



Sept. Oct., 2016, VOLUME 3 EDITION 5

Life With Us

At Niagara United Mennonite Church

*As the eagle soars and circles, seeing all beneath the sky,
you, O God, unbound, transcendent, watch the earth with loving eye.*

*As the gull with grace and beauty arcs from sky to touch the sea,
so Christ swept from cosmic splendor, gracing our humanity.*

*As the dove's descent once signaled, "Here is my beloved Son!"
now, O Spirit, come among us; name us each and all your own.*

*As the nightingale undaunted sings when starless is the night,
may we sing faith's song in darkness, waiting, yearning for the light.*

*As no sparrow falls unnoticed though its space and span are small,
so no life is lost, forgotten by the Love that made us all.
So no life is lost, forgotten by the Love that made us all.*

Words—H.G. Stuempfle

Music—K. Powell

Tributes & Memories—Rudy & Sharon

Over the past 12 years, God has worked through Rudy and Sharon to be an enormous blessing to our church family, and I have felt that blessing in some particularly significant ways. Some of the greatest words of wisdom I have received have come from Rudy and Sharon, a few of which I would like to pass along! From Sharon I learned the value of reflecting upon our negative emotions before acting on them. "Never send an e-mail when



One of the attributes of Rudy and Sharon that we have really come to appreciate is their willingness to be creative and flexible in their service to the people in the congregation. A highlight for us was June 1, 2014 when we celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary. We invited our guests to meet us at NUMC at 4:00 pm, the exact time of our wedding in this church, in order to return thanks for the blessings of our years together. Our friend Lawrence Eady played our wedding processional song on the organ as we entered the sanctuary with family and friends. We gathered in a circle at the front of the church, precisely where we stood 40 years (to the minute) earlier, and received a prayer of blessing and thanksgiving from Rudy and Sharon. These were very significant, touching moments. After some more great organ music and some picture-taking, we all left the church together and continued with a celebration dinner.

you are angry!" (An especially valuable piece of advice for us fiery redheads!) These were Sharon's words, and they have translated into other areas of my life as well. That advice has changed the course of many discussions and interactions over the years that took a much more positive direction simply by stepping back and allowing the heat of the moment to pass. Through Sharon, God has shown me that our greatest struggles are often also our greatest gifts. Sharon has walked closely with me through some of those challenges, and has celebrated with me when the gift of those challenges has been revealed in due time (and it almost always is)! As Mark and I prepared for our marriage and the joining together of our spiritual journey, Rudy gave us his blessing to explore different faith communities as a married couple. He reminded us that the church is not just each individual building and gathering. Rather, the church is the global body of believers and no matter where we are, we are a part of that body. These words have shaped how Mark and I see church and those who are a part of it, for the better. What a gift to have a pastoral team so filled with wisdom, selflessness, and love for God and for others! We feel so very thankful to have them as mentors and guiding influences in our lives, and we wish them all the very best in this next chapter of their journey!

~Ellery Rauwerda



Thank-you, Rudy and Sharon, for meeting our needs, in joys and sorrows, adapted to the uniqueness of the occasion.

~ Dick and Marlene

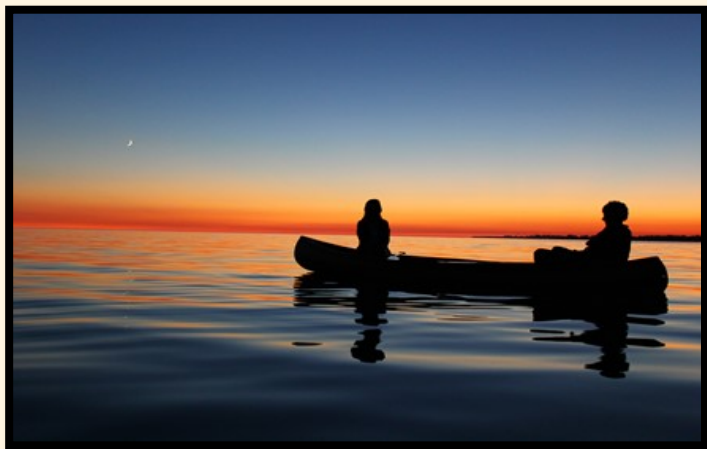
When I was on the Pastoral Search Committee more than 12 1/2 years ago, I remember the time when Rudy applied for and accepted the role of lead minister of our congregation. For me, personally, it somehow fulfilled my wish and I felt a sense of satisfaction. Now we are saddened that Rudy and Sharon have decided to leave. Hannelore and I wish them God's blessing in whatever path their lives will take.

Wilhelm and Hannelore Harder.



We have truly been blessed for 12 years at Niagara UM with having Rudy and Sharon together as a team, just beautiful people inspired by the Lord. We especially remember how Rudy and Sharon traveled extensively to different areas of the globe and Rudy on his nature trips by canoe, and by bike. Always will recall their wonderful vehicle they presented with sleeping quarter's for their big trip to the Grand Canyon. They have served us so well for our elderly, as Rudy mentioned serving at 140 member funerals, and I am sure many weddings too.

Ron Riediger and Laury Willms



I have fond memories of going to my late mother's apartment (Margarete Rempel) at Pleasant Manor on Sunday mornings to watch the church service with her, especially in 2013 which was the final year of her life. Rudy, I like the way that you carefully chose your "Sermon Series" and made them relevant to everyday situations. One that I found particularly special was your Easter series that year, where you spoke of topics such as Generational Patterns, and Destructive Beliefs.

Thank-you Rudy and Sharon for coming to lead this church for so long and making a difference.

Marlene Borzychowski

Every year the Dirks' would wait until the ice on their pond was 'just right' and then they would invite the youth group over for a night of ice-skating.

They would light a bonfire, cook up a generous pot of hot chocolate and sit out with us around the fire after our skate and get to know the youth.

This was always a fantastic night that the youth looked forward to, and an amazing example of hospitality and offering what you have to others that I learned from them.
-Stephen Cox



More time to spend with these wonderful children—big & small!



God bless you
one & all!

Life in Carrot River



ELIJAH

Hi! My name is Elijah. I was born on Nov 10th, 2015 and I am 8 months old.

I have two bottom teeth and I'm working on top ones to match. I love eating, just like my mother, and have tried almost everything my parents eat. I spend my days crawling and exploring everything. My favourite toy is daddy's backpack or mama's shoes, but when they take those from me, I like cooking in my little kitchen. I'm pretty amazing!

Carrot River is three hours drive north east of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The town is surrounded by stretching fields of canola, slight rolling hills, and cows, and they call it Saskatchewan's Outback. There are about 1000 people living in town and about 1000 on the surrounding farms. Maybe a bit more now because people are starting to return from the cities and locales to which they dispersed.

The centre of town is one street on which you will find a pharmacy, hardware store, post office and grocery store, everything you need.

Recently a bakery was built to keep the town supplied with delicious doughnuts and fresh baked bread. All along the sides of the wide main street are pick up trucks, idling in the winter to keep their passengers warm in the sub-zero temperatures and with keys in the ignition in the summer for quick passage. Everyone knows one another and it is a very safe place to live. This main stretch also boasts a lovely new square that was built a year ago by Carrot River Economic Development, which Daniel is a part of. It has a pathway that runs through the lush grass and a stage, eventually with pavilion, perfect for people gathering. At the end of the summer there will even be a wedding held there.

The church is a couple of blocks over. They have a lot of young families, with 7 new babies being born within the past year. People are very excited about their Sunday School program and they are busy preparing for summer VBS, which plenty of children from the surrounding community will attend. Fall brings with it soup supper, and the church's famous borscht, and home-made noodles for chicken noodle soup. The Christmas season is very festive with a choir for Carol Fest and Candlelight. The rest of the year three different people, one of whom is Ana, lead music on rotation and they have very talented pianists.

The people of the church and surrounding community are so friendly, like a big family. Ana shares that they feel incredibly blessed because, though their families are so far away, they have been "very adopted" here and have many grandparents and cousins. Between the open skies and fields, and the open hearts of the people, Daniel and Ana Janzen have truly found a home here in this beautiful community.

