

## Easter Sunday

Easter fell on April 1 this year. Thanks to the worship committee for planning a lovely service that included lots of drama, music and something special for the children's story. The choir was a special event, partly because it was directed by Kim Rempel and accompanied by Nichelle Bauman. It was a new experience to work with Kim as a director and it was good to discover that her expertise and confidence allowed the choir to do well. Thank you also to Nichelle who has an amazing gift for composing her own accompaniment, but who finds it challenging to play someone else's accompaniment as it appears on the page. Thank you Nichelle for stretching yourself; you did an amazing job!



*Above: With leadership from Nichelle Bauman and Kim Rempel, a choir sang on Easter Sunday morning.*

*Below: James and Susan Martin brought in one of their lambs for the children's story.*



*Above: Nancy Mann played the role of a woman at the tomb as read by Mary Frey Martin.*

*Left: Kim Rempel led the choir with expertise and confidence.*



# Refugee sponsorship consideration

By Barb Draper

On Sunday, April 8, during the Christian Education time, Leon introduced Mandy Witmer, the chair of the refugee committee of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, and Ebrahim, a Syrian newcomer to Canada to help us consider sponsoring another refugee family.

Ebrahim is trained as a lawyer and studied law in England and is now studying law in Toronto. Because of the war in Syria, he fled to Lebanon in 2012. His eight years in Lebanon were very difficult. There are so many Syrian refugees in Lebanon that they make up 25% of the population there, but the Lebanese are not friendly toward Syrians because of earlier conflicts between the two countries. It is not legal for Syrians to be employed, but living expenses are high.

Ebrahim was lucky enough to come to Canada and start a new life. Meanwhile, his roommate in Lebanon was desperate enough to try fleeing to Europe. He was smuggled to Greece in an overcrowded boat, but when he made it to Macedonia he was put in a refugee camp that resembled a prison. After three months he was able to contact Ebrahim who helped him get released. But the journey to Hungary and then to western Europe included more imprisonment due to a lack of proper papers. After a year in flight he finally made it to Sweden. Ebrahim felt fortunate to be accepted as a refugee to Canada, but only a fraction of those wanting to come are able to.

The family under consideration is a family with two boys aged 4 and 6. The father was a bank manager from western Syria who fled from his home town because he was getting pressure

from the militia to transfer \$4 million to a bank in Lebanon, a move that is illegal. When he refused he was threatened and beaten. In 2016, after more threats, he gathered his family and fled to Lebanon.

The family is Maronite Christian, a minority group within the Orthodox Church. The father is a cousin to Ebrahim's father. The mother was a business advisor and both speak English.

There is no guarantee that this sponsorship will work out. This is a named sponsorship for which MCC has only 100 slots. Leon believes that this family has connections in our area and will hopefully adjust to life in Canada well. Our financial commitment could be around \$12,500.

Church Council asked for the congregation to respond to this request by April 15 since the application needs to go in by April 30, 2018.

## MCC Meat Canning at the produce auction

A fundraiser breakfast was held at Calvary United Church in St. Jacobs again on March 17, 2018. The canning committee reported that last year was a very successful season with 620,000 cans processed in North America; 31,048 of those were from the Elmira project.

The speaker at the breakfast was Stephanie Heide, a participant of the SALT (Serving and Learning Together), who is from Aylmer, Ont. She spent the 2016-2017 year in Cambodia, teaching English to University students in Phnom Penh. Probably her greatest learning experience was living with a host family as they invited her to join the family including visiting their home village and celebrating special occasions by sitting on the floor to eat. She found the family very hospitable.

In the week of April 23-27, chicken will be processed at the Elmira location. Once again the committee organized the sale of beef and

pork in order to pay for the chicken. This year the men travelling with the canner are Carsten Wiebe from Paraguay, Michael Doerksen from Paraguay and Lucas Hiebert from Kansas. This year the canner will travel to Leamington after leaving Elmira for the final week of meat canning for the 2017-2018 year.



