

Farewell Sunday—July 29

We said farewell to two staff members on July 29. For Nancy Mann it was “good-bye” after three years as associate pastor, and for Nichelle Bauman it was “thank you” for being our music coordinator for two years.

Nancy Mann

In her farewell sermon, Nancy used the same texts that had been used for her ordination in 2009. These texts are Matthew 6:25-31 where Jesus says not to worry, and Romans 12:9-18 where Paul gives practical advice on how to live. One of the stories she told in her reflection on not worrying was that in 1987 when the Manns moved to Waterloo and began attending First Mennonite Church, she was in a Sunday School class where a woman stood up in front of about 30 people and introduced the speaker. Nancy prayed that someday she would have the courage to stand up in front of a group of people like that.

Nancy also told us that in the fall of 2015, when she began commuting to her work at Floradale, she had three objectives. Concerned about driving to the country for her work, her goal



On Nancy Mann's last Sunday, July 29, we said “good-bye,” recognizing her three years as pastor at Floradale.



July 29 was a time to recognize the time that Nichelle Bauman served as coordinator of our music ministry. Greg was not able to be there to help with child care, and Nichelle concentrated on the music as best she could.

was never to go into the ditch. She accomplished that. Another goal was not to get a speeding ticket. Although one or two might have been warranted, she was able to say that she was never given a ticket. Her third goal was to navigate the corner of Floradale Road and Line 86 safely since that corner has had some tragic crashes. She was happy to report that she succeeded in that goal as well.

Robb and Nancy are planning to do some travelling in the next year. As recommended by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada they will not

worship at Floradale, but plan to visit other congregations to decide where their church home will be. She explained why she can't accept requests to come back for weddings or funerals; it is better for the church if former pastors make room for new pastors.

Her blessing for the congregation was from Ephesians 3: "I pray that God, out of his glorious riches, may strengthen you..."

After a pizza lunch, we had a short program with a song written by Veg Weber, a skit performed by Roy and Barb Draper and Ashley Bauman, representing the young adults, thanking Nancy for her work. A wall-hanging made by Jane Hesselink (with many pieces from Laura Bauman's scraps) was presented to Nancy and Robb as well as a bowl made by Wanda Kehl.



Gifts to Nancy and Robb included this bowl and wall hanging.

Nichelle Bauman

Nichelle's experience that morning was memorable. Her husband, Greg, was not able to be there and so she led the music trying to get distracted by her children. Sometimes she had Naomi on her lap.

Greg and Nichelle, who live in Durham, an hour away, will be attending a BIC congregation in Hanover, but they plan to visit Floradale regularly. She plans to continue leading the worship team on occasion.

"Thank you to those who encouraged and supported me, she said. "You let me take the reigns and run." We also watched her confidence grow. "My family needs my full attention at this time," she said, explaining why she felt she had to resign as the coordinator of Floradale's music ministry.

"I loved the role I played. I love this place," she commented. Both women were presented with prayer shawls.



One of the last events that Nancy planned was a young adult summer barbecue held at the home of Jake and Ashley Albrecht.

Nancy and Robb's Farewell Song Sung to the tune of "Do Lord"

Chorus:

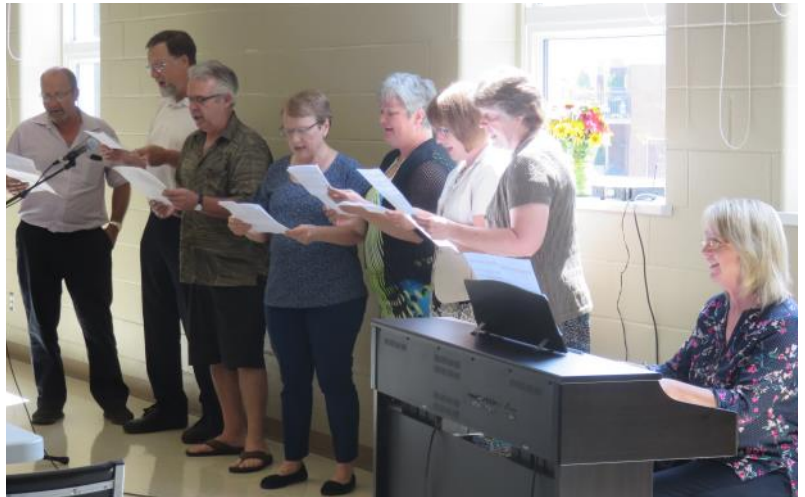
Nancy, oh Robb, oh, do remember us (oh, Lordy)
Nancy, oh Robb, yes, do remember us (oh, oh, oh)
Nancy, oh Robb, oh, do remember us
Into your retirement years.

