

Creation has many “ordinary miracles”

During Sunday school time on March 26, Merri-Lee Metzger displayed some of her fantastic bird photographs and responded to the question, “Why is creation care important to God’s people?”

As her first response to that question, Merri-Lee said that we, as people seeking to follow God, have been given responsibility from our Creator to care for His gift of creation. She pointed out that between 1970 and 2012, the land-based population of wildlife saw a 38% decline. In the oceans, the decline was 36%. By 2020 we could lose two-thirds of the wildlife. Although the Bible talks about “having dominion” over the earth, she believes this means we are caretakers. We have been given the task of representing God in the world.

Her second reason that creation care is important is that we are part of the great connectedness of all creation. We are part of a bigger picture that is interdependent. When we care for creation, we care for ourselves. The balance of creation has been upset, and we need to try to restore some of that balance.

Merri-Lee’s third response to the question about why we should be involved in creation care is that it is a miracle. From the tiniest detail to the big picture, creation is full of everyday miracles. We need to be still and watch closely to see the hand of God in creation. While Sarah McLachlan’s song “Ordinary



Miracles” was playing, Merri-Lee showed some amazing photos of birds and butterflies.

Canada is known as North America’s nursery, said Merri-Lee. Many birds come here in the spring to have their babies and then they migrate south in the winter. Showing Tundra Swans in flight, she said they often fly through this area in late March, having spent the winter in Chesapeake Bay. They like bogs or wet fields and the more we drain our fields, the less habitat there is available for them.

Merri-Lee shows many slides of monarch butterflies.

She planted some Prairie Red milkweed and had 40 monarchs hatch last summer. This type of milkweed is not invasive like local milkweed.

She also has a special spot in her heart for Piping Plovers. They had virtually disappeared from this area, but now there are some breeding pairs nesting on the beaches of Michigan and Ontario. Their favourite beach is Sauble. She encouraged people to be aware of the plovers when on the beach.

Since her retirement Merri-Lee has done much more wildlife photography. She quoted Job 12:7-10 where Job says that the animals and the birds, the earth and the fish, all know that it is the hand of God that has given them life. She hopes that her photography helps the birds fly and multiply as God intended according to Genesis 1.

Pancake-mixing at the Syrup Festival

Information provided by Glenn Martin

At the very first Elmira Maple Syrup Festival, 53 years ago, Orlan Martin, Urias Frey and Aden Weber were volunteers who mixed together the pancake batter and organized getting the maple syrup from local farmers. Orlan was the father of Glenn Martin from our congregation (also the father of Gloria H. Bauman) and Aden Weber was the father of Wayne Weber (and also Lorene Wideman). When Glenn's father, Orlan, passed away in 1987, Wayne and Glenn volunteered to take over the task of mixing the batter and rounding up a supply of maple syrup.

Orlan Martin, Urias Frey and Aden Weber were members of the Markham-Waterloo Mennonite Conference 53 years ago, and it might seem a little surprising that such conservative Mennonites would have been involved in launching the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival, but they were compassionate men who supported the Elmira and District Association for Community Living, a major beneficiary of the proceeds of the festival.

When Wayne Weber passed away in 2008, Glenn's son Kevin and Wayne's son Rick became more involved and have continued to do the same job with many of the same volunteers. Among the volunteers is Rick's son Benton Weber, who is the fourth generation of the "batter boys."

In 2017, the "batter boys" used 40 20-kg boxes of pancake mix which is 800 kg or 1,800 lbs. They also provided 28 large pails of maple syrup which added up to 140 gallons or 630 litres.

Thank you to everyone who pitches in to serve our community in this way.

The Elmira District Community Living website has the following statement about the festival: *Since its inception, all proceeds from the Festival are returned to the community, to both charitable and not-for-profit organizations. In 2001, the Festival was the proud recipient of the Outstanding Philanthropic Action award from the Foundation for Rural Living. And, at the completion of the 2002 Festival, the total*



Glenn Martin, Kevin Martin, Rick Weber and Benton Weber use a motorized beater to mix the pancake batter in a large bucket.
(Photo used courtesy of The Observer/Liz Bevan).

monies raised for these community groups surpassed the one million dollar mark.

Traditionally, 40 percent of the profits are allocated annually to the Elmira District Association for Community Living with the remaining amounts shared among selected organizations.



90th birthday

A group joined Erma Martin at Heritage House in St. Jacobs to celebrate her 90th birthday on February 27.
(Photo by Elsie Springer)



A Worship Café was held in the foyer on Sunday, April 2. Leading worship with music were (from left): Richard Bauman, Carmen Read, Alina Kehl, Dane Frede (hidden), Ryan Bauman, Johnny Friesen, Jeanette Towns and Nichelle Bauman.



Worship Café

To explore the theme of blindness (based on the story of the man born blind in John 9), Nichelle asked two out of every three people to wear a blindfold while she read the story. She asked people to share how it felt to be unable to see.



On March 14, eighteen women joined Laurene Martin at Crossroads restaurant for a lunchtime celebration recognizing her 80th birthday. From left: Lena Martin, Kathleen Cober, Marj Metzger, Melinda Martin, Mary M. Martin, Vietta Martin, Fern Metzger, Martha Brubacher, Vera Martin, Laurene Martin, Florence Jantzi, Nancy Mann, Eleanor Metzger, Lovina Martin, Florence Frey, Edna Bauman and Pauline Martin.