# Farewell to Gary Knarr

On February 25, our congregation said farewell to Gary Knarr who served as our interim pastor since September 2016. Christine Knarr said her farewell the previous Sunday since she had a commitment on Feb. 25. As well as offering everyone a little treat as they left the church, she said some very kind words, assuring us that Floradale is a friendly congregation.

As part of the worship service on Feb. 25, Gary preached a farewell sermon and did the children's story one last time. Among the gifts offered to him were gift certificates for Drayton Entertainment and a restaurant, prayer shawls and a handmade bowl by Wanda Kehl. The church leaders then prayed for Gary and his ongoing ministry as he moves to Preston Mennonite Church to be interim pastor there.

The catering committee provided meal of ham and scalloped after church, complete with lots of cake.

Many special thanks to Gary Knarr who was willing to be flexible and serve our needs. We benefited greatly from his ministry as we prepared for a new pastor.



*We became quite accustomed to seeing Gary Knarr behind the pulpit.*



*Among the gifts given to Gary Knarr was a pottery bowl, made by Wanda Kehl.*



*The farewell lunch included a ham dinner prepared by the catering committee, and a special cake.*



*Another gift was a prayer shawl. Church leaders laid their hands on Gary and asked God's blessing for his future ministry.*



# Family Ties Through Thick and Thin: The story of a family losing the older generation



Cast members back row (from left): Willis Freeman, Julia Bowman, Shirley Redekop, Steve Shoemaker, Roy Draper, Rita Bauman, Steve (Ort) Bauman. Front row: Kaitlyn Boertien, Sherri Martin-Carman, Barb Draper, Mary Frey Martin, Joan Martin, Ashley Albrecht.

## An important message

By Joan Martin

I was involved with the play as an actor. I so enjoy getting into a character and giving it all I've got. It is a wonderful way of getting to know other people that I normally don't associate with.

Thanks again to a well-written play by Barb we were able to get the message out to families of the importance of communication and understanding as their parents age and pass on. I heard a lot of positive remarks about the play.

## Working together is rewarding

By Steve (Ort) Bauman

I remember when it was announced in church that they are doing another play and please contact Rita or Barb if interested. I was mulling it over when Rita tapped me on the shoulder a Sunday or two later and asked me if I would take a part. I said I would as long as it was a super-small part. I realized from previous plays that my ability to memorize lines had not gotten better over time.

We started practicing in February and I knew from previous plays it would not take long for April to roll around.

Even though I was hesitant to make the commitment at first, I knew that it would be a good time

being with other members of the play. It's always rewarding doing something like this—working alongside people you may not usually be with.

I want to thank everyone that was involved with the play and also those that prepared and served food. The money raised will be of great benefit to those that need it.



Feeding 300 people takes a lot of pies!



The roast beef for the dinners was slowly cooked in roaster ovens.

## Reflections on the play experience

By Rita Bauman

My first thought of the play goes to the dress rehearsal when Mary and Joan and I were walking up the stairs to the sanctuary. Mary (playing the part of Lisa) and Joan (playing Aunt Lillian) were both dressed in costume and the thought of their very strong funny characters made me laugh that night! Here are these two women who have been in many church plays, are once again sharing their talents for a fundraiser dinner theater! If you would meet Lisa and Lillian on the street you would wonder what kind of women are they!

So a cast of 12 people and one fantastic prompter (Kaitlyn) met since February, learning lines and being patient with each other. There were lots of laughs and some frustration, but through it all Barb's play came to life!

This play is about family and losing a parent—something we all have to go through in our lives. When I think of my four siblings, our outcome didn't work out as well as the Snyder family in the play. Some of my siblings are still not talking to each other after 11 years since my Dad passed away. Life is too short to stay mad at a family member. As pastor Cressman said, "There's no one left to tie all of you together, except yourselves." So cherish your brothers and sisters and hold on tight. Those words, "I am sorry," could change your life forever.

Thanks to all the people who were so willing to help me with all the behind-the-set things: sell-

ing tickets, building a set, decorating, the welcome crew, prelude music, ushers and sound system guys.