—
Nancy arrived here on September first (yes she did)
Ready to start this new job in town
But was uncertain how to do this
In an office without a desk.

—
We soon learned that Nancy has flexibility
(let's stretch her)
She had to go from half-time to full-time
Had to soon learn the ropes of this new job
Which she did with confidence.

—
Between Robb and Nancy they hold seven degrees
(oh smarties)
But that didn't stop them from relating to us.
From children to adults they shared their gifts
Through i-pads and computers.

—
When there was music or drama they'd join in
(oh sing it)
Singing soprano or deep baritone
Acting in skits or presentations
All was done with great skill.



—
We hope we weren't too hard on Robb & Nancy
(forgive us)
Trying to keep them young and active
But as you can see Robb's hair colour changed
From copper to pure white.

—
We wish them well as they leave us (oh bless them)
Starting a year of traveling the world
May you find time to relax and enjoy
God bless you as you go.

—
*Written by Veg Weber
Edited by Mary Bauman and singers
Sung by Merri-Lee Metzger, Veg Weber, Jane
Hesselink, Rosie Martin, Eileen Freeman, Steve O.
Bauman, Roy Draper, and Ron Martin*



*Picnic in the Park for young families was held on July 22, 2018.
It was a rainy kind of a day, so the pavilion was appreciated.*



Thanksgiving is a time for gratitude



Gratitude

By Mary Frey Martin

A few things come to my mind when I think about what I am grateful for. First, my parents. My parents provided me with a stable family home with strong Christian values. They encouraged me to pursue education, which was quite uncommon in our Mennonite community. My father loaned me money to attend Eastern Mennonite College and I was able to pursue my nursing career there while gaining a lot of unique experiences that enriched my life.

Second, I am grateful for my hardworking husband, Orval. He was always passionate about his farming and was happy to care for his animals. I've seen many disgruntled people who hated going to work and complained bitterly about their work environment. But Orval loved being a farmer. Many is the summer evening I watched him on his 4-wheeler driving around the cattle field, giving the bull a scratch behind the ears, watching his cattle and calves graze, and it is good to know your spouse is happy and fulfilled doing what he loves. Yes, I grumbled being in that old farmhouse, and yes, I was glad to move to town, but I could not have taken that away from him.

Both Orval and I are very grateful that his fledgling pallet business did so well. He took some used pallets home one day in 1990 to put hay bales on and decided to bring a few more home and see if he could sell them. He never advertised formally, but we wound up with a very successful business selling used pallets. We were able to assist our boys

through university with this business and have a comfortable retirement. By the way, we are grateful that the township never bothered with us running a pallet business in an agricultural zone. Our pallets always sat out in the yard for anyone to see, we never hid a thing.

Gratitude is a very important thing to have. Saying thanks every day makes life so much sweeter.



Being Grateful...

By Laurel Martin

The list of things I am grateful for is most likely what you would expect: a patient and kind husband; two daughters who I love spending time with; two great sons-in-law; challenging work I enjoy; meaningful friendships that have been with me for my lifetime; a mother and father who have led by example; food, shelter and so, so much more!

I always believed that when we have choice we have abundance, and living in southwestern Ontario, specifically Waterloo Region, we have incredible abundance and choice!

On September 20 I attended WE day / Free the Children in Toronto. One of the speakers was a beautiful young woman named Mariatu Kamara who survived the civil war in Sierra Leone. She was just 12 years old when rebels

captured her and cut off both of her hands. To hear her story was difficult as well as inspiring. She spoke courageously and graciously as she said, "God took my hands, so I could touch the world with my heart."

