



# Focus on Floradale

Volume XXXIII, No. 1

Floradale Mennonite Church

February, 2017

## Thanks for the generosity

At the beginning of Advent, Merri-Lee Metzger took the children's time in the worship service to talk about those who have no homes but need to keep themselves clean. She handed out toothbrushes and soap and towels to the children, asking them to place them under the tree in the foyer as they made their way to Junior Church. She encouraged the children and the entire congregation to bring relief kits to the church and put them under the tree.

By the beginning of January there was no more room under the tree for all the towels, laundry soap, combs, clippers, hand soap and toothbrushes collected. Probably some families bought supplies for relief kits instead of giving gifts to all members of the family.

Merri-Lee also had her beautiful bird calendars available for sale over the new year and the proceeds went to this project.

We collected 34 relief kits with extra donations of over \$800. Thank you to everyone for your generosity!



## Dec. 18 Choir and Children's choir

Music was an important part of our worship service on Dec. 18. The adult choir sang several songs that they had been practicing since early November. Nichelle had her very first experience of leading a choir, although Merri-Lee led most of the songs. Thank you to Casey Horn for the accompaniment. Alina Kehl played the role of Mary.



The children also had a special part of the service. Holding lanterns (decorated jars with a tea light inside) they sang, "This Little Light of Mine" and "The Virgin Mary had a Baby Boy." After their songs they placed their lanterns around Alina who was playing the role of Mary.

T. J. Martin (above) and Sullivan Shantz were among the children practicing their part before the service. Nichelle Bauman (left), Rita Bauman and Nancy Mann encouraged the children to sing out.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this a special service.

# Christmas carolling



One of the Small Groups went Christmas carolling to bring Christmas greetings to some people in the congregation. Here Willis Freeman, Fred Redekop, Barb Draper, Rick Martin, Shirley Redekop, Nancy Martin and Kathleen Corber are singing carols for Sylvan Martin.

# Women's Fellowship

*By Karen Bender*

December is always a busy month leading up to Christmas as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ. The Women's Fellowship group meets approximately five times a year and involves women of all age groups.

Our annual Christmas party took place this past year on Dec. 7 at White Pine Ranch Bed and Breakfast (near Drayton) with 38 ladies in attendance. We enjoyed a fabulous full-course meal followed by a few fun games. We held a love offering with the donations split between Woolwich Community Services and Gloria J. Bauman's young neighbour who is struggling with health issues.

Our next event will be held on Sat. Mar 18 at the church. Come out to enjoy a hot breakfast with your church community



*Thirty-eight women enjoyed a meal at the White Pine Ranch Bed and Breakfast on Dec. 7.*

and invite a friend, neighbour or co-worker. Special speaker will be our Turkish friends, speaking on the topic of "Hope and faith: Testimonials during difficult times." Mark this event on your calendar as you will not want to miss this inspiring morning!

*Focus on Floradale is published five times per year.*

**Editor:** Barb Draper  
**Editorial Committee:**

Tim Greenwood  
Mary M. Martin  
Nicole Woeschka

# \$3,500 raised for Foodgrains Bank

*-from comments made by Jeff Bauman during the Moment in Mission*

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank began in 1983 with 15 Canadian churches and church-related agencies working together to deal with world hunger. MCC is one of those church agencies that helps to distribute aid where needed around the world.

The Floradale growing project began in 1999 as a joint project with Crystalview and the Lutheran Church. When the Lutheran Church closed in 2004, they were no longer involved. Between 1999 and 2017, this was a men's project since there was no men's group meeting. Jeff Bauman, who has been heading up this project, suggested it be expanded to being a full church project and that the fundraiser meal be a lunch after church rather than a Saturday breakfast.

Thanks to Susan Martin and the catering committee who provided an after-church lunch on Jan. 22. Some larger donations appeared in the morning offering, others cheques were included in the basket on the lunch table. Altogether about \$3,500 was raised. The treasurer would like to remind everyone that if

you put a larger donation into the basket on the table, you need to indicate what is a donation for the food and what is above that. The church cannot issue a receipt for the cost of the meal. Perhaps the simplest way to make an above-the-food donation is to put it in a properly

Martin for the use of his truck and to everyone else who has donated time and equipment to make these growing projects a success.

Since 1999 Floradale has had a growing project except in the year 2012 when there no success in finding land. A total of

\$295,000 or an average of \$16,000 per year has been donated. With the government's matching grant at a rate of 4:1, that is well over \$1 million of foodgrains for hungry people.



*Thank you to the generosity of the catering committee who helped to raise significant funds for the Foodgrains Bank. From left: Rita Bauman, Karen Bender, Norma Bauman, Susan Martin, Andrea Bowman, Tracey Martin and Barb Buehler.*

marked envelope in the offering plate.