*Open skies,
open fields,
open hearts.*



DINNER AT THE FARM

Sunday evening we drove out of the town, down a stretch of pitted highway with broad fields on either side. Turning off the highway to a dirt road, Daniel and Ana wave at a woman on a quad and man beside a machine. They tell me that this couple goes to the church, and point to a nearby patch of trees. Around here the fields are dotted with groves of trees that surround homesteads. One more turn brings us to “The Farm”. A handful of pickup trucks tells us that we are last to arrive, and we park our little car in their shadows.

Walking right in, no need to knock because we are now family, we are warmly greeted with adults and children alike kneeling in front of Elijah and making faces. Hannah, the matriarch, is puttering about the kitchen preparing potato salad and one of her daughters, Melinda, is at the table cutting onions with tears in her eyes. Melinda and Kevin live in town with their three boys and one girl. She works at the pharmacy while her husband works at Carrot River Implements selling machinery parts. Connie, who is Melinda’s sister and works at the grainery, is regaling the others with jokes. Isaac and Hannah have two more daughters and several more grandchildren, but they won’t be joining us this evening. Andy, the only son, strides in and Hannah passes him beef. He brings this out to the porch where he barbeques as the men sit around talking. Ana sets the table, making sure that everything matches and we talk about our homes and their décor, while also talking about suburban development.

With the children at a separate table, the adults laugh our way through dinner. There is a lot of good-natured ribbing going on in this family. They are mercilessly mirthful at the fact that I use a fork and knife to cut my bun, while joking about their own savage tendencies – which are actually just comfortable and homey. As we eat, they try to recall which animal we are eating and eventually decide upon Number 53. The roast, sliced thinly and marinated for three days in a family recipe before being barbequed, is quite possibly the best meat I’ve ever eaten.



After dinner we move to the living room while Ana and Connie do the dishes. Isaac, the patriarch, sits in a large recliner with his plaid shirt, while the rest of us are scattered about on burgundy couches and chairs that were pulled in from the dining table. Melinda and Kevin’s children play with Elijah on the floor or are out quadding about the farm. Talk meanders all over the place, but starts with the weather and farming. We’re supposed to get some thunderstorms and Andy is hoping that it passes without rain because the grass is laying in the swath (which means it is cut, but not yet baled). They have about 200 head of cattle, plus calves, on their farm. There was a good laugh when they heard that the “farm” I grew up on was less than 50 acres, since Andy owns 307 acres and rents 735. That’s about 4 km². I learn new words every time I come with Daniel and Ana to visit the family, and I say “interesting” so much that they tease me about being a psychiatrist who is doing a case study on the hillbillies of Saskatchewan’s Outback. “We have no hills, but we sure have the billies!”

It stays so light here since we are north of Saskatoon, that you can hardly guess what time it is. In the blink of an eye it is 10:30pm and Kevin and the children take their quads back to town, while the rest of us play Carcassonne and Elijah entertains himself with toys at our feet. Daniel wins two rounds and Elijah starts to whimper (he is teething right now), thus it is time to thank Isaac and Hannah for being so hospitable. She tells me I must come again and I am instructed to come at Christmas time for lots of snow, Christmas cheer and sleigh rides. Melinda, Kevin and Andy will come to the manse tomorrow for games and we head home to attempt sleep in the bright night. So life in Carrot River moves on.

— Jolien Koole





Reflections from the 2016

Trish and I sat on our beds in our hotel room chatting on Saturday evening after the close of the Assembly, enthusiastically discussing the experiences over the past four days. We had spent the long days prior immersed in deep learning and new friendships, as we collaborated with delegates from across Canada. The Mennonite Church Canada 2016 National Assembly was packed full. Full of information, full of processing, full of lamentations, full of joy, full of tension, and full of grace. We could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit at work amongst the almost 500 delegates.

This Assembly was absolutely incredible to be a part of. Among other really important conversations (such as discussing the Doctrine of Discovery and the Israel-Palestine conflict), we dedicated significant portions of our time to conferencing on the future of MCCanada (as led by the Future Directions Task Force), and continuing in the discernment process concerning same-sex committed relationships (Being a Faithful Church). Both of these processes brought to light a church that is bravely stepping out in faith and hope.

As most of you know, I wasn't raised in the Mennonite church but I have been adopted in. Times like these are times of big learning curves and reflection, and of participating in the family that I have chosen and that has chosen me. As I sat at my table, I was reminded of the Wholeness Through Christ retreats, where we look at generational contexts. Each one of us has brokenness that we inherit and that we live in, our opportunity is to repent of our sins, break the bonds and strong-

holds, be healed of the wounds, all through the power and grace of Christ Jesus. This weekend, to me, was a beautiful example of this. We didn't do it perfectly and we have much yet to learn, but our church family went through an incredibly tough process of lamentation and listening. We named areas where we might be complicit in sin—times we have not listened or cared for one another, times we were active agents of harm. We heard voices of pain and hurt from almost every part of the spectrum on each issue. Those who were fearful that we are not staying true to our faith. Those mourning the loss of what once was. Those who grieve because their brothers and sisters have not understood their story. Those who were broken because they feared disunity. But we also heard voices of hope. An older generation blessing the ones to follow. A younger generation joining in the heartbeat of the church that has beaten so loudly before us. Though things may change and look different, there is a future for the Mennonite church. How wonderful to be a part of this!

I've often wished things were perfectly black and white (oh, how much easier would that be!), but this "greyness", the ability to argue two-three-even four interpretations of the same, "clear" passage reveals that Scripture can be paradoxical. I've been part of discussions with people of various theological backgrounds, as well as within our greater church body and within our congregation. I've had countless conversations with friends and family about spiritual matters. I've witnessed good, loving, devoted Christians come to quite different convictions



on the same matter, even after dedicated discernment and prayer. The Mennonite understanding allows for this, and the resolutions we affirmed made space for this. Though we must always continue discerning Scripture and what the Spirit is telling us, we must also admit that we cannot fully comprehend God (see Ecclesiastes 3).

Personally, I believe this is a good thing. It can be unsettling or even scary, but it leads us to trust in God. We must trust that God knows our hearts, and the heart of the Church (see Psalm 139). We must trust that we all step out in faith and that He is there to catch us when we fall. (see Psalm 66).

How then do we move into such a time as this? One speaker mentioned that perhaps this may not always be a safe space, but a brave space. Those words remind me of the Narnia series when, in speaking of Aslan, Mr. Beaver says, “ ‘Safe?’ ... ‘Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.’ ” This isn’t a safe process. It is rending and painful. But it is a good process, and we follow a good God. One who is bigger than us and binds us together in unity.

So we step into this liminal space, a time of transition and transformation, being chained to one another in peace, learning to live in the tension of relationship and the grace of God.

— Jolien Koole

To watch video of worship and sessions, visit:

<http://home.mennonitechurch.ca/saskatoon2016/video>



Photos submitted by
Patricia Regier



Your Delegates

Christina Cox, Jolien Koole, Patricia Regier, Stephen

We were joined by Daniel and Ana Janzen, and their son Elijah,
from Carrot River Mennonite Church.

My Dream of travelling across Canada by Train

~ submitted by April Michon

In the spring, my former university roommate, Amanda, and I embarked upon a trip we'd been planning for quite some time. It was the kind of trip that we'd both dreamed of doing since we were children. A couple of years ago on a New Year's Day where we were talking about resolutions and dreams, we recognized this shared desire of ours. It was then that we committed to it no longer remaining one of those "one day" dreams, but that we would actually do it together. It was so rewarding to live out the reality of our dream being fulfilled and is now such a great joy to have the experience to remember and share with others. I hope that this reflection on the trip may inspire you to also act on your dreams and aspirations, as well as answer some questions if you haven't taken this trip.

Our trip began in Toronto, boarding the VIA Rail. Destination: Vancouver. My friend Amanda and I opted to sleep in berths, which are private bench seats throughout the day, which transform (by the lovely VIA porters) into bunk bed style sleeping areas for the night. These were very comfortable and quite pleasant. I captured some serene early sunrise photos across Northern Ontario lakes from my bedside window.

Opting to travel in the overnight cars, as opposed to just regular seats, automatically enrolled us in the meal plan. The food aspect of the trip was a major highlight! Firstly, the food was beautiful. It was fine dining every day, for each meal. My favourite meal was lobster ravioli in a cream sauce with veggies as well as the standard soup or salad first course, dinner roll and choice of dessert. (We felt like queens.)