Thank you to Elsie Springer for taking the snapshots.



80th birthday



Creation care: What does it mean for Christians?

Nature is a tangible link to God

By Peter Ellis

What are the miracles that you see in the spring, after a long winter?

When I think of spring miracles, I often think of Ontario's wildflowers such as trilliums, trout lilies, may apples, jack-in-the-pulpits, forget-me-nots and phlox. Tulip, crocus, and other perennial shoots in gardens also make me think of rebirth and new life. Blooming lilac, apple and pear trees and other spring life smells also make me think of miracles and the beauty of nature. I also enjoy the migrating birds that remind me of spring such as purple martins, woodcocks and snow geese. While the presence of robins let me know that spring is around the corner, they are so plentiful that unfortunately I don't really see them as miracles. But like sparrows and starlings, I still see robins as part of God's world.

How does creation help us to know God?

Nature can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted (e.g. sap/syrup), and felt (Have you hugged a tree lately?). Sometimes I find it's difficult to know God because God can seem ethereal and intangible. My primary connection to God is through nature because nature affects my five senses and, as a result, makes it easier for me to believe in Him. I believe humans are also a part of nature. Thus, my relationships with other people

also help me to know God. So yes, for me, creation and nature have always been a big part of my connection to God.

Why is creation care important for God's people?

Regardless of what you think about the creation story in Genesis, I think most Christians can agree that caring for the Earth was/is an expectation by God given to Adam and Eve and all humans. I see humans as the earth's stewards. I don't think we've done a great job as humans at being good stewards, especially since the industrial revolution. Having said that, we have had many dedicated folks in the past couple centuries that have spent their lives trying to protect and conserve special ecosystems and environments around the world. So we have had some success. Unfortunately, our protection and conservation measures often are counter-balanced by human livelihoods that depend on nature's resources (quarries and mines, oil extraction, tree cutting, fishing and hunting, electricity generation, urban sprawl, even some agricultural practices).

I know not everyone connects to God through experiences with nature, but I recommend to everyone to get outside and experience the wonderful world around us. Whether it's hiking, gardening, doing yard work or just being outside, I believe the natural world offers us a tangible link to God, if you can create space for it in our busy lives.

Wonders of creation

By Mary M. Martin

Many of the world religions have teachings about having respect for creation and its care. I will quote from, "The Green Rule" which says "Do unto the Earth as you would want it do unto you." The Baha'i Faith says, "Know thou that every created thing is a sign of the revelation of God." Native Spirituality says, "Great Spirit, help us learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock." Christianity in the Genesis story talks about how "God saw everything that He had made and saw it was very good" (King James) or "God looked over all that He had made and it was excellent in every way" (Living Bible).

I was reminded of these readings this week. My six-year-old grandson and I had hiked in their woods and had crawled up and over huge rocks, some of which were moss-covered and made slippery because of an earlier rain, but finally we reached the top. Here he climbed to the top of another big rock and looked down and back from where we had started. He gazed at the scenery, his home, the woods and then he took a deep breath and said, "Wow, take a look at that!"

Earlier in our hike we had come across several empty pop bottles and he had questioned, "Why do people litter?" Dylan as a six-year-old, in one walk had been both captured by the wonder of creation and saddened by the thoughtlessness of some who mess up the wonders of creation.

We live on God's planet

By Greg McCorquodale

If your boss gave you his or her house to live in for a time, would you respect and take care of it? Or would you throw wild parties where garbage is dumped in the pool, drinks are spilled on the carpet, music is played way too loud and furniture is burned in the bonfire? I think most people would definitely take meticulous care if they were living in their boss's house. I believe that God created this planet, as well as all the intricate environmental systems and life cycles that exist in relation to it. It is a planet where all of the earth's systems are in balance and working together to create an environment where humans and all other living things can survive. We are living in God's house.

The demand humans are putting on the earth has been growing exponentially and as a result, nature and our environment are subject to increasing risk. Our human activity is throwing off the delicate balance of the earth's systems. Since the early 1970s humanity has been consuming resources faster than our planet can sustainably offer them. As of 2012 we have been consuming resources at a rate that would require 1.6 planet earths to sustain. In the past 42 years the population of animals such as fish, birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles has decreased by 58 percent. As our climate changes unnaturally due to human activity, we will be presented with new challenges in learning how to operate within our environment (WWF Living Planet Report 2016).

Unfortunately, trying to live an environmentally friendly lifestyle is countercultural at this time. Buying electric vehicles and using renewable sources of energy for our homes takes a significant amount of investment. Buying products that are "green" and produced locally, costs more money and isn't as convenient. With the busy lifestyles we have and the cost of living, it is understandable why we want things that are cheap and easy. We live in a culture where burning fossil fuels and consuming products manufactured on the other side of the world is more profitable. As individuals it seems unfair that we should pay more for "green" energy, transportation and food while other people are getting ahead by abusing the environment. I think in order to change the North American lifestyle to make it sustainable, our government will have to take more action to regulate how we consume products.