To the catering committee that spent many hours with a lot of extra help making two wonderful meals, "Thank you!" It's been a good "community building" project that brought us together during this transition time at Floradale!

Thank you Barb!!



Ashley (right) gets Rita ready to go on stage.

## Reflections on the play

By Ashley Albrecht

I played the role of Penny, (Lisa's daughter) as well as helped with make-up.

When Barb mentioned doing a play, it sounded like fun to me, but I wasn't completely sold yet. I prayed about it. Barb approached me at church about something else a few weekends later (which it's not often that we cross paths). As soon as she did that, I felt like it was God saying, "Okay Ashley, she is right in front of you, here is your chance to let Barb know you want to be a part of the play." Sure enough, I ended up having a small part in the play!

I would definitely be willing to do this again. It was something new for me, and a little out of my comfort zone, but I'm happy I pushed myself. It was great getting to know people on a more personal level as well.

## Thoughts about the play

By Mary Frey Martin

The reason I acted in our recent play is that I was asked to. I hadn't been at all sure I wanted to do it, but in the end, it's been fun to put another play on at Floradale. It takes a real community effort to pull it off, and it's been great getting to know different people in our church in new ways. It was fun to work with Shirley Redekop and Sherri Martin-Carman again. Many kudos go to Rita Bauman, who calmly did so much of the production work.

I had a difficult time with my character, as at first I thought she was just a dim drama queen. I wondered how I could say "my soul is in mourning!" So ridiculous! But I became endeared to the character of Lisa, so very self-absorbed and immature; a daddy's girl to the hilt, yet someone who loved deeply in her own way. She too is part of the family. Memories are very important to her, and the family has to work through all the differing personalities as they face the challenges of dealing with losing their father.

In the end, they want to stay together because they all loved their father, and each other, even as they have their conflicts. This may be somewhat unrealistic, as we all know of families who have been severed apart for various reasons. Hurt between family members can go very deep.

I ended up having fun finding my costumes and jewelry at various thrift stores, getting my hot pink manicure on the day of our first performance, putting on my bleached blonde wig (compliments of Nancy Martin's daughter Shelley of Arts Abound) and figuring out if I put lots of eye drops in my eyes and sniffed some water just before going on

stage, I could make it seem I was crying.

The nerves one feels before going on stage is something I never get used to; there can be a sense of “I can’t remember anything,” just before going onstage.

I did worry that perhaps some would find the play too difficult to deal with, and perhaps there were some lines that offended, but it did seem to be enjoyed by the audience.

The intent was to encourage thinking, discussion, and of course, to entertain.



*Julia is a good organizer. One of her roles was curling the hair on the wig worn by Shirley Redekop.*



## Play a good connecting event in the church

*By Kaitlyn Boertien*

I was involved in the play doing make-up as well as prompting lines for the play.

I got involved because it sounded like a fun way to get more involved with the church and to connect with members that I wouldn't normally have a lot of contact with.

I was lucky enough to not have challenges with my role in the play. I just had a lot of fun!

I From working with this group of wonderful people, I learned that stepping out of your comfort zone and interacting with different groups from the church brings you closer to the church family as a whole.

From the play, I learned the importance of planning ahead and having those difficult conversations about the future as well as focusing on what is most important in this life we are living.

I understood the message of the play to be that material things are not what we should focus on. Family and relationships are most important.

I would be willing to work with the play again, yes. Even though it was time consuming, I found it very rewarding to be a part of the production.

*Kaitlyn served as our prompter. We hid her behind the piano where she could mostly see the stage. By our final rehearsal we were ad libbing when we were confused about whose turn it was to say their line, but she was very essential during the other performances to get us back on track when we lost our way.*

## We need to have end-of-life conversations

*By Sherri Martin-Carman*

I was part of the play “Family Ties through Thick and Thin” playing the role of Anna, the youngest daughter in the family. I joined the cast a bit later than the others, so I was a bit nervous about learning all of my lines on time, but everything came together as hoped.