I can't seem to forget her grateful heart and have found myself pondering and reflecting on Mariatu's story. I have asked myself again and again if I am grateful enough for my blessed life.

Pastor Jim mentioned a few weeks ago in a sermon that "there is GRACE every day." I have also reflected on that many times and I think that ultimately God's grace is what I am truly most grateful for.



Thanksgiving and anxiety

By Jim Loepp Thiessen

It's a cliché to say that we are supposed to be grateful. Of course we are! But so what, right? I have a friend who is posting on Facebook every day for a year what he is grateful for. All kinds of snapshots from his life, from family shots to appliances come up as pictures on his page. A while back I read the book *A Thousand Gifts* by Ann Voskamp. She takes the reader into her everyday life, chronicling it through the lens of gratitude. It was a powerful read.

But there is another compelling reason to be grateful. A few months ago, I saw an article around some research done that

suggests that gratefulness displaces anxiety. The point of the article is that it's hard to be grateful and anxious at the same time. Maybe the apostle Paul recognized that already, when writing from the depths of a Roman prison, a place where prisoners often asked to die rather than have to remain, he says, "Don't worry about anything, but in everything by prayer with supplication and thanksgiving..." (Philippians 4:6).

In the act of offering thanksgiving in the midst of anxiety, we move our awareness from our

heads to our hearts. Our anxiety is "located" in our heads, where it dwells, coming up with all kinds of "worst case scenarios" about what could happen to us or those we love. As we exercise gratefulness, we shift our awareness to our hearts.

The research suggests thanksgiving be done frequently. Years ago, I listened to a speaker who said she had an app on her phone that went off every twenty minutes, and she would stop what she was doing and spend a few minutes worshipping God. She

was attempting to be continually in the presence of God as it were. To be clear, we are all in the presence of God continually, but she wanted to be aware of God's presence continually. (I know for most of us stopping what we are doing and offering thanks that frequently would not be practical—I was intrigued by the possibility however!)

Here's a possibility: the next time you find yourself anxious about something, try spending a few moments or longer offering thanks!

Fall Recipes

Pumpkin Pie Cake

4 eggs
2 ½ cups pumpkin (canned or fresh)
1 cup sugar
2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
½ tsp. salt
1 can evaporated milk
1 box yellow cake mix
¾ cup melted butter
1 cup chopped pecans.



Whisk together the first six ingredients and pour into a 9x13" pan. Sprinkle dry cake mix evenly over the pumpkin mixture. Pour melted butter over entire cake mix and sprinkle with pecans. Bake 1 ½ hours at 350 degrees (325 if using a glass pan). Let it cool and cut in squares. Serve with whipped cream (optional).

Submitted by Gloria H. Bauman

Brussel Sprouts and Beet Veggies

3 cups peeled and diced raw beets
3 cups mini carrots or chopped carrots
3 to 4 cups brussel sprouts.
¼ cup coconut oil
1 tsp. rosemary & garlic salt



Stir the beets with oil and spices and bake at 350 for 20 minutes. Add the carrots and sprouts and bake another ½ hour or until tender. If the veggies seem too dry, stir in more coconut oil.

Submitted by Gloria H. Bauman

Pumpkin pudding

3 tbsp cornstarch
½ cup sugar (or less)
3 cups milk
1 egg
1 cup pumpkin puree
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp cinnamon
Dash nutmeg if desired
1 tsp. vanilla
1 tbsp butter



In a glass bowl, whisk together the cornstarch, sugar, egg and a bit of milk. Add the rest of the milk, salt, spices and pumpkin puree and mix until smooth. Heat in the microwave on high for about eight minutes, stirring at least once each minute. (Microwaves are not all the same; you may need more or less time. Of course you can use a double boiler.) As it cooks and gets thicker, stir more often until the centre has been cooked. Add the vanilla and butter and stir with a spoon until the butter is melted. Cool and serve with whipped cream.

Submitted by Barb Draper

Focus on Floradale is published five times a year.

