

  
**FOR**  
 unto us a  
*Child* is born  
 UNTO US A *Son*  
 is given; and the government  
 shall be upon *His* shoulder. And  
 His name will be called  
**WONDERFUL,**  
*Counselor,* THE MIGHTY GOD  
**THE EVERLASTING FATHER,**  
*The Prince of Peace.*  
 ISAIAH  
 9:6



NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2015, VOLUME 2 EDITION 9

# Live With Us

At Niagara United Mennonite Church

What child is this, who, laid to rest  
 On Mary's lap, is sleeping?  
 Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,  
 While shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the King,  
 Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:  
 Haste, haste to bring him laud,  
 The Babe, the Son of Mary!

Why lies he in such mean estate  
 Where ox and ass are feeding?  
 Good Christian, fear for sinners here,  
 The silent Word is pleading.

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,  
 Come peasant king to own Him,  
 The King of kings, salvation brings,  
 Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

Raise, raise the song on high,  
 The Virgin sings her lullaby:  
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born,  
 The Babe, the Son of Mary!

Helpless and hungry, lowly, afraid,  
 Wrapped in the chill of midwinter;  
 Comes now among us,  
 Born into poverty's embrace,  
 New life for the world.

Who is the stranger here in our midst,  
 Looking for shelter among us?  
 Who is the outcast?  
 Who do we see amid the poor,  
 The children of God?

Bring all the thirsty, all who seek peace;  
 Bring those with nothing to offer.  
 Strengthen the feeble,  
 Say to the frightened heart:  
 "Fear not: here is your God!"

Who is this who lives with the lowly,  
 Sharing their sorrows,  
 Knowing their hunger?  
 This is Christ, revealed to the world  
 In the eyes of a child,  
 A child of the poor.





### In Flanders' Fields

In Flanders' fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch, be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders' fields.

Major John McCrae, 1915

## My Brother's Experience as a C.O.

I come from a family of six brothers. Being the youngest I am also the only survivor. My oldest four brothers; Abe, Jake, Pete and George were born in Ukraine, in a span of six and a half years, from 1911 to 1918. My brother Herb and I were born eleven and fifteen years later here in Canada.

When WWII broke out in 1939 the only one of our family who was of age to be drafted into war was George who was 21 at the time. The oldest three were already married and farming. The draft in Canada did not start until 1940. By that time the Elders of the various Mennonite churches were lobbying the government to allow their young people to choose alternate military service, like the Red Cross, or to grant them military exemption as conscientious objectors.

George, along with many other young Mennonite men in Manitoba were ordered to report to a court session in Winnipeg where it was to be determined whether they were truly conscientious objectors or merely trying to get off the hook. There were two judges allotted to George's group. Apparently one judge was very tough and the other more lenient. George was lucky to be called to the lenient one, who asked him, "Is it against your conscience to shoot your fellow human beings"? George said, "yes", and that was it. He was now called a C.O.

In January 1941, George, along with approximately seventy other C.O.'s from Manitoba were sent to the Kananaskis Valley of Alberta to cut trees to be made into props for the coal mines in the area. They were housed in an abandoned lumber camp, and the work was hard. George heard that the camp cook was looking for a helper in the kitchen. He applied and was accepted. That started his career as a flunkie, as all kitchen help was called in those days.

As a C.O. George also served on Vancouver Island as a forestry fire-fighter. Again the cook needed a helper and as George already had experience he got the job. By the Spring of 1943 he knew that Dad needed help on the farm so he wrote letters to the government in Ottawa asking to be released from C.O. work to help his aged father. He really didn't expect a reply, much less any consideration, but much to his surprise the camp boss came to him one morning to let him know that he could go home. Thus ended his stint in the C.O. Camps.

As it turned out my parents gave up the farm and with their two youngest sons, Herb and me moved to Ontario. Then George spent a year as a cook in a lumber camp at Flin-Flon, in northern Manitoba. A small part of his job there was to bake about 30 cherry or apple pies every day for a crew of approximately 180 men. A couple of years later, after he was married, his wife asked if he could bake a cherry pie. He said no. He could bake 30, but not one.

## Memories of a Lost Uncle

In the last edition of your newsletter, Kenton and our daughter Sheryl (Neufeld) Janzen wrote about their trip to Italy this past May. One of the places they visited was the military cemetery in Cassino where Sheryl's great uncle, John Sawatsky was buried. Sheryl is the only member of our extended Sawatsky family to have been able to visit there. Lani Gade has requested that I give some more information about this uncle's death for this Peace edition of your newsletter.



To clarify a few things, I think I should give a bit of history of my Sawatsky family. My great grandparents emigrated from the Bergthal colony in the Ukraine to Canada in the 1870's and settled in Manitoba. Their families had not experienced the revivals which occurred later in the Ukraine. Their church, I imagine, was quite conservative, and I rather wonder whether the Anabaptist peace understanding was stressed too much. There were quite a few young men from my community that joined the armed forces during WW2, including another uncle of mine. Sadly, those that were fortunate to come home again were not accepted back into the church. The United Church was established in Altona shortly after to accommodate these families.

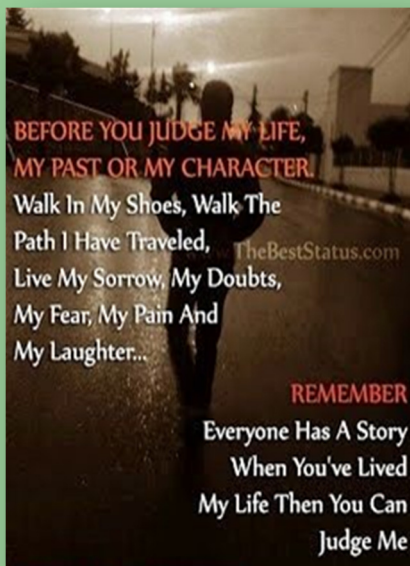
As a young child I wasn't aware of how active my uncle was in the church before he left and I doubt that he was even baptised, but I know from his letters that he was a believer. The experiences of his being in the midst of the horrors of war really caused him to think. A letter we received one Easter contained his testimony that Jesus had died for him and he was trying to live a Christian life even in the midst of the war. Uncle Johnny was wounded in Ortona, Italy on December 23, 1943, but recovered and was sent back to the front. He was wounded a second time on May 24, 1944, but was able to send his family a note letting us know that he was dying.



And I quote: *"When you receive this you will already know that I am no longer on this earthly world but have passed into God's home where there will be no more wars nor sorrow. Please do not grieve for me as we shall meet again on the Great Judgement day, if not sooner. Do not forget to be good Christians, better than I have ever been. Say so long to all for me. Goodbye until God willing we meet again. Love, Johnny"*

This experience of the loss of a dear uncle has really helped to shape my resolve to follow Jesus as He demonstrated love and non-violence. This is a real challenge to us today with the state our world is in at this time.

