war, famine, disease, deaths, perilous treks and foreign countries. The struggle for survival was real. They were thrust into adulthood and had to fend for themselves, and also for both younger and elder family members. Despite all this, the result was a person full of life that we admire and love.

When the family members were asked "What is it about Opa/Dad that inspires you?", two main themes were prevalent – the importance of family, and his gratitude for his many blessings. I have tried to provide an extract from the many responses from Dad's family, since their words are far better than mine.

What is it about Opa/Dad that inspires you?

- His dedication to his family and the paramount importance of church and family.
- His happiness and positive outlook on life.
- I'm thankful to have a role model like Opa to look up to – an honest, hardworking man who has showed me the importance of friends and family. He is a man who has a genuine smile on his face every day and who appreciates life. Opa would give you the shirt off his back if you were cold or the food off his plate if you were hungry.
- He frequently makes a point of telling us how lucky he is to have such a loving family. This is humbling because he and Oma made the family what it is - so it is all of us that are the lucky ones.
- He embodies the saying "hard work and determination will lead to success" as he tells the stories of having nothing and coming to Canada with a growing family to support, working several jobs at once, paying for a house and going to trade school. It makes you really believe that you can do anything.
- The door is always open at his place and anyone who visits is sure to be greeted with a hug and a smile. I know that I am beyond welcome at any time. Opa makes me feel welcome, important, and like the most loved grandkid in the world. This is what has made his house a favourite spot for our family to come together.
- One of the many ways Opa has inspired me is his energy and joy for life. He will try to walk places if possible. In the summer you'll see him going on his bike rides around Virgil and on a hot day Opa will walk over and enjoy a swim in the pool. He still goes on his fishing trips with his old work colleagues, even all the way to the Yukon. I just hope that when I grow old I have half as much energy and the pure enjoyment of life that he does.
- I don't really know how to put into words how I feel about Opa. Even just thinking about him puts a grin on my face because there's nothing not to love about that man. A simple squeeze on the arm will leave you knowing that, without a doubt, you are loved so profoundly and, really, what more could you ask for?
- You know he cares for us. He is very proud of his family, and loves when we're around. I think it keeps him young.
- In Opa's presence, you get a special feeling. It's like having a hot chocolate after playing pond hockey on a cold winter's day. It's a feeling of warmth, contentment and gratefulness.

***** **Happy 87th Birthday.**

We love you and thanks for inspiring us *****

Birthdays to Remember---Later

Since March is my birthday month I was asked to think of a memorable birthday I had experienced and write something about it. In all these years, only two really stand out in my memory and those two only in retrospect.

The first happened on the day I was born. It was mid-winter on the prairie in Manitoba. My family lived on an isolated farm, over a mile from the nearest neighbour. There was no thought of driving, other than with horse and sleigh because the roads were clogged with snow. Our family already consisted of five boys. My brother George, fourth in age and fifteen at the time, had walked to visit a friend some miles from home. It was a Sunday afternoon. When he returned around twilight, tired and hungry, I had just been born with the aid of a midwife. (A couple of my older brothers must have gone with horses to get her). My father met George at the door, said he couldn't come in, and asked him to walk to the midwife's family who lived about four miles in the other direction.

This meant plodding through miles of more snow. When George arrived there late that evening, obviously the mother wasn't home and the rest of the family had already eaten supper. No one offered him anything to eat so he had to go to bed exhausted and famished. In later years I never heard the end of this. I had caused him all that aggravation and hunger. Over the years we have paid for a number of dinners trying to make up for this, but the reminders kept coming. In spite of it, he always remained one of my favourite brothers.

The other birthday occasion happened at the age of twenty-two. It was the day of my father's funeral. After the church service and the interment we were all gathered at home as a grieving family, and no one, including myself, even thought about my birthday. Only later did I realize how that day had come and gone.

Submitted by: John Harder

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Sunshine Sketches of a Small Marriage

My thanks to Stephen Leacock, for the title of this article. It is a reminder that we should not take everything seriously, least of all ourselves, to look on the bright of things, and always with a sense of humor. Since I have been two weeks happily married, I'll just call it a Small Marriage.

Lani Gade asked me to write an article as Wendy and I are approaching our 25th anniversary, and may well have reached that date by the time you are reading this article. Wendy said she was not a writer, but she required editorial rights. Lani gave me a deadline which I tried to meet. The first draft was no good, so this being the morning of the deadline, I am winging it. I don't want to incur any chastisement from Lani, nor make her job in getting the Newsletter out any more difficult than it is. Sorry Wendy, I have the press run deadline to meet, and didn't have time for you to edit this. You can read the first stab I did at this, and which I told you was no good, I hope this one is better. Or you can read this one, and let me know what you would have changed.

