

Focus on Floradale

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Floradale Mennonite Church

December, 2018



On Nov. 3 and 4, Jim and Ingrid Loepp Thiessen invited the congregation to an Open House so we could see where they live.

Sadie (daughter of Kaleigh and Eddie) joined Casey at the piano after church. Maybe she would like to be an accompanist one day.



MCC Relief Kits under the tree

Once again we are collecting items for MCC relief kits as a way of sharing during the Christmas season. Relief kit supplies may be put under the tree in foyer until Jan. 6, 2019. Last year 24,530 kits were shipped around the world to help families suffering from war or disaster.

Each kit contains:

- 4 large bars bath soap*
- Shampoo (600 mls)*
- 4 large bars laundry soap*

- 4 adult-size toothbrushes*
- 4 new bath towels 75x150 cm med. Weight, dark or bright colours*
- 2 wide-tooth combs (15-20 cm)*
- 1 nail clipper (good quality)*
- 1 box adhesive bandages (min. 40 total, assorted)*
- 1 or 2 pkg sanitary pads, thin 28 pads total*

Thanksgiving food drive

By Barb Draper

Thirteen women from the church helped to sort food at the Woolwich Community Services food bank on Wed. Oct. 10, 2018. After the Thanksgiving food drive, bags of boxes of food pile up and need to be sorted.

Each month the food bank assists an average of 60 families from the surrounding community. Each family does their own "shopping," choosing items from the shelves according to the guidelines they are given for their size of family. Each such "basket" of food is designed to tide a family over for 3 to 5 days. Allowing families to do their own choosing with only one family in the room at a time provides privacy and dignity. Even the volunteers working with the families do not know their names.

Before a family can qualify, they need to undergo an initial extensive interview to make sure they qualify.

As well as the canned goods that are donated, the food bank also receives donations from

farmers who supply such things as eggs, potatoes and chickens. Foodland donates expired food that go on a table from which families may choose as much as they can use. For a few years Home Hardware has had a garden project that donates fresh produce. The food bank also

purchases some items, such as fruit in the summer.

On Thanksgiving Sunday, the people of Floradale brought produce and other food items for the food bank. This donation weighed in at 520 lbs. The staff at Woolwich Community Services expressed real appreciation for the support from the church.



Thirteen women sorted food at the local food bank on Oct. 10. From left: Norma Bauman, Bonnie Martin, Veg Weber, Eileen Freeman, Rita Bauman, Gloria J Bauman, Marilyn Weber, Rosie Martin. Kneeling: Sharon Cressman, Delphine Burkhart, Karen Wilson, Barb Draper, and Gloria H. Bauman



Food donations from the congregation made a beautiful display at the front of the church on Thanksgiving Sunday. It totaled 520 pounds



Reuben enjoyed accompanying the worship band on October 21.

New kitchen equipment

Our kitchen, along with the rest of the building, is 12 years old. In case you haven't noticed, we now have a new stove and new ovens, paid for by money raised by the catering committee.

By Andrea Bowman

The old stove was a good one, however it was not user-friendly. If the pilot lights were turned off, it was complicated and difficult to re-light them. As the ovens aged we were having problems with the cakes baking unevenly and the odd pie was burned due to hot spots in the ovens. On more than one occasion, such items were deemed unusable. As well, the inside of the ovens were often not large enough for the number of chafing pans required for large groups.

Where the old stove had ten elements, the new stove has only six, but we found a smaller stove meets our needs and this frees up space for the free-standing ovens as well as a two-burner electric hot plate. This provides electric elements for those persons who are not comfortable using a gas unit.



A smaller, more user-friendly gas stove, an electric hotplate and two large ovens replace the former gas and electric stoves.

The new ovens are really nice—they baked the cakes for the Foodgrains Bank fundraiser evenly and efficiently. The burners on the stove light quickly and are a lot less complicated to use because there aren't so many steps. Of course, we only used the new equipment for one function so far.