~ submitted by Shirley Neufeld (Bethany Mennonite Church)



### Remembrance Day Prayer

Remember with clear eyes the horrific cost of war.  
Remember with deep sorrow those who killed and were killed.  
Remember with grief the blood-stained battlefields.  
Remember with tears the rending of people from their homes.  
Remember with compassion the bereaved and the wounded.  
Remember with reverence those who risked their lives for peace.  
Remember with tenderness the children's longing for freedom.  
Remember with gratefulness all who forgave their enemies.  
Remember with hope the kingdom that is planted with small seeds.  
Remember with confidence that faith, hope and love abide.  
Remember with joy that our Saviour is the Prince of Peace.



~ Carol Penner



## Agnes (Nettie) Goerz Reflections on a Life Committed to the NUMC

Agnes (Nettie) Goerz has been a resident of the Heritage Place long term care home for the past 5 years. For 10 years before that she was a resident of Pleasant Manor, active as the tenant representative to the Board and very proud of her involvement in ground-breaking for the expansion of their programs and facilities. She is approaching her 89<sup>th</sup> birthday in November.

While dementia has progressively extinguished her link to the church over the past 15 years, the importance of the NUMC in her life and that of so many others in the congregation is worthy of some reflection.

Mom was fond of sharing the story of her family's arrival in the Virgil area as part of the first group of Mennonites settling in the Niagara area in the mid 1930's. "My sister Ann and I were the first Mennonite girls at Virgil Public School" was an oft repeated story. Mom's parents and future in-laws were part of the establishment of the Niagara congregation in 1938. There were many stories and pictures to take pride in and share while she was active in planning for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of NUMC. The anniversary provided opportunities to hear so many of the stories of founding members of the congregation. Stories of personal and congregational growth included memories of the beginning of women's attendance at membership meetings in the early 1960's. One story Mom shared was the sacred trust of preparation for communion. Her father-in-law Frank Goerz Senior was the sole deacon at NUMC from 1938 to 1951. His wife was tasked with baking the unleavened communion "bread". She recalled her mother-in-law kneeling in prayer in her home prior to baking the bread to ask a blessing for everyone who would partake. Ultimately Mom took this responsibility on when Dad became a deacon years later. There were so many other aspects of congregational life that filled her life to the fullest.

Throughout the course of her lifelong involvement with the Sunday School programs and the Frauen (Women's) Verein, Mom was always eager to hear about supports being provided through the MCC world relief programs. She was inspired by the link between the origins of these MCC programs originally initiated to help the Mennonite immigration from other parts of the world to North America in times of war and upheaval. She was especially impressed with the stories of Peter J. Dyck who emigrated from the Soviet Union with his family in 1927 and later became a principle facilitator of the Mennonite exodus from the Soviet Union during the war. She was fond of freely sharing this history on and including the international reach of the MCC programs beyond the Mennonite community through the years.

I fondly recall our home as a window to the many material aid programs that the women of NUMC actively supported through the years with quilting frames often set up for weeks at a time, storage in the basement for lye soap made for export to third world settings and packaged layettes prepared by the Verein to send to refugee families.



I recall that for most of my school years, an annual rite of passage was the arrival of hundreds of pounds of curriculum material for the Sunday School program at the church. The logistics of sorting and organizing the material by teacher and classroom would take up one room in our very small home and would usually involve many evenings of sorting, long after the sunshine disappeared after the long days of farm work. Few things gave mom more satisfaction than getting the individual packages of material to the church, sorted and bound by string with each teacher's name on it along with the upcoming class list. As I think back on this annual event, I am in awe of the long hours she committed to this work fully aware that much of it would be made so much easier with today's access to computers and lists and names that can so easily be reproduced from year to year. The many books and pages of handwritten teachers' names and Sunday school students by class were a fascinating piece of church history.



While Mom's involvement as Sunday school superintendent from 1972 to 1985 absorbed much of her attention through those years, she maintained many of her other involvements with the Frauen Verein, and frequent hospital visits with Dad as part of the important work of the deacons until his passing in 1981, and her link as a representative to the Inter Mennonite Mission and Service Board work in Kitchener. Our family was grateful that her many solitary trips to Kitchener prepared her for the long road trips to Parkhill and Oshawa where Willy and Susan and Anne and I and our families lived. Without memory we are unable to appreciate our past or the present, nor anticipate the future. So many ironies exist in the wake of the complete destruction and loss of Mom's memory.



To share a few... The Creek Road farm her family purchased when they arrived in Virgil in the mid 30's is within view of her room as she looks out at Heritage Place. Though her conversations are limited these days to brief statements or a few words, they are generally inspired by outdoor scenery often in the courtyard of Heritage Place or looking out of the window beside her bed.

Mom spent so much of her life committed to advancing education of children in our Sunday school programs, in young adult and youth programs, and later in life in marketing Christian education material and books at Heritage Books and Music. Much of this drive, I am certain, has come from the recognition of the critical importance of such education, having left school in grade 6 to help with crucial work on the farm, a practice that was common in the late 1930's.

If there was an abiding preoccupation for Mom, it was the commitment to remember our History... family history and church history along with an obligation to keep it in mind at all times. How ironic as we look back on her focus and acknowledge with sadness that she has lost her capacity to remember. Perhaps the greatest gift she has left behind is a responsibility to faithfully reflect on our past and present in order to direct our life compass for the future as long as we are able. Thereafter, the responsibility belongs to those who have the capacity to act with this knowledge and perspective.

While her life was devoted to the continued work of the NUMC, I can recall her messaging that our responsibility is to be people of God in our homes, our places of work, the community and world around us. Her life has truly been a constant practice of that responsibility.

~ submitted by Ed Goerz



*Yummy ice cream provided by the Sunday School on the first Sunday back in September!*

## Sunday School Superintendent

**Question:** What made you decide to take this position?

**Answer:** Being in the Nomination Committee it was brought to us that a Superintendent was needed for September. We went to work looking for someone to take this position. God always has the person He wants for the position. It just takes listening and obedience to realize who that person is. After announcing one Sunday after doing the children's story that we still needed to fill that position, it dawned on me that perhaps God was looking me in the eye on that one and that it was something I would enjoy doing. After getting Willi's green light and getting a great response of confidence from George Pauls who gave me the blessing I needed to be released from the Nominations Committee, I decided to take on this position.

I believe in the importance of Sunday School. I believe every child should hear about the good news that God loves them and Jesus died for them. I believe in the words that our choir sang on Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, that God needs our hands, feet, minds and hearts. We are His body. If we don't do His work we will lose our Sunday School; our children. it will be a huge loss. We need to look beyond now. Beyond sleeping in on Sunday morning simply because we have made life so busy. Beyond taking 'that break' and thinking our children need a break Sunday mornings. Our children are the building blocks in the foundation of our church. There aren't many places that they will hear about Jesus if not in the home, first, and in the church. We have a great group of teachers and song leaders that absolutely love our kids (YOUR KIDS). They are a group of dedicated, smiling people who are there every Sunday. Please give them your support and encouragement. Jesus said, "Let the children come to me for **they** are the Kingdom of Heaven". We need to grasp the depth of that statement and take it to heart.



**Linda & Debbie at work!**

~ Submitted by your Sunday School Superintendent, Linda Pankratz

## LIVE LIFE WITH US NUMC PHOTO DIRECTORY 2015

Your photo directory team is pleased to present to you the smiling faces of our congregation all in one 'Vine and Branches' themed directory – true to our geographical region, and hopefully true to the activity and spirit of our congregation. All of the pictures in the introductory pages are of our people, of all ages and stages, participating in both leisure and service, in our church and in our community. Only one picture is not of people (that's a puzzle, can you find it?) but symbolizes what binds us all together....

