



Focus on Floradale

Volume XXXV, No. 5

Floradale Mennonite Church

December, 2019



Bethlehem diorama

During the season of Advent, a miniature Bethlehem was created for the front of the church to help us immerse ourselves into the world that Jesus was born into. The various scenes can help imagine and understand the story of Jesus' birth. The project was spearheaded by the Worship Committee and they thank the following people for their contributions to these Bethlehem scenes: Gloria H. Bauman, Eleanor Buehler, Roy Draper, Rick Freeman, Jane Hesselink, Wanda Kehl, Ingrid Loepp Thiessen, Bonnie Martin, Jocelyn Martin, Marilyn Martin, Yvonne Martin, Ron Metzger, Sandra Petryschuk, Betty Snip, Marilyn Weber, Erma Wideman, Wesley Wilson, Nicole Woeschka.



Sheep and shepherds on a hillside.



The Nazareth scene is on a table at the back.

The Knitting Pilgrim

By Barb Draper

The audience was absolutely amazed when Kirk Dunn finally revealed his knitted panels at the end of his one-man show on Oct. 26. He spent 15 years putting the panels together. When he invited the audience to come to the front for a closer look at the end of the show, the stage was quickly crowded.

The idea of using his ability to knit to begin conversations about the religions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam came in 2003 at the time of the Iraq war when he overheard a conversation in his church's kitchen about Islam being a religion of hate. Thinking about how he could work for peace, he got the idea of using knitting in the style of stained-glass windows. Lots of people know how to knit, so they would be interested in how it is done, and the stories told in the tapestry would help to begin the conversations he wanted.

Throughout the show as Dunn talked about the determination needed to finish his project, the panels were covered in drop cloths. Sometimes they were used to show photos or videos that enhanced his story.

Dunn wrote a grant proposal and received a substantial

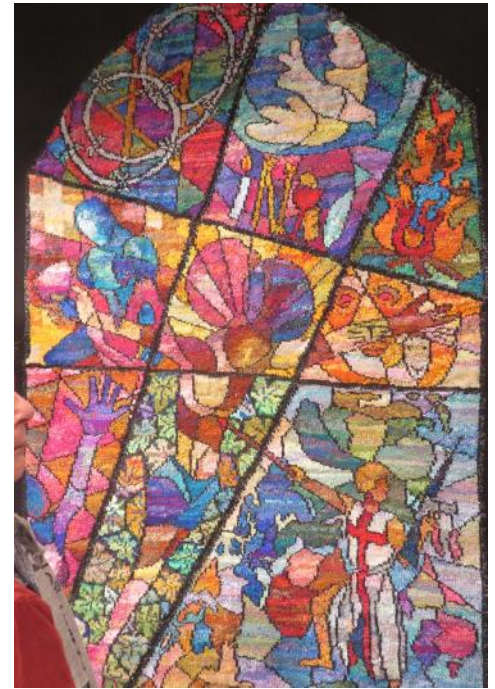
amount of money from the Ontario Arts Council. But soon the money was gone and the project was only begun. Many times he was ready to quit, but his wife encouraged him to keep going. When it came to doing panels for Judaism and Islam, he needed to do research. He had to find other work to support his family while he knitted.

At the beginning his children were tiny, but they were teenagers by the time he finally finished. He then had the challenge of finding a way to show his work, but art galleries were not interested. In 2017, when President Trump issued a travel ban on Muslims, Dunn was ready to try again and he put together a proposal showcasing his acting and knitting skills. It was this one-man show of the story of how he came to make the knitted panels that he was presenting. This time his grant proposal was successful. In the past several months he has performed it about 40 times.

He called his show "The Knitting Pilgrim" because he saw his project as a pilgrimage. It took him 15 years to complete. It required much faith and determination and it left him humbled.



People lingered after the show to have a closer look and to chat with Kirk Dunn, the artist.



The Christianity panel was completed first.

