

SOJOURNS

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The Newsletter of the Sonnenberg Mennonite Church

March 21, 2010

A TURNING POINT

The following essays were submitted by Freeman and Eileen Lehman who wrote them recently for a seminar they attended at the Mennonite Arts Festival in Cincinnati, Ohio, sharing about a turning point in their lives:

It was a cold, windy, fall day and I was working ground on my parent's dairy farm. The Oliver 77 tractor pulled a harrow preparing the twenty acre field for winter wheat. There was always work to do on our 150 acre farm, but I was a twenty year old daughter who didn't want to farm or be a farmer's wife. All of the Hartzler children worked on the farm until they were twenty-one. Then we were "of age" and were free.

I desperately wanted to go to college. I had graduated from high school and that was something that my siblings did not get to do. I should be satisfied. I sensed that my parents knew my feelings because of my nearly perfect report cards and my successes in high school. But I had an obligation to work at home for three years after high school. Several of my church friends and my cousins were at Goshen College for years already.

I thought and yearned and prayed on the tractor that afternoon in 1952. I was not even sure what I wanted to study in college. It didn't really matter. Before milking time that evening, I had assurance that I would get to college. I knew God spoke to me.

The next spring a local pastor asked if I was interested in joining an MYF youth team for the summer. The team would visit Ohio Mennonite Churches and give programs and encourage the local MYF. On June 12 I turned 21. I was free. The next week I joined the youth team. The team members were all Goshen College students and encouraged me to go to Goshen. They said I was good enough and I was college material.

My father was usually negative about finishing high school and going to college, especially for a girl. Those young people usually left the Mennonite Church. But he had prospered during the 1940 World War II years and the farm was paid for. He even bought the farm across the road. My father said he would pay my college bills. What a relief! I had no savings or money of my own. I told him I would never want the five heifers he gave to the others to start their dairy herds.

Goshen College fulfilled all my yearnings and dreams. I graduated in 1955. My husband graduated in 1956. I spent 30 years in public schools teaching in elementary

classrooms. Our three children went to Goshen College and one graduated from EMC. Surely the Lord has blessed my days! Eileen Lehman

Singing has always been a special interest of mine from early childhood. Participation in family singing and various ensembles in church through elementary and high school nourished my passion for music making. My father and grandfather were both church song leaders and provided lessons in sight singing and ear training.

After a year and a half of college at Eastern Mennonite I transferred to Goshen College. It was time to decide on a major. I had interest in Biblical studies as well. My faculty advisor, after looking at my past experience and musical aptitude, steered me into the study of music. This led me into teaching, church music and performance.

I discovered theology in the study and performance of sacred choral literature and church music. So both interests, music and theology, were satisfied.

Freeman Lehman

CONGRATULATIONS

CONGRATULATIONS to Gladys & Myron Amstutz who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Friday, March 19. They are the parents of Jane (Lloyd) Miller. They moved to Heritage Green-Kidron yesterday, and their new address is 302 Woodbury Circle, Dalton OH 44618.

LIFE AT SONNENBERG

NEW BOOK IN THE CHURCH LIBRARY

Thank you to James O. Lehman for gifting the book, Continuing the Journey: The Geography of Our Faith, to the church library. James is one of the authors who contributed a chapter. Other authors include: John A. Lapp, Lee Snyder, Laban Peachey, Geroge R. Brunk III, Hubert R. Pellman, A. Grace Wenger, Jay B. Landis, Ray E. Horst, Kenton H. Brubaker, Omar Eby, Carroll D. Yoder, Vernon E. Jantzi, Catherine R. Mumaw, Elmer S. Miller, and Robert Lee.

MAPLE SYRUP MISSIONS FESTIVAL

Our Outreach & Service Ministry is gearing up for our annual Maple Syrup Missions Festival which will be held next Saturday, March 27, 7:00-10:30 a.m.

Dave and Mike Ross have been collecting and boiling sap for several weeks, making the fresh maple syrup to pour over the fluffy pancakes which will be prepared and made by our resident chef, Ned Mast. Keith Sommerfeld is again ordering meat and spices for his special sausage which will be made fresh here at the church on Thursday evening.

Donations will be accepted at the door to support the mission outreach and missionaries of our congregation. Among this year's special projects are funding the purchase of a cow for an orphanage in Thailand—a project of our missionary, Linda Horn; a church building project in Colombia; support for Joel Miller, serving in Mexico with Dayspring Outreach Ministries; and the local missions of Camp Luz and Open Arms Ministry.