This project has been underway since April of this year. Predictably, since then there have already been numerous changes in the faces that we see. We have new babies, we have said good-bye to loved ones, and memberships have shifted. Please update your information with the office as soon as changes happen. We are making a serious effort to maintain an accurate data base.

Just a few housekeeping notes: If you have your picture in the directory, you are entitled to one book per frame. If there is more than one household represented on that picture, we'll be happy to give you one book per household. If you are not pictured in the book, or would like to have additional copies, a limited number of directories are available for purchase at \$20 each.

Thank-you to the many volunteers who helped in the production process: hostesses, phone callers, Pleasant Manor assistants, Sharon Dirks as "who's-who" coach, and Jeff Friesen who came to the rescue when the power failed on our last photo session evening! Thank-you to you the congregation, for participating so willingly!

The photo directory team consists of 4 ladies who have never worked together on any project before! We are Christiane Esau, Wendy Janzen, Kathe Wiens, and Marlene Heidebrecht. We each know a different cluster of people in our congregation but what we do have in common is that we are all 'detail' people, we are devoted to our church, and we love to laugh! We offer this directory to you to enjoy, to use as a resource for acquainting yourselves with your congregation, and to help you to build relationships. It is our heartfelt prayer that this directory helps to unite us as we serve Christ in our community!



Your Photo Directory Team



*The Froese children showing us "this is the church,*

*this is the steeple, open the doors and see all the people!"*



### What is the most important part of Christmas?

**Avery:** "It is Jesus' birthday."

**Ashley:** "remembering Jesus"

**Cole:** "being with our family"

### What do you like best about Christmas?

**Kennedy:** "Jesus' birthday"

**Kennedy:** "going to my Oma & Opa's & a friend's house."

**Sam:** "snow!"

**Avery:** "Christmas Elf, pasta, chicken noodle soup"

**Cole:** "Santa comes & a big dinner"

**Sam:** "presents"

**Ashley:** "playing in the snow"





## Music Notes for November/December 2015

### Sunday Mornings:

**November 8:** Will Friesen leads us in special music following the theme of peace for Peace Sunday.

**November 15:** "Faith Stories Through Music". Music is a powerful connection between ourselves and God. We are looking for volunteers to share their personal faith story and how a particular song influenced their journey. Prior to the song being sung, we request a short 2-3 minute spoken account of the story. We welcome various languages and musical styles. We hope for stories from all generations! Please contact Kenton if you would like to be involved.

**November 22:** The ensemble leads us in worship.

**November 29:** This combined communion service starts at 10:45 for First Advent. The Praise and Worship band leads us in worship.

**December 6:** We welcome the Bethany Children's Handbell Choir to the 11:00 service, as well as our choir.

**December 13:** Praise and Worship band lead music.

**December 20:** Special Music TBD

**December 25: ????**

**December 27:** Special Music led by Jon Bradnam and Rachael Peters

### Beyond Sunday Mornings:

**November 22nd:** Niagara Community Male Chorus Advent Concert, at SCUMChurch at 7:00.

**Nov. 29:** German Advent Program

**December 20th:** Bethany and Niagara join voices for the Candlelight Service,

**December 24:** Children's Christmas Eve Program (please stay tuned for potential time change!)

Thanks to our latest offertory contributors!



Katrina Peters



Elissa & Danielle Redekopp

## **BOOK CORNER**

### **Path of Thorns**

By Jacob A Neufeld

Soviet Mennonite Life under Communist and Nazi Rule

"Jacob A Neufeld's fascinating memoirs vividly reveal the various experiences of Russian (Ukrainian) Mennonites from the time of Stalin's collectivization campaign in Soviet Ukraine, through World War II, to the Mennonite exodus from Soviet territory to Germany and then to Canada. This book will be a remarkable historical source for those who are interested in the everyday life of a small religious minority which survived not only the 'inferno' of Soviet modernization after the N.E.P., but also the hell of the war and tragedy of repatriation from one country to another"

Sergei Zhuk, Department of History, Ball State University

### **In Search of Promised Lands**

By Samuel J Steiner

A Religious History of Mennonites in Ontario

"This long-needed and much anticipated history of Mennonites in Ontario does not disappoint. Steiner has undertaken meticulous research to offer a comprehensive narrative that balances the local and particular with broader contextual explanations for how the startling diversity of Mennonites in Ontario today came to be. This grand survey will be the definitive reference work on the subject for years to come"

Marlene Epp, professor of history, Conrad Gebel University College

### **A Prairie Christmas Collection**

By Tracie Peterson, Tracey Bateman, Deborah Raney & others

"9 historical Christmas romances from America's Great Plains. Settling the vast open prairies, weathering the winter storms, and finding joy to celebrate during Christmas epitomizes the pioneer experience. In this unique collection of nine Christmas romances, readers will relive a prairie Christmas with all its challenges & delights as penned by multi-published authors."

### **An Amish Second Christmas**

By Beth Wiseman, Kathleen Fuller, Ruth Reid & Tricia Goyer

"Second Christmas is a time of family, fun, tradition in Amish communities. Come celebrate this special time with 4 heartwarming Amish romances"

~ Debbie Fast

## Christmas Angels

**Needlepoint** is easy, relaxing, takes no talent – only a lot of patience.

Our daughter-in-law Tracey and I would sit together and do “some stitching”. The first angel I made went to my niece. The next one went to my sister in B.C. So, I thought, before I gave them all away, I wanted to make an “Heirloom from Oma” for each of our 3 grandchildren. It takes me about 1 to 1 ½ years to finish one, so a lot of thoughts and prayers go into each angel. I call it my “Labour of Love”. And no, I don’t take orders, unless another grandchild comes along. Then the magnifying glass will come out and I’ll start again



~ submitted by Anne Sawatzky

~ Anne’s Christmas Angels are displayed in the lower hallway Art Gallery.

## PEARLS FOR CHRISTMAS – and every day!

One morning in December, many years ago, I was talking to my Mom on the phone, and telling her how overwhelmed I was feeling about all the Christmas preparations not yet completed. We strategized, we planned details, and we made lists. But then we came up with the best idea of all: we would shift our focus. We would try to release our fixation on details and open ourselves to finding the unexpected joys of the Season. Our PEARL COLLECTION had begun! We defined a ‘*pearl*’ as a special moment, a view, a sound, a touch, or any beautiful or unexpected occurrence that emotionally lifted us out of the routine of an ordinary day, and reminded us of the true spirit of Christmas. Some people might call these “God-moments” or “serendipity”. We agreed we would tell each other about the ‘*pearls*’ we found and even made it into a little contest of who’s *string of pearls* would be longer! That Christmas was one of the most meaningful ever, since we were intentionally looking for blessings and sharing them with each other.



My Mom and I soon realized that collecting *pearls* was a good idea all year. It was a fruitful challenge and a lot of fun. Eventually, that little game became an excellent exercise of personal discipline that enriches and embellishes my life to this day.