My decision to participate in the play was actually based on a number of factors: first, I was looking for a new but relatively short-term change in my schedule to help me transition some of my energy, following an emotionally challenging experience. I needed something that would divert my focus in a positive way, and being part of this play has served that purpose well.

Secondly, knowing that this commitment would pull me away from home responsibilities for rehearsals and performances, I accepted the role with my family’s encouragement and blessing. My husband and sons each took turns helping me rehearse my lines—they became so familiar with the play, I was afraid that Caleb might blurt out someone’s lines during a performance if they were struggling to find the right words!! (Thankfully he didn’t 😊) It was a bonding time as we rehearsed together at home or in the car—and it was especially funny listening to Caleb’s version of dramatic Lisa or Aunt Lillian!

Thirdly, I accepted a role to give myself a creative outlet which can often be overlooked when life is full of activity. Being creative in the arts is energizing to me, and it’s a form of self-care, but it can easily be set aside for more *important* tasks. For this short season, my family affirmed me to do something that was for me, as they

recognized that I do many things to take care of the family. For this, I was grateful.

Finally, my decision to participate in *Family Ties through Thick and Thin* was because I was deeply drawn to the theme of this play, which I encounter regularly in my chaplaincy work in a Long-Term Care/Retirement setting. Advance care conversations among family and close friends in order to know what are the person's values and wishes are so vital—but they are typically not happening early enough, and so families face tough decisions they are not ready to address when in an emotional crisis.

These conversations need to go deeper than, "I don't want to be kept alive by a machine" because our medical science has come up with so many treatments and options for prolonging life that go beyond many people's imaginations. Having conversations with doctors about potential medical scenarios, in order to prompt conversations with our Substitute Decision Makers, can give those we trust the information they need to make decisions in the event that we are inca-

pacitated or unable to make those decisions for ourselves.

For more information about where to start, I encourage you to take advantage of wonderful materials through Hospice Waterloo Region: [www.hospicewaterloo.ca/programs/advance-care-planning](http://www.hospicewaterloo.ca/programs/advance-care-planning).

Another key message was about estate planning and families' responses to a will after a loved one has died. Decisions about the legacy we leave after we are gone are very personal. Hopefully our estate plans will reflect the values that were most important to us during our lives, so they won't be a surprise to our family or beneficiaries. It's a time that can be fraught with high emotions and grief, but hopefully also one that can bring a family toward working together, in the spirit and legacy of our loved ones wishes. As Pastor Cressman said in the play, "I only wish all families could come to agreement." While this might seem like a dream to some, it can be a very gratifying experience when families are able to work together in honour of a loved one, despite the challenges and emotions that are also a reality.

## Response to the play

*By Roy Draper*

When you are married to someone who takes on literary projects such as writing plays for the good folks at Floradale to perform, you often end up being involved somehow—whether in front of or behind the spotlights. When Barbara asked me to take on the role of Mike I was a bit unsure because of the size of the part and the many lines I would need to learn; I'm not getting any younger and neither is my memory!

However, I did agree, and I found that the role was much more challenging than any I had previously taken on, but it was also very satisfying somehow—and not just because I got to yell at my character's sisters. It was interesting to experiment and gradually learn how my character should show anger and sadness both verbally and physically, and I thought that the audience reactions helped us refine our roles. Along the way most of us needed a little help from our ace prompter, Kaitlyn, and sometimes our castmates helped us through tricky situations when the lines didn't flow the way they should have.

Things I learned: we have some talented and dedicated people—of all ages—at Floradale, as people devoted many evenings to be at practice. I was humbled by the patience of the cast as I made mistakes and tried to remember where to move on stage—and when. Kaitlyn and Ashley also did double duty as actresses and make-up artists.

Rita was buzzing around the set at high speed as she combined her on-stage role and also did a lot of work organizing the set, props, etc. (She also finally "taste-tested" the chocolate on-stage during the final performance!) Lorne worked with Rick Cressman to get the stage lights working and adjusted.