If we believe in God and that we are living on his planet, shouldn't we want to take care of it like we are living in our boss's house? There is very strong scientific evidence that the party we've been throwing is negatively impacting God's planet. Now that we know that, why aren't we insisting that things change? As a society we can make the required changes, as individuals we just have to care.

I think it takes a strong faith to give up the rat race to live a life that is ecologically sustainable. Changing the way we live might seem like an unaffordable and daunting task, but in reality we can't afford not to. It might be short term loss but for long term gain. We need to stop living for

ourselves and start investing in the health and well-being of future generations.

Thankfully there are world leaders preparing for this change and entrepreneurs ready to capitalize on the new "green" economy. Life as we know it will change, it's just a matter of timing. Hopefully the way we subdue this planet changes for the better, sooner than later.



Caring for the earth

By Gary Knarr

When God created the world so wonderful, beautiful, and productive, God gave humans the pleasant yet challenging task of tending it (Genesis 2:15). In this, Scripture suggests that humanity's first occupation was that of gardener and caretaker. We live out part of God's intention for us when we act as tenders of creation, and work with God to create what is beautiful and life giving. Many of us do enjoy gardening and tending a variety of plants, as if we still have the instinctive desire God first gave us to work close to the earth, have God's good earth on our hands, and help good things grow.

There are also many other ways to continue our care and tending of the earth besides gardening. A careful regard for having clean air, water and earth will

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ensure the health of the planet and all of God's creatures that live on it—including humans. Recently a local high school student won an essay contest for writing about the wonderful future our planet will have because the governments of the world will take strong initiatives to development efficient alternatives to the burning of fossil fuels and keep the environment clean. I admire this optimism, even though not all governments and political leaders share this kind of commitment to the wellbeing of God's creation. Government action depends upon people electing governments and political leaders who will take the care of the environment very seriously and implement the necessary measures. It also depends on people taking their own personal initiatives to decrease waste and carbon emissions by the choices we make regarding our use of fuels, food, and all forms of matter and energy.

The encouraging news is that some waters and areas that were once very badly polluted no longer are. After many centuries of people living in filthy and diseased cities, governments finally did take initiatives to provide clean water and air and have proper disposal of garbage and sewage which have made urban life in much of the world far healthier. We no longer pour our garbage or empty our chamber pots onto the streets as people had done for many years. While much creative work remains to be done in caring for God's creation and God's creatures, there are historical examples of progress in care for the environment. With God's help, we can continue to find

ways to make God's garden of creation cleaner and safer and more as God created and intended it to be.



Caring for the earth

By Katie Gerber

My favourite season is spring. I love how the wind begins to have warm undertones, how the sun grows warmer and warmer each day bringing the tiniest little green buds to break out of the tree branches. I love the timing of the bush onions and violets, the sound of the birds cooing and singing and chirping outside my open bedroom window—which doesn't close again until late fall. I love being able to wear bare feet in the yard, how the mud gushes between my toes and seems to be on everything. And rain! Gentle, warm and peaceful—or downpours paired with crashing thunder and splitting lightning. How I love it!

Spring brings new life, a fresh start and much excitement. Coming out of this Easter weekend, I realized how perfectly timed the celebration of Christ's resurrection is. The promise of new life within us because of the gift of Christ's sacrifice which washes away our sin and leaves room for beauty and hope to arise in our hearts. Worship pours from my soul all spring long, something I long to be able to experience all year! There's something about spring that is so fond of

giving me glimpses of the Father's character, of His power and majesty in those downpours, of his gentleness in the chirping of the baby birds. I see God's faithfulness in the places I know with certainty, the tulips will rise. All of creation shouts his glory. He created the earth and everything in it to do just that, to glorify Him.

I have so much respect for people who devote their time and energy to caring for creation; the farmers, tree planters, gardeners, activists, thrift store shoppers and recyclers to name a few! I'd like to work on taking better care of this earth; I am called and created to be a steward of it! Life gets busy and the easy way, which is often more harmful for creation, becomes much more appealing.

On Saturday April 22 the youth picked up garbage in Woolwich for Community Clean Up Day, a really cool day where the township is "divided and conquered" and de-littered! I hope this beautiful spring weather can remind us of the little things we can do to work at caring for this earth!



The MYF was still smiling after participating in Woolwich's Clean-Up day in 2016.

Everyday Miracles

By Nicole Woeschka

I quite often think about creation and miracles when I'm driving. For as long as I can remember I have thought of God when I see a sunbeam shining down through the clouds. I actually used to think, as a kid, that if I looked hard enough and squinted just

right I might actually see Him peeking through!

Crocuses peeking through the snow is another one of those things that remind me of God's love and power. You can argue the science of flowers growing but I still think it's a miracle.

One of the things we are thinking about in this issue is whether or not creation care is important for God's people. I think God worked too hard to cre-

ate this beautiful world for us to abuse it. We need to take care of this garden for as long as he allows us to enjoy it!



Creation care survey

By Leon Kehl

I was wondering what the response to the Creation Care survey might be. There were a total of 17 responses with 15 in favour of a exploring forming a committee and 2 against. Several people expressed an interest in helping look into a forming a committee and the results will be brought to Church Council for discussion. For a church of this size there wasn't a lot of response but perhaps that wasn't surprising since this hasn't been something we have talked a lot about as a church.