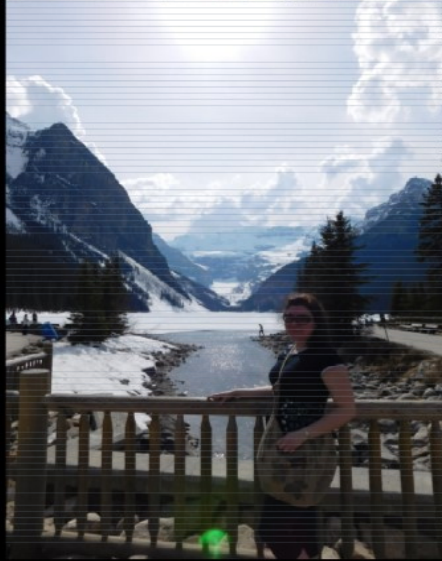
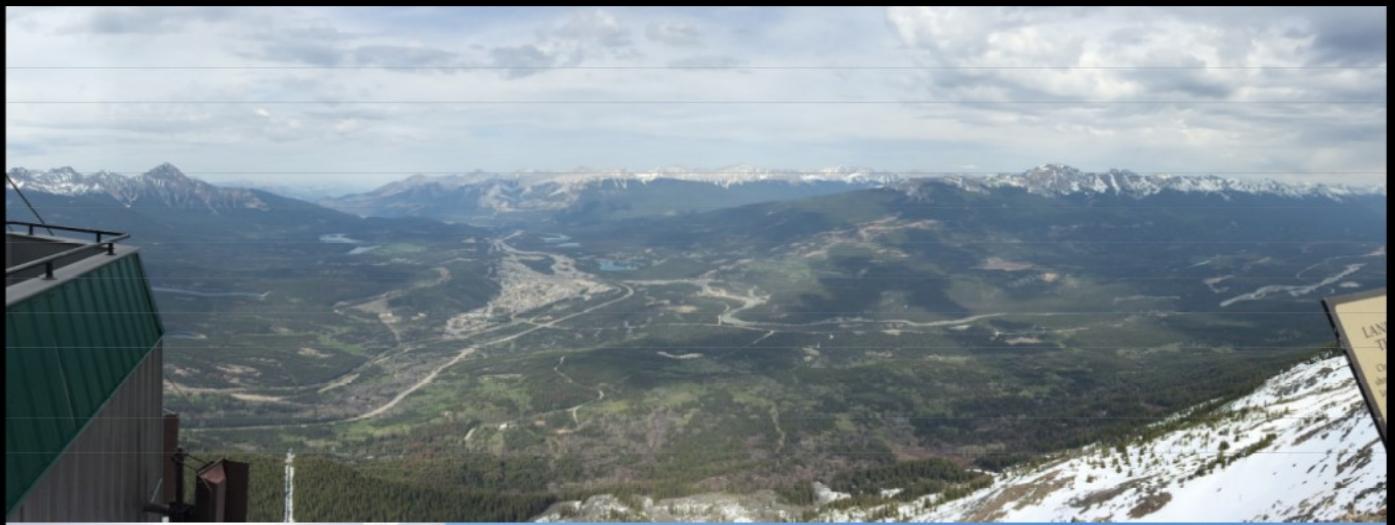
Secondly, the dining car was splendidly quaint and old-fashioned. There were three seating times. When ours called us to the dining car, we were seated with other passengers to constitute tables of four. The four of us then had the opportunity to get to know one another throughout the duration of the meal. I really enjoyed that aspect.

Most passengers were also going the majority of the same distance that we were, and we were therefore able to build a rapport and camaraderie with one another. By the last day there was a very jovial spirit as one woman celebrated her birthday on board, sharing much laughter and friendship with her newly made friends. I found it very interesting to see the assortment of passengers. Most notable was the fact that we were in the minority as Canadians on the train to see the country for a holiday. The majority of passengers were foreigners. We met people from the US, from Europe, and from Asia. Some people were students, some were vacationing, some were moving to a new province to start a new life, one was even there as a part of a prize. Via often arranges for musicians to travel for free if they perform for the other passengers while they travel. We met a young Country singer who had won a province-wide singing competition from BC who was on her way home from Nashville, by way of Toronto. Enjoying her twice daily live shows in the back entertainment car was a lovely addition to the already spectacular atmosphere.

The views from the train are wonderful. I will never forget the experience of seeing the tips of the Rockies for the first time as I dined over a leisurely brunch. I was constantly surrounded by windows and never felt that my view was lacking. The Via staff would even alert us when there were wildlife spotting visible to the passengers. I was able to see bears, mountain sheep, and even a beautiful waterfall from the train.

For most of the 3-day, 4-night trek, we were ahead of schedule. We travelled at the end of April before the summer schedule begins. As a result of being early, we were able to enjoy getting out and off the train at a few extra stations, in addition to the regularly scheduled stops where you have enough time to get out and explore the area a bit. Our longest stop was in Winnipeg, where they even arranged for us to have a tour bus available to do sight-seeing over this 3 hour stop. Through these stops I was able to not just put my feet down in each of the provinces we journeyed through, but was able to also do a bit of exploring and get a flavour for what it might be like to live there.

I did not get stir-crazy on the train. There was lots of space available to walk around, and of course greet my new friends as I passed them by. We also frequented the window cars that were elevated with windows all around on the walls and rooftop. Another nice memory is this car was watching the sun set as we charged onward. Then we leaned back in the chairs to watch as the stars slowly appeared. It was beautiful.



It was nice travelling with a good friend as we had lots to talk about, including planning what the rest of our trip would cover! We had booked sleeping accommodations each night so we knew the route we were taking, but had not made many firm plans as to our daily activities as we wanted to allow ourselves the freedom to be spontaneous and seize opportunities as they presented themselves. As you will see in the picture of the map I included, the lines represent the general path of our travels. The various colours indicate our varied modes of transportation. On our trip we sure utilized an assortment of these including: train (white), taxi, large car ferries, passenger in a car, small 10 person ferry boat, bicycle, Car2Go (timed inner-city smart car rental), bus, driving our rental car (red), Skytram, horseback, plane (blue).

(see next pg.)

(cont'd from last pg.)

We arrived in Vancouver, and though it was sad for that lag of the trip to end, we were excited for the 9 days that still lay ahead of us. We did some visiting of friends and family: Amanda's high school friend (downtown Vancouver), my mom's cousin and his wife (Colitqualm Beach, Vancouver Island), Cheryl Schmidt (Maple Ridge, BC), and Amanda's aunt, uncle and cousin (Kelowna, BC).

There's not enough space here for me to share with you all of the amazing experiences that we had over the remainder of our trip as we explored such a wide variety of activities venturing through BC and Alberta (we flew home from Calgary). The following list of highlights will not do them justice but can help to give an idea of the wide variety of experiences we enjoyed: seeing 700+ year old trees on Vancouver Island, bike riding along the Vancouver coast in Stanley Park, eating so much delicious seafood (throughout the whole trip), driving from 27 degree weather in BC up to the top of still-snow-covered mountains, winery touring through the sunny, picturesque Okanagan Valley, experiencing a burst of vibrant gardens in full bloom in 30+ weather in mid-April (while Ontario was still awaiting the first signs of spring), exploring natural hot spring caves as the sun set over the mountains, stargazing while floating in a hot spring pool, hiking the trails alongside Lake Louise on top of 3 feet of snow, enjoying the best brunch of my life (so far) at the Fairmont Lake Louise, excitedly spotting wildlife sightings along the roadside, hiking 2,277 m above sea level on the top of The Whistlers Mountain, and shopping for my first cowgirl hat from country and western stores in Calgary.

It really was a truly wonderful trip. I enjoyed the friendship, the family and friend visiting, the new experiences, the amazing food, the break from work life and regular responsibilities, but also really thoroughly enjoyed seeing my country. I was so awestricken by the gorgeous and so varied landscapes that we get to call our own. I was so proud each day of that trip to be Canadian and be surrounded by other Canadians, and be celebrating our most beautiful country!