*Lisa (played by Mary Frey Martin) expresses her exhaustion while Anna (played by Sherri Martin Carman) tells Aunt Lillian (played by Joan Martin) why she can't just take things from Ed Snyder's house. Granddaughters played by Julia Bowman, Shirley Redekop and Ashley Albrecht smile at Aunt Lillian's antics.*

I also learned to be thankful that my two families did not experience the conflicts that the family did in the play. I'm starting to think about writing clear instructions to be used by my family survivors when my time on earth is done.

I thought the play attempted to communicate that saying goodbye to older members of our families can be stressful, as we lose those around whom family life may centre. What happens when the older generation is gone? How do we hold together as families? The comments—sometimes humorous—of playgoers seemed to indicate that the message struck home.

I think I'd do something like this again, but it's not something to take on without thinking about it first. It's a commitment of two evenings per week for rehearsals, plus much more time at home spent practicing and memorizing lines.



*Aunt Lillian (played by Joan Martin) shows some old family pictures to her brother's grandchildren played by Julia Bowman, Ashley Albrecht and Shirley Redekop.*

## Putting on a play is scary

By Barb Draper

Writing a play and then performing it is a bit scary. By the time all the rehearsals are done, it feels boring and almost trite, so I never know how an audience will respond. The first one was the scariest one, but when it went over okay, I had the courage to try it again.

Putting on *Family Ties Through Thick and Thin* was also a scary experience because I couldn't just hand it over to Eleanor Buehler to direct. With Rita Bauman at my side and Shirley Redekop agreeing to help direct, it felt as though we might be able to pull it off.

When I started writing this play, I thought it was going to be about dealing with the process of saying good-bye to someone from the older generation. Roy and I lost his mother last summer and so it probably was on my mind somewhat. But in the end the play was just as much about what happens after the death. Fortunately, neither my nor Roy's family had any of the problems of the Snyder family in the play.

I never have a good sense of what will touch the audience. Someone told me that he found it hard to listen to the description of how the Snyder family was together around Ed's deathbed because he wasn't able to be there for his mother. I'm often surprised what touches people; when I write I'm often thinking about the logistics of staging.

The weather was quite disappointing again. For the last play in 2013, it was the dinner crew that had the anxiety as the power went off due to an ice storm. We never expected we would have another ice storm to contend with. Because the dinner was cooking on Saturday we decided the show must go on. We had a respectable crowd of a little more than 150 that night, but often the Saturday night show has the largest attendance. It was a little disconcerting that there was no audience in the front row.

Postponing the Sunday matinee for a week was hard at first. I thought it was a miracle that the cast and crew was able to put it on the following Sunday afternoon. We had another good audience on April 22 which made it well worthwhile to do a postponed performance. I decided that the storms are just there to

see if we can persevere, it's not a message that we shouldn't be doing this.

Telling a story through a stage-play is fun, although the rehearsals are a lot of work. I was so pleased with the commitment of all the actors to be there for rehearsal as much as possible. We didn't need to chastise anyone for not working at memorization. Mary Frey Martin and Steve Shoemaker had their lines learned well ahead of schedule and they were an example for the rest of us.

I made myself cards with all my cues written on them, and that made memorizing easier. So if you saw me walking the streets of Elmira muttering to myself, that's what I was doing. I find I can memorize better if my feet are moving.

The hardest part of this play was at the beginning of rehearsals, trying to help people know where and when to move and how to express their lines. It was wonderful to see the actors change their lines to make them more comfortable and sometimes to add humour. Although it was one more complication to deal with, the individual mics loaned to us by Shelley from Arts Abound was very helpful. Although we reminded people to speak loudly, the mics helped a lot.

Thank you to everyone who was supportive of this project. I really felt that everyone in the congregation was rooting for us, from the idea stage to the final performances. It was wonderful to have the dinner as well—we wouldn't have had an audience on Saturday without it!



*The quantity of ice pellets on April 14 required the parking lot to be cleared.*



## Play brought reminders of life

By Veg Weber

Watching the play allowed me to reflect on events that I have experienced in my life. Several years ago I was at a neighbour's house within minutes after her death. She was a single lady who had a roommate living with her. When the deceased woman's family was notified of her death, they wanted to know who the executors were. None of us knew so we were asked to find her will. That's an awkward position to be in—being told by her family that we had to locate her will in the house. There we were searching through her whole house trying to locate the will. By 2:00 a.m. we found it!