In the early years, Earl Gingrich was able to negotiate the use of land east of Elmira at Lorraine Farms. Later Lorne Bowman helped to get the use of land at the corner of Line 86 and Floradale Road. Clare and Bonnie Brubacher arranged for a field on the 4<sup>th</sup> line of Mapleton and Lorne Bowman was instrumental in getting access to the field behind the Crossroads restaurant.

Many thanks to Oscar J. B., Randy and Justin Martin for lending the use of and operating large equipment to plant and harvest the crops. Thanks to Gerry



*On the morning of the Foodgrains Bank fundraiser, Robb Mann had the opportunity to lick the beaters as the catering committee finished up the icing for the cakes.*

# Visit from MCEC executive minister

By Barb Draper

David Martin, executive minister for MCEC, brought the sermon on Sunday, Jan. 15. During the children's story he remembered how he was taught to share and to put some of his money onto dime cards that would go to support missionaries.

"My theology of church has changed since the days of dime cards," he said, pointing out how the world has changed since he was a youngster, growing up at Waters Mennonite Church near Sudbury. Today the world is less Christian and the countries of Africa probably have more Christians than do the countries of North America. Our mission field is no longer overseas, but on our doorstep.

"Where is the mission of the church?" he asked, asking whether God is calling us to work at building relationships in our communities. As churches, it is our mission to work at disciple-making. We are busy people, he recognized, but asked how we can re-orient ourselves to make connections with our community.

David challenged Floradale Mennonite Church to consider how God is calling us to live out our faith. He reminded us that many other congregations across Canada are asking the same question.

"My prayer is that along with other congregations across MCEC and MC Canada, you might know more fully what it means to love God and to love your neighbour."



During the Sunday School time before worship, David talked about the Future Directions process that will bring re-structuring for Mennonite Church Canada. In 2012, Willard Metzger of MC Canada met with the executive ministers across the country to talk about the need for cutbacks due to declining donations and declining numbers in our denomination. That began the process.

In Saskatoon in the summer of 2016, the delegates authorized further discussions about how the area churches (such as MCEC) could work with MC Canada to re-align how things are done to make everything more efficient. A delegate meeting will be held in Winnipeg Oct. 13-15, 2017 to approve the final proposal.

David pointed out that each congregation sends delegates to MCEC and asked why we also need to send delegates to MC Canada. Just as MCC Ontario has delegates from the congregations but MCC Canada works with the executives of each provincial MCC, so perhaps MC Canada could be structured as a collaboration of area churches. (Here at Floradale, this reminds us of how

we worked back in the old days, when the business meetings of the Mennonite Church were only attended by representatives of the Conference of Ontario.)

The role of the national church is to support the work of the area church, said David. And the role of the area church is to support the congregation.

We could have national study conferences every other year or so, where people get together to worship, study and fellowship. David pointed to Mennonite World Conference that works in that way. He suggested that no one gets upset because MWC assembly doesn't have business meetings.

David pointed out that this model would hopefully see more resources going to the smaller area churches. It wouldn't impact MCEC all that much because we have a large, active area church.

One of the programs that will probably suffer is the international mission program. But David pointed out that Brian Bauman has travelled to Myanmar because there is a church there that wants to be part of MCEC when the pastor of the Lao church had a relative who was planting churches in south-east Asia. Perhaps we can find new models and ways of doing international mission. He reassured us that the national church would continue to work at leadership development, international ministry, indigenous relationships, communications and other tasks that we want to do together. He also assured us that the national church is not going to disappear.

# Exploring Generosity

*For this issue we asked various people to write about their role models and their observations about generosity.*

## Generosity

*By Kathleen Cober*

Generosity means the act of giving without looking for something/benefit in return. The people who have been wonderful examples for me have been grandparents, parents, neighbours and church family. My grandmother Hoover, a mother of twelve children, made my coats until I was fourteen years of age.

My grandmothers were there whenever they were needed—births, sickness. When they came to visit, they always brought something; they never came with empty hands. When my mother was ill, I was eight years old and a neighbour asked me to come across the field the next morning. She gave me a large kettle of oatmeal porridge to carry home for our breakfast.

My husband was generous but never thought much about it; it was the way we lived and interacted with people. My son, who spoke at his Dad's funeral, asked his siblings for some memories of Dad. His brother said that he remembered that if someone needed something which Dad had and was not using, it was given to the person, never sold to them.

In 1942 my Dad was injured at work and unable to work for six weeks. The members of the church which we attended gave my parents a grocery shower. This was the first time that I saw my Dad with tears running down his cheeks.