It is so amazing how the mention of my journey across Canada by train, sparks such interest and intrigue in everyone. The common response I generally receive when people learn of my trek is either: "I've done that! (followed by gushing about what a great trip it was)" or "Really?! I've always wanted to do that!!" My response is always: "Good. So do it!" Let me leave you with that same encouragement. Whether you've been wanting to explore our vast country and take in all of the natural beauty, culture, history and activities that it has to offer, or if you have some other destination in mind, or some other dream to follow, don't let it just stay as a "one-day" dream, but pursue it. You'll be ever so glad that you did!

~ April Michon

Changes Happening Through the Gospel

Let me start by saying how thankful and blessed I was to have a team of people in Canada supporting our team. Every day I was reminded of how many brothers and sisters from home were praying for us and praying for the nation. This was truly revealed to me when I heard from one of my teammates that they met a follower of Christ in the city we were living in. This was completely by God's hand, in a city of a million people we were blessed to meet up with a christian girl and connect her with a disciple. Over the past 10 years of ministry in this nation we haven't seen something like this.



Market that the team would do ministry in
with friends we made on campus.

Our mission statement has been **Changed Hearts, Changed Lives, Changed Nation.** I believe the Holy Spirit fostered this vision and showed many changed lives in and through this nation even though I might not have tangibly seen them. What I personally saw however were hearts hardened towards Christ, radically softened giving them the ability to see his beauty. Not only were we able to share the life giving message of the Gospel of Jesus to over 160 people, but we saw a Muslim woman accept Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour.



Sunset during the desert trip. God moved in
amazing ways through this sabbath

AMAZING! Only God can change lives like this and bless us with opportunities like the ones we had on the trip. We were also given the opportunities to have hundreds of spiritual conversations. These conversations blessed us with the opportunity to show them character of Jesus, the meaning behind grace, how God loves each and everyone of us unconditionally and so much more. The blessings that came out of these conversations were truly exhibits of the power of prayer. For years the ministry in this nation has been very difficult due to certain factors. In the past, if missionaries would like to use the Bible in the ministry, it would be found that walls would be immediately put up

around the peoples hearts. Locals would say it has fallacies and that the true meanings were lost in all the different translations. This year my experience was very different. In most of my conversations the reality of the Bible was not doubted, the spiritual climate grew. We were able to give out a total of 18 Bibles on the trip. This did not include the Bibles that some people already had on their phones before we landed. This alone shows a massive change occurring. I had a friend that brought up the bible in our conversations willingly. We were able to discuss what the text is saying and how it applies to our lives. It was and still is very clear to me how much God is working there. My heart was truly changed for the Muslim world after experiencing this first hand. God opened my eyes to the needs of the Gospel of Jesus for this nation. Walking around everyday I saw the pain and suffering, especially when I talked to people who don't have hope in the certainty of heaven. It's something that needs continual prayer; that the Holy Spirit would be at work in this part of the world.



The town we lived in for the duration of the trip

~ submitted by Matthew Riediger

The Garden Party

Saturday June 25th we attended an event that was unique in my experience....a garden party fundraiser: organized by John Giesbrecht of Vineland and hosted by David and Terri Dick of Niagara Motors at their country home on Creek Road in Virgil, for the benefit of "Friends of the Mennonite Centre in Ukraine" (FOMCU) a non-profit charitable foundation celebrating its 15th anniversary this year. In 2000, the former Girls' School, built in 1910, in Molochansk in southern Ukraine, was acquired and became the central meeting place for the Mennonite Centre's administration, activities and community outreach.



As Henry and I arrived at the Garden Party, we saw a car trunk full of newly-baked Zwieback being unloaded and groups of guests mingling in the sun and shade-speckled yard. Tables and chairs were beautifully set out on the terraced backyard overlooking the forest, orchards and vineyards in the distance. The setting was idyllic and the Lord blessed with perfect weather. We knew it would be a great evening.

Soon we were offered beverages and fresh Lake Erie Pickerel appetizers. In the background, the barbequers were preparing vareneki, farmers sausage and fresh local asparagus on the barbeque grills; and indoors the chefs were preparing sautéed onions and sour cream, homemade Mennonite mustard, and Zwieback and Bergen bread. Strawberries with ice cream, and watermelon were brought out for dessert.

All the while, Angelika and her son Yelisei visiting from Ukraine and guests of John Giesbrecht, were serenading us with melodious Ukrainian music and songs—Angelika with her beautiful voice and guitar and her son on the violin.



After the meal was complete, we moved indoors to the music and piano room. There John and Kathy Rempel and Will Friesen, with a hand-selected ensemble of voices from several churches, sang and played a variety of folk, Russian and German songs reminiscent of the favourites of days gone by and a good and

happy life lived. Angelika and her son presented the famous Fiddler on the Roof song, and several other Ukrainian songs. The music was a wonderful interlude of closeness and fellowship.





(formerly Chortitza) areas. This much needed and appreciated work is only possible because of the donations that come in from donors and interested people. **FOMCU** receives no government funding.

As the evening wound down and guests slowly began to say good night, I was left with the feeling that the event was a success: a good time was had by all—a wonderful compliment to the organizer, the host and hostess and the many volunteers that made this event happen; the many generous donations contributed that will find purpose in chemo treatments, cataract surgery, eye checkups and glasses, hip surgery, windows and doors for schools and orphanages, summer camps for children, student aid, hot meals for seniors and ongoing medication needs to list but a few of the needs on a never-ending list.

I, too, am a director for this organization, and would be happy to answer any questions about the work of “Friends of the Mennonite Centre in Ukraine”, just give me a call or email, both are listed in the church directory. FOMCU’s mission is to offer assistance to the impoverished former neighbours of our Mennonite ancestors in southeastern Ukraine. In the past 1-2 years, we have also experienced a great need for refugee aid due to the ongoing conflict, not all that far away from the Mennonite Centre. (See blogs, info and newsletters at www.mennonitecentre.ca) Fifteen years ago when the Girls’ School was acquired, the mayor of Molochansk at that time said, perhaps we will become a “light on a hill”. We continue to strive towards that goal.

May we all be truly blessed in whatever Kingdom work we choose to do for the Lord. ~ Linda Friesen (Henry)



This photograph graced the last page of our bulletin on **November 19, 1967**. With the Vietnam War in South East Asia nearing its peak, public consciousness in the U.S. and Canada awoke to the grim realities of many young lives lost in a far-off war and human suffering and misery violence always brings. The script with this picture includes the following: “The Canadian Board of Christian Service encourages us to witness for peace. We now have an excellent opportunity to witness to our faith and help both our friends and our enemies. Our Foreign Minister, Paul Martin is quoted as saying: “It seems clear that all attempts to bring about talks between the two sides are doomed to failure unless the bombing is stopped. This is a matter of first priority if we are to start the process of de-escalation and open the door to Would you be willing to encourage your congregation to write to M.P.’s expressing (your concern)? For great effectiveness, write soon.

Would you be willing to encourage your congregation to write to M.P.’s expressing (your concern)?

For great effectiveness, write soon.

May God guide and bless you as you seek to serve him this way.”

Sincerely Yours, Board of Christian Service,~
Jakob Letkemann, Executive Secretary

~ submitted by Harold Neufeld

Camino de Santiago Part 2

June 2016 Erv, Sig and I, Esther returned to Portugal to finish walking the Camino de Santiago.

(in German - Den Jacob's Weg)



This is a pilgrimage with many trails throughout Europe – ALL ending in the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostella, Spain. These trails represent the mission trips of the Apostle James.

Last year we found ourselves in Portugal with 5 days to fill and decided we would give walking the trail a try – as this was on my “bucket list”. We chose to walk a trail along the coast of Portugal, heading north toward Spain. Walking

through small fishing villages, over Roman roads, through eucalyptus forests, past stone walls surrounding small farms and gardens with many beautiful flowers.

We ended our walk last year on a beautiful beach, in the small fishing village of Ancora.(approximately 15 km short of the Spanish border).

We loved the whole experience, the scenery, the food and the people, so much so that upon returning home last summer – we quickly booked a return trip. This time to finish the walk! Throughout the winter and spring we walked daily to keep in

shape, and purchased lighter, more suitable backpacks.