Unlike with Ed Snyder's children in the play, we knew where my Mom kept her will and what her financial situation was.

There are so many decisions to make after someone dies and it is important for the family to work together. Although a death does bring out many emotions in

people and you may react in ways you don't expect.

For my sister and I, we are organizers so immediately we started into action after my Mom's death only to be told to slow down. We had just been up for over 24 hours with very little sleep and we were told we would make decisions we may regret.

After my Mom's funeral, some of my cousins said to me we have to stay connected. We don't have our parents here anymore who always kept us connected with extended family. It made me realize we are the next generation. My sister and I acknowledged that although we had talked to each other when Mom was alive, we need to do it more frequently since she is gone. We each had called Mom once a week and therefore stayed updated through her. Like Sandra mentioned in the play, we are the only ones left carrying the family memories.

Thank you, Barb, for encouraging us to think about and consider what our wishes are, to have them written down and talk about it with our family.

## Reflections on Family Ties

by Nancy Mann

I laughed, I cried, and sometimes I laughed until I cried as I enjoyed two of the recent performances of Barb Draper's original play: "Family Ties through Thick and Thin." This short reflection would not give me enough space to thank all the people who helped to make our Dinner Theatre such a success. Thanks to everyone who played a part—large or small. This was a great event for our congregation!

In addition to being great entertainment, it also prompted us to think about questions relating to our own family ties. What happens when the last matriarch or patriarch in a family passes away? Will siblings grieve differently? Will they have different expectations for a time of memorial? What will continue to keep their family ties strong? Or does such a passing naturally weaken those family ties?

*Continued on page 10*



*Pastor Cressman (played by Willis Freeman) explains to the Snyder family that they should consider the wishes of their parents as they struggle to cope with the death of their father. From left: Sherri Martin-Carman, Roy Draper, Mary Frey Martin, Barb Draper, Steve Shoemaker. Ashley Albrecht is hidden behind Willis.*

I'm the oldest in a family of three sisters, and we have two elderly parents still living, so the themes in this play hit close to home for me. I'm pretty sure I've been accused of being a bit "Sandra-ish" at times! I expect that this is quite common for an oldest child. It is also interesting to reflect on the divergent life-paths that often emerge from children who were part of the same family

of origin. I thought the play demonstrated this very well.

I appreciated the way that *Family Ties* invited us to think about forgiveness. In Matthew 18: 21-22, Peter asks Jesus how often he must forgive a brother (or sister) who sins against him. Jesus' answer reminds us that, especially in our close relationships, forgiveness is the oil that keeps the wheels of our relationships turning. We must find ways to forgive

the small, sometimes imagined, slights that we feel from one another. In sibling relationships, a sense that one is favoured over the other can create deep feelings of resentment. We must find ways to move beyond these felt hurts if sibling relationships are to remain strong with the passing of the previous generation.

Now, let me see if I can remember who has a copy of my will.....

## The history of drama at Floradale

By Eleanor Buehler

We are so blessed to have Barb Draper as our resident playwright. She used her creative gift of writing to give us another very timely and meaningful play. It was filled with lots of food for thought about the importance of the older generation communicating with their families about information that will be helpful at the time of their death. It was very well presented and well performed.

Besides enjoying the play very much, I also made a trip down memory lane about the many plays that have been performed here in Floradale. I know that Allen Martin directed *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Rick Bauman directed *The Secret Church*, however I do not have information on what years those were performed. Since I had the privilege and challenge of being involved as director in 14 plays from 1968 to 2013, I saved a play book and bulletin from each one. This is the following information I gathered from these souvenirs.

Before 1968 the Literary Society of the Elmira area churches performed plays every several years. These were directed by Walter Metzger. I remember having a part in one of those plays. Elmeta Bowman, who was a long-time member of our church, was aware of this and asked me if I would consider getting a play together for a Christmas performance in 1968. It was called *The Greatest of These*. We held play practices in our home and presented it at Floradale Public School. We managed to pull this together in just 6 weeks.