Sometimes, life brings us a black *pearl*, which I suppose, can be beautiful too because of how we grow and learn from it. Mine came on June 25, 1995 when I lost my fellow *pearl* collector. In her honour, I acquired a string of real *pearls*, and lovingly wear them on sentimental days.

I have shared my *pearl* story with a few friends over the years, and I am thrilled when they adopt the practice and then tell me about *pearls* they have found. One friend gave me a copy of a story that reminds us that Jesus is the clasp on our string of *pearls* that holds it all together and completes a perfect circle. Yes!

Christmas *pearls* remain particularly meaningful for me, perhaps because our idea started at that time of year. I have a special journal now, where I write them down. Each year, when I start to unpack the Christmas decorations, the first thing I do is read some pages of my journal. There I find such a treasure of wonderful memories that I might have otherwise forgotten. It helps me to keep the task at hand in perspective and grounds me in the Reason for the Season.

Dear friends, I wish you a LONG *string of pearls* this Christmas and in the seasons that follow. Watch children’s faces, listen for unexpected sources of music, savor the flavour of a traditional treat, smell the fresh pine boughs, enjoy the hug of someone you haven’t seen for a long time, in every way open yourselves up to surprises and blessings.

Take the time to search for those precious pearls... and then tell somebody about them!



## "HOLY NIGHT"

The title words are part of the most familiar Christmas carol in the Christian world. These words became particularly captivating when sung simultaneously by thousands of people in the city streets spanning four blocks. No, this was not a mass choir practice of any particular church or denomination, but an event culminating from thousands of hours of voluntary work, as well as generous financial contributions. This event was known as "A Festival of Lights" in the city of Niagara Falls, New York.

The volunteers came from all walks of life, including employees of the City of Niagara Falls, the Department of Education, the manufacturers, the business sector, the New York State Parks Commission, organized labour, U.S. Air Force, and other individuals who saw the need for injecting some feeling of pride into the people who reside near one of the seven wonders of the world.

Employed by an electrical construction/engineering company, my responsibility in this event was to co-ordinate and design the power sources and controls needed to illuminate hundreds of trees, displays, numerous pathways and facades.

Some of the focal points were: The Convention Centre which featured the largest toy train display and model villages that I have ever seen; the E DENT Lackey Plaza - a concrete sculptured area spanning a city block with illuminated hand rails which served as guides through the maze of water falls and fountains, one of them capable of shooting water 12 m. into the air, illuminated by a 6600 watt xenon flood light. The pedestrian mall, emanating from the Convention Center and terminating at the observation tower in the State park, a distance of 5 blocks, featured animated and inanimate displays all along the way.

The Winter Garden, a unique building, housing floral displays, grottos, and a dining area complemented by suitable music, created a truly celebratory atmosphere. Statues of tropical birds with appropriate sounds added depth to a holiday feeling in the South. The walkways in the upper level of the building provided a panoramic view of 5 blocks of lighting.

Considerable power was required to feed all the loads. It came from adjoining establishments like the Convention Centre, E DENT Lackey Plaza, Hilton Hotel and the Winter Garden. The multi source of power was advantageous for making it available, but it made co-ordination more critical. However, all systems were ready to go in time for Christmas.

People were filling the streets long before dusk, but at 5:00 p.m. the switch was flicked on, and within 30 seconds the whole landscape was transformed into a spectacle of coloured lights, while a powerful sound system accompanied it with "Silent Night, Holy Night" sung by thousands of people over a four block area. Never before or since has this song evoked in me such deep feelings as on that evening in 1982. It seemed like every fibre in my body had tuned in to this celebration!

After this Festival season, I was encouraged by the Western New York Chapter of the Illuminating Engineering Society to submit a verbal and pictorial summary of this work. The efforts were rewarded with two awards for "good lighting practice".



Niagara Falls, NY Festival of Lights ran from 1981-2000



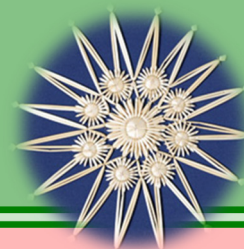
*~ submitted by Arno Bartel*

## Christmas in Germany



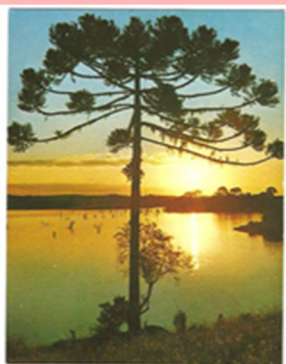
Christmas in Germany brings back memories of my early childhood. In WestPrussia, where I was born, winter came early in the year. Often in November with ice and snow, and we children could go tobogganing or skating on the little River Tiege, which flowed through our little town. Coming home from an outing like that into the warm kitchen, the smell of gingerbread cake and Pfeffernuesse would greet me. My mother was getting ready for Christmas. At our house Christmas started with the first of Advent, when our family would sit around the table which was decorated with an Advent wreath with 4 candles. One candle was lit, and there was a plate with the first Christmas cookies, and a bowl with various nuts. We would sing Christmas carols and my dad would crack the nuts for us to eat. It was a time of family togetherness. I had two brothers, older than I. Soon dad would buy a Christmas tree. It had to be a perfect fir-tree, not a pinetree. And this tree would wait outside until a day before Christmas Eve, when it was brought into the "Gute Stube" (parlor) and the door to that room remained closed. Finally, on "Heilig Abend" (Christmas Eve), the door would open and we would see the tree lit with real candles and decorated with the old-fashioned ornaments and Lametta (tinsel). What a beautiful sight! We had an elderly lady living in an upstairs apartment and she would spend Christmas Eve with us. She had a beautiful voice and she would lead us in singing many Christmas carols. After the singing, mom would show us our spot on the table where our presents were waiting for us, not wrapped with colourful paper, but covered with a tablecloth. There usually was something new to wear, there was always a book and a "Bunter Teller", a paper plate filled with sweets and cookies and Pfeffernuesse, and always a big red apple and an orange. The orange was something special in those days. Christmas Day dinner was usually a roasted goose, and after dinner we would visit my dad's brother and family, who lived a few houses down from us. This was always special too, because they had a unique Christmas tree stand. It was like a big round music box. The tree would fit into it, my uncle would wind up the stand and the tree would turn around and around while it played several familiar Christmas Carols. Of course it was fun to get together with my cousins too. These are memories from over 70 years ago. How is Christmas celebrated in Germany now-a-days? I have no idea. But it is nice to sometimes think back to the old days and reminisce.

~ submitted by Hannelore Enns



## Christmas in Brazil

Our Christmas trees in Brazil were "pinheiros", a very prickly tree. It was set up and decorated on Christmas Eve after we younger children had left for the Sunday School program practice. It was a big surprise for us when we got home, along with a plate of cookies and maybe a little gift. But we were very poor. I remember best in 1943 at 10 years of age, I had many wishes and my poor widowed mother, with tears in her eyes warned me not to expect any gifts or a tree. We had lost a horse and a cow, because of broken limbs I think, and there was just no money. But we did find a tree, and I also got a plate of cookies and a beautiful little cup and saucer. Mom had also made a new dress for my beautiful big doll. From friends I received a little photo album that I still cherish. We had friends that also invited us and other widowed families for "Erster Feiertag" on Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. The grownups sat around and ate peanuts, a holiday treat, and we children played. Christmas was in the middle of summer. At the Sunday School program we had a tree with real candles, recited poems, and sang a lot. My favourite songs were Stille Nacht and Süsser die Glocken nie klingen. My mother died the following year, and I seem to have blocked out all Christmas memories until 10 years later in Canada.