In the last week I started reading the April edition of *The Mennonite* which was entitled "Caring for God's Creation" and all of the main articles focussed on this theme. At the same time I recognize that not everyone feels this is an issue that the church needs to pay attention to. As one of the responses said, there is a lot of focus outside of the church so we are all well aware. Yet I found one of the articles entitled "10 types of People who Care About Creation" illuminating. The author, Jennifer Halteman Schrock, talked about the Eco-Hip and the Traditionalists suggesting these two groups both care about creation, but in different ways. For example, one of the ten types was described as Simple-Living Servants. The Traditionals learned their thrifty ways from depression-era parents and the original *Living More with Less*, while the Eco-hip have Blessed Earth links on their browser bookmark bars. Traditionals shop at Thrift stores to save money, while the Eco-hip shop at Fair Trade stores to pay just wages. Traditionals hate wasting things, while eco-hip hate chemicals. As she suggests these

simple-living servants add integrity to churches as they act humbly on what they believe.

For me, the idea of listening to each other is key if our church would decide to move forward in creating a committee. How do we respect each other despite our differing perspectives and priorities? How do we avoid judging each other for our individual decisions? Many of us have grown up in church environments with a strong sense of community norms. For example, I know at our church some people wouldn't bring certain cars they own to church on a Sunday because that wouldn't be proper. That speaks to a level of respect to the community which is both a blessing and a challenge.

Often the church has hesitated to take a stand on issues of social justice in deference to the community. I know my mother now speaks with some regret of her church's silence growing up on segregation of blacks. We are all against racial discrimination now, but at the time this was a divisive issue in many churches so the subject was avoided or people were told to be patient and wait for change.

I think churches often avoid conflict where possible, since there is often enough conflict without looking for additional sources. Is this why many would prefer to avoid issues of social justice whether it was slavery, segregation, nuclear weapons, politics, living wages etc.? Even if you didn't fill out a survey on Creation Care you probably have an opinion. If you were looking back 10 or 20 years from now, what direction do you think the church should have taken? I don't know what our church might do going forward, but appreciate everyone who has participated in the conversation to date.

Focus on Floradale, Flashbacks on creation care

Compiled by Nicole Woeschka

Over the years *Focus on Floradale* has reflected on God's creation. Many notes mention feeling closer to Him when gardening, walking outside, or just enjoying nature in general.

In May 1997, Vera Bowman wrote: "Gardening is a relaxing time for me and also a time I can talk to my Heavenly Father because being outside in the open space you feel closer to God. 'So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labour.' (1 Cor. 3:7-8)"

In April, 1996, someone wrote: "Spring, the Season of Hope: I love to see the spring flowers poking up

through the cold, dark earth. They come up with great faith, expecting warm sunshine and rains....It is fun to watch the calves enjoy the freedom of the open pasture, running and kicking up their heels after the confines of the barn all winter.

'Solomon 2:11-13 See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing had come, the cooing of the doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit, the blossoming vines spring their fragrance. Arise ... and come away!'"

Someone else wrote: "Spring is the time of year when snow disappears. We can see the dead-looking grass and trees. We know that soon they will show life again because God has promised in Genesis 8:22: 'While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer

and winter, day and night shall not cease.'"

Another said: "Year after year I never fail to be amazed as my perennial garden begins to sprout through the earth that had been frozen so hard for months before. It reminds me of the scripture in Romans 1:20 that tells me I have no excuse to not know God because He can be clearly seen by what He has made."

God entrusted the earth to us, his people. It is our responsibility to care for it.

In March, 1992, someone wrote: "As we participate in God's kingdom on earth, our role is an important one... Our world was created by a loving, imaginative God. His creation is filled with incredible detail, beauty and diversity. How can we, as part of this kingdom, refuse to be good stewards?"



Thank you to Nichelle Bauman for organizing and leading a Good Friday and Easter choir.

As well as some special pieces, the choir led the congregation in Easter songs.

Front row: Kate Bauman, Mary Bauman, Barb Draper, Norma Bauman, Eileen Freeman.
Second row: Merri-Lee Metzger, Nancy Mann, Marj Metzger, Florence Jantzi, Wanda Kehl.
Back row: Steve Bauman, Robert Mann, Steve Bauman, Rick Martin, Cliff Bauman,
Roy Draper, Lester Kehl, Darrell Jantzi, Richard Bauman

Asking questions in Palestine

By Hannah Redekop

For the past two years I have been serving on the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Steering Committee as a representative of the corps, or field teams. This year, the meetings were held in Hebron, Palestine, so I was fortunate to have the opportunity to travel to Palestine and extend my trip beyond the meetings to spend a month here on the CPT Palestine team to get an idea of how we do our work here.

I asked a lot of questions my first week here. My teammates were getting a little frustrated I think. Not because I was asking questions though, but because there are no answers.

Hebron is a hard place to wrap your head around. It's a historical place; Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah are all buried here and they are the forefathers for Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Jews and Muslims used to live in Hebron together and in peace.

Now, because of colonization and conflict, Palestinians live under constant militarization in Hebron. There are hundreds of Israeli soldiers who control the city in order to protect the Jewish settlers who have returned (against the will of the original Jewish families from Hebron) and live in four illegal settlements within the city.