Other comments:

Susan Martin said that they still need to learn how to use the new equipment, but she was very enthusiastic. She also pointed out that the new gas stove is very user-friendly; anyone should be able to use it.

Someone commented that the new ovens are not as low and less bending is required to get pans out of the ovens. Another advantage of the new larger ovens

is that enough pies can be baked at one time for a catered meal which is more efficient and will save volunteer time.

Susan said about the new equipment: "It's fabulous!"

Recipe

Slow-cooker coffee

When we had folks from Floradale for an open house, one of the items we served was "slow cooker coffee." Several of you asked for the recipe and asked me to put the recipe in the Focus so here it is!

- 9 Cups strong coffee
(You brew this in the normal way, then pour it into the slow cooker).
- ¾ cup sugar
- 3 cinnamon sticks (or use ground)
- 6 whole cloves (or use ground)



Simmer on low for 1.5-3 hours. Serve with whipping cream and a dash of nutmeg

Submitted by Jim and Ingrid Loepf Thiessen

New structures in the cemetery



You may have noticed the new columbaria in the cemetery, providing an option for cremated remains. The word "columbarium" comes from the Latin word for "dovecot" or "pigeonhole." Columbarium is usually pluralized in the Latin way, hence "columbaria."

Foodgrains Bank growing project began 20 years ago

By Jeff Bauman

I first learned about the Canadian Foodgrains Bank in 1998, when I went to a Mennonite Central Committee Ontario (MCCO) annual meeting as our church delegate. I think it was my first year as a delegate and wasn't sure what to expect. It was made easier by Donna Freeman, Valina Martin, and Elmeta Bowman carpooling to Port Colbourne with me. I realized at that point, that MCC was an important agency to many people at Floradale.

Part of an MCCO annual meeting is seminars. I picked a seminar in the morning titled "We are Hungry! What is MCC's Response today?" The seminar was put on by Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB). The people involved were talking about Growing Projects, and how urban and rural Churches could work together to grow crops for CFGB. This struck a chord with me because our Church is both rural and urban.

I must add that there was something going on in my mind before this MCCO meeting. I was always impressed at how the ladies group from our church met and raised money for many chari-

ties. Could the men also meet as a group and support a charitable project as well? So when I attended this seminar it sounded like the perfect project for the men to support.

So how do you get the ball rolling with something like this at our church? I started by bouncing the idea off the ladies that were with me on the ride home. I also asked other people at our church, to see if they thought it could work. People were supportive of the idea, but how would we get land, who would do the work etc...?

I think the wheels were spinning a bit until Edna Diefenbacher asked if I would plan a men's breakfast for our church. For me, that was a sign from God to move forward with the CFGB project and begin planning annual men's breakfast meetings.

In the fall of 1998 we planned our first breakfast meeting. Now, how can this CFGB Growing Project be sold to everyone? Well we were able to bring in one of the best salesmen MCCO had going at the time—



A newspaper report says: "Amsey Martin, one of the many hardworking volunteers who make the Foodgrains Bank successful, takes a breather on a hot afternoon. Amsey is from Crystal View and a brother to Oscar J. B. Martin."

Dave Worth the executive director of MCCO.

After an inspirational talk from Dave we had a real breakthrough. Earl Gingrich said we could work some land he is renting east of Elmira in the 1999 growing season. Oscar J.B. Martin said he would work the land. Wow!!! There it was. We could proceed. We formed a Committee before we adjourned for the morning. It was also suggested we make this a community project. So we contacted Crystal View Mennonite Church and Trinity Lutheran Church in Floradale. They agreed to join. Hence the "Floradale Community Growing Project" was born.

Many changes have happened over the last 20 years. I could write about more of the project's history but I will leave it at how the Floradale Community Project was started. My thought is that God knew what was in people's hearts and the talents that everyone had, to put this worthwhile growing project together at Floradale.