Returning to the same hotel, to get our Pilgrim's Passport re-stamped in Ancora where we left off last year, we headed north to Spain. Again we walked between 20 – 30 km a day. Every day brought new adventures, sights and interesting people to talk to.

A big part of the experience of walking “The Way” is to not be in control of everything, but to trust that you will find your way. The following is part of the report given in Church by Sigrid upon our return.

It was really neat and special to see how many of you followed my post and our progress on facebook.

I was also touched when on our return home, some of you shared that you had prayed for us, prayed for me.

Early on into our walk I ran into some difficulties with my hip and then my knee. Fellow travelers came to my aid with anti-inflammatory meds and I was grateful to Erv when he volunteered to carry some of my supplies, to take some of the extra weight off my shoulders.



Along Roman Highway number 19 with our Portuguese friends, the yellow arrow with the way marker in the background.



The approach to Santiago

I have to admit that I was a bit disappointed that this much anticipated and planned-for trip was not going as smoothly as I had hoped. And so as I limped along, my thoughts often turned to many of you here at home. To those of you who were struggling with far greater health issues and challenges than what I was dealing with.

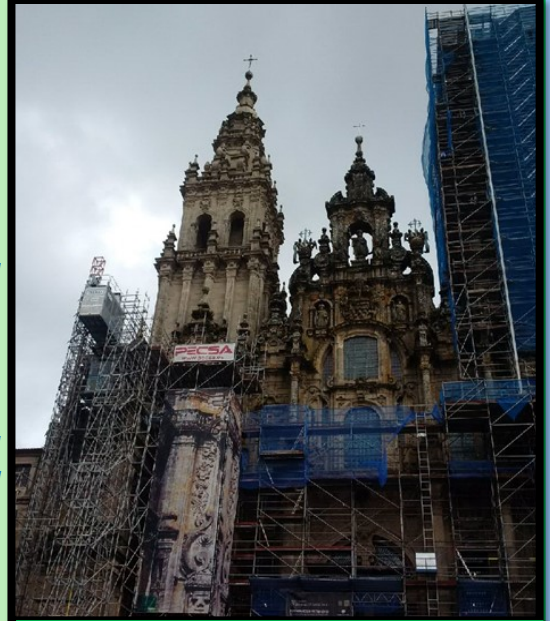
And I also prayed, and so we prayed for each other. Prayed for God's grace and sufficient strength for the day. And the Lord was gracious.

We did complete our walk. We did reach our goal as we made our way into Santiago - attended the Pilgrims Mass and were happily reunited with friends we met along the way.

This year the trip was more of a challenge for me - but I have no regrets. It was well

worth the effort and the experience

So, we did make it! Ten days of walking this year and 4 days last year, from Porto, Portugal to Santiago de Compostella, Spain. Covering about 300 km along the way. A very worthwhile and memorable experience we will never forget.



Cathedral in Santiago - our destination

~ submitted by Esther Willms & Sigrid Wiens



Junior Youth Retreat

~ submitted by Jen Hinz

Jr Youth had an amazing time at the MCEC retreat "Open to God: Exploring Our Gifts" at Silver Lake May 13-15. The theme focused on finding the gifts in others. Whether you were canoeing (through snow), playing ultimate frisbee, doing the low ropes challenge or making milk bag mats, the counsellors encouraged the youth to talk about the strengths and gifts they were seeing in the other participants. It was a unique way to get the kids talking, and fascinating how many of them were hearing for the first time about a gift God is developing within them.

NUMC had the largest group with 12 campers and 3 sponsors. All together there were just over 100 participants. We had a great time getting to know the other groups playing games in the evening in the round building, or braving the snow outside. Over the weekend, there were many different strengths and gifts identified, some of them vastly different. We have an amazing God who created us to be not only in relationship with Him, but with each other. It makes us a stronger body. These kind of relationships don't just happen, we need to make time, work at it, and develop them. Bringing the youth together in this kind of environment is an amazing way to walk that path.



Tributes to our Opa Jake Goerz

Opa was always cheerful. He was very kind and generous, and loved his family very much. He always had a few surprises up his sleeve which always made visiting him a lot more interesting. He loved buying nice fruit to share with the family, and would often bring someone along when buying the fruit. When I was a little bit younger, I would run up to him and ask for him to comb my hair. He would pull a black comb out of his back pocket and comb every hair on my head...perfectly. He was a strong man, and a hard worker and I hope that I can follow in his foot steps and do my very best. I loved him and I will miss him very much.

-Nick Goerz

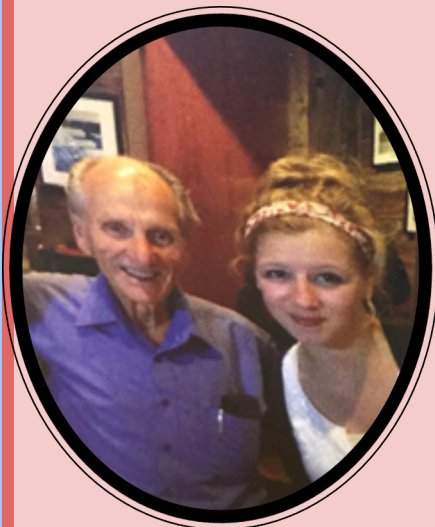


You may think that it be a loving father and car-up with neither, with no what not to do. This was Opa. When I take time ther's life, this is one thing ther was taken from his never knew his grandfather, yet he was to his kids the best Dad they could have asked for and the best Opa any of his grandkids could have known. He was not perfect, for sure, but he was, among many things, genuine, caring, and very wise. I believe he walked closely with God and had a deep trust and faith in his Saviour that allowed him to be all he needed to be, and so much more for his family.

would be hard for someone to ing grand-father if they grew example of what to do and absolutely not the case for my and reflect on my grandfa-that stands out to me. His fa-life at a young age and he

I have thousands of memories with Opa and it is hard to remember them all at once, but I definitely have my favourites. One of my memories is simply the smile in his blue eyes, and the smile on his face that portrayed his love for his family, but also tended to give him away when he might be up to something. I saw that smile so many times growing up. Such as, in the moment right before he would let us slide through his knees while singing Huppe Huppe Reite, or in the moments right after he would sneak up and splash us with water while we walked along the beach at the cottage. And I saw this smile all the many times I would remind him for the hundredth time that I was in fact his **only** granddaughter. On one of my

last visits to Virgil a couple months ago, as I was leaving, he told me of how he thought I was beautiful and he told me he loved me and even then there was still that twinkle of love in his blue eyes that will be impossible for me to forget.

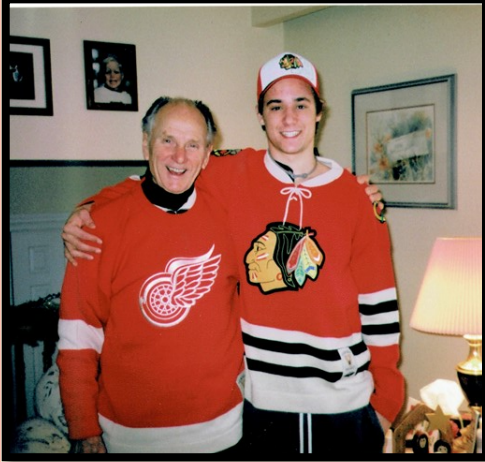


By: Lauren Goerz



Hey Oma! I hope all is well. Below is my passage about **grandpa**.

A grandfather is someone with silver in their hair and gold in their heart. My grandfather, Jacob Goerz, battled with a weak heart for most of his life, surviving a heart attack, years spent with a defibrillator to regulate his heart beat and finally passing to heart failure, however just because his heart was weak he truly embodied the phrase "heart of gold".



My grandfather was someone with a generous and caring spirit, a man strong in his faith and who cared for people and his community. He was a man who was always willing to help out his friends and family taking care of them as a provider and expecting nothing in return.

Growing up I was lucky to spend the most time with my grandfather out of his four grandchildren. The memories I have with him will stay with me forever,

from helping get work done around the house, long walks in the morning, playing soccer on the beach at our cottage and lessons in windsurfing, to simply lying beside him in bed during his last few weeks just to talk and hear stories of his life.