Palestinians must pass through several checkpoints daily to get to work, school, or just to do some errands. The main street through Hebron, Shuhada Street, is closed to Palestinians, blocked off by large cement blockades

and barbed wire. Palestinians, especially young men, are constantly being stopped in the streets and forced to stand with their hands up against the wall, while the soldiers search their bodies. Sometimes, when the soldiers ask for their ID cards, they are told to throw it on the ground towards the soldier so he doesn't come too close.

I have started to play soccer with some of the kids in my neighbourhood. They used to have a playground, but the Israelis took it over and turned it into a parking lot. So we play in the street outside the military base. Yesterday while we were playing, I looked up to see that half the boys had disappeared. When I turned my head there were six soldiers coming towards us. I then realized the boys had escaped up through the tunnels of the Old City, afraid to be detained by the soldiers. They don't need a reason to do body searches, ID checks, or arrests; they call it "preventative measures."

I talked with a soldier the other day. He said the military presence is necessary to ensure security in the city. But there are too many holes in that story. The checkpoints do not secure an area of the city; it is possible to avoid them by taking alternative routes. It turns a 5-minute walk into an hour walk, but if that means the kindergarten teacher doesn't have to subject herself to the humiliation of the checkpoint, she walks for an hour to school. The arbitrary detainments in the street are just that—arbitrary, and often directed at children, which is illegal under international law. The secu-

rity threats that I have witnessed in my time here have come from the Jewish settlers who throw garbage, rocks, water, and bleach down onto the Palestinians in the marketplace, and verbally and physically attack Palestinians as they peacefully protest for their right to the land. In these cases, the settlers received no repercussions for their actions, and the soldiers arrested four Palestinians.

What is masked as security is actually a system of apartheid, where the Palestinian people resist a psychological and physical torture of occupation as they continue to live out their right to be recognized as a people and a country.

I will definitely leave here with more questions than answers, but I will continue to ask the unanswerable questions, refusing to normalize the situation here until Palestine is free.

Theatre of the Beat presents

Yellow Bellies

A historical drama with music, highlighting the experiences and public response to Mennonite Conscientious Objectors during WWII.

at **Floradale Mennonite Church**

Sat. June 17, 2017

At 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Tickets \$20 (\$10 for students) available at the door

Hosted by Floradale Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario

Proceeds will go to establish a permanent plaque to mark the location of the Montreal River CO camp north of Sault Ste. Marie.

Collective repertoire: A new hymnal and heart songs

By Nichelle Bauman

In January, February and March, I led three discussion classes on the topic of collective repertoire and music in the church. This idea of collective repertoire is how we as a congregation, a denomination, and as Christians have a shared musical vocabulary. There are songs that we sing that have become a part of us, and are deeply meaningful to us in our shared life together. This is illustrated well at weddings and funerals, when people come together to sing songs that express what sometimes cannot be expressed through mere words. Joining our voices together in song is a very powerful thing. Some songs that would be a part of our Christian collective repertoire include “Amazing Grace,” “When Peace Like a River” and “Great is Thy Faithfulness,” because they cross the boundaries of generations and denominations.

Our congregation here at Floradale has a collective repertoire that is unique from other churches, even within the Mennonite denomination. Each church is shaped by the culture, language and individuals that make it up. Several years ago, a Bi-national Worship Council was formed, and Mennonite congregations from both Canada and the U.S. participated in an eight-month long survey that asked what songs were sung during worship, and which songs were “heart songs.” The findings were interesting: Mennonites sing a wide variety of music throughout the year, but tend to sing Christmas favourites in December. The most-sung song



across the churches was found to be STS#44 “The Love of God.” Not surprisingly, some other top songs included WB#307 “Will you let me be your servant,” WB#118 “Praise God from whom all blessings flow” and “Great is thy faithfulness.”

As a part of our discussion, we talked about what songs we consider to be in our repertoire here at Floradale: WB#318 “Joy to the World,” WB#226 “You are salt for the earth”, WB#526 “In the rifted rock I’m resting,” WB#12 “Come, let us all unite to sing,” WB#420 “Heart with loving heart united,” WB#1 “What is this place,” STJ#49 “Rain Down,” STJ#13 “My soul is filled with joy,” STJ#27 “God of the Bible,” STS#121 “Nothing is lost on the breath of God,” WB#26 “Holy Spirit, come with power,” STJ#32 “If you believe and I believe,” WB#580 “My life flows on”....

Notice that some of these songs are from the newer hymnal supplements. This illustrates the fluidity of our collective repertoire. Times change. People change. And so will the songs we sing a lot and hold dear, to a certain extent. Some songs have “staying power” and are sung for generations. Some only get sung once or twice and we tend not to sing them again.

Traditionally, our denominational hymnal is the source of the music for our repertoire. I would say that this is

primarily the case at Floradale, with a few exceptions. “How Great Thou Art” and “Bind us together” are two songs that get sung regularly and aren’t included in any of our current hymnals. The process has begun to make a new hymnal, to be available in 2020. According to <http://hymnalproject606.com>, “Of the 57 songs sung at Mennonite World Conference in 2015, 60% were new” (not in any of the three current Herald Press hymnals).