The site of the first Floradale CFGB growing project was east of Elmira. Sponsors are Waterloo Crop Services and Fairway Lumber. The project began 20 years ago in 1998.

The 2018 Crop Report:

Just a review of how the crop did this year. The winter wheat that was planted at the end of 2017 and harvested in 2018 produced 107 bushels to the acre at the field behind Crossroads Restaurant. This equalled 70 tonne at \$250 per tonne which totalled around \$17,500.00. The straw also sold for \$3,000.00. The fundraiser lunch on Nov. 4 was also a success. Thanks to the Catering Committee and everyone who in some way helped make the past year a great success.



For several years the growing project used a field at the corner of Church Street and Floradale Road. Again the sign indicates that sponsors of the project are Waterloo Crop Services and Fairway Lumber. The sign below indicates that use of the land is donated by ABS Canada and St. Jacobs ABC.



A new sign from CFGB with their new logo. It also includes the website: foodgrainsbank.ca.



The catering committee prepared the fundraiser lunch on Nov. 4. Hard at work before church are Tracey Martin, Andrea Bowman, Rita Bauman, Susan Martin and Norma Bauman.

A different look

By Barb Draper

When we moved from the old to the new church in 2006, several young people carried over the pulpit and three chairs. No one I've talked to knows how many years that pulpit was in use at Floradale Mennonite Church, but a photo from the 1950s shows it is more than 60 years.

Jim Loepp Thiessen, our pastor, does not like to stand behind a large pulpit; he prefers to wander as he engages the people in the pews. When someone from Church Council asked him if he would be more comfortable without the large pulpit, he agreed, and

the pulpit and three large chairs are presently in storage.

According to Brent Bauman, our historian, the chairs were a gift to the church from the Seranus and Blandina Martin family. The last member of that family to attend Floradale was Valina Martin who passed away in 2013. Blandina died in 1956 and Seranus in 1964, suggesting that the chairs are probably more than 50 years old.

Familiar traditions are good, but sometimes it is important to make changes to accommodate present realities.



Jim prefers to wander, not be confined to a large pulpit.

Christmas Traditions that sometimes need to be adapted

Knowing when to adapt traditions can be tricky

By Mary M. Martin

I believe family traditions are instrumental in tying families together for better or for worse. As circumstances change (i.e. your child leaves home), you may need to change or adjust a tradition to accommodate this reality. In my experience letting go of a tradition to accommodate family members is easier than being forced to let go of a tradition due to a death.

I don't remember it being a conscious decision but the first Christmas after my husband's death I dropped some things we used to do because it was too painful to pretend things were the same. Trying to find a new way, a different path was an attempt to make the empty spot less noticeable. Today it almost seems like the family tradition is to not have a tradition because of the many accommodations made over the years. One family tradition that has stood the test of time is, "no turkey for Christmas dinner."

Today my daughters and nieces met for our Christmas cookie exchange, a tradition that came out of my sister's death 16 years ago. We have adjusted things over the years as the children grew older, but this tradition has bonded us together and we look forward to it every year.

The tricky part of traditions is to know and accept when they need to be adapted or let go of, but until then to enjoy and value what you have!

May your Christmas season be rich and full with family, friends, memories and valued traditions.



Christmas traditions to hold on to or let go

By Eleanor Buehler

When asked to write about this topic, I thought of a few which have been a part of our family celebration in the Christmas season. We began having our Family Christmas on Christmas Eve because there was a church service on Christmas morning, which we always attended. We have continued this Christmas eve tradition throughout the years; it makes it possible for the extended families to have their gatherings on Christmas Day. Of course, after the church service was changed to Christmas Eve, it meant that we were no longer able to attend the Christmas Eve Service, which feels like a loss to me.

Since we gathered on Christmas Eve, we always read the Christmas story from the Bible. When our grandchildren became old enough to read the story, we began with the oldest one, then for seven years after, the next one would have their turn. They kept a very good record of who was going to be reading the story that year.