The offering went to the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support in Kitchener, an organization that helps local refugees with getting settled in Canada.

John B. Miller Concert



On Sat. Nov. 23, Floradale Mennonite Church hosted the John B. Miller band for the third year. Using piano, guitars, violin, bass and various percussion instruments, they played a variety of Christmas music. Some of it was toe-tapping, other songs were more lyrical. The coloured lights that changed from song to song were also appealing. There was a warm atmosphere with good rapport between the band and the audience.

Fall ladies meeting at Listowel

By Char Weber

Our committee plans a Saturday morning event every fall. There are eight churches in our Woolwich-Grey cluster and this year ladies from Listowel Mennonite Church hosted our meeting on Nov. 9.

Upon arrival, we are welcomed by refreshments of coffee/tea and muffins or breads. It is a great opportunity to visit prior to the meeting. This year, we had an informal setting sitting at tables in the fellowship hall. Our guest speaker was Andrea Charest who runs a thrift-shop-style shop in Listowel named It Takes a Village. We enjoyed her stories and information about this shop that has charitable status and relies on volunteers and donations to pay the rent.

We had a "casual conversation with Andrea," as she said. When people come into the shop, they are given so many "points" to spend. There are clothing and household goods on shelves that they can choose from. As well, there is a small food bank.

Andrea is a single mom herself and thus has walked this journey in her own way. She is an excellent speaker and you could feel her enthusiasm for her work in an unpaid position.

She returned to school herself this September, attending first year of university in Waterloo as a mature adult. With her children now grown, she is one fast-paced and busy woman. Our meeting was in the midst of her first mid-terms and assignments, but she did not hesitate to come speak with us when asked. She expressed her deep feelings about the importance of assisting those in need (and there certainly is need in Listowel) with grace and dignity. She has a genuine concern and care for her work here.

This is her second year with this thrift shop. During the summer months especially, there is a stand outside the store for a "free give and take" system, for extra garden produce and excess bread they are sometimes given. Just help yourself.

This project is in the growing stage and she has a list of volunteers who work in the store. Our offering of \$785 from the 45 ladies who attended that morning went to It Takes a Village. This will cover a portion of the rent. She mentioned the increased need for warm socks, gloves and hats with the cold weather now. Ladies also brought a few such items and/or a Food Bank items to stock their shelves! This was much appreciated by Andrea.

More donations are always welcome; see the address below. The shop is also on Facebook.

We certainly enjoyed listening and learning from Andrea Charest.

It Takes A Village
177 Main St. W, Listowel, ON N4W 1A1
Phone # 519-291-0116

WMCEC Update:

Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada will cease to exist as an official organization by Dec. 31, 2019 as decided at the meeting in April. A new committee is in place called Women's Working Group and they have an event planned for the fall of 2020. Watch for more information which will be sent to all churches.

Reducing the clothes mountain

On Thur. Oct. 24, several people from Floradale helped at the thrift shop, sorting through the many bags of donated clothes that sometimes pile up to make a "clothes mountain." Although the pile was not completely gone, it was considerably reduced. Clothes that were not in A-1 condition were sent on to the RePurpose store down the street, the rest will be priced by regular volunteers.



Maddy and Kelsey Greenwood helped to sort clothes at the thrift shop

Thank you from the food bank

On Oct. 16, several women from the church helped to sort food at the local food bank. Here is a note from Lisa at the food bank:

Ladies at Floradale Mennonite Church,

Once again you ladies come with many donations from the congregation, to spend an evening sorting food for the Fall Food Drive. Your support and your time to WCS shows how much you all care about our community. We greatly appreciate your kindness. Together with your donation we received over 13,000 pounds of food this fall.

Thank you for coming.



The church collected food for the food bank on Thanksgiving Sunday.



Christmas nostalgia



We invited people to describe what ornaments or foods evoke Christmas nostalgia for them.

B.C. Christmas memories

By Rita Bauman

Growing up on a farm in the Fraser Valley nestled between the mountains with four siblings and a Mom who loved Christmas, there was never a shortage of excitement!

