



"And His name will be called,
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, *Prince of Peace.*
Isaiah 9:6 NKJV

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Life With Us

At Niagara United Mennonite Church

The Prayer of the Children

~ Kurt Bestor

***Can you hear the prayer of the children?
On bended knee, in the shadow of an unknown room
Empty eyes with no more tears to cry
Turning heavenward toward the light***

***Crying Jesus, help me
To see the morning light-of one more day
But if I should die before I wake,
I pray my soul to take***

***Can you feel the hearts of the children?
Aching for home, for something of their very own
Reaching hands, with nothing to hold on to,
But hope for a better day a better day***

***Crying Jesus, help me
To feel the love again in my own land
But if unknown roads lead away from home,
Give me loving arms, away from harm***

***Can you hear the voice of the children?
Softly pleading for silence in a shattered world?
Angry guns preach a gospel full of hate,
Blood of the innocent on their hands***

***Crying Jesus, help me
To feel the sun again upon my face,
For when darkness clears I know you're near,
Bringing peace again***

***Dali cujete sve dječje molitve?
(Croatian translation:)***

Can you hear the prayer of the children?

This song was written for the children of Yugoslavia during the civil war in the 70's, but is dedicated to all the innocent children in this world who suffer daily!

Christmas Eve, December 25,

1990, was a very blistery, cold day. It was a particularly sad day as our family laid our dear mother, Frieda Baergen, to rest. Our hearts were heavy as we left the casket sitting in the cold cemetery with the bright flowers cascading over the wooden casket. We still had to fulfill the tasks ahead of preparing for the next day, Christmas. The stockings had to be hung and the atmosphere had to change for the sake of the children. My memories are actually fond of this day because of a few things that happened. The church dedicated the Christmas Eve program to mom! After her many years of service with the Sunday School there were quite a lot of people that had fond memories of her being their Sunday School teacher. That was so very special to my dad and his children. Also, through the preparations of a funeral I had to buy presents for the kids. I had gone over the river with Regina, my friend since birth, who I had told when we were very young, that she could share my mom with me because of her hardships growing up. We saw a doll, a big doll, that reminded us of one that mom had bought me when I was a child. I actually carried guilt over that doll for years because my brother, Ron, and I went snooping before Christmas and prematurely saw our gifts. (It was hard to swallow that pill on Christmas morning!) I purchased the doll for my daughter, Melanie, and watched with anticipation as she opened her presents. Her disappointment in receiving this big doll, instead of a Barbie doll, was too much for me. I went to bed at that point, exhausted from the day, and the previous week. Melanie was only 5 years old but she learned the biggest lesson that day - compassion. She realized what her mom had gone through

and she realized love was the gift and the real meaning of Christmas. The Barbies have come and gone but that doll still sits in their daughter, Rachel's, room.

Lovingly submitted in remembrance of my Mom who left us 26 years ago,

Linda (Baergen)
Pankratz



There are two Christmases I distinctly remember to this day. The first one was in Germany. One evening my brother and I were returning from delivering Christmas cookies to an elderly lady. It was such a quiet evening, no sirens blaring announcing another air raid, no bombs exploding nearby. The streetlights were on again! And in the shine of the lights I saw snowflakes falling down. I will forever remember the feeling of peace that even as a small child I felt in my heart.

The other Christmas that I will never forget was the first Christmas we celebrated in the colony Fernheim in the Paraguayan Chaco. It was so drastically different from everything I had known so far. It was terribly hot and I definitely did not feel a Christmas spirit. Even during the war, my parents had always managed to give us some really nice presents and more than one at that. The expectations of my new friends



in that respect were not that big. And to top it all off, in our temporary cramped housing, I found a tennis ball in one of the drawers. That's when it dawned on me, there was no Santa Claus and the ball would probably be it. And it was. We

had pouring rain on Christmas Eve, and my world had changed forever. But it was also the beginning to understand the real meaning of Christmas.

~ Lani Gade

One of my most memorable Christmases was spent with my very good friends from Buffalo, Josh and Christine. I was unable to return to Kansas that year, so Christine's mom invited me to join their family. We had a beautiful, snowy holiday in the Adirondacks Mountains of north east New York. It was a good reminder that sometimes

family isn't only the group of people you were born into, but the people with whom you choose to surround yourself.

~ Will Friesen



Christmas Memories

Growing up the 7th of 9 children made Christmas "sparse", but much-anticipated. My mother prepared roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, and a steamed suet pudding with lemon sauce for Christmas dinner. My "stocking" was a knee sock pinned to the arm of a chair – with some goodies in it on Christmas morning. My gift(s) usually included a book and a pair of slippers. One Christmas, our neighbour Kitty, gave my sister a Barbie, and me a Midge – treasured for years. We made clothes for the dolls. I still have the patterns, but not the dolls!

~ submitted by Laurene Nickel



Christmas Amidst the Chaos ~ By Mary Pries

It was in 1992 - 93 in the South. The pastor toured us around the area where we would live for the next two years. Shattered buildings, vacant windows, holes in the roofs or no roofs at all. Homes resembling doll houses, all within exposed to rain or sun, rafters dangling down, windows blown out, bedding trailing on the floor. Street signs non-existent. Bulldozed garbage like snowbanks at home, pushed up alongside the roadways and streets, made up of people's furniture, toys, clothes, bricks, splintered beams of wood, paper, and once treasured keepsakes all mixed together in a chaotic mess.

Sanctuaries overrun by needy people with bewildered faces, some weepy or sad, some angry ones, some avaricious ones too. All looking for food or clothes or blankets or someone willing to listen to them.

Forms to be filled in, agencies to connect to, government tape to cut through, to somehow shorten the waiting lines of the needy. Salvation Army, Red Cross, Samaritans Purse and Fema – also working alongside us.