A lot of these examples deal with gifts of food, but many times

gifts of generosity can be in the form of volunteering, time spent in prayer, visiting someone in hospital, taking a casserole to someone who is ill, taking a colicky baby for a day to give the mom some rest and relaxation.

There are many acts of generosity never seen by others. Matthew 6:3 says, "But when you help a needy person, do it in such a way that even your closest friends will not know about it." (Good News Translation).

For Christmas this past year, my family gave me a trip to Florida. My son paid the health insurance plus some spending money and my daughter and her husband gave me my plane ticket, paid with air miles. What a surprise!

Your act of generosity may not be of this magnitude, but any act of generosity will lift a person's spirit and bring happiness to them. You will also experience joy for doing a good deed. Remember, our reward is in heaven as God sees and remembers our acts of kindness.



## Generosity of Spirit

*By Gary Knarr*

Christ's people are called to lives of generosity and caring. We recognize that living with a spirit of generosity is part of our mission to the world. At times, the believ-

ers' generosity in sharing of time, energy and finances are an amazement to the world.

One visitor to the Annual MCC Relief Sale was astounded to discover that the many people who give of their time so generously to help make the Relief Sale possible each May are unpaid volunteers. "People do all that work without getting paid anything for it?"

We realize that our motivation for generosity comes out of our gratitude to God for all God is for us and does for us, and our caring concern that the needs of all people are met.

One area of generosity that is very important is a generosity of mind and spirit. As we receive the generosity of God's love and grace toward us, we want to pay that generosity forward in our attitudes and actions toward others.

A generosity of mind accepts others as they are, and is very slow to criticize people for the character traits and limitations we observe in them. I am reminded of a "Peanuts" comic strip episode from several decades ago. Lucy, the eternal critic, gives Charlie Brown an extremely long list of his faults that she wants him to correct so "the world will be a better place" for Lucy to live in. Checking the long list of his faults that Lucy has given him, Charlie Brown exclaims, "But these aren't faults, they're character traits!" One person's trait can be viewed as a fault by others. We all have "character traits" that displease and annoy others, but a spirit of generosity helps us overlook,

forebear and get along with one another.

A spirit of generosity allows us to accept and appreciate those who have beliefs and opinions that are different from our own. Instead of being critical of those who differ from us, we can understand that conversations about our differences are not to be feared but welcomed and enjoyed as learning experiences. The “absolute truth” about an issue is very difficult for us fallible human beings to discover, but a spirit of generosity allows us to recognize that the truth probably lies somewhere along the continuum between two opposing opinions.

One of the few things I still remember from high school math is that “between any two points on a line there are an infinite set of points.” Our ideas and perspectives are usually at some point along the line, and not at the point of absolute truth.

A spirit of generosity recognizes that we all have our own struggles in life, and we do not always realize what another person may be experiencing. There is a saying that a fish that is caught on a hook must seem to the other fish to be acting in a very strange way (if fish think and reflect on such things). We don’t always know what “hook” others are caught on. A spirit of generosity supports another on their journey, and is understanding when another’s journey is proving difficult for them.

Basically, a spirit of generosity is simply a part of caring, and living by generosity is a part of loving our neighbour, and doing for others as we would want others to do for us.

## The joy of Giving!

By Katie Gerber

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver,” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

I want to be a cheerful giver! God loves a cheerful giver! I want to joyfully give my time, energy, love, compassion, money, resources, belongings, prayers and skills to the work of the Kingdom! If you want to be inspired to give of anything, read 2 Corinthians 9; it places an eagerness to give in my soul!

That chapter in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians reminds me of people I’ve grown up with who just LOVE to give, because they realize all they have is not their own—they’ve been given everything they have (from money to passions to skills), to serve the Kingdom of God!

The Bible also has many generous people that we can look to, but one particular person in the Bible who has consistently been a model of generosity for me is the widow, who gave her only two small copper coins. She’s an illustration to me of a giver who sees giving as a privilege, a delight!

When it comes to giving my time, I often will do it out of a feeling of obligation. Like the widow who didn’t have much money, I don’t have much time! Yet she gave and truly released the gift, something I need to work on doing when I give of my limited time. How do we hold tight to this perspective, so that we don’t get caught up in the day to day, self-preserving, individualistic society we live in today?