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Exploring the small group experience

The small-group experience

By Mary M. Martin

Way back in time (when my husband was still living and my children were young) there used to be “family groups” and then for a number of years these groups were discontinued. I am not sure how it came about but a few years ago groups were again formed and identified as “small groups.”

As I understand it, the intent was for groups to meet for a year to give people an opportunity to get to know each other and then close so new groups could be formed. Some groups closed but there was also some interest in staying together and moving from the getting to know each other to being a support group.

I have heard some comments/concerns about groups staying together as opposed to closing as the original intent was. Personally, I have been part of a small group (outside of our congregation) for many years and deeply appreciate the supportive network that has developed over time. However, I also hear the concerns about “closed” groups since this was not the original purpose.

I don't believe this need to be an either/or situation; maybe there is room for both. The Elders decided that before we form new groups it would be important to try and get some feedback. Let us know what would make small group an important part of your church life experience. Are you interested to be part of a group that is committed to more than one year?

The last page of the *Focus* can be detached and used as a guideline for your thoughts. Or you can send your comments by email to Mary Martin or Rita Bauman. Or you can speak to Jim or any one of the Elders.

Small Groups

By Veg Weber

Ross and I have been part of small groups whenever they have been offered at Floradale. Sometimes they have been a Bible Study group but most often were a social group.

When our children were young they enjoyed being in groups with friends their own age but also learned to know other people it was an intergenerational group. It was a great way for them to interact with people from church who they otherwise would not have. Being in a small group was also helpful to me as it was a great way for me to learn to know others in the church who were not in my age group.

Each group I have been part of has been a great experience for me. I have learned to know many people in our congregation better and in a setting outside of church on a Sunday morning. Mostly the groups we have been part of just enjoyed hanging out, eating and talking.

I would encourage people to be part of a small group, learn to know others in the congregation better and I don't think you will be disappointed.



Small group reflections

Anonymous

I have been part of small groups for many years. I like getting to know people better from all ages in our church. I didn't like that some groups stayed together for several years. That put some of the same people in our group and we felt they should have been mixed up more.

Not many people were involved in recent years, while years ago our whole church was divided into groups. We always enjoyed them, however it was done.

I like to have groups of all ages. That's how to you get to know people from our church.

It sounds like a good idea to have groups formed around common interests. Maybe it would get more people involved.



By Erma Wideman and
Martha Brubacher

We have been in small groups before. One of the frustrations is that it can be difficult to find a time for everyone to be present, such as when groups are re-formed in a year or two. It is easier to plan dates that work for everyone when there are no more than 10-12 in a group.

We think the small group experience could better fit our needs and expectations if there was a strong commitment meet regularly. We prefer the groups to be intergenerational; we much prefer mixing up the age groups because it is very good to hand around with younger people.

Regarding groups with common interests, we would like to see a variety of events. Our concern is that if we are too specific about events, there might be fewer people interested in joining.

In our experience, 10 about the right size. If a group is too much smaller, it makes the group very small if some people can't make it. When people do not come out, the group lacks continuity.



Small Group Feedback

By Nancy Martin

For the past three years, Rick and I have had the pleasure of hosting a small group from Floradale Mennonite Church that was organized by the Elders. We thought being part of a small group would be a great way to get to know a

few people in the church a little bit better. Our group very quickly started to bond and we enjoyed many activities and meals together to the extent that when the first year was over, we opted as a group to stay together a second year and then again a third year. This for us is what made the small group experience so special—the chance to be a small support group over an extended period of time.

The biggest challenge with the small group was coming up with times and activities that worked for everyone. However, once we were able to coordinate our calendars, we thoroughly enjoyed our times together. Initially our small group had an age range from 1 year to 80 years! The large age range had its advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, it really did feel like a family—we had everything from the baby, to the active kids, to the parents, to the grandparents to the great-grandparents.