Truckloads of free food and clothes arrived almost daily, but it needed unloading, storage space to be found, and hands to distribute it fairly. A huge semi rolled up one Sunday – for Thanksgiving Day - carrying a hot turkey dinner for hundreds of people! What a treat!

Many volunteers from the North slept on sleeping bags in the sanctuary, virtually living at the church during their stay. Every two weeks new ones came while the tired ones went back home again.

He had done his work, Hurricane Andrew had. Exhausted, he soared away, spent and tired, limping back to his lair, hidden behind the smiling blue skies until next time.

In the wake of all that destruction two small figures stepped forward, ignorant of what lay ahead; unknowing, but held in the grip of God's Hand.

We'd volunteered for MCC, looking forward to a time of spiritual refreshment and a renewed focus for the future, our careers left behind. Expecting a gentle merry-go-round ride, we found ourselves on the wildest roller coaster of our lives instead! Once you're on one, you dare not get off. So on we went. God means business when He has a certain work He needs done. He doesn't fool around.

“If with all your heart you truly seek me, you shall surely find me,” thus says the Lord.

Christmas Day lay just ahead. Along with a few faithful church members, we were winding up all activities before the holidays. But not just yet! Two more families arrived with young children in tow, looking to “do some volunteer” work for the holiday break!

Now *they* needed shelter, food, things to do and a place to stay! But there was more ahead – a huge semi rolled up on the church yard. Happy voices announced a load of apples and pears for the holidaying church members had arrived. Could they have a few volunteers unload and distribute the same? There were roughly 500 lbs. of apples and 500 lbs. of pears waiting.

Anyone still at the church at this late date was recruited, word was sent out into the community, and eventually, that job, too, was accomplished.

In the midst of that crazy-busy day a dear friend of mine from long ago, who now lived in Ft. Lauderdale, called. She was leaving for two weeks for the holidays and her condo was ours to use. Also, a large box had arrived from home for us which we had not had the time to open. So we took it with us. The church was not festively decorated nor any services planned anyway since many families went home to the North for Christmas. So we were by ourselves.

How good it felt to look forward to a quiet place to which we could go! When we arrived there at last, a wonderful reception awaited us! The condo was warm and still, but a beautifully decorated tree awaited us in the living room. Another festive tree stood in the dining room. Toys and teddy bears perched on easy chairs. The fridge was loaded with food and special goodies. And oh, that big soft bed was just what we needed. Christmas cards and notes, even a couple of gifts for us were set out as well. In no time we were sound asleep in that big, comfy bed, too exhausted to eat!

But the best treat, the one that made that Christmas stand out, happened the next day when we opened the gift from home: there was a large tin of home-made, real Mennonite, traditional cookies!

We did not feast on turkey that year. We just ate the cookies. We had them for breakfast, then munched some more for lunch while watching those great TV specials that are on at that time, and finished off the last of them, along with home-brewed coffee, at supper time.

My heart still brims over with thankfulness in recalling the longings for home that we felt, holding us close, so close. There it was – the true gift of love given at Christmas, even amidst the chaos around us.



Farming was a central way of life for our congregation in the early years in Niagara. The majority of our families lived on farms and made their living producing tender fruit for the market. Over the years, these smaller farms were not viable for supporting a family anymore, and many were amalgamated into much larger operations. In addition to this development, the sale of tender fruit from the Niagara Peninsula was severely affected by cheaper imports of fruit from other parts of the world. Thus, the number of farmers in our congregation dropped considerably over the years. And now we have a very small group of farmers in our midst. And yet, we are thankful for farmers and farm workers all over the world who provide fruits, vegetables, grains, and more for our daily consumption. To celebrate farmers, in this harvest season, we asked John and Jocelyn Thwaites and family to share a few snapshots of daily life on their farm with our church community. Thanks Family Thwaites for your willingness to share!



~ nectarines on packing line



*~ planting pear trees
~ pears ready to harvest*



Offshore workers provide important work force on farms.



- grading & packing Asparagus

~ rows & rows of asparagus



~ watering during the hot dry summer.



Another harvest season is almost completed. Just a few grapes left to pick. From a farmer's point of view, the combination of a very hot and very dry season brought a mixture of blessings and problems. The heat made the fruit sweeter than it's been for several years. The dryness meant we had to work extra hard to water the crops enough. Fortunately, here in Niagara, we are blessed with an abundant supply of water. Also, our farm is equipped with an extensive and reliable irrigation system. In the end, the crops were very good, and the year was successful.

In addition to that, I feel a great deal of satisfaction knowing we have built on a business that was started by my father. Our employees have become important as well. With many there is history. One has been with us for 30 years, and it's interesting to see how they worry for us when problems come up. Most important is being able to work with family, and raise our children on our farm where we work side by side.

As farms get larger in order to survive, we sometimes feel isolated from our community. I would like to thank all those who support local agriculture through their purchases. It helps local agriculture survive, and it is satisfying to know we are appreciated by our neighbours and community.

~ submitted by John Thwaites



*O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good,
and his mercy endures forever. Ps. 136:1*

Thanksgiving officially became a national holiday in 1879 when the Canadian government proclaimed it: “a day of general Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed”.

In Canada, the holiday actually draws from several traditions:
The First Nations communities (that were here long before the Europeans) organized various fall festivals to give thanks to the Creator for the harvest.
In 1578, the explorer Martin Frobisher and his crew commemorated Thanksgiving for their safe return from their search for the Northwest Passage.
Various other Thanksgiving traditions emerged in different parts of the country to mark the ends of wars.
- the end of the Seven Year’s War in 1763 was celebrated in Nova Scotia;
- in 1816 Lower Canada celebrated the end of war between France and Great Britain;
- in Upper Canada they celebrated the end of the Lower Canadian Rebellion in 1838.
Harvest celebrations were brought to Canada by early settlers from European peasant societies and were marked in various communities across the country at different times.
Later, Loyalist refugees who moved to Canada from the United States brought with them their tradition of Thanksgiving that grew out of the American Thanksgiving harvest celebration. This is when the turkey was first introduced to Canadian festivities.