One of my favorite memories is on Christmas Eve. We always had a children's concert and acted out the Nativity scene and sang carols like "Oh Tannenbaum" (Oh Christmas tree) in German; we had a huge real decorated Christmas tree in our Sanctuary. (I think singing this song was a thank you to the people who made a big effort in decorating this huge tree!)

My brother Paul and I will sing this song in German at our Christmas gathering, and our children just laugh at us! The best part of this Christmas Eve program was the "Tute" a brown paper bag filled with candy, nuts and an orange for every child, followed by going home and opening our presents. I don't think I ever slept much after all that excitement!

Food was always a highlight at Christmas—Napoleon Torte for breakfast, Bubbat, with the Turkey, Halva and Pfeffer Kuchen and of course lots of chocolate!

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas!



Napoleon Torte

New traditions of generosity and hospitality

By Nichelle Bauman

Advent is my favourite time of year. I enjoy preparing for Christmas, not only physically by making decorations and food, but spiritually as well, by reading through and meditating on the gospel texts. Reuben gets excited to set up the nativity, and he often plays with the little wooden figurines. Naomi on the other hand is busy sneaking decorations from the Christmas tree. I always decorate with dehydrated orange slices on a piece of ribbon, and she likes to pilfer them whenever I'm not looking. Then I find a bunch of empty ribbons on the tree!

Growing up, we had many Christmas traditions, but one of the fondest for me was our Christmas tree. For the first five years of my life, we'd get bundled up and head out to pick the perfect tree, cut it down and enjoy hot apple cider, bring it home ... and within a day or so of it being set up, I'd get sick.

Then after a bunch of sick Christmases, they figured out I was allergic to the Christmas tree (among other things, like dust, which artificial trees are great at collecting so that wasn't an option). So my dad decided to make us a Christmas tree. I wish I could find a picture, but it's so vivid in my mind: he screwed a hook into the ceiling and then placed a plywood sheet directly under it, with little eyelet hooks all the way around the perimeter. He then strung wire from the eyelets to the ceiling hook to make an eight-foot-tall cone. Then he put wire around it horizontally (picture a

giant inverted tomato cage), with little loops for us to hang our decorations on. He left a larger opening at the back, and then he was able to set up the nativity on a plant stand inside the cone. Then all the gifts were put inside the cone around the base of the plant stand. To top it off, he set up a flood light to bathe the whole hypoallergenic "tree" in green.

A Christmas food tradition is baking and decorating cookies. Up until fairly recently, Grandma would invite my sister and I over to decorate sugar cookies and lebkuchen. My sister and I loved decorating the little lebkuchen people in hats, scarves, dresses and overalls of icing and sprinkles. Now, I make lebkuchen and sugar cookies myself, and I continue to enjoy decorating them. I look forward to when my kids are a bit older and can make some memories decorating with me!

One Christmas tradition that I have started in the past couple years is making my own wreaths and swags for decorating the outside of the house, and to give to friends and family. Tromping through the bush to gather grapevine and evergreen boughs on a crisp November or December day is fun (and good exercise when pulling a toddler in a sleigh!). I also find the time spent outside to be a great time to connect with God and thank Him for His beautiful creation.

Greg and I are at a point where we are starting to think about what traditions we want to build into our family. It feels so counter-cultural to do this (and some people think we're weird) but we don't buy each other (or our kids) gifts, and we try as much as possible to keep the gifts we do

give relational (three-course dinners at our house for example).

In addition, we want Advent and Christmas to be an intentional time of generosity and hospitality to those beyond our normal circle of family and friends. Doing an MCC relief kit every Christmas and going shopping for it as a family is a small way that we have started that tradition. We look forward to the many opportunities and relationships that leaning into a tradition of generosity and hospitality will bring us!