On the other hand, it was sometimes difficult to find activities that were good for the whole age range but we found that including a meal together always

worked for everyone regardless of what the other activity was! The young family in our group unfortunately moved out of the area after our first year together and we missed the energy that the children brought to our group. Without them in the group, it seemed silly to organize visits to a pumpkin patch or go to Waterloo Park to see the Christmas lights—they just wouldn't be the same without the excitement that the young ones created. So our second and third years together have definitely had a different tone and atmosphere and we have spent more time talking and getting to know each other better.

Moving forward the elders are discussing re-forming the small groups. They are contemplating whether the groups should be formed based on age or common interests. Forming groups based on similarities would make things much easier when planning events but we also have experienced the huge benefit of putting a most unlikely group of people together and seeing the wonderful results!

The small group experience has definitely enriched our lives.



Bible Quizzing for Grown-ups

On Sun. Sept. 30, Pastors in Exile, a program designed to help young adults stay connected with faith, hosted a Bible Quiz for Grown-Ups at the Huether Hotel in Uptown Waterloo. Here is the *Canadian Mennonite* team, working on one of the first three rounds which were written. The team included Barb Draper, Jim Loepp Thiessen, Ginny Hostetler and Tobi Thiessen. This team had the highest points going into the final round which involved buzzer questions and a 60-second rapid-fire round. The Canadian Mennonite Scribes team won first place over "Arli Klassen and friends." The Steinmann Quizzers came in third. There were eight teams including one with Kim Rempel.



Requested Recipes from the Women's spring progressive supper



Strawberry Cream Dessert

- 2 ¼ cups graham cracker crumbs (about 36 squares)
- 6 tablespoons sugar
- 10 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup confectioner's sugar
- 2 cartons (one 16 ounces, one 8 ounces) frozen whipped topping thawed, divided
- 1 package (3 ounces) strawberry gelatin
- ½ cup boiling water
- 1 cup (8 ounces) strawberry yogurt

Topping:

- 2 tablespoons graham cracker crumbs
- 1 ½ tsp. sugar
- 1 ½ tsp. butter, melted

In a bowl, combine the cracker crumbs, sugar and butter. Press into an ungreased 9x13" pan. Refrigerate for 15 minutes. Meanwhile in a mixing bowl beat cream cheese and confectioner's sugar until smooth. Whisk in 1 cup whipped topping. Spread over the prepared crust.

In a large bowl, dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Whisk in yogurt and 6 cups whipped topping until blended. Pour over cream cheese layer. Refrigerate for 1 hour. Spread remaining whipped topping over strawberry layer. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Just before serving, combine topping ingredients and sprinkle over the whipped topping. Yield: 12-15 servings.

Submitted by Gloria H. Bauman

Mocha Mousse

- 1 ½ cups chocolate crumbs
- ¼ cup margarine
- 1 ½ packages cream cheese
- 1 ½ cans condensed milk
- ½ cup chocolate syrup (or up to 2/3 cup)
- 1 to 2 tablespoons instant coffee granules
- 1 tsp. hot water
- 1 ½ cups whipping cream

Mix together the chocolate crumbs and margarine and press into a 9x13" pan. Beat the cream cheese until fluffy and add condensed milk and syrup. Dissolve coffee in hot water and add to milk mixture. Whip the cream until stiff and fold into chocolate mixture. Spread on the crumbs and freeze for at least 6 hours.

- Submitted by Gloria H. Bauman

Presentations:

On July 22, 2018, the two young people graduating from high school were presented with special blankets by Kim Rempel. Kyle Martin was not able to be present, but Alina Kehl shared about her high school experience and sang a song.

On Sept. 22 the six-year-olds were presented with their children's Bibles. Pastor Jim Loepp Thiessen and Jeanette Towns made the presentations to A. J. Martin, Logan Shantz and Edward Wilson.



Amanda Martin won first prize in the Senior Showmanship at the Waterloo 4-H Sheep Club Show held at Lloyd and Tracy Diehl's farm (Sandbox Stables) on Sept. 23. She also won second place in overall showmanship and third place in Confirmation which refers to the quality of the sheep breed. Amanda's sheep (a female) is named Goon. Thank you to Susan Martin for the expertise and training that she gave to Amanda and all the girls in the Waterloo 4-H Sheep Club and for lending one of her sheep to Amanda.