The early Thanksgiving celebrations here in Canada celebrated both the harvest bounty – and also the freedom and peace that was experienced after war.

Thanksgiving is now nationally marked every year on the second Monday in October all across the country. Many Canadians celebrate with family and friends and take the opportunity to pause and give thanks. It remains an opportunity to recognize the harvest and other blessings of the past year.

It is very fitting that we as refugee newcomers, sponsorship groups and supporting communities – come together in Thanksgiving to mark the new start that we have together.
We join with First Nations peoples and the early European settlers in Thanksgiving for the bounty that surrounds us.

We give thanks for all the newcomers that have made their way to Ontario as we believe that our community is healthier and stronger when we are diverse, and welcome newcomers to live among us. We continue to pray for peace in Syria and in the other places around the world where wars continue to cause much hurt, pain and suffering. We pray for those who continue to be caught living in these unsafe places. .

Like the ripples that come from a stone thrown into the water - may the peace, love and thanksgiving that is here today grow outwards from this place to bless and influence our community and the broader world.



My New Cultural Lessons

~ NUMC's latest refugee family, 2016

When our church expressed a desire to sponsor and support some Syrian refugees, I thought that I might be able to volunteer some hours of **help** as I am retired and had never been able to get involved with any previous sponsorships.

So when the volunteer committee met, it was nice to see the willingness and eagerness with which everyone came out. The request was made to MCC for a family. The response came back: there was a family for us to sponsor, and could we also give support to two young men, brothers - mostly social support and assistance.

It didn't take long and we had housing available for the family, furniture donations and many other useful household items. And then we waited...

Finally we received news that the two brothers would be arriving soon, and since they still needed temporary lodging, I offered them a room. Zaina was willing to come along to pick them up from a hotel in Toronto so we had a translator to help with the communication. The greetings were very friendly. Mohamad, the oldest of the two, had learned some English by watching videos. So already during the drive home we heard of their horrific experiences in Syria, and some of the activities and work they had done while in refugee camps in Lebanon.

Before they arrived, I had informed myself a little about what foods they would like to eat and so I shopped for flat bread, hummus and halal chicken for the first time. We were very surprised to find out that they drank maté which we also enjoy. They shared a package of yerba tea that they had brought with them.

It very quickly became evident how polite and grateful they were. Any little thing we did was so very much appreciated. It was a pleasure to treat them to some Canadian fast foods; they lit up the first time we drove past the golden arches of McDonalds. During the time that they lived with us, I heard "can I help you, please and thank you" more frequently than ever before. They were quick to clear the table after dinner, and just looked for opportunities to help.

It was also quite apparent how internet connected and computer smart they were. In a very short time they had found someone in Oakville who came from the same city in Syria, Homs, as they had. He invited them for a weekend

but not knowing this family, my protective mother guards went up. After consulting with the committee members, we hesitantly let them go, but not without taking down his license plate number. This Oakville family is continuing the contact, and Mr. C. has been like a father figure to the boys.

After much waiting and anticipation, we were finally also able to receive the Syrian family. It was a great day for the boys to see their Auntie and Uncle.

Part of the area of my involvement was to help with the medical and dental care. Here too, I've been amazed again and again how we were very fortunate to find Arabic speaking professionals who have been so helpful to give the care needed. They are always recognizing what we, the church, are doing for these people and wishing us "God bless you!"

After the school year ended, the children were busy at camp while the adults still continued with English school. At times they have done some yard work and even a little construction. They all seem very willing and eager to do the work.

On August 24th the committee and some of the faithful volunteer drivers had a special celebration with them. We were going to provide the food, but Iman was busy all day preparing some of their favorite specialties for us. They were eager and excited to present the food and themselves, beautifully dressed for this special occasion, which happened to be Ahmad's 50th birthday as well.

Today when I look back at the whole experience, I have to admit that when I tried to help them, they have actually **helped** and blessed me. The "thank you" they express is so heartfelt, and it's hard to leave their home without trying some specialty they have made, or looking at the garden they planted, or at something that one of the children built or made.

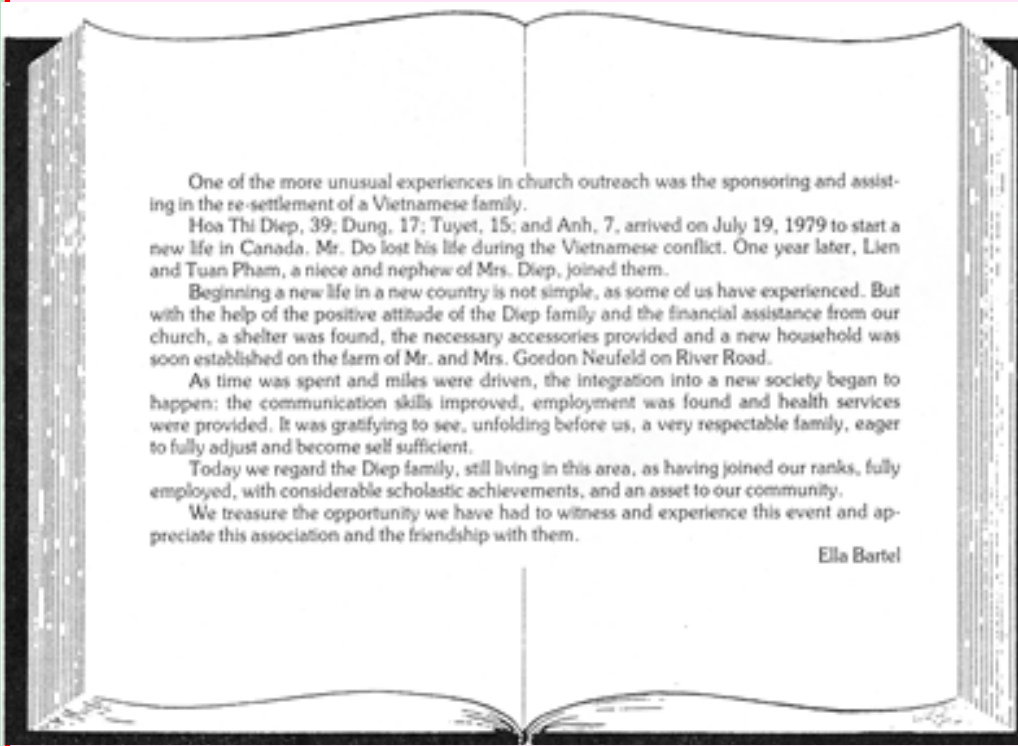
Already in this short time that they have been here, they helped with making and selling the peach salsa and were excited about it, knowing that the funds go to help people in need.