~ Anneliese Pankratz



**Lani's homemade  
Christmas Tree in Asun-  
cion Paraguay, 1960**



**Merry Christmas! Fröhliche Weihnachten! Feliz Navidad! Joyeux Noël! Frohe Wienachte!**



It's that time of the year again—If we haven't yet, soon we will see Christmas trees in front windows, twinkling lights hanging from the eaves, pfeffernüsse and other holiday sweets, nativity scenes complete with the three wisemen, and hear familiar Christmas music in nearly every conceivable location. Most of these things are synonymous with the holidays with people at Niagara UM, but few of us likely know their origins.

Evergreens have been revered as symbols of eternal life and rebirth for millennia, so it is no surprise that German Christians began to bring them into their homes during the Christmas season as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century, despite having been banned for their Pagan origins by the six-century Christian Council of Braga. Traditionally, the tree was brought into the house and decorated on Christmas Eve, where it would remain for the 12 days of Christmas until Epiphany. Later, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it is said that Martin Luther was so moved by the beauty of stars shining between the branches of a fir tree that he decorated his family's Christmas tree with candles. Also originating in Germany, tinsel became a favorite tree decoration in the 1600's and is based on a legend about spiders whose web turned into silver when spun on a Christmas tree.

Finally, it should be no surprise that it was the Germans who invented the artificial Christmas tree, fashioned out of goose feathers dyed green. Today, Christmas trees are likely the most ubiquitous symbol of the Christmas season throughout Europe and North America, where 30-35 million Christmas trees are harvested annually, each taking around 15 years to grow to 6-8 feet.

~ by Will Friesen



## Christmas is Volendam, Paraguay

**My mother and her family**, along with many others arrived in Paraguay in 1949 after the war. Listening to my mother describe her experience of Christmas there as a child has always fascinated me because her experiences seem so different from my own. I can sometimes hardly imagine what it would have been like. What I have learned from listening to these stories is that despite having very little at the time, she still experienced community, family and wonder. I recently asked her about a few of her Christmas memories:

**Marion:** My memories of Christmas as a kid are all about making a wish list, marzipan, lots of baking, decorating the pine tree with all our beautiful glass ornaments, people visiting, snowy days and shopping. Christmas in Paraguay as a small child must have been very different!

**Mom:** Oh yes! There was no such thing as a shopping mall where we lived! Our Christmas was much simpler. We just didn't have very much.

**Marion:** Is there a particular gift you do remember getting?

**Mom:** Sometimes parcels would arrive from America. This particular Christmas we received a parcel that contained a sweater for my mother and one colouring book with two crayons that my sister and I had to share. This was very special for us! What I remember about the book is that both the front and the back of the book were damaged, but the middle part was ok. My favourite picture was the beautiful princess with the long flowing hair and the wide ruffled skirt! We took turns colouring and did our best to make the pictures look nice, but it wasn't that easy with just two crayons which were blue and orange! (*laughing*)

**Marion:** Did you go to church on Christmas Eve?

**Mom:** One Christmas that I can remember, everyone met under the trees in the village. We had a congregation, but no building, but that didn't matter. We still gathered together to worship. Onkel Gerhard (Mr. Gerhard Martens) brought an old sack filled with candies for the Sunday school children. That was a special Christmas treat for us. I was around seven and half years old at the time.

**Marion:** What about a Christmas tree?

**Mom:** Well, there were no pine trees and no decorations, but that didn't stop us from being creative. My mother found a nice branch with green leaves that she broke off and placed in an old tin pail filled with dirt. My sister and I made our own ornaments with what we had. Sometimes we had a few pieces of silver paper from a candy wrapper which we twisted into a shape and that became an ornament. Or we would blow out eggs that became birds. For the head we balled up some paper and stuck it into one end of the egg. The tail was another piece of paper which we folded like an accordion and stuck into the other end of the egg. We had an ink pen called a "Tintenstift" which we used to draw on the details. If we were lucky we might have a small piece of coloured paper that could also be transformed into an ornament.

**Marion:** I guess since you were in Paraguay it must have been warm for Christmas – unlike here!

**Mom:** It was hot and dry! Because it's in the southern hemisphere summer takes place during the time when we have winter. Sometimes the heat was unbearable. One nice thing though, is that once the service ended, we (the kids) all ran from house to house visiting friends. This was one of the best parts about Christmas for me.

~ submitted by Marion Griesse



## The Sudermans: An Update in Pictures:

### The Life of Sammie and James

at home...



at school.. ..



### Karen at the Library:



**Karen's organized mess**

### Andrew at Work:



**Andrew's organized mess**

So there we are in the day-to-day activities of our life here. We hope that gives you a window into what we see and do.

Also, a large piece of what we're up to here surrounds formation. There is an ANiSA pilgrim, Mzwandile (Mzi) Nkutha, who has been involved with the network from the beginning. Time and opportunity opened up for him to study at AMBS (Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary) with his family for a year. This will not only have impact on Mzi's life and the life of his family, but on the wider ANiSA community. We are inviting participation and contribution in order to cover some of the costs for this year of study. You can find details of how to contribute to Mzwandile's time at AMBS [here](#). Thank you for this and all the ways we work together as the church, from across the street to around the world!

Peace and Joy,

The Sudermans



## Keresemose e ntle, Niagara UM!

It's always tough being away from home around Christmas. Especially missing the NUMC candlelight service! But our hope is that you've just put that service on hold for the next few years until we're home.

It's been both good and tough settling back into life in Gaborone since coming back. It's obviously different with Malakai around, but he sure makes it simple for us with his easygoing personality and flexibility. He also sleeps like a champ, so we have nothing to complain about!

As Christmas approaches, we look to the ways that we've been blessed even in these past few months out here. Our Bible studies, which we have been approaching more as formal classes recently, have been going very well with good attendance and participation, and encouraging excitement about the materials which we've been studying (as an introduction to Biblical studies course we've been addressing Biblical authorship, exegesis, hermeneutics, etc.). Our prayer is that we would be able to see other leaders from among this group leading similar courses in the different branches of their church.

The prison ministry also continues to thrive, and we've been fortunate enough to start being involved in reconciliation work among the inmates, as they come to terms with their crimes with their own families, and then with their victims and/or families of their victims. We're praying for more people from our local church partners to join us in this ministry, as with different work and school commitments it is often hard for people to stay involved for more than a few weeks or months.

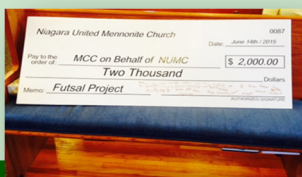
And finally, the development work continues to present challenges, which also make the successes and the progression all the more satisfying. The futsal project continues to gain traction, and we are so encouraged by local community leaders who are passionate about serving in Bontleng and working together with us to fight through the various roadblocks. We're praying that God would claim this ground for himself, and that communities even beyond Bontleng would be blessed by such developments even this coming year.