Another tradition began many years ago when our grandchildren children were younger. I would always make a batch of cut-out cookies with Christmas shapes. Then we would have a Cookie Icing Party and every cookie was a crazy work of art with icing of different colours

piled high on each cookie. When the plate of cookies was brought out on Christmas Eve each of them would try to find the one with the craziest icing.

We have always had the traditional turkey dinner on Christmas Eve as part of our gathering. The one part of the meal that has always been requested is Gramma's dressing. It feels very satisfying to me that this recipe continues on in our extended family and some of them have learned to make it "almost" as good as Gramma.

I will write about one other tradition that has evolved over the years: gift giving. Now that each of our children have their own homes and families, it felt like it was time to encourage them to think about giving gifts to those in need instead of giving gifts to each other at our gathering. So we have bowls set out, each with a designated MCC Project. We give them the money that would have been spent on a gift and they can choose which bowl they want to put that money into.

As the years pass and our family continues to grow and change the one most important tradition which I hope will never change is that we can continue to gather as a family at Christmas time.



Family traditions of long ago

By Mary Bauman

No matter how busy or how involved in things we are, or how far from home we are, at Christmas time the majority of us will plan well in advance and re-arrange our schedules so we can be with those we hold nearest and dearest. As we get older, we reminisce about the many Christmases and treasured memories and traditions we have.

Cliff comes from a large family but had a very well-organized and efficient mother who saw to it that her children would have the best Christmas she could possibly make for them. He remembers always going to church on Christmas morning. Their meal would sometimes be roast beef because Mr. Bauman said they had chicken all through the year, so beef would be a special treat.

The Sunday School concert was also a highlight as well as the school concert, complete with the arrival of Santa who had a bag of candy for each child.

Marj remembers her mother baking a delicious dark fruit cake several weeks ahead so the flavor would be just right by Christmas. As well, she made “cookie press” cookies. I am sure there would be lots of little fingers eager to help by adding sprinkles and icing.

One of their younger sisters, Miriam, remembers the decorations in the house. Cedar boughs were cut from the bush and lovingly placed here and there inside to add warmth and fragrance. The Bible would be open at the Christmas story, placed on the sewing machine and flanked with cedar. There was also a special box that held a few decorations—tinsel to adorn the cedar, folded bells and balls that would be opened and hung in the windows.

There weren't many gifts other than an orange and some candy.

But Miriam remembers one Christmas that she asked for a doll with hair and eyes that opened and closed. And to her delight, on Christmas morning, her wish came true. Miriam also remembers having turkey sometimes with her mother's delicious stuffing. I don't have that exact recipe, but have included mine which Cliff says is similar.

Dressing for slow cooker from Leona Reist

1 cup butter
2 cups onions, chopped
2 cups celery chopped
¼ cup parsley
12-13 cups dried bread crumbs
(1 loaf)
1 tsp. poultry seasonings
½ tsp. turmeric
1 ½ tsp. salt
1 ½ tsp. sage
1 tsp. thyme
½ tsp. marjoram
½ tsp. pepper
2 pinches ginger
3 ½ cups milk or chicken broth
2 eggs well beaten

Melt the butter and sauté onions, celery and parsley. Pour over crumbs and toss well. Add seasonings and liquid. Mix well and pack lightly into a large crockpot. Set on high for 45 min. and reduce to low for 4 to 6 hours.

I grew up in a very small family, with only one sibling, my dear brother Jim who died 14 years ago. We had an aunt and uncle who had moved to Toronto and had no children of their own. Every Christmas for many years they sent Jim a new pair of skates and I received a doll. How exciting for us the day that box arrived in the mail. I still have the last doll I got when I was 11 or 12. I have had a bit of work done on her and she sits on a cabinet shelf some 60 years later, still

smiling at me every time I look at her.

On Christmas Day we went to our aunts' and uncles' home who lived beside us. The meal would be a roasted goose, chosen from their flock and stuffed with raisin dressing. Something else I remember was Jello made in drinking glasses, red in one and green in another.