If you have the opportunity to host them for a meal or spend some time with them, maybe even offer a ride at times, you can be sure it will be appreciated and you will be blessed for it.

"What we do for anyone in need, we do for Christ."

Blessings, Kathe Wiens





NUMC's first refugee family, 1979



Dung, Hoa Thi Diep, Tuyet, Anh
1979



Tuyet & groom & some sponsors from NUMC



~ wedding of Tuyet, 1992



~ wedding of Dung, 1990



~ Dung & wife & sisters & friends
Dung Manh Do says: "Thank-you so much for your kindness and generosity that you have given us. We will always be grateful for what you did." 2016

~ submitted by Marlene Heidebrecht

**For here we have no lasting city, but we seek
the city which is to come. ~ Hebrews 13:14**

50 years ago we arrived in this wonderful land, called Canada. My wife Ingrid and I with three children, between the ages of 5 and 2 in tow. A year later our 4th was born.

We were received as members in this church the same year, and we thank the Lord for His many blessings. Every now and then, I get asked the question: How did you come to Canada? The short answer to that is: By airplane. But that is not the point, so I will have to go way back.

Our original home was West-Prussia, Germany. We lived on our family farm and things were good. But - war time came. Father was drafted into the army. Mother and Grandfather managed the farm. Then came January 24th 1945. We started hearing the rumble of guns from the nearing Russian front, and we fled our home. Even at 9 years old I sensed some of the pain of this tragedy. That evening, Mother and Opa took us children and Oma to the neighbouring village by horse drawn sleigh. They went back later that night to load and get the covered wagon for the trek. I remember asking: "Opa, why do we not have the sleigh bells, like we usually do?" "No, my son, not tonight." Heavy words from the heavy heart of my Grandfather. What all might have gone through his mind on that night . . . ?

And so the long trek began. Cold, snow- covered roads, and the squeal of the wagon wheels on the frozen surface. Wagon after wagon, all moving slowly - westward. We did go as far as Pommern, about 120 Km, and interrupted our trek west, in the hope of being able to go back home. That was not to be and we had to go on. Soon we were overrun by the eastern front, and all chaos broke loose. But God protected us through that night. We were able to go back to that same place we had started out two days ago. Here we remained a few months. It was very insecure and dangerous. There were no authorities of any sort.

Eventually we were evacuated by, what I assume, were Polish authorities, and put on a freight train with many other displaced folks. It was a harrowing trip. The train stopped often. Gangs of plunderers came in and took whatever they wanted. We did cross the river Oder and were in what was then East Germany. We were able to establish contact with an uncle, mother's brother, and with his help settled in Central Germany near the Harz Mountains. In the spring of 1946 our father joined us there. We applied and received a parcel of land, and life was becoming fairly normal. Then my mother became very ill and after about two years in and out of hospitals, the Lord called her home. Those were sad times. Grandmother, on mother's side, helped us a lot. When my Dad married again, we became a happy family once more. After a time, the political situation in East Germany be-

came such that my parents and several others decided to flee once more. It was, however, not possible to leave legally, so in the summer of 1951, on a sunny Sunday morning, 19 souls, made up of 3 families, set out on two horse-drawn carriages and 2 bicycles for a "supposed" picnic outing towards the border. Only the almighty God could and did help us through this journey!

The fact that we went on a Sunday outing in this manner did not draw any attention; we had done this before. It took about one and a half hours to reach the border town. Some arrangements had been made for our crossing. There was some delay, but then we received the word that we could go. The very last stretch we had to travel was grassy strip with a rising wooded area on either side. A few hundred meters ahead was a field – West Germany. At this point, a uniformed border guard, rifle over his shoulder, came toward us from ahead – and now what?! There was nothing we could do at this point but to pray and continue on our way. This soldier came right toward us, and with a small wave of his hand – walked by - .

There is nothing else I want to say here, other than; The Lord God sent His angels to protect us. We crossed the border safely!

After only two months in West Germany, we joined a group of about 450 or so other Mennonites on a transport to Uruguay, arriving there in October 1951. Here I met my wife Ingrid, and we were married in Oct. 1960, and the Lord blessed us with three children. In 1965, we decided to move to Canada, looking for better economic prospects, and arrived here in April, 1966.

Yes, it was by airplane we came, but most of all it was by the grace of God.

And by this grace I am able to sit here, 50 years later, and tell the story.

~ submitted by Hans Hermann Dau



Ode to an Empty Bottle

Around our Bontleng park site you will see a number of bottles. These bottles were used up, and discarded. Once their purpose was done they were tossed to the side and forgotten about. Some could have been smashed and shattered on the path, as is seen all over the city of Gaborone, Botswana, left there to be picked up by little hands and stepped on by unsuspecting travellers, some to be shipped off to a landfill not to be thought of again by the person who had originally purchased it.