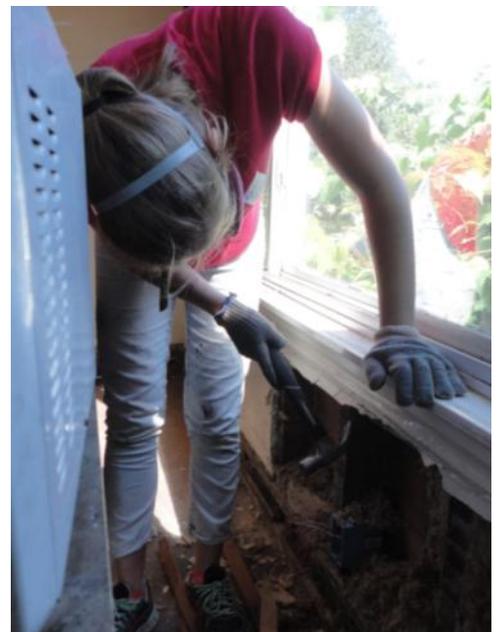
Here are some pictures of people who inspire me in their generous giving of their time! up



Floradale youth working at Operation Christmas Child.



In the summer of 2016, the youth painstakingly helped restore a building in Detroit with MDS.



# Memories of generosity

By Mary Frey Martin

One of my early memories is of going into our cellar to find my mother sorting potatoes. I asked her what she was doing, and she explained she was getting ready to send potatoes to a place called the House of Friendship. She went on to tell me that there were men who had no homes and no money and so they stayed there, and we were helping them. I remember digesting this fact that there were people with nowhere to live, and being impressed that my mother, who was always busy, was helping people in need.

My mother and father, Martin and Selina Frey, were role models for me in generosity. As early as I can remember my mother went to Sewing circle once a month to make quilts to send to MCC. I knew my parents had sent food and money to Germany after the war. When I was around 10 we had some visitors in our home, a couple from Germany, who had benefitted from that help. They came to say "thank you." And when the MCC relief sale started in New Hamburg, my parents got involved with a bang, sending many pies and jars of relishes and jams, and quilts.

My father served on the school board and was chairman for several years. In church he was the song leader whenever it was "Martin's church." I know my father gave money to the church, but that was done privately.

My parents freely opened their home to overnight guests, and I remember a man named Jack Wall, who ran a girls home,

staying in our spare bedroom many times. Funny, we were three girls sharing one bedroom as I was growing up, but one bedroom in our upstairs always stayed available for company. We often had extra people at our table for a meal, and I remember feeling very comfortable inviting my friends to come for a meal and knowing there would be lots of food, and that my mother didn't mind.

Then when my parents retired, they moved to northern Ontario where they worked for a mission for nine years. They returned and shortly my father was an elder at Floradale. There are many more examples of my parents generosity that I could give.

My definite impression of my parents is that they enjoyed being generous of their time and money and themselves. Their estate was divided so that a percentage went to charity, and we children got the rest. It gave them great meaning, I think.

When I moved into a house with several other nurses in 1981,

I remember a knock on the door and someone was collecting money for some charity. Without thinking I went to my purse and got out some cash and gave it. None of the others gave anything, and they reprimanded me afterward saying, "you never know where that money is going to go." I was shocked; it didn't occur to me to not give something. I have changed my tune on that, and have felt so inundated of late with requests for money that I have found myself becoming rude, unfortunately.

It feels good to be generous though, and I like being around people with generous hearts. Sometimes, though, it is necessary to evaluate just when one is being taken advantage of, and when one must take care of oneself and pull back.

I remember a friend telling me with great bitterness how her father, who was a Mennonite minister in Pennsylvania, was gone all the time doing church work

*Continued on page 9*

## Floradale's generosity over the years

By Nicole Woeschka

I started combing through the *Focus on Floradale* archives looking for examples of generosity, and soon realized that I could fill an entire issue with examples and stories!

In the first issue in 1985 there was an article about the Youth Advocate Program; this is just one example of generosity of time nurturing the young men and women of the congregation.

Floradale Mennonite Church is synonymous with the word generosity. If you require evidence to support this claim, look at the theme of the November 1986 issue "A Church in Service." Service is just another word for generosity of both time and money. Floradale has financed renovations and additions and even new buildings over the years which also shows a generous nature.

One last example is the longstanding relationships with MCC, New Hamburg Relief Sale, the House of Friendship (as well as numerous others). I am proud to be a part of such a wonderful family here at Floradale.

and was never home with his family. Sometimes generosity can be misused. But by and large, it is better to be generous than not.

I will finish with a story about my mother. When she turned 65, my mother started receiving old age pension. My father told her that is her money and she can do whatever she likes with it. She decided to use it to buy materials to make quilts for all her grandchildren. I said to her "Oh mom why don't you spend it on yourself? You could save up and buy a fur coat!" She replied "Ach, what would I want with a fur coat?!"