I love our current blue hymnal. It contains the songs I was raised on, the songs through which I was taught to sing in 4-part harmony, songs that I have sung at weddings, funerals and some very meaningful worship services. So as much as I’m excited to see what the new hymnal collection includes, I will definitely be hesitant to set aside the blue book.

What are your thoughts on a new hymnal? Do you remember transitioning from the red hymnal to the blue one? Should Floradale consider purchasing the new ones when they are available?

As a part of creating the new hymnal, the committee is asking for feedback. You can go to <http://hymnalproject606.com> and click on the “Name your favourite song” button. Or you contact me (phone, email, in person) with your hopes for the new hymnal, and your opinion on songs that have impacted your faith, and I will be sure to include your responses when I fill out the longer survey intended for song leaders.

One of my heart songs is WB#546 “Guide my feet.” I’ve loved this song as long as I can

remember, but it took on special meaning for me when Reuben was born. After we received his diagnosis, the future seemed uncertain, but trusting in God's love, guidance and provision gave me such comfort. So I sang "Guide my feet" a lot, as a

comfort to myself, a prayer to God and a lullaby to Reuben.

We've got so many great songs in the hymnals, and I would love to hear which are most meaningful to you. For a series of Sundays, I'd like to feature people's "heart songs," with a short description of why the song

is meaningful for you in your faith walk.

So...What are your heart songs?

Let me know in person, by phone, email or drop a note in my church mailbox.

Nichelle Bauman

Celebrate Recovery

By Nancy Mann

I wonder what it is like, as a Christian, to feel that some area of your life is "out of control?"

The apostle Paul once wrote, "I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate." (Romans 5:15). I think that this must be what it is like to struggle with an addiction.

Understandably, people struggling with addictions may be uncomfortable sharing these struggles openly in the church, but we do want to provide a place where people can feel supported in face the difficulties that they are experiencing. This was the impetus for the formation of a group to help Christians battle addictions. The group is called *Celebrate Recovery*.

Celebrate Recovery began as an initiative of Saddleback Church in California in 1996. It now operates worldwide with 79 groups in Canada and two locations in the Waterloo Region. While there are other social support services which help people who struggle with addictions, this group has a specifically Christian focus. According to the web-site, *Celebrate Recovery* is a Christ-centered recovery program where people come to find hope, healing

and freedom from all types of hurts, habits and hang-ups. Ken Taylor, the lead pastor at Creekside Church in Waterloo, says "I would not want to pastor a church which did not have access to a Celebrate Recovery Group, either at that church or at a church nearby." (from the Creekside Church Celebrate Recovery Website).

I learned about *Celebrate Recovery* from my friend, whom I'll call Ben. I have been friends with Ben for almost 40 years, although sometimes we have been out of touch for long periods. Recently, Ben shared with me his personal struggle with an addiction. When this struggle cost him his job, Ben reached out to *Celebrate Recovery*. He attends their weekly meetings for support and encouragement in dealing with his addiction. On March 16, I accepted his invitation to attend a *Celebrate Recovery* meeting.

The meeting began at Lincoln Road Chapel at 7 pm. About 50 people gathered for opening worship. Each week the service includes a testimony or a lesson. "Kelly" shared her struggles with alcohol as a teenager and then as a young mother. I was deeply moved by her story. After the worship time, we divided into

small groups for sharing and prayer.

As a visitor, I was invited to attend Recovery 101, where I learned more about the program. In small groups, people are encouraged to be honest about their real struggles, and reminded that they will not be judged, but instead, people will pray with them and encourage them. The need for confidentiality is strongly emphasized. After the small group meetings, there is an open time of visiting as light refreshments are served.

My friend Ben has been attending *Celebrate Recovery* for several years now. He has shared with me how much support and encouragement he receives from this group. Sometimes we don't know how much a person we know is really struggling. It is my prayer that *Celebrate Recovery* can be a valuable pathway for people who struggle with any type of addiction, hurt, or habit that impedes healthy living. Local groups meet weekly at Lincoln Road Chapel and Creekside Church. I give thanks for the caring people who reach out, through this ministry, in the name of Christ.

~ Nancy Mann

A Learning Tour to Guatemala

By Eleanor Buehler

About two months ago there was a notice in the bulletin about a MCC Learning tour to Guatemala. The goals of the trip were: to hear the stories; meet the people; participate in the rich culture; and witness the efforts of Guatemalans who are striving for positive change; observe the way that MCC accompanies Guatemalans and their efforts to both honour their past and empower their communities to thrive in a continuously shifting post-war society.

As we read about this, Zenas and I both felt this was something we wanted to experience. We returned home on March 25, both feeling that the goals of the tour had been met. We were challenged and blessed by our time in Guatemala.

So how do we condense all we learned and experienced into this report?

Well the first thing that comes to mind is the contrasts. One very stark contrast was the



living conditions. First we visited the city dump; it spreads out over a vast area and we viewed it from way up on a hill. Smoke rose up and there was the smell of rotten garbage. We could see people wandering through this ugly mess, trying to find things to sal-

vage. This was their only way of survival.