Never too many special ornaments

By Heather Clemmer
(nee Harrison)

Growing up in Peterborough, with my two older brothers, Christmas was an enjoyable time. Christmas eve, I would sit in my small kid-sized rocking chair and plead with my Mother to hold the felt “Santa” that sat above the roaring fire. He was always smiling and happy to be held “gently.” My Brother got to keep him, when we all moved away, which was sad for me especially when he rarely held him??? Perhaps before I was born, they had their turn with Santa.

Santa Claus always came, leaving an unwrapped present under the tree and stockings full. Our stockings always contained a Delicious apple, a Naval orange, a Jersey Milk Chocolate bar, and loose nuts (Brazil, hazelnuts, walnuts and almonds-in their shells). Pantyhose for me and new socks for my brothers. It was always the last to be opened.

We were never allowed to go downstairs to the tree until everyone was awake. Needless to say, I was always waking my siblings up to hurry to see what Santa left us, sometimes getting up in the wee hours of the morning, when it was still dark out. As my brothers got older and knew the true story of Santa, they were wanting sleep more than the wrapped gift to open, so getting them awake seemed to be more challenging year by year.

My Mother always took me to some crafty place before Christmas to make different ornaments, ceramic, beaded, and milkweed to name a few. To this day when I put them on my tree here 50 years later, I still remember where and when I made them. Sputnik, and the tiny ceramic mouse with a yarn string to hold it onto the tree, and the gold painted milkweed that had a trumpeter blowing on a Golf Tee, are some of my old favourites.

Each year that we have lived in Elmira, I have bought three new handmade ornaments. Giving the boys theirs for when they moved away. Stick snowman, fused-glass reindeer, stained glass golf bags, snowmen lightbulbs, and more from Pinterest. I hope my sons and their families continue saving and collecting their own Christmas ornaments now and in the future. You can NEVER have enough for the tree.

Merry Christmas to all, and may your memories be FULL, and your lights on your family and trees shine bright.



Precious memories

By Polly Burkhardt

As I hang my Christmas tree decorations, warm memories of our life in Warton flood back. When I hang the star, I think of Shelley who babysat our boys. Oh, the patience and love she had! The snowman and raindrop remind me of the wonderful times we spent with our friends. I also have a beautiful glass angel that gets placed in the centre at the front of the tree. This angel just became more precious to me as the aunt who gave it to me passed away this year due to cancer. I will forever remember her love and support.

Every year in early December, Mom would make her grocery list to include candied gumdrops, crushed pineapple, yellow raisins and coloured cherries. She was getting ready to make her Christmas gumdrop cake. The batter would be prepared and put into two loaf pans and into the oven to bake. The aroma in the kitchen was delicious.

This gumdrop cake was not allowed to be eaten right away, as Mom said it needed to be kept for a few weeks in the fridge to age. When we were older and each had our own places, she would make sure there was enough for each family to have half a loaf. Our families soon knew this as part of Grandma’s Christmas tradition.

As the years have passed, Mom is no longer able to make her cake. Derrick loved this gumdrop cake and asked for Mom’s recipe. It has now become a new tradition for Derrick to make the cake early December. We now share it with both



Christmas traditions speak to the heart

By Kaitlyn Boertien

Christmas is such a wonderful time of year. It's a time to come together, reconnect with family, and celebrate. Though the holiday season can be busy and stressful, there are a few things that I always look forward to.

I come from two very large and loud families. Both sides have similar traditions. Our Christmas feast usually consists of various potluck items, which I always look forward to, because there's nothing quite like a Mennonite potluck!

Another common factor with my families is that we sing. Now,

on the Martin side we get together on Boxing Day, which just so happens to be my Grandpa's birthday. We have a tradition in the Martin family to sing "Happy Birthday" in the most hideous, off-key, out-of-sync manner that you can possibly imagine! But, when the song books come out, there is beautiful four-part harmony that gives me the chills.

The Gingrichs are the same. My favourite song that we sing at both gatherings is "O Beautiful Star of Bethlehem." This was my Grandpa Gingrich's favourite song also. This is our first Christmas without him, but I know he will be with us, and singing along.