Yes, I well remember March 3, 1990. Well, at least the date -3/3/90- so that helps a lot when the anniversary rolls around. I haven't forgotten once yet, though it was sometimes late in the day before either of us reminded the other. And I am sure I have forgotten many details of that day. I do remember that nowhere in the wedding vows was there any part of having to agree with your spouse, and that was a good thing. It is really more important to be agreeable, than to agree, and Wendy has certainly been the former. I've tried.

When you are single, getting married involves a "change of status". That means you get to check off a different box on your tax return than I was used to. I suppose as long as you check the appropriate box on your tax return, (or whatever government form is in front of you at the time), you are at least being honest, but the real question is whether I lived that day as a married person. Wendy doesn't give me check boxes to complete for that question, for which I thank her.

Marriage has taught me that honesty is not enough; you sometimes need to ignore that, and go with intuition. Just a few days ago, we were standing in Wendy's kitchen (see below), and Wendy noticed a fleck of something on the floor. I had already noticed it, but ignored it. Wendy asked – "What is that on the floor?" Well, I heard and understood the question (something Wendy says is rarer on my part than before), and wanting to show that I had understood the question,

the first time it was asked, and wanting to show that my new glasses had indeed corrected my vision, and that I wanted to resolve my good wife's curiosity, I bent over and examined the fleck. Could have been anything, most likely a piece of crushed food, probably cereal, could have been a Special K flake, could have been a Floccon de Mais flake (something like a Corn Flakes flake, but the box doesn't have a rooster on it), could have been something else, maybe a piece of lint or cloth, but I'm thinking most likely a Special K flake, but I just couldn't be certain. So, I straightened up, and told Wendy that I didn't know what it was.

Those of you with intuition will know what Wendy's response was. It seemed she really had little wish to know what exactly was on her kitchen floor, she merely wanted her spouse to clean it up, and asked me do so. Actually, I don't remember if she just asked me to pick it up, or to clean it up, but I did the latter, without further question on my part. But I don't think I will collect any brownie points for that. What I do remember about the question was that the friendly, approaching gracious, tone (really) it was asked in, and the word "please" at the end. Same tone. So to me, that was love, and some proof that she understood (I wouldn't hope for "appreciated") my sense of humour, and that she was also not without her own sense of humour.

So how did we get to be standing in Wendy's kitchen on that day? Well, somewhere early in this marriage we were standing in the kitchen (as we called it then), when she made a comment about her kitchen, indicating a degree of possessiveness greater than 50/50, but also showing a window of opportunity to the observant spouse. So, I said, "OK, it is your kitchen", and that is the way it has been ever since. I was immediately absolved of all kitchen duties, and learned to understand the benefits of stewardship – I got all the benefits of the kitchen, without the obligations of ownership. Thank you Wendy.

So, the 25th anniversary of a marriage is viewed as a milestone, and truly it is. Until the last few years, we were often asked how long we had been happily married. People don't seem to ask that anymore, and I don't know why that is. My stock answer to the question was "Two weeks", and if that ended the exchange, that was fine. If I wanted to elaborate, I would assure them that this was indeed the last two weeks, which had been so happy, that I forgot what life was like before that. (Maybe that is what a "change in status" means). So yes, maybe our 25th is a milestone, but let's mark it as the 650th of "two weeks happily married" with many more to come.

Happy Valentines, Wendy.

Our 50th Wedding Anniversary

Wilhelm & Hannelore Harder

March 6, 1965 - March 6, 2015

*Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him,
and he shall bring it to pass. Psalm 37:5*

We just can't believe how fast the years have flown by and now it's our 50th Anniversary!

We first met a few years before we got married while our families were visiting, which was a traditional way of meeting someone at that time. Since our families both had immigrated to Canada in the early 50's, coming from Germany, and originating from the same area in Westprussia, it was easy to connect, and quite a few young people became close friends and got together frequently, some others also married someone within that group. Wilhelm (Bill) started a job at the head office at Volkswagen Canada in Scarborough after taking a job retraining course, two years before we were married, and I was employed at the Niagara Credit Union, after an extended trip to Germany. Bill commuted every weekend to St. Catharines. We were friends all these years before we started dating about a year, then got engaged. Our wedding was at this church on March 6, 1965.