I must admit that at times I feel like one of these bottles. The feeling of being secluded and worthless is all too real especially in the darkest and toughest times. Waiting and anticipating someone to say or do the wrong thing just so I can lash out and hurt them to ease my own worthlessness. Deep down I know this is not what God has for me. I know it, I read it and I even understand that there is better way but it is just too hard to put into action when I'm in my funk.

However, I am learning more and more that I am a visual person. On one of these funk days of mine, I went to the park with Nathan and Malakai. I looked around the sight and saw the various elements that we have had on our hearts, prayed about and now finally in the world, I saw everything from a different perspective.

Nothing stood out more than the work with the bottles. The bottles have been used in our recycling centre, gardens, bathrooms and soon in our café, and I was struck at just how beautiful that is. Not only for the eco-friendliness of it or the beauty of how it looks, but in what it symbolised to me.

They stood there yelling at me that this is what God has for us and so much more! Yes it is not God's intention for us to be broken, dirty and tossed aside, but He makes all things good. So although it may not be his intention, he helps us with one word: all. We are all broken, we all need him, we all can help each other and all together we can build each other up. We need community.



Like the bottles, when we remain in our broken state by ourselves, we are of no use to anyone, we will be in the way and could possibly be waiting to hurt others, but if we band together and allow the designer to use us in His plans we can stand together strong, united and with purpose. Maybe not in the way He originally intended but in a beautiful way all the same. We need to find the beauty in every single day, even if it is not

what we have intended for ourselves.

This is something I struggle with. When I am hurt, sad or feeling any extreme really I seclude myself from everything and only later do I regret it because I missed out. When things are not going my way I withdraw. I have to make this a challenge to myself, to think in terms of these bottles. I challenge myself and everyone else too, to find the beauty and find community because when we do, great things will happen!

~ written by Taryn Dirks



Nathan talking about the bio-toilets



The happiest I've been about any toilets (without actually needing one)



Bio toilet, no water necessary



Celebrating our Grandma, and her awesomeness at 80!!

Happy Birthday Marlene Fast!

"Grandmas hold our tiny hands for just a little while, but our hearts forever."-- Author Unknown

"Grandmother-grandchild relationships are simple. Grandmas are short on criticism and long on love." -Author Unknown

Some most precious memories, shared by various grandchildren:

Grandma is a baker. She is a cleaner. She is a doctor. She is a spoiler. She is a hard worker. She is always busy. She is a caretaker. She is a babysitter. She is a soother. She is a lover. She is smart. She is caring. She is selfless. She is a listener. She is a relaxer. She is a cook. She is a helper. She is courageous. She is fun. She is expressive. She is more than you could ever wish for a grandma. She is a grandma, a mother, a sister, a cousin, a daughter and great grandma. She creates beautiful memories and everyone appreciates what she does for our family. Thank you grandma for always being there. We will never forget you and you will always hold a special place in our hearts. **To the world you are a grandma but to our family you are the world. Happy birthday!**

Love, the family and friends. - *Carly*



From Grace: **Memories of Grandma Fast**

One of the first memories with grandma was when I was younger and we were making Pfeffernusse. And I had never used a knife before. So when it came to cutting the Pfeffernusse I expected Grandma to do the cutting. But no! She handed the knife to me. I was surprised and a bit nervous, but I did it and I felt so proud after!



From Molly:

Baking is one of my Grandma's specialties. A memory I have of grandma is when we were at her house for my mom's birthday. Grandma and I were baking her a cake. When we were putting the cake batter in the pan, somehow grandma could scrape all the batter out of the bowl and it looked like the bowl was clean! I was so amazed. (yet disappointed because that meant I couldn't lick any of the extra batter!) Now my goal for baking is to be able to scrape all the batter out of a bowl just like she did. Thanks Grandma! I love you so much! Happy Birthday!

From Liam:

One of my best memories of Grandma is when I was only around 8 or 9, and we were making zwiebach together. This was my favourite kind of bread, and so I was extremely excited to learn how to make it. I remember how I was anxious and kept skipping steps, but Grandma was patient and showed me how to do it correctly. I eventually got frustrated and wanted to quit, but Grandma just smiled and encouraged me on. In the end we were able to make some really good zwiebach. Someday, I want to have the same persistence and tolerance that Grandma showed that day, and maybe I'll even be able to make zwiebach to her standards. :)

It's through my Grandma that I discovered my love of baking. One of my favourite memories is when I asked Grandma if I could have her recipe to make zwiebach (the buns that only a Grandma can make), and I wanted to write down - EVERY step. We spent the weekend baking and of course, with her help, they turned out great. My Grandma is an amazing baker and cook, and one day I hope my baking can turn out even half as good as hers.

Happy 80th Grandma!

~ Love, Leah





When I think of Grandma, I'm struck with how much she loves us. My memories are filled with all the many ways she made her home safe and inviting and surrounded us with warmth and love, and always a little sense of adventure, as we grew up. I think of all the many meals spent around her dinner table. I remember her patience in including us as children in her baking of cookies and zwiebach. A visit to Grandma's was never complete without a stop at her kitchen table for her homemade chocolate chip cookies dunked into a glass of milk. I think of her hands and arms welcoming us in for hugs, sending us out into the yard to explore and imagine, and then to run back in and share about our adventuring. As teenager and adult I appreciate her interest in my life, the

elaborate meals she would serve and then sit and listen to us talk about our current activities and happenings. Now as I have two little boys of my own, I've seen again how she's fostered a loving relationship and meets them where they're at. The boys love to spend time with "Oma and Opa". She has sat and cuddled them from the time they were born, she continues to get down on the floor to play with them, to listen to their ramblings and join in with their silly songs. I am so thankful for Grandma and the life she has modelled of unconditional love and support for us, her family.