A memorable tradition from my childhood takes place in the basement of my parents' house, in

front of the Christmas tree, with the fire going. We had a book of the Christmas story that doubled as somewhat of an ornament. The front and back cover tied together, displaying the pages inside, that are bound together, making a star like shape. We would sit around and read the story before proceeding with opening our presents. This has always remained special to me, because it reminded us of the true meaning of Christmas.

As I prepare for my first Christmas season as a mother, I am filled with joy and excitement. Although Mackenzie is quite young and does not understand, I look forward to starting our own traditions, as well as carrying on with the ones that are close to my heart.

From Christmas Past

Compiled by Mary M. Martin

December has come and the close of another year. Our lives are busy with many activities and one of them is compiling the December Focus with its theme of Christmas nostalgia. This got me to dig into past Christmas Focus on Floradale issues to see what themes had been addressed over the years. I didn't have time to flip through all past copies, but here are some excerpts from some of the writers:

In 1985 For "Christmas Memories" Dave Metzger wrote: "One Christmas many years ago, I stayed home alone to look after the turkey while the rest of the family went to church. I was a little nervous because Ab was bringing Eleanor for Christmas dinner the first time. I have a fond memory of that day because everyone said the turkey was delicious."

In 1988 for "Gift Giving at Christmas" Barb Draper wrote: "The whole matter of Christmas customs and traditions has caused many Christians much concern as they struggle to keep things in perspective. What is the dividing line between Christian and pagan practices at Christmas? Some of our traditions at this time of year may be unrelated to the "real" meaning of Christmas, yet they are important in developing relationships. In fact, special times with family and friends, sharing presents, feasting, are age-old ways of celebrating special events."

In 1994 for "Christmas Reflections" Bonnie Brubacher wrote "Christmas is my favourite time of year.

I guess it all starts back when I was a little girl watching Mom do all sorts of baking fancy cookies, cream buns and coffee cake, decorating the house, wrapping presents for me. You know, I always got so excited I could hardly wait."

In 2001 in "Anticipating Christmas" Steve Bauman wrote: "This year with all the warm weather we've had it was hard not to get outside decorations up in a balmy breeze. Even a procrastinator like myself got the lights flashing without getting frostbite. Next on the to-do list is getting the Christmas tree.... Of course the best thing is getting together with family."

In 2003 for "Favorite Charities" Donna Freeman wrote: "My favorite charity is Mennonite Central Committee. I feel their program ministers to the physical needs of individuals as well as their spiritual needs. When compared to other charities, they have low administrative costs so more of your money reaches the people who need it.... As a family, we have supported the Global Family Program using the sponsorships as Christmas gifts."

It was interesting to browse through these few December issues; many memories were evoked. I also copied a Christmas cookie recipe that Vera Bowman had submitted all those years ago and intend to try them for Christmas. Time and people change, and I wonder how the quoted writers would answer the same question if they were writing today. I think that although time and people change, the theme, the anticipation and the hopes around Christmas remain constant.

Surprise gifts are special

By Shirley Shoemaker

In most people's lives, Christmas is a busy and bustling time. Since I have always not enjoyed shopping, it is always important to give something from the heart which might be a result of some of my baking or maybe a gift of time or visit.

People play a big part in my life and from my youth I remember how exciting it was to see friends come home from afar for the holidays. To this day that is always a highlight and maybe this can happen again this year, as Barb is planning to show the old Sunday school production of 50 years ago. I'm excited about this.

Thinking of a special thing given, I think of a piece of pottery given to us one year from the Kehls. We had given them some trees to plant when they moved to their house in Floradale many years ago. It was a surprise and I still use it with a special recognition of who we received it from.

Thinking of other special things, I think it is the surprise that is usually the exciting part of gifts for me.