Gordon Elmer Weber

Dec. 27, 1924 – Sept. 3, 2018

These are the words of tribute given by Gordon's sons at the funeral on Sept. 7, 2018 at Floradale Mennonite Church.

According to government documents, Gordon Weber was born on Dec. 27, 1924, but his mother always insisted it was two days later. It was always a question of when to Dad's birthday. He was the third child of Allen Weber and Laura Schiedel, predeceased by his siblings Vernon Weber, Sylvia Schwindt and Ralph Weber.

He grew up on a farm on the Floradale Road and married our mother, Audrey Bauman, on June 17, 1950. For the first year of their marriage, they lived on dad's home farm with his parents.

It was soon after their first child (Stuart) was born, that they purchased a farm on the 12th of Peel Township and they farmed there for the next 39 years. Murray and Bert were also born there. They then made the decision to sell the farm to Stuart and Sandra Martin, and a close relationship continued with them and their growing family to this day.

Gordon and Audry built a bungalow on a severed lot on the corner of the farm and lived on this property for 14 years. They then made the decision to move to Floradale Parkview Manors senior's residence where they lived there for nine years. This is where they were living when our mother passed away unexpectedly. Dad was able to live independently there, until a fall made it necessary to move to Heritage House nursing home.

Our parents had the foresight to be proactive in making timely decisions on each move. Their thoughts were always shared through family meetings that they instigated. This is one of the best gifts parents can give to their children, and we are forever grateful to them. A life lesson for us as

sons as we plan for our retirement future.

The last five years in the nursing home were difficult for dad. He missed mom dearly, as he slowly deteriorated in both mind and body. Dad was well-liked by the staff and an easy person to care for.

During those years he expressed his desire to die and couldn't understand why he was still here. This past Friday evening he was transferred to the hospital with a broken leg as a result of bone degeneration. His only option was to have an operation to relieve the pain. He survived the surgery, but the next morning we were told the chance of survival was bleak. The doctor told us he could be moved to palliative care, and asked us about dad's wishes. At the very moment we were telling the doctor Dad's desire to pass on, he took his last breath. It seemed like dad made the decision for us.

We remember our Dad as a quiet, slow-to-anger, patient man. It is hard for us to think of a time when Dad ever raised his voice, no matter what grief we gave him. Bert remembers breaking axe handles umpteen times. It didn't faze dad.

We remember when Dad lost his pride and joy, the sugar shack, by fire, and he responded by saying, "Well, we'll just have to start over again." The sugar bush was a special place for Dad and our families, making memories that will not be forgotten—gathering sap, being in the shanty with the wonderful sweet smells, and taffy on the fresh snow.

Dad was instrumental in introducing apple fritters topped with maple syrup at the Elmira Maple



Syrup Festival as a youth fundraiser, a favorite that continues today.

Dad and mom were charter members of Berea Mennonite Church. Our faith direction was influenced by our parents, starting each day with family devotions at breakfast, regular church attendance and involvement. For Dad, the church family and neighbours were his circle of friends. Our parents were leaders in church life, and left lasting impressions on us in our church and community involvement.

Dad had a theological mind, and was not afraid to question things. This has given us the freedom to continue to question and still have a faith. Dad had taught us that not everything is black or white.

Dad started out as a dairy farmer, but early on, decided that he disliked cows and the commitment they took. It soon became a mixed farm operation, including a beef feed lot, finishing pigs and cash crops. Some unusual crops included, sorghum, sugar beets, turnips, canola, timothy and clover seeds.

Dad was not afraid to attempt to fix or build anything around the farm, to keep costs down. Despite the busyness of the farm, it was important for him to take his family on a few days of vacation to a cottage on a lake each summer.

This was unusual in those days for farm life.

In his retirement years, Dad enjoyed the role of being a grandpa and building relationships with his grandchildren. We remember him building a snow pile for them, helping them dig tunnels, letting them ride the 'gator to the bush, going to the barn with them to see the neighbour's cows, spending time in the garden, picking and eating fresh vegetables, making a make shift swimming pool using a stock tank, and letting them cut the grass with the riding lawn mower. He also financially supported each grandchild in their continued education.