The following is a recap of the other plays that have been performed over the years:

1971 *The Carpenter* Floradale Public School  
 1973 *The Family Nobody Wanted*  
 John Mahood Public School

1975 *One Foot in Heaven* Floradale Public School  
 1976 *The Diary of Anne Frank*

Floradale Public School

We were also invited to bring this performance to Stratford where we spent a whole day putting up all the staging and props etc. Those of us that were there will never forget that only about 2 or 3 people showed up for the evening performance!

1980 *Pollyanna* Floradale Public School  
 1984 *Here and Now* Floradale Public School  
 1988 *Cheaper by the Dozen*

Floradale Mennonite Church

1997 *The Carpenter*

This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> time we performed this play.  
 2003 *The Least of These*

Floradale Mennonite Church

In 2007 we were very fortunate to have our own playwright, Barb Draper.

2007 *What Shall we do With the Family Farm?*  
 This was the first play performed here in our new church. It was also the first time that we expanded to a dinner theater. Both Friday and Saturday evenings included a meal and then there was a Sunday afternoon matinee. We raised approximately \$18,000.00 to help pay off the church mortgage.

2010 *Those Shoes of Peace* by Barb Draper)  
 Floradale Mennonite Church

2013 *Mom it's Time to Sell the House* (Barb Draper)  
 Floradale Mennonite Church

It was after this production I felt led to announce my retirement as director of any further plays. I felt so blessed to have played a part in this ministry here at Floradale Church. As I attended the play this year, I felt so thankful that we still have all the gifts that are needed and all the people that give so generously and willingly of their time and talents so this ministry continues forward.

## Floradale women's fellowship breakfast

By Bonnie Martin

On Saturday March 24th, we had 110 women in attendance here at Floradale to enjoy a buffet breakfast and be inspired by Sharon Brubacher who shared her personal story of faith and healing.

Sharon, who was not able to walk for 1½ years due to a spinal cord injury, and is now living a normal and active life, truly knows what it is like to be at your lowest, but still keep your faith. She was able to live out a miracle in her life.

Sharon pointed out that as women we have a lot of different emotions, and experiences in our lives; it may not be as dramatic as what she went through, but we need to remember no matter how

big or small our situation is, God is here for us and wants us to turn to him for healing.

Hopefully everyone was challenged this morning as to how we can become better faithful servants for Christ, and not to forget the grace of God!



## Fraternal visitors from Meserete Kristos Church & College

Submitted by Darrell Jantzi

We are pleased that two fraternal visitors from Meserete Kristos Church and its College in Ethiopia will be travelling within Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) from May 13-20. Kelbessa Muleta Demena (Vice President of MK Church on left) and Kiros Teka Haddis (MK College President on right) will take part in a full agenda of sharing the vision and purpose of MK College with MCEC churches in a variety of settings.



You are invited to attend any of the following planned events:

**Sun., May 13, 4:00 pm** - Freedom Gospel Ethiopian Church and Medahniale Ethiopian Evangelical Church, Toronto.

**Wed., May 16, 7:30 pm** - Area Mission Celebration at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden.  
Theme: Celebrating God's Grace in the Midst of Challenge.

**Thurs., May 17, 8:30-10:00 am** - Fundraising Breakfast at the Crossroads Restaurant, Elmira.  
RSVP to Darrell Jantzi 519-669-4356 or John Peters 519-885-6422.