We didn't have church on Christmas day unless of course it fell on a Sunday. However, we did have a Sunday School concert in the church basement on a week night because Santa had been contacted and arrived at the end of the program with a bag of candy for each child. I can still hear his bells ringing as he came down the stairs and then burst into the room with his hearty laugh.

My mother was a Sunday School teacher and enjoyed training the older girls to perform a pantomime while carols were being sung. She would have them in white dresses, trimmed with tinsel—kind of like the heavenly host in the sky the night Jesus was born.

And all the while the big furnace that had been stocked to the brim kept us all warmed, both body and soul.

One year my brother sent away for a record that he had seen advertised somewhere. It was an old 45 that we played on our little record player. I found it recently and offered the song to you. Just google “Happy Birthday Jesus, Mama said you were near.” It is especially nice for a family with young children.



In talking to our children and grand-children, they also have lots of fond memories. Some were about movies watched together, opening one present on Christmas eve, wrapping gifts after the children were in bed and visiting with family and friends. But most of the memories were of food served only at Christmas.

No wonder most people make Christmas a priority. And each year, new traditions are being made.



Christmas traditions included singing

By Martha Schatti

As a child, there were not that many gifts under the tree on Christmas morning, but everyone received something. After chores were done and breakfast was eaten we were able to open these gifts. It was rather hurried as in those days there was always a service at church.

After church it was the off to my father's side of the family for a get-together and a big feast in one of his siblings homes. Each of nine siblings took turns hosting. In later years when the number of people outgrew our homes then we rented a hall.

One tradition that we kept for many years was singing from the hymnal while someone playing along on the piano. This is where I learned many songs from the blue *Life Songs 2* hymnal. I miss that.

We also played a lot of board and card games for the afternoon before indulging again in another meal before saying goodbye. As

years passed the date was moved from Christmas Day to Boxing Day and now we have a get-together in June. We still have a big feast although it is potluck instead of a full-blown turkey dinner and we still play board games and visit.

My mother's side of the family was similar, sharing the hosting with six siblings meeting on New Year's Day, and now meeting in June as well. There are only two remaining siblings on both my father and mother's side, but there are many cousins along with their children and grandchildren. We seem to have a strong tie and desire to continue this tradition for years to come.

Merry Christmas everyone.



Family get-togethers are important

By Bonnie Brubacher

The Christmas season is a busy time of year for us as it is for most people, I personally absolutely love this time of year! The festivities, the decorations, the people, the food, and the Christmas Carols!

Traditions for Christmas get-togethers are still happening for both our families. The extended gatherings traditionally changed locations; from an in-home dinner at Grandma's or Mom's home is now held a church hall location for ease of space and children to play. The other change I see is the numbers that attend or the age group that attends.

We traditionally start in November with my Mom's side (Jantzi) when her sister and brother's families all gather for a pot luck dinner with each family taking their turn to organize it. After this we normally put up the decorations at our home.

Following this it's time for the annual Brubacher gathering on Clare's side. The whole family is invited. including his Mom, Selina, who is 99 this year (wow)! We are happy to have her and her two sisters, Lydia and Martha join us. This get-together is usually the first Saturday of December. If all attend we are 56 people.

We like to entertain during the holiday season, so we enjoy hosting friends at different times of the month, for an evening or for a dinner gathering.

On the Sunday a week before Christmas Day, I host my Frey side of the family, including my Mom who is 86, two sisters and their families and our children and their children. We are 21 with everyone.

Our Christmas Eve tradition started back in 1985 with three couples and our young children taking turns in hosting Christmas Eve. After a local Christmas Eve service, we still have this get-together. ☺

Christmas Day is our immediate family and our grandchildren's day; they can come anytime it works best, sometimes it's a brunch or sometimes it's for an evening dinner, whatever works best is fine with me.

