

NEWSLETTER

HOW IS YOUR GARDEN GROWING?

BY PASTOR DAWN RANCK HOWER

In April we asked the question: “What do we need to do to prepare the soil of New Holland Mennonite Church for new growth?” Preparing the soil is our work for this season in the life of the congregation.

Soil preparation is happening in many ways. Several of you mentioned conversations that you had with another church member in which you healed a broken relationship. I hear people talking about notes of encouragement that they received. The greeters and ushers met in a productive meeting from which new ideas and changes were implemented. Seventeen folks gathered in each others homes for “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner.” Eleven people agreed to be on call in the nursery on Sunday mornings if needed. Each Sunday a different person is sharing a testimony from their own life. This week a group gathered and worked together to knot comforters for Nepal. The list could go on!

As a Leadership Team we are also paying attention to those areas that are no longer serving us well. We have reorganized our church structure to better serve our current size. We are questioning the amount of staff time and energy that the monthly newsletter requires. The Leadership Team is proposing that this be the last newsletter to be published. (I welcome your feedback about this).

This summer, we will continue to prepare the soil as we learn to know each other better, learn to know about our community, and fast and pray.

Here are some of the ways in which this is happening (or will happen). There are blank spots for more ideas from all of you – keep dreaming!

1. Learn to know each other better

- A. Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner. May 30 and again in the fall. Date TBD
- B. Sunday School Picnic in September. Date TBD
- C. God Sightings: A testimony each week during the worship service
- D. Fall Sunday School: Men’s class tell life stories
- E. Combine Adult Sunday School classes once a month to hear life stories
- F.
- G.

2. Learn to know about our community

- A. Poverty Training Workshop (June 7 & 14)
- B. Usher/Greeter Training: May and September
- C. Dawn serve coffee to Early Learning Center parents on Tuesday mornings
- D. Interview churches who are experiencing renewal
- E. Hear the Habecker Mennonite Church story (cont. on page 2)

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This newsletter belongs to all of us. Your input is greatly appreciated. Please feel free to submit articles to the editor.

Editor: Judy Nguyen

Mission Statement

As we encounter God’s heart of love, our hearts are made new by God’s Spirit. We invite people to experience Christ’s love, welcoming each one into a caring fellowship, serving Christ with our gifts and resources.



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WISDOM FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

BY PAUL MARTIN

REMAIN IN ME

JOHN 15: 1-11

"REMAIN"

In his farewell address to his disciples, Jesus uses the word **REMAIN** eleven times.

The dictionary definition for the word remain is—"to stay in the same place or with the same persons". Obviously Jesus was speaking the word in a spiritual context, asking his disciples (the twelve) to **stay connected** to his teaching after his departure and going back to his Father. And this is the meaning he is conveying to us today. **Stay connected**

Why is it so important for us to **stay connected** today?

--because He has cleansed us from our sin v-3

--so that we can be fruitful v-4

--so that we can bear much fruit v-5

--so that we will know what to pray for v-7

--so that we will have our prayers answered v-7

--so that we may experience the Father's love v-9,10

--so that we will keep the Father's commandments v-10

Lord, I need your continual cleansing, I want to be fruitful, I want to know how to pray and have my prayers answered, I want to follow the Father's commandments and experience His love, I want to bear much fruit, I want to **stay connected**.

Help me, Lord, to **REMAIN**.
AMEN

HOW IS YOUR GARDEN GROWING?

(cont. from page 1)

- F. Interview local people about our community
 - G. Church members participate in events in New Holland: Early Learning Center fundraiser, concerts in the park, fall fair, etc.
 - H. Generations Sunday School class: Study "Close to Home" pamphlets in the fall
 - I.
 - J.
3. **Fast and Pray.**
- A. Pray that God will give direction to each of us and to our congregation
 - B. Pray for our neighbors and people in New Holland who don't know Jesus yet
 - C. End prayer with the prayer of Jesus "not what I want, but what you want"

I see hope—small sprouts starting to poke their heads out of the ground. This is an exciting time in the life of this congregation. Who knows what God will do?! **God promises to work within us with power to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine!**

EARLY LEARNING CENTER NEWS

BY JEN MORALES

Another preschool year has come to end and we are entering our summer which is sure to be filled with excitement. This year we had two Kindergartners graduate and 21 preschoolers graduate, heading off to Kindergarten. Thank you for all of your prayer. It has been a blessing to each one of us.

As we enter the summer months we will be spending more time outside and adjusting to our new playground set up. In the future we will be adding a nature area/garden as well as some smaller equipment but are still in need of funds. We also need to fence in the entire play area, separating the toddler area from the preschool/school age area. All donations are welcomed and we thank you for your ongoing support with this project.

This summer our Discovery Club is going to have a lot to do! They will be visiting Middle Creek Wild Refuge and learning about North American Mammals as well as visiting East Lampeter Park, going to a movie, bowling multiple times, swimming weekly, playing soccer with a professional soccer player, learning about some of God's creatures and much more. We ask for God's guidance as we try to keep these kids engaged, entertained and busy. We will be focusing on character traits and values. This age group tends to be quite challenging. Please remember the teachers as they work with them throughout the summer.

This year has been a challenge as we all adjust to a new office staff. We thank you for all the ways you bless us and trust that your

prayers will continue to be with us as we touch little lives for Jesus.

Happy Summer!



LT HIGHLIGHTS

BY JENN ESBENSHADE

Financial Update – There is a \$4,600 deficit currently in the budget. Some is due to timing of certain payments but most also is a result of the planned deficit. There will be a note in the bulletin to encourage continued giving. The LT also discussed using the money in the building and capital funds towards paving, flooring in the fellowship hall, and updating the library.

Congregational Next Steps – Dawn suggested three areas for work: learn to know each other better; learn to know about our community; and fast and pray. There was agreement that there is a lot more personal responsibility in renewing our church rather than letting it up to someone else. In the fall, both the Men's class and the Generations class will be working with materials around these themes. Some other suggestions were to meet together in a monthly combined Sunday School to share life stories or meaningful scriptures. These ideas will be continued topics at upcoming LT meetings.

Safe Church Update – Bryan Hower and Peg Jackson went to their first meeting held by Lancaster Conference on how to update our church's protection policy. They would like to have a fall and a spring meeting during the Sunday School hour to go over general information about the process. Jenn Esbenshade has agreed to assist them in their work.

Visitation Ministry – Members of the LT will be visiting those living in retirement communities who no longer attend NHMC to ask if they still consider NHMC their church or do they see their chaplain at their home to be their pastor. The LT agreed that Dawn's time should be focused more on the ELC and reaching out to the community. The Special Pals program will continue to support these residents.

Drone Vigil – Charles Longenecker sent an informational email to Dawn about vigils held at Horsham Airbase with the Lancaster 1040 for Peace Committee. The email is looking for churches to hold a worship service at the airbase. Dawn sees the first step as educating the congregation on the issue of drones. Dawn will ask the pastor from Pilgrim's Mennonite, who is leading these vigils, to come and preach on this issue.

History Page on Website – The LT looked over some of the history and helped correct some errors. Dawn will keep working at it.