## Generous role models abound

By Lisa Bauman

When I hear the word generosity, I think of people who are giving of their time and/or money to help those less fortunate than themselves. Every individual can demonstrate giving of their time and/or money in different ways. Some people choose to give their time to go to places such as MCC in Kitchener and pack relief kits to be sent to different parts of the world, while others choose to donate money or supplies that are used to fill those kits, and some people may choose to do both. We need people who are willing to do all of these things; there is not one of these groups that are better than the other.

Because of the influence and impact they have had on my life I would have to say that the best

people to model generosity in my life are my parents. Having grown up at Floradale Mennonite Church though I don't think I can say that one person stands out more than anyone else in terms of generosity. Everyone gives what he or she can and that is all you can ask for. We are a very fortunate congregation to have so many generous members. The following are only a couple of the examples that I have seen throughout my time at Floradale:

- Having paid off the building fund in approximately 10 years after having built a multi-million dollar church is an incredible display of monetary generosity by everyone in the congregation.
- Seeing the ladies who donate their time to the catering committee who then turn around and donate some of the money raised to different organizations.
- Many people donate a lot of time and money to help make the MCC Relief sale a huge success every year.

Every person in the congregation who has a parent or parents present to look up to has an incredible role model when it comes to generosity. I don't think you can ask any one of these people who their role model for generosity is and get a response other than their own parent(s). As a young adult I feel as though we have big shoes to fill when it comes to continuing the pattern of giving of time and money in the future.



## Sharing generously from God's bounty

By Nancy Mann

In the gospel of Luke, chapter 21, Jesus is described as watching the people placing their offerings in the temple treasury. People with varying degrees of wealth are sharing as they feel called. But Jesus especially notices the poor widow who gives a very small offering. He remarks that her offering is more generous than those of others, because she has given a significant amount out of the little that she had. Perhaps others, who gave larger amounts, did not sacrifice as deeply.

If we extrapolate this teaching to our present day, we might say that God notices when people give generously and sacrificially. The question we might ask, when we are invited to share our financial resources, or our time and talents, is, "What is God calling me to share?"

Sometimes we find the Bible story of the poor widow very challenging. The scripture actually says that "*out of her poverty, she put in all she had to live on.*" (NIV)." How, then, would she live, and take care of herself, in the days to come? I have always wondered about this.

Modern day financial planning emphasizes our need to take care of ourselves, and it is important that we have financial plans that allow us to care, in a reasonable way, for our own needs. But when do our needs become our wants? The choice to be generous, to give some of our resources to meet the needs of others, helps us to develop a discipline of living within our means. It teaches us to

*Continued on page 10*

*Continued from page 9*

save for things we desire to purchase, and sometimes to be simply content with what we have.

We choose to support the work of the church with our talents, our time and our money. We also choose to support other organizations in our community with social values which we share.

In a marriage, we have conversations about what is needed at home and what is available to generously give. Sometimes we show our generosity in receiving our spouse's suggestions and building compromises into our financial plans. Can we also learn to do this with a generous heart?

May the gentle breath of God's spirit continue to prompt our hearts towards generosity.



## Generosity of spirit

*By Mary M. Martin*

Generosity. What does this mean to you? I found the following quote after a brief look on Google, "Generosity is a quality—like honesty and patience—that we all probably wish we had more of. When you show generosity, you might give away things or money or put others before yourself. But generosity is about more than cash and stuff. When you're forgiving and gentle to people, you show generosity of spirit."...I stopped reading to reflect.

I agree that generosity is "more than cash and stuff" and yet

after reading in *The Record* that HopeSpring, a charity that provided services and support to people living with cancer for 21 years will close at the end of March because of the lack of funding, I am reminded that "cash" is important. I know after many years of working at House of Friendship that "cash and stuff" is desperately needed to provide services to those who have need. I have witnessed Floradale Mennonite church demonstrate generosity through "cash and stuff" with the tea ball project, the beans and corn project, the "doing" funerals and supporting refugees to name a few.

So what about "generosity of spirit," how important is this? I believe it is essential if our communities/society are to be physically and emotionally healthy and it starts with being "forgiving and gentle" with self. I remember a supervisor encouraging me to forgive myself for not being perfect, and rather to learn from a negative experience and to strive for excellence (doing it differently the next time). Learning to be "forgiving and gentle" toward myself has given me some tools to be so toward others.

I believe through the "generosity of spirit" things happen that the public doesn't necessarily see and these include, listening respectfully to someone that is telling you a story they have told you before, not taking a hurtful comment personally without checking it out, affirming someone when they have done something well or tried to do the first time.

Back to Google. "Generosity is a quality . . . that we all probably wish we had more of" may well be true, but it is also true that it is a quality I have witnessed being practiced.