We bought a house in a nice location on the Scarborough Bluffs, overlooking Lake Ontario. We continued to visit our families regularly and kept close ties with friends here in Niagara. Hannelore worked at a bank in the neighbourhood until our daughters were born, Linda in 1967 and Susan in 1968. Family life was very busy, and Bill continued with his job as well as taking several night courses over the years. We attended the Toronto United Mennonite Church (TUMC) where we became active members and served on several committees over the thirty years.

Hannelore volunteered at the children's elementary school during the early years, and also took some night school courses, which led to a secretarial job opportunity at Volkswagen Canada. At this time Linda & Susan attended High School and were very independent, and time went quickly, looking after the house and garden on weekends, and taking many car trips during holidays, including many trips to Florida in the March breaks.

Linda continued her studies at Queens after graduating from high school. She became an elementary school teacher. She got married and stayed in Kingston, then Ottawa, for several years where our first grandson was born. The family moved to Houston, Texas in 1998 where Linda retrained to become a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments.

Susan continued her studies, first at Guelph University, completing her masters at McGill, then decided to go into the medical field, coming home to study at the University of Toronto. After four years leaving for her Residency Pro-

gramme at Stanford Medical Centre in California. She graduated as an anesthetist in 2003, starting her working career at the Welland General Hospital. She was back in Ontario for seven years, and when she started her family, we were blessed with two more grandchildren during this time. We took care of her oldest son for several years while she continued her work. When our granddaughter was one year old, Susan and her family moved to California where her husband started a new job at Google in California where he had lived a few years earlier.

After many different jobs during his thirty-three years at Volkswagen Canada, Bill was ready for early retirement when the company was downsizing in 1994. Hannelore's job was eliminated at the same time.

Shortly after retirement there were some health issues that came up, but as soon as Bill was on the mend, he volunteered with a group of 5 men called "Freedom55", and helped to rebuild TUMC, starting from the basement up. This kept him very busy for about a year, while Hannelore volunteered in the Coffee Shop and Ten Thousand Village Store at the St. Clair/O'Connor Community, which is a senior residence that TUMC and the Danforth Mennonite churches initiated and built for their seniors in the early 80's.

Since both of our daughters moved to the USA, in 1998, we decided to relocate to the Niagara area, to be closer to extended family. We bought a bungalow townhouse in St. Catharines. We knew many people here at NUMC and were welcomed., and everyone made us feel at home.

We have taken many car trips to visit Texas and California in the last few years. We have visited every state, except Alaska, and all ten provinces. We were also fortunate to have our daughters join us on a trip to Germany and the former Westpreussen to see where we were born, and where our ancestors lived for over four hundred years.

Our daughters and grandchildren come to visit regularly, with Susan and children visiting for most of the summer and one week at Christmas. Our oldest grandson is studying at Guelph University. Since Bill likes to drive, he took a job at the local Volkswagen Dealership several years ago to drive their cars as needed on an "on call basis", and he is also a volunteer driver for Heidehof. Being a Worship Leader in the German Service is another venue that he is involved with. Hannelore volunteers where needed and is involved with Women in Service, and keeps schedules and the household in order.

We have been blessed for 50 Years with our families, and have come full circle back to Niagara. We help each other out and work as a team, we are soul mates. We share the same background, values, faith, love and hope, and by now we probably think alike, therefore life seems to run very smoothly. We hope that after overcoming some health challenges in the future, we can look forward to the next decade.