**Thurs., May 18, 7:30 pm** - Area Mission Celebration at Mapleview Mennonite Church, Wellesley.

Theme: Celebrating God's Grace in the Midst of Challenge

**Fri., May 18, 2:30-4:30 pm** - Hanover Mennonite Church Fifty Plus.

**Sunday, May 20**

**8:30-9:20 am** - Kelbessa at Waterloo North Matins Service and **9:30-10:30** in SS Hour.

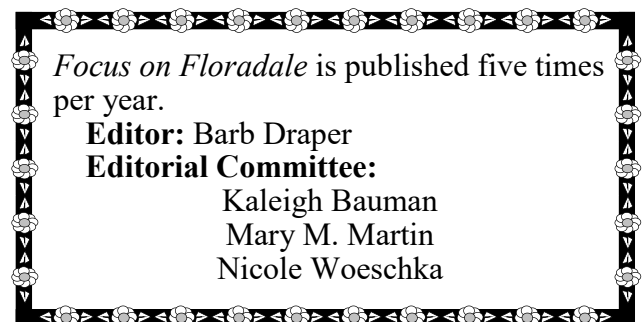
**11:00-12:00** - Kelbessa at Shantz Mennonite Church SS Hour.

**9:45 am** - Kiros at Bethel Mennonite Church Worship Service.

**11:00 am** - Kiros at Floradale Mennonite Church for Moment in Mission.

**4:00-6:00 pm** - Kelbessa at Meheret Ethiopian Evangelical, Kitchener.

**4:00-6:00 pm** - Kiros at Bethel Ethiopian Evangelical, Kitchener.



## Play Proceeds

Thank you to everyone involved in the dinner and play held at the church on April 13, 14 and 22. When so many people pitch in to help, we can raise a lot of money. We raised well over \$10,000 which will be divided between Woolwich Community Services and the Global Church Sharing Fund of Mennonite World Conference.

## Special Anniversaries

Congratulations to Mike and Jeanette Towns who celebrated 10 years of marriage on April 19.

Robert and Nancy Mann will celebrate 40 years of marriage on May 6, 2018. Congratulations!

## Births

Congratulations to Char and Tony Martin on the birth of Rory Seth Martin, born Friday, April 20. He is a brother to A.J. and Nash.

Congratulations to Randy and Bonnie Martin and Steve and Jen Shoemaker on the birth of their first grandchild, Chase Carter born to Jessica and Brock Shoemaker on April 5, 2018. He is also a great-grandchild of Oscar and Joan Martin.

Congratulations to Mary and Orval Martin on the birth of their second grandchild. Marilla Joan was born to Jared and Kendra Martin on April 14, 2018 in Toronto. She is a little sister for Jonas.



*At our annual meeting on Sun. Feb. 25, 2018, we presented this enlarged wall-size photograph to Darrell and Florence Jantzi to recognize their years of work on the Urban Ministries project. The photo, taken by Roy Draper, shows Pauline Martin, Lloyd Martin, Florence and Darrell picking beans.*

## 2018 Heifer sale

The 2018 37<sup>th</sup> annual MCC annual heifer sale was held on Fri. Feb. 16, 2018. Money raised totaled \$108,475. Ninety-nine heifers were sold. Clarence Diefenbacher expressed appreciation for all the donors and buyers from the Floradale congregation. Money raised will go to MCC for its relief, peace and development work around the world.

## Women's Enrichment Day

On April 20 and 21, the WMCEC spring Enrichment Day was hosted by the North Leamington United Mennonite church. April Yamasaki, a Mennonite pastor and author from B.C. was the speaker. She spoke on "Living Creatively." About 150 - 200 women from a number of MCEC churches enjoyed the Friday evening and Saturday sessions.

A special treat was the closing session when we gathered at the northwest beach at the Pelee Park. It was a worship service that demonstrated the theme, "Living Creatively: making space to meet God and find inspiration for creative living." Singing with many beautiful voices beside the lake soothed my soul.

Saturday morning as part of the business session there was some discussion about the future of WMCEC and also Mennonite Women Canada. It was noted that it is increasingly difficult to find women to become involved and what might this mean. I found it interesting to read in the *Canadian Mennonite* that other Mennonite women also have concerns about the future of their women's groups.

I have attended several of the WMCEC women's enrichment events and have found the experience worthwhile. The resource people are thoughtful speakers and the singing is beautiful. I can understand that it may be time to evaluate how things have been done and to question if things are still relevant. Hopefully some direction will be revealed in the months ahead.