The contrast came at our next stop on the edge of Guatemala City, past deep ravines where the poorest residents live in thousands of cinderblock huts roofed with plastic sheets and powered by black electrical cables strung from nearby lampposts. Eleven km south of the city, the road comes to a set of towering white stucco walls and a pair of cast iron gates that open onto “Cayla



City.” Here there are high-end boutiques, cafés where residents sip cappuccinos and lattes under red umbrellas. The cheapest apartments cost about 70 times the average Guatemalans yearly wage.

Everything is clean, bright and beautiful. It is promoted as a safe haven in a troubled country.

Another part of the learning was about how MCC is walking alongside the Guatemalans through helping them establish Co-operatives. We visited several cooperatives and learned how MCC is involved in helping them get started and continues to walk with them today. The two that we will share about are La Vega Volcan and ANADESA.



As we drove on the back of a truck on a bumpy, winding road up about 2400 metres (8000 feet) above sea level, we could view some of the most spectacular scenery in Guatemala.

In this mountain realm, 90 percent of families earn less than \$2 US per day and 45 percent live in extreme poverty. Food security remains elusive to the residents of this mountain realm. A child malnutrition rate of 43 percent stalks children under the age of five. In



addition, there is little or no viable employment, so the men have been leaving the countryside seeking work which leaves families broken up. MCC has been working with the community of La Vega de Volcan which now serves as a model to others. Along with its 150 families, this community has embraced an initiative to become a community-based tourism destination. Interestingly, La Vega does not view its tourism project as economic development but rather as



The work continues in the shadow of the Tacana volcano. All meetings of the cooperative begin and end with the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Another cooperative we visited is ANADESA. Between 1980 and 1990, Panabaj suffered from the 36-year long Guatemalan armed conflict when the Guatemalan military, unwanted and uninvited, occupied the community for ten years. In 1990, the townspeople of Santiago Atilán decided to reclaim their

school were destroyed. After the storm MCC came to help with disaster relief. During that time, a group of twenty families banded together to learn how to make beaded jewelry in order to support themselves.

MCC has supplied volunteers to help with the projects that ANADESA wanted to use in reaching out to the communities of Panabaj, Tzanchaj, and Chukmuk. They have an afterschool children's program that reinforces reading, writing and mathematics, as well as coordinates art and recreation activities.

The women and their families also open their homes for "Home Stays," providing housing and food for groups who visit the lake. We had the very memorable opportunity of being billeted in one of these. Since I could communicate somewhat brokenly in Spanish, with our hostess, it was a wonderful opportunity to feel more connected with them. We

"human development." Together, they own their distinct, native culture and spectacular, natural environment.

Originally, the main focus of the La Vega cooperative was on the production of trout as an income generation project. Trout, raised in the fresh, frigid waters tumbling through the community, are sold to restaurants and provide food security for La Vega. The vision to broaden the trout project to include tourism evolved due to the community's experience with MCC's "Connecting Peoples" tour groups. Visitors affirmed the community—its beauty, its peacefulness, its amazing location in the shadow of the Tacana volcano—and paid for their visit.

As the La Vega cooperative continues to develop its tourism venture, they reflect on the biblical stories and what they mean for their community. They reflect on the Exodus story and hope for their own promised land. The story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand also provides encouragement that a community sharing its bread and fish, trout in this case, can meet its needs and find its own miracle. Juan Pablo Morales, a program coordinator in the highlands, says, "God is the centre of each one of our lives and the center of our organization."



rights from the violent occupiers and peacefully demanded that the army vacate the premises immediately and without condition. As a result, 13 people were assassinated in the cantón of Panabaj. In that place today stands the Parque de la Paz, constructed in order to commemorate the 13 people who died that day.

Then shocking tragedy again struck this place. Early in the morning of Oct. 5, 2005, after days of rain from Hurricane Stan, mudslides roiling with boulders and trees crashed into the small town of Panabaj. Residents rushed to rescue neighbours, but around 300 people were killed and many homes and buildings including the



will never forget her big smiles and concern for us.

There are many, many other memories we would love to share but space does not permit. Please feel free to ask us questions about our trip.

In closing we will say we are extremely thankful that we went on this MCC Learning Tour in Guatemala.

Women's breakfast with Turkish newcomers

By Barb Draper

At the women's breakfast held at the church on March 18, we enjoyed the benefits of a Turkish cook. Some Turkish newcomer women joined us for breakfast while some of the men did most of the cooking and clean-up.

Leon Kehl explained why these Turkish people have arrived in Canada looking for refuge. Many of them are part of the Hismet movement, a group of Muslims who believe that living for God (Allah) means serving others. Many of them are teachers and professors and the Hismet movement has established 2,300 educational facilities around the world. All of the schools in Turkey have been closed by the government.

In Turkey, the state religion is Islam and the Imams are paid by the state. The members of Hismet, who in the past served in many government positions, refused to go along with some of the Turkish government's new initiatives and last summer they were suddenly declared enemies of the state and labeled as terrorists. Many were arrested, some have been tortured.

Some of these educated people managed to flee the country, sometimes leaving their families behind. For some of them, if the government of Turkey knew they were in Canada, they would persecute the families.

Leon has many friends in the Hismet movement and has been hosted by these people in Turkey. The local chapter of the Intercultural Dialogue Institute (at the Centre for Peace Advancement at Conrad Grebel University College)



Donations at the women's breakfast went toward helping the families still caught in Turkey.

has Turkish connections and so this organization has been assisting Turkish refugees who have made it to Waterloo. The president of the IDI is a friend of Leon's and so it was natural that Leon has also been involved in trying to help those who have needed to leave everything behind and flee for their lives.