## Generosity binds relationships

*By Hannah Redekop*

According to those pop-sociology stats, Colombians are well-known for their friendliness and generosity. In fact, I believe they're rated as the happiest people in the world on several websites. (We can talk about alternate facts later.) Often times when I am on the receiving end of these generous acts from Colombians it comes as unexpected to me, as something that I feel I don't deserve. A free haircut from the stylist whom I've just met. An invitation to a Christmas gathering where I've all of a sudden become one of the family. A bed and a sponge bath in a rural farming community while I burned up from dengue fever.

These are all small things, and things I would do for someone else without even considering it generous. As I begin to think about generosity, especially related to my work, it's brought out some uncomfortable realizations. More often than I'd like to say, I picture myself in the role of helper or service provider to those in "need." I imagine myself as the person who can solve the violence that my "clients" are experiencing. It's my job and I will do whatever I can to help these people. So, when our CPT partners and communities we work with offer me these gestures of generosity, I get uncomfortable. I feel like I shouldn't be accepting their generosity because I'm just doing my job. I'm here to help them, not the other way around. And of course, the most common thought that pops into my head: I cannot accept their generosity—they have less than I do.

But this is a mindset that I need to constantly unlearn. This way of thinking is built on centuries of racism and colonialism that permeates our Western laws, our literature, our media, and our culture and subconscious. And I have to actively do my own work to recognize my privileges and reverse my conscious and unconscious stereotypes. It's uncomfortable work; I have made many mistakes and I will continue to make mistakes as I try to be an ally and recognize my own racist behaviour.

But it is only when we perceive each other as equals that can we sincerely work together. As much as my white skin might tell me so, I do not have the answers to the conflict in Colombia. The Colombians whom I've met and worked with have lived and breathed this conflict and have sacrificed so much to defend their human rights. And yet they are offering me generosity as equals, inviting me into the work they have been doing for decades.

I resonate a lot with what Lilla Watson, an Australian indigenous activist so beautifully said, "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

I must constantly remind myself that through generosity we bind ourselves together in a relationship of struggle for the mutual goal of liberation. Let us always be generous and humble ourselves to accept generosity.



By Leon Kehl

I don't know what others think of when we talk about generosity but I know I always imagine being on the giving side of generosity. Often we are inspired and challenged by the generosity of others and I can think of numerous role models throughout my life. Growing up in a Mennonite home and church has given me some wonderful examples of generosity and has helped make me who I am.

Having said that, I sometimes find it difficult and challenging to receive generosity from others. I want to be the generous person, not the one in need of generosity. I remember the generosity of others during Christine's illness but somehow receiving generosity from family and friends seemed more natural because of our previous relationships.

I've really been challenged when receiving generosity from complete strangers. When Christine and I first went to Turkey on a study tour almost eight years ago, accepting the radical generosity from strangers was something we were suddenly faced with. Although Turkey is a first-world, modern nation, the wage levels were and are considerably

lower than Canada's. As we travelled we realized that we were being hosted and entertained by people like us, but from a different culture and faith. The sobering part was they were doing this constantly, hosting groups from around the world to create peace and understanding. We, from wealthy Canada, were the one's receiving, not giving and that was hard.

I realized that we in the West like to think we have something to teach the world and little to learn. I can remember after being hosted by a family who would have helped pay our group's hotel costs, visiting one of their linen shops. They didn't take us there to make money, rather they wanted to give us a good price if we wanted to purchase something. The shock came when we returned to our van after saying goodbye. There sitting in the van were beautiful thick sets of towels, presents for each of us. I remember feeling deeply humbled because I could not imagine myself doing that for complete strangers. What did that say about my faith and commitment to living generously? These

Continued on page 12

### Generosity behind the scenes

By Nicole Woeschka

What does it take to keep a church running smoothly? The answer is a large group of people willing to share their time and money. It requires custodial staff to keep the building clean. We need trustees to keep the lights working, the bathroom fixtures functioning, and everyone who prepares for funeral services. We need to have people willing to cater countless functions and staff to create the Sunday services. Church Council needs members to help drive the church in the right direction.

A big "thank you" to all the people who carry the church behind the scenes including all the ones I didn't mention! We have a great congregation who lean on each other to keep moving forward.

people were more generous than I could imagine being!

The radical generosity of strangers and the role models around me has helped deepen my own faith and generosity. We can read numerous examples and exhortations in the Bible to live generously, but we live in a society that tells us to look out for number one. I've been grateful for the lessons I've learned from others both at church and around the world.

So in December when I was asked to try to help find places for refugees from Turkey, I felt I needed to help. I reached out to various people that I knew, trying to find places for refugees seeking a non-Muslim, non-Turkish, English-speaking household to help their integration into Canada.