My grandfather was a great man who has helped shape me into the man I am becoming today and has left me with values and wisdom I hold close to my heart. Although he can no longer be with me here today, I know we are not far apart for his heart of gold now lives in my heart.

~ submitted by Lucas Boyce



There are just about too many stories and memories (if that's possible) that could be shared about my Opa's life, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have spent as much time as I did with him. Whether we were walking to Tim Hortons or stopping at every available fruit stand within a 50 km radius, every day with him was always an adventure. I have such incredibly fond memories of our times together -between the cottage, BC adventures, and even yard work - that despite his passing it is impossible for me to think of him and not smile. Even in his weakest moments he could

still pull out a sense of humour like no one else I know, and pretty much every person that has met him at least once has a "Jake story" that makes them chuckle. His personality was so strong and he reached so many people over his 83 years of life, making it incredibly meaningful to remember his time here and what he's done for not just me, but for everyone. His perseverance throughout all his challenges in life is an inspiration to me and I know for many others as well. I do miss him dearly, but am beyond thankful that he left us with what he did: strong values, fond memories, and funny stories.



~ by Torin Regier



Celebrating many blessings from God with friends and family!



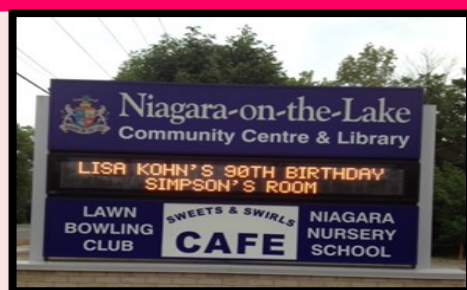
It was a party of parties at Werner and Annie Pankratz' home on July 23, 2016. The last few years had many trials and tribulations, which was all the more reason to celebrate God's blessings! Over 120 friends and family gathered together for fellowship and good food, to rejoice in the many milestones. This was a 60th birthday party – 4 years late for Annie; a 65th birthday and retirement party for Werner, and their 45th wedding anniversary party – 1 year early. They were also giving thanks to all of the friends and family who were a source of comfort and support during Annie's brain aneurism 1.5 years ago, and praise to God for her recovery! It is important to come together and celebrate the many blessings which includes friends from over the years, in each season of life, and to keep family close. The large group brought together salads, deserts, appetizers and an asado rib feast! People who had not seen each in years welcomed the opportunity to visit at the celebration. Gathering everyone for a group photo was a great way to remember the moment. Thank you to Pastor Rudy for providing a



blessing to the happy couple and over the meal. Werner and Annie, along with their family welcomed the opportunity to come together with so many of you, to remember the past and look ahead to the future, pausing in the moment to recognize and celebrate that God is good!

1 Chronicles 16:34 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

~ submitted by Tricia Regier



"Lisa (Elisabeth) Kohn celebrated her 90th birthday on July 30, 2016 with family and friends. She feels very blessed and is grateful for all the birthday wishes, the beautiful songs, the fellowship of friends and family and the special time together."

Thank-you!

Submitted by Dorothy (daughter)



Mom at 90

Our mother was born in 1926 in the Ukraine and as a result of the pending war and at a young age they were forced to leave and fled to Germany with her mother, sisters and brother (her father was taken away by the Russians). After 5 years they went to Paraguay where she met my father and shortly after, 3 children were born, Karin & twins

Doris and George. In 1958 they moved to NOTL, Canada and this is where I and then Elly were born shortly afterwards.

It's hard to believe that my mother is already 90 years old. It seems that just yesterday she was ironing clothes in the small family room while dinner was on the stove and my dad was coming home any minute from work usually around 5:00 p.m. Yes, we ate almost as soon as my dad came home and you better have been ready and washed up. Mom could make just about anything and it always tasted good. Those days we always had dessert afterwards usually peaches and ice-cream or as my Mom used to say "there's always room for Jello!" Our mom always canned peaches, pears, plums, red beets, pickles and much more so the fruit cellar was always full. Each Saturday was Zwiebach baking day and we never got in her way when she was making those and other famous Mennonite baked goods. Mom loved her grandchildren and later on any opportunity for them to come over was appreciated. As a result a long time tradition emerged where all were welcome every Saturday for lunch and there was always enough for whoever showed up. Mom's

recipes basically made from memory, were loved by all and as a result have been passed down to her children so her grandchildren could continue to enjoy the tradition. Mom also loved getting dressed up and going out on Saturday nights,

mostly dominoes nights with friends (including Mrs. Kohn who also recently celebrated her 90th birthday!) and enjoyed entertaining when it was their turn. There are so many fond memories of home life that I could probably write a book and our mother would be in a lot of the stories.

Our home had a Christian foundation family life which included strict attendance at Church and Sunday School and I really appreciate both my parents for making that a priority. (Reading "Das Beste" before dinner though not so much).

At her 90th birthday celebration we had a lot of those yummy baked goods my mom used to make and our family was so appreciative of the friends and relatives who came over to Pleasant Manor and visited with us. Mom can't communicate as well and her eye sight is poor and not as it used to be but, (believe you me she used to be able to toss a Schroll (slipper) across the room pretty good if you were out of line!) Mind you we always laughed afterwards. She is still however pretty keen and has a good memory as well. She still watches Jeopardy and Wheel of Fortune for entertainment and enjoys the visits from family and friends. She may appear weak when you see her, but when she hugs you it's like a vise grip and she won't let go. This to me represents the strong love she has for us and how much she cares.

Fortunately the good Lord has given us so many wonderful years together and we cherish the ones that are still here.

~Submitted by Fred Teichgraf

Birthdays in September 2016

Hans Wiebe: 80 (5/3/36)

Henry Rahn: 82 (9/15/34)

Sinaida Enns: 92 (9/18/24)

Hans Funk: 91 (9/19/25)

George Riss: 91 (9/20/28)

Agnes Sawatzky: 82 (9/23/34)

Mary Willms: 81 (9/29/35)



25th Wedding Anniversary:

Robert and Pam Glass 9/7/1991

Armin and Ursula Hinz 10/12/91

Birthdays in October 2016

Eleonore Funk: 89 (10/3/27)

Kaethe Fieguth: 91 (10/6/25)

Hans Juergen Wiens: 82 (10/7/34)

Maria Neufeld: 82 (10/12/34)

Peter P. Dirks: 98 (10/15/18)

Elly Kopp: 84 (10/15/32)

Annie Falk: 89 (10/19/27)

Katharina Siemens: 86 (10/19/30)

Hans Hermann Dau: 81 (10/21/35)

Elfrieda Braun: 83 (10/27/33)

"Dad, you're never going to build that treehouse!"

Lesley and I made the decision to leave Toronto and move back to my hometown in 2001. I had such a great childhood growing up in a small town and wanted the same for my kids. We built a house on Line 2 in Virgil that year. One year later in August 2002 Kai was born. Followed by Emma in 2004 and Kennedy in 2008.

My parents had made the transition from our family home on East West Line to a smaller bungalow condo in Virgil by the time Kennedy was born. Having built the house and barn at East West Line, my father was quite attached to the property. The same could be said for many of "Opa's treasures", as my kids like to refer to them, that he accumulated over the almost 40 years he lived there. In 2008 we bought the family home from my parents and after some minor renovations in the house moved there in the summer of 2009.

Sometime in the early 70's my Dad planted 4 silver maple trees and today 2 of them are still standing. Both are beautiful, healthy trees. One is significantly larger than the other having benefited for years by tapping its root system into my Dad's composting operation he had going to fuel the vegetable garden we had every summer. Today the trunk of the tree is close to 4 feet in diameter. For years I looked

at this tree and thought it would be perfect for a treehouse.

My brother Bruno bought an older home in west St. Catharines years ago, demolished it and built a new one. The old house had two pressure treated decks on it so before he tore it down I dismantled the decks and brought the wood home with the intention of using it to build a treehouse that summer. It didn't happen that year and I said I would build it next year. Then the following year came and I didn't get to it again and I said I would build it next year. This went on for a few years. Always another project that got in the way.



Finally last summer I told the kids; "This is the year I'm going to build the treehouse". They laughed and said; "Whatever Dad. You say that every year. You're never going to build that treehouse". Well now I was determined to prove them wrong.