Updated Christmas song

Submitted by Ab Metzger

A writer to the *Wellington Advertiser* said he wished that some Christmas songs could be updated and complained that many songs seem "a little materialistic." He decided to update the "Twelve Days of Christmas" so that the last verse would go as follows:

"On the 12th day of Christmas, a kind soul gave the food bank,
12 drinking boxes,
11 cans of soup
10 pounds of taters
9 tins of tuna
8 granola bars
7 cans of beans
6 tins of fruit
5 jars of pasta sauce
4 cans of veggies
3 bags of pasta
2 pounds of sugar
And an assorted bag of toiletries.

Comforter Knotting blitz

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of MCC in 2020, MCC Canada has a goal to collect 6,500 hand-made comforters by Jan. 18, 2020.



While a group of women from Floradale regularly make comforters, we invite everyone to participate in the Floradale blitz on Jan. 11. Come for an hour, or come for the day. Let's see how many we can make!

Focus on Floradale is published five times a year.

Editor: Barb Draper

Editorial Committee:

Polly Burkhart

Sharon Cressman

Mary M. Martin

From the last issue

Our last issue had reflections on the grandparent-grandchild relationship. The editor goofed and somehow part of Laurel Martin's article was omitted. Here is the complete write-up that should have been in the October issue:

Grandparenting is indescribable

By Laurel Martin

I was blessed to grow up into my adult life with all four of my grandparents, all of whom were Markham Mennonite. They all valued their faith, their families and their heritage, although I don't recall any of them ever saying that. It was evident in the way they lived, spoke and walked their faith daily and quietly.

I remember my Grampa Martin giving us two dollars if we could successfully say a full sentence in Pennsylvania Dutch! I remember my Grandma Weber, after she moved to Snyder Avenue in Elmira,

kept chocolate bars in a drawer for treats! I also remember my Grandma Weber was incredibly accepting and loving to all who crossed her path.

We spent a lot of time visiting at both the Weber and Martin Grandparents, so they were an important part of shaping our lives, in an unspoken quiet way.

In April of this year we became Grandparents for the first time, it's like most events in our life experiences, hard to explain unless you have experienced it. To watch your children become parents is really, truly a new chapter. The joy and love that spills over for a grandchild is for me, indescribable.

We feel grateful and blessed to have the gift of Addy in our lives. We too, have lots of visits and spend lots of time together, even in this short time. As I reflect, I don't think Addy will say her Grandma Martin is quiet! However, I do pray Addy grows up knowing that her faith, family and heritage are important and will provide her with a blessed path.

An overview of Floradale's 'Hopping Thursday' program

By Veg Weber
and Merri-Lee Metzger

In the spring of 2006, we had a brand-new building and Pastor Fred started brainstorming on ways to utilize this space. He thought we could start an evening program for all ages. Fred decided to have an Adult Bible Study, Stefan Cherry, the youth worker, started a youth program called Koinonia and I started a kid's program for SK-Grade 5 called Koinonia Kids. I'm pretty sure Fred came up with the name Hopping Thursdays.

We wondered where the kids would come from. We contacted Floradale Public School and asked if they would consider sending a flyer home with their children, promoting our program. They were very willing and continue to do it every year.

For the first several years our daughters Liz and Sarah helped out. We used curriculum from MCC and the Hello sheets that were being distributed by MCC at that time. Each sheet focused on a different country. We ate food, played games and made crafts from each of these countries. Every evening also included a gym time that we also supervised.

During these first years we also had many visitors come and share their experiences of the countries we were studying. Lester and Wanda shared about India, the IVEPer working at Elmira Thrift & Gift shared, as well as others.

It didn't take long for the enthusiasm of the program to catch on and soon more children were coming. Numbers were increasing with the majority of the children coming from the school/community. Merri-Lee Metzger,

Chris Kehl and Steve (Ort) Bauman offered to help out which was a God-send. Steve is now the "favourite guy" in the gym that all the kids love.