As our many families grow to the next generation and the next generations I see attending numbers have started to decrease due to many busy schedules, sometimes work-related or due to younger children's activities. I can understand, our next generations also have other family gatherings as well, yet it certainly seems that all these Christmas gatherings are still pretty well attended, possibly the older generation keeps is going ☺.

We have a lot of Christmas family gatherings, involving both our parents' side and as well as extended family aunts and of course our immediate family, This is called TRADITION!.. and who wants to be the one that breaks Tradition?

Refugees and Christmas

By Leon Kehl

I think our Christmas traditions changed two years ago when my parents welcomed two Turkish refugees into their home two weeks before Christmas. That wasn't part of the Christmas planning and room needed to be found for them at the inn, just like we celebrate in the Christmas story. They arrived during a snowstorm on December 11th for what we thought was a day visit, but they had suitcases with them and no place to return to. Isn't that similar to the Christmas story where Jesus' family end up fleeing to Egypt from Bethlehem rather than returning home?

I've been asked in the past by Muslims whether Christians have the same saying that visitors are a blessing from God. We don't say that often, but if we read our Bible that message is clearly there. Jesus says in the story of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25, "I was a stranger and you invited me in".

So that Christmas we didn't have a traditional Christmas turkey or ham but rather a Turkish dish called maqluba with stewed meat, rice and vegetables. Those men had to flee without their families and we greeted them not knowing what the future would

hold. We had no idea when and if they would be reunited with their families. So began a journey of walking with them, waiting, hoping and praying.

The first Christmas may have been a celebration of welcoming the stranger and making new friends, but like Jesus' family's journey to Egypt, this was only the start of a period of waiting, often in fear and uncertainty. In the next year we were able to celebrate the arrival of one son and also Dan and Karen welcoming another Turkish man and later his son. Yet there was no news on when their wives and other children could join them. Some of their families were in hiding in Turkey and sometimes we would join them in their sorrow or happiness when a family member or friend was arrested or released. There was always this fear of what might happen to their families and whether they could join them here in Canada. Would they be able to leave or be caught and jailed?

So last Christmas felt darker as we had no idea how long this experience might last. My mother was recovering from a long and painful experience of shingles and my father from eye surgery. The Turkish refugees had moved out but had become part of our

family and so now we waited with them. Was that what Jesus' family felt like in Egypt, waiting in uncertainty, where hope becomes difficult?

This Christmas feels like spring after a long difficult winter. Within

24 hours we got to meet both of their reunited families after arriving within days of each other. We saw a video of one of the wives entering her new home for the first time. Her husband had flowers ready and rose petals sprinkled up their stairs with new slippers and pyjamas waiting. Her husband had spent hours cleaning the whole house prior to his family's arrival. How would you prepare for your spouse's arrival after two years, not knowing when you would ever be able to share the same bed again?

As we celebrate their safe arrival, we also think of others who are still waiting, hoping and praying. I think of another Turkish friend who is here but had to flee leaving his pregnant wife in Turkey. I can't imagine not being there for my child's birth and not knowing when and if I would ever see my own flesh and blood.

I think of the Syrian Christian family from Paul's home town of Tarsus that our church has agreed to sponsor. What will their Christmas be like as they wait in Beirut for word of when they can come to Canada. This Christmas will be their third Christmas living away from their family and friends in Syria.

Like Jesus' family they are living in a foreign country, wondering when they will be able to live in freedom in a new home. So as we celebrate Christmas with our families this year, I would invite you to pray for this family and that by next Christmas they will be able to live here with us in Canada, surrounded by new family and new friends.

As we prepare to welcome Jesus' birth this year, let's also remember what he said about welcoming the stranger.



Mary, Joseph and Jesus were refugees when they fled to Egypt.

Why you should join the Floradale Facebook group

By Jim Loepp Thiessen

We've started a "Facebook Group" for Floradale Church. We've not had too many people join thus far, so the question might be why would want to join this group, or even join Facebook in the first place?