Dad left us a legacy in living out his faith; this has helped shape who we are today. We are grateful to you Dad. We thank you.

Shared at the funeral by his sons, Stuart and Bert Weber

Murray's tribute

Over the last five years, as I visited Dad at Heritage House, a lot of stories about his childhood and early life became his focus. He really enjoyed singing old hymns that I remembered singing in my younger years. Quite often he would ask if I knew that song, "Peace, Peace" and he would sing part of the refrain which I did not know. A google search eventually turned up "Wonderful Peace."

I asked where he had learned that song and he did not know. A while later, my Aunt Ina said that she knew the song and produced two songbooks with the song. One was a collection of songs put together by C.F. Derstine and the other book had written inside, "Mrs. Phillip Biesel," June 1924. That was seven months before dad was born! I asked dad if he knew Mrs. Phillip Biesel, and he thought she was a school teacher.

As a young man, Dad attended Winter Bible School at East End, now First Mennonite Church where C.F. Derstine was a teacher, so I believe this is where he learned "Wonderful Peace." While attending Bible school, he stayed with his grandparents, Isaac and Susannah Scheidel in the north end of Waterloo and he rode the trolley down King Street and back each day to East End.

In the last year, Dad had dreams that he believed were real and they really disturbed him. One day Char and I were visiting him and he was telling us one of these dreams and then he said, when I think of that song, "Wonderful Peace" I am at peace!

Rest In Peace, Dad

Murray and his brothers asked Cliff and Mary Bauman to sing the song, "Wonderful Peace" at the funeral.

Births

Congratulations to Nicole and Tyler Woeschka on the birth of their son, William Peter (Liam) on July 6, 2018. A baby brother for Everly.

Brielle Rita Shantz was born to Cal and Jenn Shantz on July 9, 2018. Congratulations!

Congratulations to Luke and Trish Martin on the birth of their son Hayes Robert, born July 16, 2018. He is a little brother for Sawyer.

Riley Ammon Bauman was born Aug. 2, 2018 to Eddie and Kaleigh Bauman. A little brother for Sadie.

Marriage

Julia Bowman and Josh Russell were married on Aug. 11, 2018 at Lakeside Downtown Church in Guelph. Julia is the daughter of Andrea and Wayne Bowman and granddaughter to Clarence and Marilyn Diefenbacher.

CORRECTION:

Scott Bauman and Clara Walker were married on June 2, 2018. An incorrect date appeared in the July issue of the *Focus*. Scott is the son of Richard and Norma Bauman.

Engagement:

Garret Bender and Kim Parker have announced their engagement. They plan to be married Sept. 21, 2019 at the Stratford Golf and Country Club. Garret is the son of Dan and Karen Bender. Kim is from a farming family of six siblings in the Stratford area. They are buying a house in Gowanstown.

Special Anniversaries

Congratulations to Clarence and Marilyn Diefenbacher who will celebrate 55 years of marriage on Nov. 9, 2018.



Rick and Donna Freeman celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary on Sept. 29, 2018. Congratulations!

Did you see their photo in the *Observer*?

Dale and Sharon Martin will be married 40 years on October 18, 2018. Congratulations!



Congratulations to Steve and Jenn Shoemaker who will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary on Oct. 15, 2018.

Response requested:

The Elders have discussed the re-forming of the small groups and what would make small groups meaningful to the participants. Your feedback to the following questions would be greatly appreciated.

1. Have you been in a small group before?
2. What do you like, or not like, about small groups?
3. How could we make the small-group experience better fit your needs or expectations?
4. Do you like the intergenerational groups, or would you prefer groups of your own age?
5. What are your thoughts about forming groups around common interests? For example, having a Bible study, doing a book study, watching movies, trying foods from different cultures, being social and plan-as-you-go... Forming a group around a common interest/theme need not preclude socializing and hanging out together, but simply would be the organizing theme for the group.

We look forward to receiving your feedback by October 14.
Please direct your responses in writing or in person to Rita Bauman or Mary M. Martin.