Then on a snowy Sunday afternoon in December my local Turkish friend told me that some Turkish refugees coming from To-

ronto for a visit had suitcases, hoping there would be a place for them. We were just finishing a Re-Learning Community huddle and when I described this to the group, I was truly humbled by the response. Greg and Nichelle looked at each other and said they would take one lady if she needed a place. She decided to remain in Toronto, but she remains separated from her family, including her newborn child; they remain in hiding in Turkey and are unable to talk to her.

My parents met these strangers and said they would be welcome to stay that night. Again I was amazed by this willingness to embrace and welcome the stranger, which seems so important now, as we watch what is happening south of the border. That Sunday afternoon and evening was one extended "Kairos moment" as Re-Learning Community describes it. There were no more minutes than a

regular Sunday, but God was very present and real as strangers came together to become friends.

Our family has trusted that God is in this experience of hosting strangers and has been richly blessed by the opportunity to live generously. But the blessing hasn't just been experienced just by us. I've been amazed at how others at our church have also responded to their story. In Islam there is a saying that visitors are a blessing from God and I've been asked if we have the same saying in Christianity. In the past I've struggled to respond to the question, but now I can truthfully say we don't have that exact saying but I know exactly what you mean.

In living generously I've experienced a taste of what our hosts in Turkey did when we were their guests all those years ago.

## Response to CBC's "Pure"

*By Peter Ellis*

I don't watch "Pure" (the CBC TV series), but I have seen some previews. When I first saw them I was in a bit of disbelief and shock. Then I recalled a few stories that my Russian Mennonite friends from Grebel told me of their experiences growing up in the Leamington region and the drug-trafficking rumours (facts?) that were circulating. I remember a friend saying that when they crossed the border, they wouldn't let on that they were "Mennonite." Being a non-Mennonite at the time, I found that remark to be strange and puzzling.

Because I haven't watched the show (and likely won't), my only hope is that the show has got the facts right. I don't know all the facts. But I do know that the term "Mennonite" brings up a whole a spectrum of people—buggies, black cars, no electricity, pacifists, conscientious objectors, etc.—the same way that a huge spectrum of people are classified as "Canadian" or "American" or "white." Mennonites, like Canadians, are not homogenous, but do non-Mennonite Canadians or other TV viewers know this?

I hope the CBC got their facts right when they agreed to air this show across Canada. I would like to think that CBC is a premier broadcasting station but I guess they are fighting for ratings and viewership the same as every other media outlet.

We were visiting with Kendra's parents (non-Mennonites) and they asked us all sorts of questions about the credibility of the content in the show. We couldn't adequately answer their questions but it led to a conversation about the many different types of Mennonites.

I periodically have questions about Mennonites from colleagues at work and I'm always amazed at their limited understanding of the wide variety of Mennonites that live in our region. Hopefully, if nothing else, this show can lead to conversations about Mennonites and add to the complex and complicated understanding of "Mennonites" from an outside perspective.

*Editor's Note: Many of us would agree that CBC did not get the facts straight. For more information, see the Feb. 13 issue of Canadian Mennonite.*

# Floradale's response to urban needs in the name of Christ

*The chair of the Missions Commission asked Darrell to write a brief history of the work of the Urban Ministries committee.*

*By Darrell Jantzi*

This congregation has been responding to human need for many years. Long before an organized program emerged, individuals were responding to a variety of needs, helping out in unexpected ways to meet fresh challenges.

Enos Bearinger, a well-known local Wallenstein farmer, became burdened for the many homeless men struggling with alcohol addiction in Hamilton's inner city. He sold his farm 60 years ago, in response to God's call, and shared his vision to buy an old factory on James Street, clean it up and rebuild it into a Rescue Mission facility that would welcome transients and community outcasts.

Ab Metzger recalls responding to Enos' request for help with some hefty elbow grease, tools and heavy equipment as the property was to be transformed. Florence and I recall being with Floradale groups who travelled to Hamilton one Sunday night a month to present a gospel program and serve a meal to many hungry and troubled souls. Floradale teams continued to provide some programs, food, literature and money in the years that followed until that ministry was well established and better supported by the local church community in Hamilton.

There was a clear sense even years later, that if we discontinue something, we should get involved in another mission project. Dalton and Carol Jantzi had accepted a call to Warden Woods Church and Community Centre in 1966 to work with the many one-

parent families and seniors in a high density part of Scarborough. As new mission workers, they shared a different vision and asked for our help to equip a day-care centre and early childhood education program to better meet deep needs in their high-rise community.

In time, this led to a new challenge of inviting selected single moms and their kids to spend a several days or a longer summer holiday with our farm families. Some lasting friendships developed. Later, similar projects and interaction with Floradale were started in the Jane-Finch/ Tobermory high rise community where we again partnered in an effective city-to-country exchange program for over 25 years. With changing leadership came some program changes.