March

2015

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 @ 10 am German Service— Joachim Dau @ 10 am Interactive Sermon @ 11:00 am Worship Service— Rudy Dirks @12 Jr Youth's Spa- ghetti Lunch for All	2 @ 7 pm Women's Bible Study @7:30 pm Niagara Community Male Chorus Practice	3 @9am Women in Service @ 7 pm Church Council @ 7pm Women's Worship	4 @ 6:30 pm Pioneer Club @ 7 pm Prayer Mtg	5 @ 7:30 pm Choir Practice	6 World Day of Prayer @ 6:30 pm Youth Band @ 7:30 pm Youth	7
8 @ 10 am Interactive Sermon @ 11:00 am Worship Service— John Tiessen	9 @ 7 pm Women's Bible Study @7:30 pm Niagara Community Male Chorus Practice	10 @9am Women in Service	11 @ 6:30 pm Pioneer Club @ 7 pm Prayer Mtg @ 7 pm PCRC Mtg	12 @ 7:30 pm Choir Practice	13 @ 6:30 pm Youth Band @ 7:30 pm Youth	14
15 @ 10 am German Service— Isaak Eitzen @ 10 am Interactive Sermon@ 11 am Worship Service— Rudy Dirks	16 @ 7 pm Women's Bible Study @7:30 pm Niagara Community Male Chorus Practice	17  @ 9 am Women in Service @ 7 pm Spiritual Council Mtg	18 @6:30pm Pioneer Club @7pm Prayer Mtg	19 @ 7:30 pm Choir Practice	20  @ 6:30 pm Youth Band @ 7:30 pm Youth	21
22 @ 10 am Interactive Sermon @11 am Worship Service— Steve Cox	23 @ 7 pm Women's Bible Study @7:30 pm Niagara Community Male Chorus Practice	24 @9am Women in Service	25 @6:30pm Pioneer Club @6:30 pm Young Adult Leadership Night @7pm Prayer Meeting	26 @ 7:30 pm Choir Practice	27 @ 6:30 pm Youth Band @ 7:30 pm Youth	28
29 PALM  SUNDAY @ 10 am Baptism 2 Begins @ 10 am German Service— Udo Woelke @ 10 am Interactive Sermon @11 am Worship Service— Rudy Dirks	30 @ 7 pm Women's Bible Study @7:30 pm Niagara Community Male Chorus Practice	31 @9am Women in Service				

Other News...

"Along the Road to Freedom: Mennonite Women of Courage & Faith" Art Exhibit.

This collection of 26 paintings, hosted by St. Catharines United Mennonite Church, tell the dramatic stories in art and words honouring women of faith who have provided families with leadership in extreme situations. Exhibit runs until **March 8th**; Mon-Fri 9am-1pm and Wed & Fri 7-8:30pm. Additional times or groups by appointment: 905-935-8017.

Sunday, March 8, 3 p.m., a book launch of Sam Steiner's *In Search of Promised Lands: a Religious History of Mennonites in Ontario* at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church, 335 Linwell Road. This wide-ranging story of Mennonite migration, theological diversity, and interaction with other Christian streams is the first comprehensive history of Mennonites in Ontario since L. J. Burkholder's *A Brief History of Mennonites in Ontario* published in 1935. Also, have the opportunity to view the "Along the Road to Freedom: Mennonite Women of Courage and Faith art exhibit." **More information is available on the poster on our Community bulletin board.

The Art of Giving for a SOUP-er Cause! Get your tickets for the 10th Annual Empty Bowls fundraiser, **March 11th** at Club Roma in St. Catharines. Enjoy soups prepared by Niagara Region chefs in one of a kind pottery bowls created by local potters. Help end homelessness and reduce the impact of poverty in the Niagara Region. Presented by Bethlehem Housing and Support Services. Visit www.bethlehemhousing.ca or call 905.684.1660 ext. 1.

You're invited to Conrad Grebel University College! On **Saturday, March 14th (10am – 4pm)**, Conrad Grebel and the University of Waterloo will be having an Open House! Come and meet current students, learn about residence life, and have your questions answered about the programs offered at the University of Waterloo. There will be free parking available in the Grebel parking lot. For more information, visit www.uwaterloo.ca/grebel/future-students Please contact Jessica Scott if you have any questions! jrwhite@uwaterloo.ca or 519-885-0220 ext 24264.

March 28 at 6:30 pm—MEDA Waterloo Spring Banquet at Steinmann Mennonite Church. Catherine Sobrevega from the Ghana GROW Project will be speaking with Quiet in the Lans providing musical entertainment. For more info: www.meda.org/waterloo Online Payment preferred or RSVP by email: nagbonaye@meda.org or phone (519) 725-1633 x100. Reservations close March 23. See poster on our Community bulletin board for more information.

Silver Lake Mennonite Camp Registration is now open for Summer 2015 with programming available for campers ages 6-16 including Mini Camp, Teen Camp, Family Camp and many others. Space is limited so be sure to register early. Campership Funds (subsidies) are available. For more information, please visit www.slmc.ca or contact Dave Erb at dave@slmc.ca or 519-422-1401.

If you would like to submit any photos or articles for the newsletter, please contact any of the Newsletter Team of Editors:

Lani Gade | 905-468-2316 | wlgade@bell.net

Kathy Rempel | 905-468-3829 | jrempe16@cogeco.ca

April Michon in the church office at: 905-468-3313 or by email at office@redbrickchurch.ca.

Deadline for the April newsletter is March 13th, 2015.



LIFE WITH US



NEWSLETTER



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