Being home and being able to share together with you as a congregation earlier this year was encouraging for us, and your ongoing support on so many levels has allowed us to carry on with this work out here. As we think of the heralding of the birth of Jesus and the reminder that the good news of great joy is for all people, we feel blessed that you're helping us to witness this joy of the Lord being shared among different people here in Botswana.

Now, as one of our favorite Christmas songs here in Botswana says, "*Christmasie e tla, reka magwinya!*" ('Christmas is coming, go buy some fatcakes!').

Peace,

Nate and Taryn, and Malakai



**\$2000.00 collected by Sunday School  
for project in Botswana**

## Christmas Baking



**Special baked goods** are also an important part of many people's holiday celebrations (and, to some, arguably far more important than the tree!). Pfefferküsse are one such treat and go by a number of names, including the Dutch pepernoten and the Plautdietsch päpanät, which all translate to peppernuts. A holiday tradition

dating to at least the 1850s, pfefferküsse vary from region to region and from one baker to the next—some being soft and mild, some larger and some bite-sized, some crunchy and full of spice—but one thing in common is that they are *all* delicious! Another favorite holiday treat for many is the New Year's cookie—also known as Niejoash koakje, portzelkje, and olliebollen—which is a recipe carried with Mennonites throughout the years from Holland to Prussia to Russia and to the Americas. The fritters have grown to such popularity in the central U.S. that they are one of the most popular ethnic foods at the Kansas MCC Relief Sale, where an average of 35,000 are fried and sold at each sale. Finally, I can't write about holiday foods without at least mentioning the

infamous fruitcake, which  
sidered essential food for

originated in ancient Egypt, where it was con-  
the afterlife.



~ by Will Friesen

## CHRISTMAS EVE IN REESOR - 1939

The snow sparkles in the bright moonlight. It is quiet; no sound can be heard except the jingle of the sleigh bells in the distance. The large sleigh, used to haul pulp to the railway siding for the paper mill, will be our means of transportation tonight to take us to the one-room school house where the Christmas Eve celebration will take place.

Bundled in our warm coats (no snow suits in those days), knitted stockings covering our longjohns, moccasins on our feet, two pair of mittens, a toque large enough to cover our ears, and a heavy scarf to cover most of our face, we trudge through the snow to meet the sleigh that will pick us up at the road..

The school room is decorated for Christmas. Evergreen wreathes hang on the walls, and a large tree stands in the corner with real candles and sparklers which will be lit later during the evening. Two men with pails of water are stationed nearby just in case of fire.



A stage has been set up at the front of the classroom. This is our Christmas service as well as the school Christmas program. The older children have memorized their part, and present the Christmas story. All the children, grades 1 to 8, take part in the "choir", singing Christmas carols a cappella in both English and German. (In the community there were not only German Mennonites, but some French families, and some from Finland, Sweden and Russia, so English had to be part of the program.) The evening program continues with poems recited and further singing.

As the children sing "Up on the Rooftop reindeer pause, out jumps good old Santa Claus" suddenly the door swings open and Santa Claus with a loud HO-HO-HO enters carrying a large potato sack on his back. He also carries a large book in his hand in which are written the names of all the girls and boys, indicating if they have been good or bad during the past year. In his sack, Santa Claus finds a pair of mittens for each child on his list. These have been donated by the women of the United Church in Paris, Ontario, who support the northern settlements.



At the end of the evening, the children and their families return to their homes to await Christmas morning and the bowls filled with peanuts and candy which Santa will have left for them. Maybe, just maybe, he may have left a doll for the girls and a toy hammer for the boys.

~ submitted by Martha Bartel

## Christmas Music

**Music** is one of the most inescapable signals that Christmas is coming—we hear Christmas music at concerts, in the grocery store, in church and school, and on nearly every radio station. "O Holy Night", one of the most popular Christmas songs on the radio today, was the second song ever to be broadcast on radio in 1906. Fifty-five years later, "Do You Hear What I Hear?" was written as a plea for peace during the Cuban Missile Crisis. A staple of Christmas choral music is portions of Handel's *Messiah*, a massive two-hour-long choral and orchestral work. Though composed by a native German, in its original form, *Messiah*'s text is taken entirely from the English King James Bible and tells the story of Christ from Old Testament prophecy to his second coming. Handel composed the entirety of *Messiah* in 24 days, and it remains some of the most recognizable and frequently performed choral music to this day.



~ by Will Friesen



Leamington, 1953  
Live candles  
Helga Rahn



## CHRISTMAS IN URUGUAY

The seasons in Uruguay are opposite to the ones in Canada. So that causes Christmas to be on the hottest days of summer. The main religion in the country is Catholicism. The gift-giving that we do at Christmas is done on the day of "Reyes", Epiphany, the day of the three kings' visit to Jesus. The children would leave some hay for the camels and maybe a drink for the kings at the entrance to the house, and find gifts in the morning of the 6th of January. Christmas is mainly a day of church worship and mostly of going to the beaches to cool off, after the priests blessed the beaches at the beginning of December.

One year our neighbour had a blossoming bush in front of their house with balloons tied to it. That was their Christmas tree.

We as Mennonite immigrants tried to keep Christmas as close to the German traditions as possible. The cedars are very fresh and green in summer. So our Christmas tree usually was a cedar top or branch. The candles on the tree were real, small candles which had to be watched closely. But houses usually were built of brick and the floors of ceramic tiles. The doors were open. We never had a fire. Now many of our people have artificial trees and lights too.

Sunday school Christmas Celebrations in church were always on the Sunday before Christmas, so that Christmas Eve was strictly for family. Father would read the Christmas Story from Luke 2, we sang the old German carols, each child had to recite a poem or verse, and after that we could open our presents.

Now Santa Claus even found his way into the malls of Montevideo, with big artificial trees and artificial snow and lots of commercial stuff. I think that happens the world over. So the churches have to think of ways to bring Christ back into Christmas. On the farms Christmas came at the time of wheat harvest and always was a very busy time. It was hard to have enough time for family celebrations. My mother-in-law once said that she sometimes wished that it would rain so that nobody could work outside. But that was not what she really wanted either, because the harvest was their livelihood. So sometimes the tree had to wait until very late. But Christmas was important to all. May we all appreciate the many blessings that God bestows on us at Christmas.



~ submitted by Ingrid Dau



## Amidst war, child found Christmas joy

(One of a series of special Christmas stories written by our readers. Today's story comes from Eleanore Dyck of Irvine Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake. St. Catharines Standard Tuesday, Dec. 19, 1995)

In 1941, I was eight years old and living in Nazi-occupied Ukraine. My father had been sent to Siberia by the Communist government shortly before the German invasion. My mother was an invalid.

That year Christmas was celebrated in the village school, and this is my first memory of Christmas. On Christmas Eve, my brother and I went to the school to watch the festivities. My eyes were as big as saucers! I had never seen a Christmas tree – as tall as the ceiling, and lit with real candles and covered with shiny ornaments.