My original plan was that I could knock up a treehouse in a week. Boy was I wrong. What I had in my head in terms of a plan for this treehouse and what I actually ended up with were completely different. What I learned is that it's almost impossible to plan it out entirely in advance. You need to build it in stages and after each stage you can then plan the next. First we built the deck. Once I could stand up there and get a feel for where all the branches were I was able to decide where the walls should go. Then once the walls were up I could see how the roof could be framed.

My 1 week project turned out to be 5 weeks of working on it every weekend and every weeknight until I couldn't see anymore. It literally took on a life of its own. It certainly was a lot more than I originally anticipated both in terms of time and difficulty. Being a relatively big guy it wasn't always that easy to crawl and climb into the various spots in the tree I needed to be while building it. I lost count of the number of times I hit my head or scratched myself on a branch.



But in the end it turned out great. We've even had complete strangers pull into our driveway and ask to go in it.

~ submitted by Paul Bartel

(to see this work in progress, visit our downstairs art hallway)

Another Amazing Chapter in my Life

This summer I had been given the opportunity to work as a reenactor for the 41st regiment at Fort George. Which, believe me, was one of the greatest opportunities that I had ever received. For the longest time it had been a goal to work at the Fort, as it would crave my passion to connect with history. When I



was a young child I remember various occasions visiting many Forts with the 1812 theme, and what had caught my initial attention was the uniforms and, of course the cannons and muskets going BOOM!!!



Since beginning the job, it has been such an enjoyable experience, as I both learn valuable information and meet many amazing people along the way. Now you might be wondering, as it is a frequent question, is it hot wearing those uniforms? It's actually not as bad as it looks, it took some getting used to at the beginning but once you get used to it, it's nothing. Though you will sweat a for pounds on the hot days. Learning the drill and firing the muskets are such a cool experience, along with living the life of a soldier during the war of 1812.

It's a career that gives you the best insight to connect to the past and appreciate the present. In the end this is just another amazing chapter in my life with the presence of God.

~ submitted by Chris Friesen

A Song to Sing

I was vacationing at Breakers Lodge, a small resort that consisted of three buildings: the main lodge where the large dining room was located with guest rooms upstairs; an annex close to the main building which housed additional guests; and an entertainment hall where the guests could gather to play table games, tell stories, or have sing-songs, accompanied by whatever instruments individuals had brought with them.

The people were wonderful - the owners, the staff, -- and some guests of Scottish origin who had come from Michigan to vacation at this resort as they had done for many years, always during that particular week in June. They welcomed me into their group, taught me how to play shuffle board, and asked me to participate in their activities and the afternoon singing sessions, also referred to as the "happy hour". One afternoon, a gentleman picked up his guitar and sang the song, "One Day at a Time", written by Marijohn Wilken and Kris Kristofferson. It was the first time I had heard the song and the lyrics seemed to penetrate my soul. I knew this was a song I had to learn. I had my guitar with me and soon I was strumming along with the singers. At the end of the happy hour (this was a non-alcoholic establishment), we all lined up behind the Scottish individual who played the bagpipe, and marched into the dining room for our supper. It was nearing the end of the day, at which time we would sit and watch the sun set over Lake Huron.

I have often sung the song, "One Day at a Time". The lyrics have special meaning to me, and still do, for I realize that during the years that I reared my two sons, worked every day, and attended classes at university in the evening, God had always been there with me, giving me "strength to do every day what I had to do".

~ submitted by Martha Bartel

Book Corner—by Debbie Fast

We have placed on the table in the library, a number of book series which cover a variety of reading interests

Angels Walking - by Karen Kingsbury

"Somewhere in heaven a decision has been made. An Angel Walking team has been assigned to a desperate mission. When angels walk, most people never know, never see. But they are there. And sometimes the stakes are so high, all of heaven stands ready. One-time national baseball hero Tyler Ames has lost everyone he loves on a quest to make it to the big leagues. Then, just when things seem to be turning around, Tyler hits rock bottom. A series of small miracles leads Tyler to a maintenance job at a retirement home & a friendship with Virginia Hutcheson, an old woman with Alzheimer's, who strangely might have the answers he so desperately seeks. Every journey begins with a step. It is time for the mission to begin."

The Legend of Sheba, Rise of a Queen - by Tosca Lee

"A woman cannot rule like a man. No. We must be far more clever. Her name is legend. Her story, the epic of nations. The queen of Sheba. There is a tale that is told. A desert queen journeyed north with a caravan of riches to pay tribute to a king & his One God. The story of a queen conquered by a king before she returned to her own land laden with gifts. This is the tale you are meant to believe. Which means most of it is a lie"

Money Secrets of the Amish - by Lorilee Craker

"Finding true abundance in simplicity, sharing & saving.

When writer Lorilee Craker learned that the Amish are not just surviving but thriving in the economic downturn, she decided to find out why. What she found was about a dozen tried & true financial habits the Amish have employed for generations that will make your cash last longer & help to build your wealth.

Packed with practical, simple & smart money saving ideas & teeming with great insight into the sensible Amish ways. Money Secrets of the Amish will entertain you with stories & retrain your brain to be the savvy money saver you always dreamed you could be."

Good, but not quite good enough!

When Kathy asked me to write this article for the newsletter, she asked that I talk about my journey in earning my PhD and the challenges of job hunting. In order to give a more complete picture, I figured that I should probably go back about ten years ago to when I was in my final year of high school in a very small community in rural southwest Kansas.

In August 2006, I had just entered my senior year (or grade 12 for you Canadians) of high school and already at that point had a pretty good understanding that I found my science classes, especially chemistry and physics, very interesting and enjoyable. During those years, I had also become very involved in the music program at my home church—Emmanuel Mennonite Church—where I regularly played piano and organ, sang in the choir and small ensembles, and enjoyed playing piano and organ/piano duets regularly, which are all things I enjoy to this day. It was decided that I would attend Tabor College, a Mennonite Brethren four-year college, after graduation, but I was torn whether I would choose to major in the sciences or in music. Following the advice of many people, I chose to major in chemistry education with the goal of being a high school science teacher.

The following year, I began my freshman year at Tabor and dug right into my chemistry ed major, enjoying



nearly every moment of it. My high school science teachers had prepared me well, and I was able to excel such that after completion of my first year my advisor, Dr. Bruce Heyen, asked me if I would like to be hired by the science department as a student lab assistant. I happily accepted and began a three-year tenure helping organize and inventory a stockroom, preparing lab materials for all the chemistry classes, and helping to organize and present chemistry demonstration shows for local elementary schools, Bible camps, and 4-H clubs. Meanwhile, I began education classes that included placement in local junior and senior high schools—an experience that took me only one semester to realize that I hated. I wrapped up the year by dropping the education component of my major, which freed up my schedule to take more elective classes.



Dr. Heyen, in addition to being my chemistry academic advisor, was also the minister of music and choir director at Hillsboro Mennonite Brethren Church, as well as a very accomplished pianist. With his encouragement, I enrolled in a number of music classes and continued with organ lessons and singing in the Tabor College Concert Choir, as well as becoming very involved in the music program at Hillsboro MB. Following a choir rehearsal one Wednesday evening at Hillsboro MB, Dr. Heyen and I were visiting and conversation migrated into my plans for the future. He suggested I look into graduate school, an idea I initially dismissed; however, in the ensuing months I realized that I still wanted to teach, just not at the high school level. After four years at Tabor, I graduated in May 2011 with my bachelor's degree in chemistry.



One of my good friends during my years at Tabor was a fellow named Dustin Friesen, whose dad was a professor of graphic design at Buffalo State College in Buffalo, New York. Following two trips up to Buffalo to visit in 2008 and 2010, he and his family encouraged me to apply at the University at Buffalo. (Interestingly, we went to NOTL in 2008 and I remember passing NUMC and thinking, “Oh! There are Mennonites here, too!”) While I had no intention of moving half way across the country to the giant snow globe of Buffalo, the application to the university was free, so I said, “Why not?” A few months later, I was accepted into the program, and I began plans to move over 1400 miles to Western New York.

My first year in grad school in Buffalo was not fun. I had never had to work so hard for a decent grade, and I had never scored so poorly on as many exams as I nearly failed that first year. I was in a fairly constant bad mood, but I was in fairly good company with the other first-year grad students who were largely in the same boat as I. One fellow, whom I met my first day at UB, quickly became one of my very best friends. Josh, in addition to being a dear friend, later became my roommate until he married Christine, who has likewise been adopted as a close friend.