The two men living with Lester and Wanda Kehl were able to fly to the United States and then walked across the border to apply for refugee status in Canada. One is a journalist, the other was a physics teacher and principal. Like other Turkish refugees they are very worried about their families who remain in Turkey. Those who fled believe there are about 20,000 people still hiding in Turkey.

A few of the women talked about their experiences. One woman, who taught phys ed, especially basketball, at a Hismet school now lives in Kitchener with her husband and two young sons. She said when they came they didn't know anyone, but she has been touched by the kindness of their

neighbours who gave them a TV to help them learn English and toys for the children. Although she had been perfectly composed as she talked to us, after she sat down she burst into tears.

One of the women who works at the IDI and has lived in Canada for 14 years explained that these women, who were teachers and doctors and technical workers, have suffered three layers of trauma. They need to deal with what they saw and what happened, they need to face the question of what they are going to do next and they are also dealing with what is happening to their friends and families who were not fortunate enough to get out of Turkey.

We heard one story from the husband because the wife said she would not be able to describe her story without crying. Her husband said that they lived in Ankara where he was a professor of foreign languages at a Hismet institution. When they heard something was happening outside, they looked out the window and saw a mob coming toward the building.

They had knives and sticks and were shouting, “Kill them!”

There were three of them in the building at the time and they tried to leave through the back door. The husband slipped out the door, trying to get to his car. He joined the crowds, pretending to be one of them and shouting with them.

“They were like hungry wolves, wanting to kill someone with knives and sticks,” he said, explaining that it took at least an hour to get his car back to the door. His wife, who later said she

still has nightmares, quietly said, “I was sure he was dead.”

A woman named Leyla also had a powerful story. She and her husband had worked in Hismet schools in Azerbaijan and Sudan before going to Pakistan where she served as the principal of a preschool. One day, not that many weeks ago, they were informed that their Visas were being revoked and they had three days to get out of Pakistan.

“It was very hard; it’s still hurting,” she said. “How do I explain, as a principal, that I’ve

been branded as a terrorist?” She and her husband and son were lucky to be able to get to Canada, but she worries about her son who is a student in Turkey. “Anything could happen to him,” she said.

In spite of the pain and trauma experienced by these newcomers to Canada, they expressed appreciation for the welcome and understanding they have received.

Refugee fundraiser lunch

By Barb Draper

A fundraiser lunch on Sunday, March 26 raised about \$1,700 to be divided between MCC Ontario’s refugee program and Intercultural Dialogue Institute (IDI), a local organization that has been helping the 40 or so families that have come to Waterloo Region as refugees from Turkey.

Engin Sezen, the executive director of the Waterloo chapter of IDI explained that the refugees fleeing Turkey are well educated and well travelled. “These newcomers will find their way,” he said, “We need to help them now in Kitchener-Waterloo, not necessarily financially, but emotionally and socially.”

Leon Kehl is a longtime friend of Engin which explains the connection between these Turkish refugees and Floradale Mennonite Church. Leon explained that when he travelled to Turkey he received such generous hospitality that he has felt compelled to do what he can to help them now.

Engin explained that the Muslim President of Turkey is trying to make the country more Islamist—promoting the Islam religion. Those who objected to having Islam used as a political tool have been persecuted and tortured. Those who managed to escape are the lucky ones.

The K-W area has a good reputation for welcoming refugees said Engin, adding, “The world needs more Canadas, and Canada needs more KWs,



The food for the fundraiser lunch was prepared by our local Turkish cook.

and KW needs more Mennonites, and the Mennonites need more Leons!”

Moses Moini from MCC Ontario also spoke, saying MCC Ontario helped 637 refugees settle in 2016. He expressed appreciation for Floradale’s support through the Floradale Generosity Fund which has offered \$60,000 in matching grants over several years.

Lunch was prepared by the Turkish cook who lives in Floradale and the beef was tender and delicious. I asked the Turkish couple sitting at our table what spices they think he used. They weren’t sure, but when the cook came around and chatted with them, they asked him and then translated into English, saying that his special ingredient is “love.”

Engagements:



Melissa Bauman, daughter of Brent and Rita Bauman is engaged to Kyle Diniz. They will be married August 19, 2017.



Julia Freeman, daughter of Willis and Eileen Freeman is engaged to Nathan Martin. They plan to be married at Floradale Mennonite Church on Sat. Oct. 2017. Nathan is the son of Terry and Arlene Martin of Elmira.

Birth:

Sadie Leigh Bauman was born on March 27, 2017, a daughter to Eddie and Kaleigh Bauman.



Irene Freeman will celebrate her 90th birthday on May 22, 2017. Congratulations!



We had breakfast and worship in the fellowship hall on March 5. During worship, a drama by Roy Draper and Peter Ellis asked questions about the meaning of temptation. In table groups we were asked to think about what we are tempted by.



At Hopping Thursday the children made individual arks with lots of creative animals.



On April 21, the children from Hopping Thursday performed "Who Really Built the Ark?" Here Noah, his wife, and the animals are ready to set sail.