~Love, Lauryn

Thanks for encouraging us to take some time to consider mom's special place in our lives!
~ Linda



November Birthdays

Justina Bartel: 91 (11/2/25)
Gerhard Hummel: 87 (11/7/29)
Irene Penner: 81 (11/16/35)
Nettie Goerz: 90 (11/23/26)
Siegfried Wiens: 83 (11/24/33)
Susanne Janzen: 90 (11/27/26)
Gunnar Doerwald: 82 (11/28/34)



60th Wedding Anniversary:

John & Lucy Harder: 11/3/56
Jake & Frieda Neufeld: 11/17/56



December Birthdays

Elizabeth Janzen: 85 (12/1/31)
Jake Wiens: 88 (12/6/28)
Marg Goerz (Eric): 81 (12/6/35)
Egon Epp: 85 (12/9/29)
Adine Enns: 80 (12/9/36)
Irma Epp: 85 (12/12/31)
Henry Schroeder: 83 (12/14/33)
Marlene Fast: 80 (12/18/36)
Christa Witt: 81 (12/26/35)
Henry Martens: 80 (12/27/36)
Therese Bergen: 85 (12/30/31)

Two months in NUMC History ~ Harold Neufeld

I'm sure the tradition started much earlier, but a familiar almost-end-of-the-year announcement from the December 30, 1951 bulletin read: "Montag Abend wollen wir, wie ueblich, den Jahresschluss in unserem Gotteshause feiern. Zu diesem Abendgottesdienst, der 8 Uhr beginnen soll, ist ein jeder herzlich eingeladen. Die Jugend wird eingeladen, sich nach Schluss des Gottesdienstes in der alten Kirche zu versammeln."

An announcement of this sort, in various configurations and variations appeared EVERY year end for the next 48 years. The December 23, 1999 bulletin said it this way: "New Year's Service 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Paul Martin, a retired Mennonite Pastor and a potter, will share his Parable of Life on the Potter's Wheel" while forming two works of art from clay. **Everyone** is invited and encouraged to attend!"

The bulletins in December 2000 made no mention of a yearend worship service.

From our church bulletin dated December 16, 1979: "Our Pastor, Peter Falk, has been invited to share in the bi-annual General Assembly of the Mennonite Church of Zaire, with which ministry Peter and Annie Falk have served from 1952 to 1974. We have encouraged him to respond to this significant occasion, and are pleased to have this close connection with our Christian brothers and sister in Africa. We wish brother Falk God's rich blessings as he goes to minister in Zaire from Jan. 3 to Jan. 23, 1980.

What's that pleasant smell on Cherry St.?

When I went for my walk this morning a whiff of pleasant smell hit my nose. No, it wasn't a dryer sheet and definitely not Christmas cookies yet. It came from Henry's (Siemens) garage.

And then it hit me, he must be pouring Christmas candles for the Christian Benefit Shop. So after my walk, I stopped by their place. And there he was, two pans on the burners,



one filled with red wax, the other one with green. He is very careful to keep the colours clean and very particular about getting the wick centered. His purple candles from the wine festival were sold or

packed away, and so were the orange ones for Halloween. Yes he makes candles for all occasions, Easter, St. Patrick's Day, Valentine's Day with the appropriate colours. He has learned that blue and red makes purple and he even makes black ones.



Clara, on her part makes sure that Henry has plenty of containers into which he can pour his wax. She finds them in the Benefit Shop where people drop off items that are no longer of any use to them. The most beautiful ones are the pretty China cups that don't have a saucer anymore. Henry collects old candles from everywhere, some people bring them to his house. And I hope you remember that



there is a box in our church mail room where you can drop off your old candles. Then I would suggest that you go to the Benefit Shop and buy a whole new creation made by Henry.

Well, if Henry was pouring Christmas candles, Clara must be doing her Christmas arrangements, wreaths and bows. So I went inside the house and sure enough there was Clara busy at it. She takes a lot of the Christmas items that people have dropped off at the Shop, wreaths, garlands, arrangements, bows, even tiny bits and pieces like birds,



balls or flowers and shapes them into a whole new beautiful creation.

She has an excellent imagination and is very particular with her colours. Her only tools are a good glue gun and some wire.



~ submitted by Lani Gade

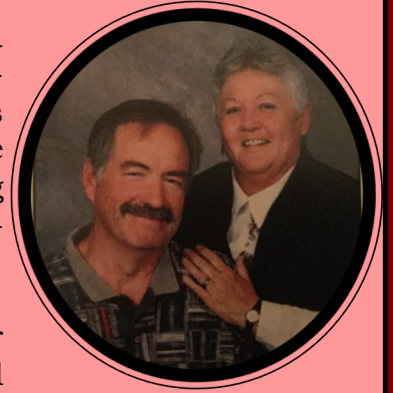


~ submitted by Lani Gade

~ submitted by Lani Gade

It All Started with a Quebec Winter Scene

Lath Art is an early American art form using “Lath” (rough cut wood slats used to support plaster on interior walls in home construction until the early part of the 20th century). During the cold winter months (before television) a few people started to cut up lath pieces to create primitive pictures. These cut up pieces were lightly stained using homemade colours. Finally these pieces were assembled and glued on to a board, concluding with a lath frame.



Since these pictures have a primitive rustic look to them, I look for scenes / pictures of a rustic nature -- old farm scenes or nautical stuff. Half the fun of doing a lath project is hunting for just the right image. I look for paintings from the Group of Seven, postcards etc. The image really needs to grab me to change it from its original to a wooden slats project. The inspiration needs to be there (especially in the early stages) because it takes some time and patience to cut all the wood pieces, make sure they all fit together, and stain each piece to the desired shade of colour to make a lath picture.

I began this hobby 25 years ago, with a kit of a Quebec winter scene. I've done many since, and I find the end result is always worth the time and effort.

~ Karl Nickel



~ to view some of Karl's real Lath Art, visit the downstairs Art Gallery in the hallway



So before you head to the different stores for a new Christmas arrangement, visit the Christian Benefit Shop and see what you might find there. Our churches support MCC, and the Benefit Shops are a major financial contributor to MCC.