At the end of the program, Father Christmas arrived with lots of packages. All the children were so excited! There were many others like me who had never seen anything like this. When Father Christmas began to call out names, my heart almost stopped. Would he really call me to receive a beautiful doll like the other girls did? Then I knew he never would. These gifts were only for the children of officers and bureaucrats. The poor children were given nothing. But I was excited by the spectacle and told my mother about the beautiful tree and the toys and the wonderful Father Christmas.

Now that I've had my own children, I realize how badly she felt being unable to give us any Christmas treats. But she comforted us with the story of the very first Christmas, and how God gave mankind the gift of life to both the privileged and the poor. Many Christmases have come and gone, but I will never forget that one.

Lori Dyck's grandmother and Lori's cousins in Russia

~ submitted by Lori Dyck

## No Room in the ....Hotel/Campground/House...

Christmas 1973 for us turned into a memorable, yet very different celebration! John and I with our 18 month old daughter, Debbie had come to Botswana in August as CUSO (Canadian University Services Overseas) volunteers to teach at the Serowe Teacher Training College. It was a place that could not have been more different from Canada, and more similar to Paraguay; therefore feeling totally foreign to me, while bringing back fond memories to John. For Debbie it was just home! By December, however, all three of us considered Serowe our home. We had become Debbie, MaDebbie and RaDebbie to our students and coworkers. It was obvious to us who the most important member of our family was! Having taught for three whole months, it was time for summer holidays, and the weather acted accordingly. While the local people poured out of the village to go to the lands (ranches) for the summer, we expats set out on our summer vacations. After all, how often do you get to explore the southern part of the continent of Africa?



Before everyone headed their separate ways, however, we celebrated Christmas with our students and staff at the College. We had a Christmas tree, though it hardly resembled any tree we had ever had in Canada. We had a Santa Claus who didn't look anything like a Canadian Santa, and we had lots of candy which Santa distributed to all the students and children. All in all it was very exciting with lots of shouting, singing and even some ululating. We had even had

a Christmas Concert which John and I had planned and carried out in a very Canadian manner with sheet music. We were informed by the students that they didn't need music to show them how to sing parts; they harmonized from the heart—and they did just that!

Loading our small VW variant (station wagon) with camping supplies for cooking along the way, and bedding for sleeping in the back of the car, the three of us set out on our adventure.

Heading east and then south, we travelled through a country of spectacular natural beauty, from the vast expanse of the semi-arid Karoo Desert to the lush vegetation and ocean beauty of the Cape to the richness of wildlife in protected reserves. For our inexperienced eyes, the world around us was often simply breathtaking! Having traversed the Great and Little Karoos, we arrived at the awesome Cape of Good Hope! Meadows of wildflowers surrounded us on all sides, and looking down over the cliffs, we saw the panoramic view of the ocean below. It was spectacular!

Amidst all this awe-inspiring beauty, there were still the obvious signs of apartheid – scenic drives for Europeans only, other drives for coloureds or blacks only, washrooms for whites separate from the holes for non-whites. Campgrounds for whites only, except for black servants. Our spirits sank every time we saw this discrimination, and the beauty of God's wonderful natural creation lost some of its lustre. Since 1994, Apartheid has officially ended, but the country of South Africa still struggles with inequality among the various races.

The nights on our trip were spent in campgrounds, which were very well set up with the necessary amenities. Although we had sometimes slept on the side of the road or in an open area in a game reserve in Botswana, we realized that it would not be a smart thing to do this in South Africa.

For Christmas Eve, we headed away from the Cape to Port Elizabeth, and decided to treat ourselves with a room in a hotel. As we drove through the quiet streets of Port Elizabeth on Christmas Eve, we were disappointed to see not one sign of Christmas – no lights or decorations, nor celebrations at any churches. And of course, there was no snow! How could this be Christmas? Finally, we decided to just find a hotel and celebrate Christmas Eve in our own room. But, alas, there were no rooms available in all of Port Elizabeth! John and I were getting a bit nervous. There were no campgrounds, and now no rooms, and it wasn't safe to sleep at the side of the road, and we had our little daughter with us. How careless of us to allow something like this to happen in a unfamiliar foreign country!

One last hotel to try – small, but maybe just one room. I stayed in the car with sleeping Debbie, and John went in to ask. When he didn't return, I took Debbie and went in to check things out. As we came into the foyer of the hotel, I saw John speaking to a boy about 12 years old. It seemed that the boy had heard John being told that there were no rooms available in the hotel. Seeing the disappointment in John's face, he approached John and suggested that we come and stay at his place. We thanked him for his offer, but said that he would need to check with his parents first. The young boy called his mom on the hotel's phone, and then gave us the amazing response of his parent's permission for us to park our car in their driveway, and spend the night there. What a relief that was for us! We could also use their washroom facilities in the evening and in the morning. And so we took the boy with us to lead us to his nearby home, and parked our car, went inside to meet the parents, used the washroom and went to sleep in our car. Next morning, we went inside to use the washroom, and expressed our heartfelt thanks to the family, who was sitting around the breakfast table. We don't remember the family's name, nor their address, but that night, they provided a place of safety for our little family! Christmas Eve had new significance for us, as we felt we had met our very own guardian angel!

We were all a little quieter as we drove off in the direction of Kruger's National Park for more exciting adventures on Christmas Day. **It had definitely been a Christmas Eve to remember!**





# The Journey of My Thankful Heart

An Anthology by Adine Enns

## ***This I Know***

By Kenneth H. Wells

*I may not know what next may come  
Across my pilgrim way;  
I do not know tomorrow's road,  
Nor see beyond today,  
But this I know, my Saviour knows,  
The path I cannot see,  
And I can trust His wounded hand  
To guide and care for me.*

*I do not know what may befall  
Of sunshine or of rain;  
I do not know what may be mine  
Of pleasure or of pain;  
But this I know, my Saviour knows  
And what so ever it be  
Still I can trust His love to give  
What will be best for me.*

*I do not know what may await,  
Or what the morrow brings;  
But with the glad salute of faith;  
I'll hail its op'ning wings!  
For this I know, that in my Lord  
Shall all my needs be met,  
And I can trust the heart of Him  
Who has not failed me yet.*

My family immigrated to Canada in 1949. This was an exciting adventure. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of October we boarded the ocean liner Samaria at Bremen, a seaport in northwest Germany. We stopped in France for more passengers, then crossed the English Channel. In the dark, from the crowded deck we watched the lights of England's coastline disappear and headed across the stormy Atlantic Ocean. Once again into unknown territory.

As I am writing this today, a scene from my distant past etches itself into my mind's eye. Russia! 1943! I see the lantern lights of the trek wagons flickering on the other side of the river. The bridge has been destroyed. We are fleeing our home in a horse-drawn hay wagon. Frightened and cold on this dark, dark night we are waiting in line for our turn to be taken across the Dniepr River on a barge.