Floradale also became involved with House of Friendship ministries in Kitchener, a work similar to Hamilton Rescue Mission. Our people provided a variety of fresh garden produce to assist with meals and temporary housing for homeless men. Ab and Eleanor were closing out about 100 laying hens around 40 years ago and offered to donate them as meat to the House of Friendship if friends would help to clean and prepare them. With many good volunteers, it worked out okay, but some felt there was too much waste and the project would be more worthwhile if they had heavier birds to dress. So Ab talked to Dave Frey who arranged to send 120 heavy White Rock chicks for Ab to grow as meat

birds for the next fall which proved much better.

Our people really didn't like drawing chickens in the outdoors, so when health authorities also raised questions about our techniques and facilities, it was decided to do a pork project instead. Later on, a decision was made to supply quantities of beef and hamburger that Dave Metzger and Howie Bauman arranged for. Other families donated cabbage and onions, rhubarb and apples, watermelon and muskmelon and much good will year after year.

Sandra, head of the kitchen at House of Friendship welcomed good meat and fresh fruit and vegetables frequently in short supply and remarked about Floradale's resourcefulness. Around that time, a number of Floradale couples took on the preparation and serving of a delicious Sunday evening meal to about 40 men once a month to give staff a break.

Even earlier Harold and Fern Metzger offered land to grow sweet corn and many helpers came together at the farm to pick, husk, clean and preserve up to 1300 lbs of freezer-ready corn. This required more organization and the church named a House of Friendship Committee to manage the various responsibilities and coordinate volunteers. In the 1980s green beans were grown at the farm of Harvey and Ermina Martin. When Harold sold his farm, Orval Martin welcomed the growing project to his farm where green and yellow beans were later added to the corn growing project. Over the next 20 years, the

*Continued on page 14*

*Continued from page 13*

amounts varied a bit and gradually reduced in size as the desire for more fresh fruits and vegetables grew and their storage space lessened.

As our involvement and interaction with the Jane-Finch Church community grew, a variety of Floradale farm families hosted the Saturday outdoor fun day and barbecue where Jane Finch people met their host families for an overnight in our homes. The following Sunday was usually the church picnic with afternoon activities the bus would leave for Toronto around 3 p.m.

In exchange, the JaneFinch group hosted us for many years on the first Sunday of Advent for a joint worship celebration and Christmas potluck meal with Floradale supplying the desserts.

With the variety of ongoing involvement in urban projects, the name changed to Urban Ministries Committee as it stands today. With changes in leadership at Jane-Finch, and changes in MCEC funding for Jane-Finch, our church also contributed to the costs of extending the pastoral and youth ministry through our church budget. As our primary support for Jane-Finch community was cut back two years ago, our Urban Ministries budget was reduced to \$700 which we tried to stretch so we could continue providing some financial assistance to them as well as giving some money to the local food bank for items in short supply.

When Orval sold his farm four years ago, Jim Maurer offered to provide his farmland for the growing projects. Our committee gave leadership in managing the project from start to finish

but many assisted in various ways and Orval continued to provide boxes and tools required. We appreciated the wholehearted support of Jim and his Old Order Mennonite neighbour who plowed and cultivated the soil, seeded, fertilized and sprayed the corn. In addition to an abundant bean and corn crop, beets, potatoes and some cabbage were also tried and Jim provided apples, pears and rhubarb primarily for House of Friendship.

In the last few years our distribution was considerably expanded and excess amounts of fresh vegetables were shared with the Elmira food bank and other local families in need. On two occasions, the Reapers of Hope in Moorefield received with thanks the remaining vegetables and fruit at the end of the season and the

dehydrated product became food for relief.

Our team worked hard throughout the season to keep on top of the weeds, some stone picking and scuffling, but the great success of the weekly distribution of large amounts of fresh vegetables, the team effort in bean and corn picking, all the processing of the food to freezer ready packages and delivery goes to our approximately 50 volunteers who stood with us at key times to get the job done efficiently and have a such a great time of together doing it. The strong support from the seniors living at Parkview Manors next to the church was such a blessing. Hopefully, this beautiful spirit of hospitality and generosity will continue for years to come.

## Engagement



*Kaitlyn Martin and Justin Boertien have announced their engagement. They plan to be married on August 26, 2017.*

## Special Anniversary

Congratulations to Oscar and Jane Clemmer who celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary on Jan. 22, 2017

We wish a very special happy birthday to Laureen Martin who will celebrate her 80th birthday on March 6, 2017!

We wish a very special happy birthday to Erma Martin who will celebrate her 90th birthday on February 27, 2017!