Trip to Iceland

Iceland is only a small island 190 miles north to south, and 300 miles east to west. It is 155 miles from Greenland and 520 miles from Scotland. Iceland has about 120



glaciers, the largest of which covers about 3300 sq. miles. In Apr. 2010 Mt. Eyjafjallajökull erupted, grounding flights heading to Europe for days. The

farmer who lived below the volcano did not leave his home. He just kept an eye on his cattle to ventilate his barn regularly so the cows had air to breathe. The farmhouse, garden and fields around were covered with about a foot of ash. They washed the ash of the roofs and used bulldozers to clear the land of all the ash. The volcano did not spew any lava.

Iceland has a population of 330000 people and 200000 live in the capital city of Reykjavik. About 80% of the city is heated by geothermal energy. Hot water pipes are about 2 feet off the ground going across fields and rocks

into the city. All the water in the houses is hot water from the geothermal ponds. The pipes cannot be buried because it is all lava rocks, and pipes must be protected



above ground from the many earthquakes Iceland has.

We went to a geothermal lake, Laygarvatn Fontana. You could barely see the other side of hot, warm wa-



ter. I waded in, on the beach and the water was warm, but you could not stand in one spot for long because the sand was so hot. There were little puddles on the beach that bubbles hot water. In one of these puddles

they baked us a loaf of bread. It takes 24 hours to bake the bread in an enclosed container. They dug out the bread and served it to us with lots of butter.



The landscape of Iceland is very desolate with lots of piles of lava rocks overgrown with a kind of moss. This moss, if disturbed takes 100 years to regrow again. There are very few

tall trees. The saying here is, if you get lost in a forest – just stand up.

Iceland was discovered in the year 900 by the Norsemen, and Reykjavik was established in 930. Christianity was introduced by the Norwegian missionaries around the year 1000. Most people belong to the Lutheran denomination, but few attend church.

We drove to the towns of Geysir and Gullfoss where we stayed over night, and saw the geyser erupt every 4 to 5 minutes. We visited the gigantic waterfall in Gullfoss where glacial meltwater cascades down into a deep and narrow canyon. As we drove along the southern coast, we saw houses built right against the hillsides. There were a few farms where they raise mainly horses – a small horse breed, but not a pony. They also raise lots of sheep which roam the fields and hills in spring and summer. In winter, they are brought back to the farms. We drove about 200 miles that day to the large glacier Jökulsárgljúfur, where we had a ride on an amphibian with wheels. It drove right into the lagoon in between the icebergs.



On another day we swam in the Blue Lagoon, in the middle of a lava field. This geothermal water contains rejuvenating minerals algae and silica.

The lagoon is 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and the water is mixed with salt water from the sea about one mile underground.





While I was admiring a lady's warm hat, she saw my name tag, and remarked excitedly, "Finally I meet a real Icelandic lady." I explained that I was from Canada. Helga is a Celtic Norwegian, Danish name and Helgason is a family name in Iceland. We met tourists from many different countries – Korea, Japan, Austria, Brazil, Helsinki, and many from Florida and Texas, and then the three of us from Canada. Iceland is a very interesting country to visit, and although it is far north, its temperature is moderated by the ocean currents and the Gulf Stream, and so the climate is not severe. It does, however, have many earthquakes as was indicated by a Seismograph we saw displayed on a map in a mall. While we were standing there looking at the map, it lit up in different places registering earthquake movements all over Iceland.

~ submitted by Helga Rahn & Marlies Boldt



Marlies, Elsie, Helga

Book Corner—by Debbie Fast

In the Manger **By Max Lucado**

25 Inspirational selections for Advent

"The greatest mind in the universe imagined time. The truest judge granted Adam a choice. But it was love that gave Immanuel, God with us.

The Author would enter his own story. The Word would become flesh. He, too, would be born. He, too, would be human. He, too, would have feet & hands, tears & flesh.

Witness the birth of Christ as you've never seen it before. Through 25 inspirational selections from the works of best selling author Max Lucado, join Mary and Joseph inside a stable, beside a shepherd, at the face of the King."

The Purpose of Christmas **By Rick Warren**

"Why is Christmas such a big deal?

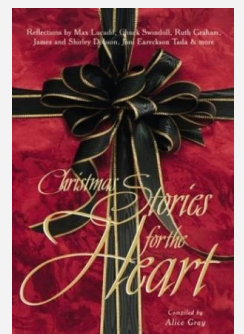
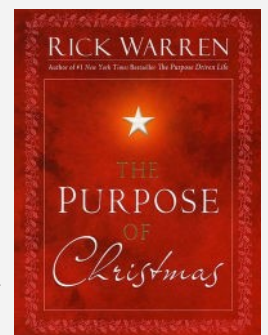
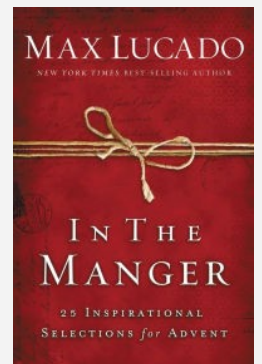
If you stop to think about it, it is astounding that the simple, unassuming birth of a peasant baby boy, more than two thousand years ago in the Middle East can today cause traffic jams every December in places like New York City, Tokyo and Rio de Janiero.

The night Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, a small group of poor shepherds were quietly tending their flocks of sheep in a nearby field, looking up at the stars. Nothing seemed different from a thousand other nights. But what was about to happen would transform not only their lives but billions of other lives as well. The world would never be the same. Understanding & receiving God's Christmas gifts to you will transform your life ... forever."

Christmas Stories for the Heart **Compiled by Alice Gray**

"Rekindle the warmth of Christmas.