*"Have you ever stood  
at the edge of the ocean  
and watched the waves come in?  
God's love is like the waves -  
constant, steady, sure.  
He says His mercies  
are new every morning.  
Every day we get a new wave  
of His mercy, grace and love."*

~ Holly Gerth



*"His compassions never fail.  
They are new every morning;  
Great is Your faithfulness."  
Lamentations 3:22-23*

The ship was tossed mercilessly. The waves looked like huge mountains rolling towards me. "Oh, was I sea sick!" After a rough 13 day voyage, we landed safely in Quebec City. By train we travelled to Moor Lake, Ontario, a station in the bush with nothing but train tracks, trees and a dirt road. We then drove to Five Oaks, a settlement of shacks built by the fathers who had come to Canada the year before on contract with Ontario Hydro. All labourers to build Hydro Dams on the Ottawa River. The settlement of shacks looked a little like the Russian village in the movie, Fiddler on the Roof. There was no electricity, no plumbing, no radio, no car, no bike, no animals but it was home.



October 31, 1949. My first day at school in Rolphton, 3 miles west of Five Oaks, on highway 17. Rain or shine, hot or cold we all walked to school. The school was filled with immigrant children. Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Danes, Norwegian, German, Latvian, Estonian, a few French Canadians and fewer Canadians. Amazingly we all learned and played together even though we had trouble understanding each other and our teacher.



*If possible, to the best of your ability,  
Live at peace with all people.  
Romans 12:16 (CEB)*

Upon completion of the Hydro Project on the Ottawa River in the spring of 1951, all employees were transferred to Niagara Falls. Thus we came to live, learn, grow and work in this beautiful Niagara Area.

~ to be continued

*In light of the recent 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bethany Mennonite Church, and looking over the November and December 1964 bulletins of our Church, increasing references were being made to the newly founded "daughter" congregation.*

From November 15, 1964: "The name chosen for our new church is Bethany Mennonite Church."

November 22, 1964: "Today -After the service we again meet in the Credit Union Building to decide on the site for the new church."

November 29, 1964: "Application Forms for membership in the Bethany Menn. Church are available from the ushers. Please return them tonight. The church is to be built on the corner of East-West Line and Creek Road."

December 6, 1964: "The Bethany Mennonite Church has launched a special drive for donations and loans to the building fund. Receipts will be issued for December donations." Note that a total of \$800.00 was collected during December 1964/January 1965.

And from the same bulletin: "Membership Transfer - 145 members have requested a transfer to Bethany Mennonite Church."

# Milestones

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

## November Birthdays

Justina Bartel: 90 (born Nov. 2, 1925)  
Gerhard Hummel: 81 (born Nov. 7, 1934)  
Heliant Block: 86 (born Nov. 13, 1929)  
Irene Penner: 80 (born Nov. 16, 1935)  
Nettie Goerz: 89 (born Nov. 23, 1926)  
Helen Riss: 91 (born Nov. 23, 1924)  
Siegfried Wiens: 82 (born Nov. 24, 1933)  
Katie Quiring: 81 (born Nov. 26, 1934)  
Susanne Janzen: 89 (born Nov. 27, 1926)  
Gunnar Doerwald: 81 (born Nov. 28, 1934)

## December Birthdays

Elizabeth Janzen: 84 (born Dec. 1, 1931)  
Marg Goerz (Eric): 80 (born Dec. 6, 1935)  
Jake Wiens: 87 (born Dec. 6, 1928)  
Egon Epp: 86 (born Dec. 9, 1929)  
Irma Epp: 84 (born Dec. 12, 1931)  
Henry Schroeder: 82 (born Dec. 14, 1933)  
Peter Quiring: 80 (born Dec. 16, 1935)  
Christa Witt: 80 (born Dec. 26, 1935)  
Therese Bergen: 84 (born Dec. 30, 1931)



## Address Update:

Henry & Lilia Neudorf 905-401-3124  
Willi & Linda Pankratz  
Box 41, 1652 Four Mile Creek Rd  
#108 Enns Lane Virgil, ON L0S 1T0  
Home: 905-468-4080  
Cell: 289-686-3774  
pankratz57@gmail.com

Elke Schmidt  
Apt. 1006, 614 Lake St.  
St. Catharines L2N 6P6



**Congratulations  
Anneliese Pankratz  
on your retirement  
after 41 years of  
driving school bus!**



## Weddings

Sept. 26, 2015 Helen Guenther & Isaac Woelke

## New Babies

Oct. 2, 2015 Alex Keir Wilson born to  
Kent & Natalia Wilson



**Happy 90th  
Birthday  
Kaethe  
Fieguth!**



## Memories of By-gone Days

Having another birthday brings back many memories of by-gone years. November 1929 my parents, Henry & Mary Andres with my four siblings, John, Hilde, Henry and Frieda escaped from Mariawohl, Molotschna, Russia ( now Ukraine) and traveled to the refugee camp in Prenzlau, Germany. It was during this time that there was an epidemic of "Lungenkrankheit" (lung disease) and my sister Frieda died, together with 66 other children and three adults. Our family was then sent to another refugee camp in Mölln, Germany, spending several years there waiting to immigrate to Canada.

My story starts on October 15, 1932 when I was born in the Hospital of Mölln. (Aran and I have returned there several times and the refugee camp is now being used as a military school.) Sometime later our family moved to Neu Schöningstedt in Germany where my younger brother Ed was born.

Finally in March 1936 the family was able to immigrate to Canada arriving in Halifax on March 16<sup>th</sup> and from there travelled on to Vineland and the Niagara district. Our parents were able to buy a small farm on Lakeshore Road where I attended a one-room school for 3 years.

Then in 1941 Dad bought a larger farm in Virgil and I attended school there, until high school when we were bussed to the St. Catharines Collegiate and later attended St. Catharines Business School. I then started my career at McKinnon, now GM.



John, Henry & Elly Andres  
Mölln, Germany 1933



Refugee camp in Mölln, Germany 1930

~ submitted by Elly Kopp



Women's Breakfast at  
Lawrenceville



Thanksgiving Sunday  
at NUMC with  
presentation of new  
Photo Directory



Heritage Concert Choir helped raise  
\$11400.00 for Syrian Emergency  
Relief Fund!




If you were wondering why the watermelon was not on display at Thanksgiving—it was still growing! It has now been picked & weighs a whopping 78 lbs!



Will turning water into  
Koolaid & back again.

## Candles of Advent



Light one candle in the night.  
Light one candle of faith;  
Faith that can heal a world in need,  
Faith that can conquer hate and greed,  
Faith in a child who will come to lead.  
Light one candle of faith.

Light one candle in the night.  
Light one candle of hope;  
Hope for the world to calm its fear,  
Hope for the news we long to hear,  
Hope in a child who will soon appear.  
Light one candle of hope

Light one candle in the night.  
Light one candle of love;  
Love that will teach the world to care,  
Love that surrounds us everywhere,  
Love in a child who will help us share.  
Light one candle of love.

Light one candle in the night.  
Light one candle of peace;  
Peace that will free the world from war,  
Peace that will last for evermore,  
Peace through the child we are waiting for.  
Light one candle of peace.

Light one candle in the night.  
Light one candle of joy;  
Joy for the song the angels sing,  
Joy for the special news they bring,  
Joy in the child who is born a king.  
Light one candle of joy.

~ Don Besig & Nancy Price

### LIFE WITH US NEWSLETTER

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