First of all, if you don't "do" Facebook, by way of introduction, it's a social media platform. It's a way of connecting with people you might normally connect with, and those you might not, through your computer. You become "friends" with people who you might know, and those you don't, depending on your own personality. You then have access to their pictures, videos, stories and articles they post—and they to yours. Grandparents will often join to see pictures and videos of their grandkids.

There are strengths and weaknesses of this way of connecting with others. In my view, Facebook excels when you see things like prayer requests from people. It's a fast way of letting lots of people know quickly what is going on in your life. It's also great to bring happy birthday greetings to folks you would perhaps not otherwise think of on their birthday. I get some excellent articles from colleagues that they post—and their opinions on those articles.

You can join various groups within Facebook that may connect with your interests. For example, I'm in a group with several hundred thousand members who only post Instant Pot recipes they like.

Facebook is a platform for online conversation, which is both its blessing and its pitfall. It's a strength because it brings people into conversation who may not otherwise engage around various issues. Its weakness is

that things are often said electronically that would never be said in person. And overall, people tend to collect with people holding similar viewpoints, which only serves to polarize us in the long run. We end up not seeing material from folks who have opposing viewpoints.



And like other platforms, there is also "fake news." Stories are posted which aren't true. There is ongoing media dialogue right now around Russian influence via Facebook in the last American election spreading fake video material. It takes discernment to see truth from falsehood.

Facebook fails as a medium when it becomes a point of social comparison. People tend to post the best parts of their lives, and it can often look like everyone but you has the most wonderful life! And because you can "like" what

is posted, it's easy to think your story, viewpoint, or video is a fail because it didn't get enough likes. You can compare yourself to others to see who has more "friends" than you do. "Oh, look they have _____ number of friends, they must be more popular than me!" Finally, it's far too easy to waste a great deal of time simply scrolling through stories and pictures.

Having said all that, the group we have started is not an "open group." That is, you have to ask to join as a person who connects with Floradale. The group has potential to be another way to let others know what is happening at church and outside of it.

In my previous congregation folks used Facebook, but didn't often check their email, so it was a fast way of setting up a group and connecting quickly with youth and parents for example. If you wish to join, and you're a part of Facebook, then you simply search for Floradale Mennonite Church and ask to join our group. If you aren't part of Facebook, and you want to join, then you have to set up an account (free), and then make many decisions about who and what you want others to see from your life. And the journey begins...



In late October the church sign at Bethel Mennonite Church was hit by a large round bale that escaped. It caused significant damage.

Woolwich-Grey cluster women's meeting

Sara Wyngaarten spent a year in India as part of MCC's Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program. While at university she studied agriculture and development. A member at Elmira Mennonite Church and an MCC supporter, she was pleased to find in her studies that MCC is regarded as a good example of an aid organization.

At the women's meeting at Bethel on Nov. 3, Sara brought greetings from the Mennonite Church in India. MCC began working there in 1942 when there was a famine in West Bengal. In the 1950s MCC began doing long-term development and now is doing a lot of education, development and peace building.

In the year from 2017 to 2018, Sara worked in rural areas, assisting with local training programs working with women. She said it was very inspiring to see how rural women were able to improve their lives and to see how MCC is empowering these women.



When Sara returned from her SALT term in India, she brought back several saris, some of which were gifts.

WMCEC and Mennonite Women Canada news

Char Weber announced that the WMCEC spring meeting will be held at Floradale Mennonite Church on April

13, 2019 with Marilyn Rudy-Froese speaking on the theme: "We don't know where we're going, but we know how to get there."

Shirley Redekop, president of Mennonite Women Canada, reported that support for the organization seems to be waning. She pointed out that the recent *Con-*

nections newsletter has been distributed and is available on the Mennonite Women Canada website. She also recommended that people read her report on the women's trip to Tanzania which appears in a recent issue of *Canadian Mennonite*. Among the projects of MW Canada is support for overseas workers.