Lots of help is needed. Sign-up on the Missions bulletin board in the foyer to help with sausage making on Thursday night, or to help with preparation, serving and/or clean-up on Saturday.

Everyone is welcome! Invite your friends and neighbors.

NEWS & NOTES

CENTRAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL - 330/857-7311

KINDERGARTEN DISCOVERY DAY at Central Christian is scheduled for Wednesday, March 24 from 8:00-10:30 a.m.. If you have or know of a 4-year or 5-year old child that would enjoy seeing what a morning is like in Mrs. Bilderback's kindergarten class, call Doris Risser at (330) 857-7311 to register.

SONNENBERG STATION SPRING SCHEDULE

- This evening, March 21, 7:00 p.m., Cornerstone Community Church, 18600 Davis Road, Dalton
- Tuesday, March 23, P. Graham Dunn Spring Celebration Event, Central Christian Performing Arts Center
- Saturday, March 27, Life Bridge Community Church, corner of Wooster Avenue and 3rd Street, Dover
- Next Sunday, March 28, 7:00 p.m. Crown Hill Mennonite Church in Rittman

Come and be inspired through the timeless art of choral music. Freewill offerings will be taken to go toward reconstruction efforts of the Holy Trinity School of Music in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

P GRAHAM DUNN SPRING CELEBRATION will be held this Tuesday, March 23, at Central Christian School. A special worship service will include music from local musicians, Sonnenberg Station and Sommers Sisters. Guest speaker, Dr. Tony Evans, founder and Senior Pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, Texas, will give a message that will inspire and encourage us on our Christian journey. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m.

BENEFIT FOR BIXLER FAMILY: This Wednesday, March 24, 2010, Kidron Mennonite Church is having a "Benefit" Evening Meal, 5:30-7:00 p.m., for Andy and Whitney (Lehman) Bixler and their 2 ½ year old daughter, Maggie, (granddaughter of Gene and Lynda Lehman-Kidron Mennonite and George and Anita Bixler-Oak Grove Mennonite) who has had leukemia since she was 8 months old (but is now in remission). She has been in the hospital (Dayton Children's first and now in Cincinnati Children's Hospital) for 3 weeks. She was initially admitted because of pneumonia, which turned into ARDS (acute respiratory distress syndrome), and additionally now is suffering from ulcers in her stomach, which have caused significant bleeds. She has had numerous transfusions. Andy and Whitney stay at the hospital constantly. Whitney is unable to work because of caring for Maggie, and Andy is in the process of obtaining his PhD by doing an internship in Cincinnati. They are giving him one month off. Area churches are invited to attend this benefit supper in support of Andy and Whitney and their young daughter. Please pray for Maggie that she will be healed. Also, pray for Andy and Whitney for strength as they care for their daughter. They do have a blog page that is available to keep up on their story. The site is maggiebixler.blogspot.com.

AMISH & MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTER SPRING BANQUET: You are invited to attend the spring banquet of the Amish & Mennonite Heritage Center on Thursday evening, March 25, 6:30 p.m., at the Carlisle Inn, Walnut Creek. The guest speaker for the evening is evangelist and churchman, Myron Augsburg, of Harrisonburg, Virginia. All are welcome to attend the banquet. An offering will be received for dinner expenses and program support. Please call AMHC for reservations (330/893-3192).

RADICAL JOURNEY: Thinking about what's ahead this fall? Are you a young adult interested in discovering more about God, yourself and others? Would you like to be part of a team that invests a year serving and learning together in a cross-cultural setting? Are you someone who enjoys a challenge and takes initiative to build relationships? Radical Journey may be just what you're looking for! To learn more about Radical Journey, view location descriptions, or apply now for the 2010-2011 year, visit Service.MennoniteMission.net or e-mail KayS@MennoniteMission.net

SALEM MENNONITE CHURCH (Kidron), would like to welcome you to join us for worship at our Pre-Easter Services March 28, 10:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., and March 29, 7:00 p.m. We are privileged to have Ervin R. Stutzman, our new MC USA Executive Director, as our guest speaker. His goal is to meet a lot of people and as many churches as possible. His sermon series is titled, "Keeping First Things First." We look forward to having a lot of guests from our sister Mennonite churches join us. We hope we can show our support for Ervin by filling our church so that as many people in the area can get to hear him as possible. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Darrell Ediger (330/466-4077). The offering will go to MCC's work in Haiti.

The next issue of Sojourns will be printed for Easter Sunday, April 4, 2010. Please submit any items for this issue by Thursday, April 1, 9:00 a.m. Thanks!