Curl up by the fire and warm your heart & soul this holiday season with these wonderful stories. Tender & uplifting, this collection will greatly renew your faith, hope & love for the Christmas season."



God's Hand Has Led Us to NUMC

On my first day on the job at the church I was informed of the 'tribes' that make up the congregation. That was a new term for me in connection with church life, but I soon came to realize that it is used to describe the variety of backgrounds and journeys that have brought many of you to this place. I thought it might be helpful for you to have some information on our 'tribe'. Both Janie and I grew up in Hamilton and attended the same church. We met and started dating while in youth group. Almost immediately I left for Bible College in Regina, SK and so for the better part of 4 years, we kept Canada Post busy delivering letters back and forth. These were in the good 'ole days when one had to think before writing because there was no easy way to delete unwanted words! While I was attending Bible College, Janie completed her nurses training and we were married the weekend after her graduation. I was serving a church in Virginia by then, so she joined me and our ministry journey together was begun. The various places where we served have been provided in the bulletin during my introduction to the congregation so I will not repeat that information here. Over the years our 'tribe' has grown to include 4 children, all of who are married, and now 13 grandchildren. We are amazingly blessed through the spouses our children have married and marvel at the hand of God resting favourably upon us (in both Janie's and my extended 'tribe' we are now in the 5th generation of God keeping His promises).

Although family is our first priority in living out the mission of Jesus, Janie and I have seen God expand our hearts for global service. Whether it is Janie exercising her gift of hospitality in serving the over 900 guests who come through our B&B every year from a variety of countries, or my involvement on humanitarian boards and assisting churches of various denominations through times of transition, the world is becoming more and more our parish. We keep dreaming of where God has in mind for us to be. It is obvious to us both that God's good hand has brought me to lead in the transition here and we look forward to how He will bring it all to a successful conclusion.

This year we are celebrating 45 years of marriage (and ministry) and will be taking our hearts for the world to Hawaii in November!



~ submitted by David Lewis

(Welcome to our House of Tribes, Pastor David & Janie! May you feel at home among us.)



Thanksgiving Day sharing by Jon Bradnam with Pastor David about his personal struggle with health issues and how he experienced God's presence.

Can we still be thankful when we face critical health issues?



**Jon & Darin
meeting during
cancer
Treatments.**



**Let us all continue to pray for the
miracle of God's healing for both
these young men !**

Lighthouse Kids' Ministry



"Lighthouse Launch - each child made a lighthouse to take home".



"When the 'Deckhands' are parents the kids get to do things together with them"



"One of the newest members to the Lighthouse Ministry"



"Bible Truth time"



"Our Lighthouse symbol made by Alex Fast"



Deckhands and Sailors together making a lighthouse

~ submitted by Linda Pankratz

Pioneer Clubs at NUMC

Our Pioneer Clubs team this year consists of the following persons: Mrs. Marlene Heidebrecht (Kgtn), Mrs. Jacqueline Stearns (grade 1-2), Mrs. Ramona Neufeld (grade 3-4) and Mrs. Evelyn Finlay (grade 5-6). We have three student helpers: Aria Stearns, Emily Koop and Andrea Neufeld, and one parent volunteer, Mr. Scott Vanderlee.

We all prepared diligently for opening night hoping that we would begin where we had left off at the close of our programme in April. At that time there were 35 children enrolled. You can imagine our disappointment when only 9 children signed up on Sept. 14th. We swallowed our feelings and plunged right in singing our theme song, praying, sharing a devotional skit with the children and playing some games to get acquainted. It turned out to be a wonderful evening! We laughed and enjoyed each other's company.

Since that evening our numbers have climbed to 19 and we are teaching, sharing, playing and singing with all our hearts! Our prayer is that God would send us children whom we can serve, children who need to know and love God. We continue to believe that 'Every child matters to Christ!' And thus, every child God sends to Pioneer Clubs matters to us!

Please keep us in your prayers. Pray also that God would show you a child who would benefit from this Wednesday evening programme. None will be turned away!

Sincerely, Ramona Neufeld



Beginning the new year with some delicious ice cream served by the Sunday School Staff



CAMPBELL SOUP LABELS – October 2016 – Report from Women in Service

The labels were taken to the WMCEC rep. in Vineland to forward to the designated school. There was no enrichment day this Fall.

Condensed Soup	650	Chunky	363
Habitant	30	Ready to Serve	61
Franco-American Gravy	7	Prego Sauce	5
V8 Juices	4	Spaghetti	3
Goldfish Crackers	4	only UPC is necessary	
Boxed Soup	20	only UPC is necessary	

PLEASE NOTE -- To be eligible for the education program, the entire label of the CAN must be handed in – picture and UPC
The following were handed in, BUT are NOT eligible for the program in Canada

U.S. condensed soup	51	U.S. Spaghetti	36
Labels without UPC	7		

UPC's cut from the label, but the rest of the label was missing 69

In the spring there were 343 UPC's handed in without the rest of the label

On Sunday, October 30, there were 18 U.S. soup labels in the "Collection Can".



OCEANS

You call me out upon the waters
The great unknown where feet may fail
And there I find You in the mystery
In oceans deep
My faith will stand

And I will call upon Your name
And keep my eyes above the waves
When oceans rise
My soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours and You are mine

Your grace abounds in deepest waters
Your sovereign hand
Will be my guide
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me
You've never failed and You won't start now

So I will call upon Your name
And keep my eyes above the waves
When oceans rise
My soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours and You are mine

Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders
Let me walk upon the waters
Wherever You would call me
Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander
And my faith will be made stronger
In the presence of my Saviour

I will call upon Your Name
Keep my eyes above the waves
My soul will rest in Your embrace
I am Yours and You are mine

~ M. Crocker, J. Houston, S. Lightelm

CCLI Song #6428767, License #806258

Sung by Jon Bradnam on Thanksgiving Sunday

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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