There were a number of reasons I was excited to move to Buffalo—it was a new region of the country, the first time I had ever lived in a town with more than one stoplight, and it wasn't a bubble of Mennonites. For the first time in my life, people didn't know how to pronounce my last name. I had to explain to people that, though I was Mennonite, I had electricity and didn't ride a horse to work. It was exciting to be out of the cocoon of my familiar Mennonite world, and I happily experimented with such exotic church denominations as Baptist, Presbyterian, and Anglican, whose services I had never before experienced. After settling on an Anglican congregation that first year, I enjoyed the rich liturgy, the hymns, the choral music and pipe organ, and the grand and awe-inspiring architecture. But, I grew to realize that I missed that



Anabaptist theology that I hadn't realized I even cared about. I missed singing from that familiar blue *Hymnal: A Worship Book* that I had never given much thought about. A little lightbulb went off in my mind that reminded me

of that red brick Mennonite church I'd seen in Ontario five years before. A few clicks later and the ever-helpful internet told me that Niagara-on-the-Lake, though in another country to which I had only been once before, was less than an hour's drive away. The rest is a story that most of you already know.

Four years into grad school, I became aware of a faculty opening at Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia. I applied, and was ultimately selected as three finalists. After a trip out to Virginia and a two-day interview process, I was confident that I had the job. However, first the days passed by with no word, and then the weeks passed... Finally I received an email saying that, though I was a qualified and desirable candidate, they had ultimately chosen another person. Fast forward a few more months, and I really began chugging out the letters of application. Another bright opportunity popped up—Rocky Mountain College in Montana. I applied and was quickly offered a phone interview and a subsequent invitation for an expenses paid on-site interview. Again, the interview went very well, and I was assured by the dean that they were very interested in me. But, once again, the days and weeks passed without a word until I received a phone call one afternoon. Once again the hiring committee had decided to go with the other candidate.

Again, I was assured that I was a desirable candidate and that the committee was even split on whether to hire me or the other candidate. It grew to be very frustrating to be so close to a job yet so far and to be told that I was good but just not quite good enough. Back to the grindstone. I began chugging out the applications, cover letters, and individualized resumes, completing nearly 80 in the next few months, all the while trying to finish my PhD research and dissertation. I

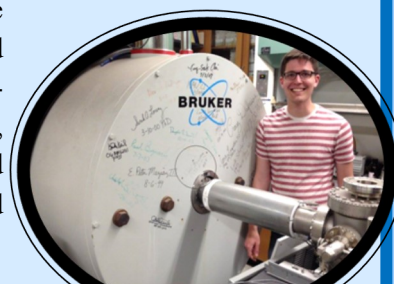
gave up on the teaching position and opened my search to anything that I was remotely qualified for and located basically anywhere in the country. I had the odd phone interview here and there, but none of them led anywhere. A few would conclude with a remark like, "This sounds excellent, William. We are interested and will contact you shortly to schedule our next interview." Three to four months later and I have yet to hear a word from them!

All the while, there was one job posting that I had been ignoring at Garden City Community College, located a little over an hour from the town where I grew up. I had made up my mind long ago that I refused to move back to the emptiness of southwest Kansas, where it is hot as the blazes in the summer, frigid in the winter, and blowing wind more often than not all year long. But, there I was, early May with graduation in just two short weeks and no job lined up. That weekend, I had come up to Niagara on Saturday like usual and spent the night at John and Kathy Rempel's, but Sunday morning I was in a rotten, grumpy mood and decided to stay



home from church because I had so much to do—my doctoral dissertation was due in a couple of days, I had corrections to make, and I had a list of several more jobs to apply for. That job in Garden City popped back into my mind, after having dismissed it months before. I mentioned it to Kathy, and she encouraged me to apply. So I whipped together an application and sent it off.

The following Wednesday, I had my PhD defense, which involved me giving an hour-long presentation followed by a two-hour long oral exam. By the time it was finished I was pretty exhausted, but the day before I had been offered a Skype interview from Garden City. I ate a quick lunch, and then had my interview and by the end of it had scheduled an on-site interview.



Will's Spectrometer

TWO-DIMENSIONAL GRAPHENE
AS A NOVEL MATRIX FOR MALDI
IMAGING MASS SPECTROMETRY
AND BIOLOGICAL MASS
SPECTROMETRY

By

William L. Friesen May 4, 2016

**Will's
Thesis**



In the following two weeks, I finished hours of dissertation corrections, hosted my family who arrived for my graduation, graduated, and then flew back to Kansas with my sister for the interview, arriving home a day before my parents who drove home from my house in Buffalo.

I drove up for the interview, met with the committee for about 50 minutes, and was then ushered into an office where I was offered a contract for employment. What a whirlwind of emotions!

As many of you know, I accepted the offer and spent the next month and a half packing up five year's worth of accumulated possessions and furniture to prepare for a move back to southwest Kansas—a place that, following high school graduation in 2007, I swore I'd never move back to. My last month and a half in Buffalo/

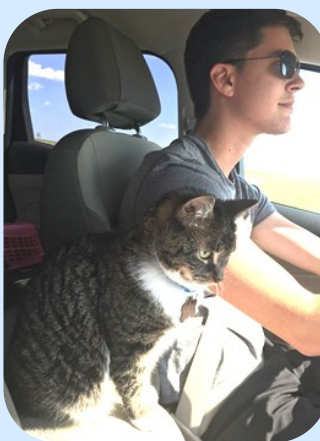


Niagara flew by, and before long it was time for the moving truck to be loaded and to say farewell to some of the best friends I've ever had in my lifetime—friends who were more family to me than just friends. It was an odd



mixture of sadness and excitement as I saw Buffalo growing smaller in the rearview mirror of that U-Haul, a feeling similar to that which I'm sure many of you have felt before.

The 1,500-mile drive with my dad went fairly easily, save for a pet cat who very much finds car rides objectionable and for a tire blow-out about 200 miles from our final destination.



Dad and I pulled in front of my parents' house in the middle of a classic Kansas thunderstorm with a fantastic display of lightning at about 2:00 in the morning the day after leaving Buffalo. By supper time the following day, my parents and cousin who helped me move in had headed back to their homes and I was the newest resident of Garden City, Kansas!

Now, nearing the end of August, I am preparing to begin my second week of teaching. The journey to get to this job has been an interesting one full of adventures and wonderful people and lots of hard work. I have told a number of people how God must have a sense of humor, bringing me back to a place I thought I didn't want to return to, to a job that I thought I was accepting only as a last resort. A few weeks in, I can't imagine a better fit for me, and I can honestly say that there's not a job in the 70+ for which I applied that I'd rather have at this moment in time than this particular one. I thank God for employment in a place near my family and others I care about, teaching a subject I love, and with colleagues I also call friends. I invite any of you to stop by next time you're passing through the windy high plains of western Kansas. I've heard a few say that it's quite similar here to the Chaco of Paraguay, so it could be like a trip down memory lane for some of you! I am looking forward to my next trip back to Niagara and am hoping to visit my other home in Niagara very soon. Peace!

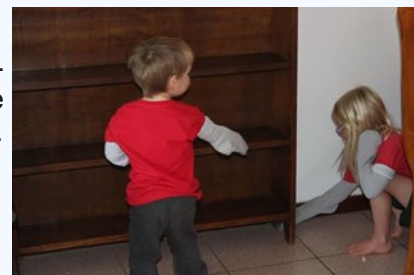
God bless you, Dr. William Friesen!

Andrew & Karen Suderman are moving

After 7 amazing, challenging, fulfilling, happy years we are bidding South Africa farewell. We are so grateful for the life, friends, home, and work that we've had here. We move on with deep grief at what we are leaving and excitement at what is to come. Tears are close to the surface as we pack up our life here.

This January Andrew is beginning a post at Eastern Mennonite University as a professor of Theology, Peace and Mission. I am so proud of him!

Two pairs of Dad's old socks, two sets of arms, a little bit of groovy music... We had ourselves a cleaning party!!



- submitted by Karen Suderman

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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