A transition team has been appointed to discuss the future of MW Canada and will report at their next meeting, part of the Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Abbotsford, B.C. from June 28 to July 1, 2019. While women's retreats and inspirational days are still appreciated, the future of the Canada-wide body is in question. After a discussion with Mennonite Women USA, the 2019 issue of the Women's Bible Study will probably be the last because costs are not being covered.

Shirley asked for input and indicated that the present executive is very much open for new ideas.

Serving in Tanzania

On Sunday, Nov. 4, Lloyd and Erla (Martin) Koch spoke about their on-going work in Tanzania, working with the Sharati Mennonite Church there. The Eastern Mennonite Mission Board began working in northwest Tanzania on the shores of Lake Victoria, in 1934. They built a hospital where many North Americans worked over the years, including Simeon and Edna Hurst, Elsie Cressman and Victor and Viola Dorsch.

In the 1990s, ownership of the hospital was given to the local Tanzanian Mennonite Church. The church is fairly large; today it has 103 congregations and 9,000 members. The hospital includes a School of Nursing and graduates about 50 students each year.

For the past 10 years, Lloyd and Erla have spent several weeks in Tanzania, sharing their skills. Lloyd, an experienced hospital administrator, has helped develop strategic plans and work at infrastructure projects. In 2014 they shipped silo to serve as a large water tank to provide a good water supply.



Inside the tank they were able to ship dried food from a local gleaners operation as well as blankets and sheets. One year they painted the entire hospital. In 2016 they renovated the old pediatrics ward into an ICU. In 2017 Lloyd helped them work at water purification; this has allowed them to sell clean water to local people.

Last year they began work on a new laboratory which needs another \$30,000 to complete. Lloyd and Erla again plan to spend Feb. and March of 2019 in Tanzania, hopefully completing the lab.

Meanwhile, Erla works in the villages, teaching English, bringing health education and developing relationships. Over the years she has supported HIV families and helped to empower women with income generation. She says there is so much poverty and she can't help everyone, but she does what she can. This year Palmer Becker is accompanying them and will do some teaching of theology.

Wedding



Ben Greenwood and Cinthia Corvino (from Waterford, Ont.) were married Oct. 15, 2018. The wedding was held at Waterloo City Hall and they will be living near Waterfor.



Special Anniversary

Congratulations to Cheryl Buehler and Ted Read who will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary on Dec. 18, 2018.



Sunday morning worship time

Since September, worship time has been at 10 a.m. followed by adult education time (Sunday School). When Church Council discussed responses to this trial, opinions were too mixed to come up with a conclusion. Council has decided to leave worship at 10 a.m. until the end of February so that we can have a conversation and make a decision at the annual meeting.

Community Christmas Carol Celebration

This year Floradale is hosting the Community Choir celebration on Sun. Dec. 9 at 7 p.m. Choirs from several community churches will be singing as individual choirs and as a mass choir. There is always lots of audience participation in the carols as well.

Among the choirs that will be participating in this 10th year are: Floradale Mennonite, Elmira Mennonite, Trinity United, St. Theresa Catholic, Gale Presbyterian and Woodside.

The evening also includes an offering to raise funds for Woolwich Community Counselling. This counselling centre has its roots in the Elmira and District Ministerial, the group that is the basis for this annual Christmas event.

Many thanks to Merri-Lee Metzger, Floradale's conductor and to Casey Horn, our pianist, and to Eileen Freeman who has done a lot of work behind the scenes, especially to make hosting this event possible.



Hopping Thursday musical

On Nov. 16, the Hopping Thursday program did their annual performance, "As Free as a Bird." The cast included two narrators, four rabbits, three chickens, three geese, three rats and four cats for a total of 19 children involved. About one quarter of the children are connected to the congregation. Many thanks to Merri-Lee Metzger, Veg Weber, Chris Kehl, Jane Hesselink and the rest of the adults from the congregation who helped with this performance.