Because the program was growing we divided the children into two groups: SK to Grade 5 and Grade 6-8. Casey Horn, Liz Weber and Jane Hesselink have led the Grade 6-8's over the years while the youth worker led the youth. At one point we had 50 kids here from SK to Grade 12 plus the adults. It was a hopping/happening place!



One year each child made their own little blanket.

For several years we collected and assembled items for MCC school kits. The children really enjoyed bringing items and watching our collection grow. Some of the other service projects included the youth making apple sauce and for a year they made the snack for everyone each Thursday evening. Gordon and Audrey Weber took a real interest in our Hopping Thursday program, so one year the children made cut-out cookies, baked and decorated them. The following week we went to

Parkview Manors where the Webers were living. We sang a few songs to the residents and handed out the cookies.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry was introduced where ladies would come on a Thursday evening to knit prayer shawls. Some of the children (mostly girls) wanted to learn how to knit and the women were willing to teach them.



Learning to knit.

In 2010 we performed our first musical, "Not A Creature Was Stirring," where all the children were cats or mice. Randy Bauman and Rita Bauman joined the cast as the adults. This started a tradition that on the first evening of Hopping Thursdays we are asked "are we doing a musical this year?" Each year we are never sure if we will, but the kids are always insistent. We have done a musical every year and they have ranged from ones we have purchased: "It All Happened in the City", "Once Upon a Lily Pad" where the kids were frogs, fireflies, turtles, birds etc.; one that Merri-Lee wrote "We're Gonna Grow" on the fruit of the Spirit; to ones that the kids wrote themselves.

The kids are very excited about these musicals and most are willing to participate or to

help make props. We have been privileged to have a mother who has made most of the costumes we now use in our productions.

Our routine for a Thursday evening is the SK to Grade 4's go into the gym from 7-7:30 while the Grades 5-8 have an input session in the Junior Youth Cave in the basement led by Pastor Anita. At 7:30 we switch and the Grades 5-8's go into the gym while the SK to Grade 4's gather in the multipurpose room. We have a circle time with the children where we sing, pray and share a story. Then there is a craft for them to make and we finish off the evening with a snack that is often related to our theme for the evening. Of course this is the kid's favourite part of the evening along with gym time.

We have had the honour of having others help us with crafts. Dana Bauman came to help us make stepping stones and Wanda Kehl helped the children make pottery cups, that we used with our snack each week.

For a couple years after gym time we gave the children the opportunity to check books out from the church library. We decided they needed bags to take these books to and from the church, and Elmira Thrift & Gift

were willing to donate jeans for this project. All we had to do was sew them into bags and put handles on. The children then used fabric paint to decorate and personalize their bags. .

One year we sewed teddy bears for each of the children and made small quilts for each child. Fabric squares were cut and each child could pick out the squares they wanted to design their quilt. Laura Bauman and Melinda Martin put all the quilts in frames and each child could knot their own blanket.

During the early years of our program one of the fathers was a carpenter. He was so impressed with our program that he made twenty benches for the children to sit on. We continue to use these benches each week.

There were a few years where we had quite a few boys in our group and needed to keep them busy. Ron Metzger shared his gift of woodworking and cut out the pieces needed to make bat houses, butterfly houses and bird houses.

Many of our themes and crafts involve nature and animals. A couple of years ago our theme was Noah's Ark and each child was given an ark to paint and decorate. Each week the children made two animals using



The musicals involve many interesting costumes thanks to one of the mothers.

popsicle sticks, clothes pins, wooden balls, etc. to furnish their ark. Our year ended with a mini musical that the children had written.

Initially the program started the second week of September and went to the end of May. The second week of September conflicted with Meet the Teacher night so now we start the third week of September. Going until the end of May conflicted with kids' soccer schedules so we moved it to the end of April. Now we run from the third week of September to the end of November, start up again in January and stop at March break.

This is our 13th year of our Hopping Thursday program. Although there have been changes over the years, the SK to Grade 5 program has remained stable. We are grateful that we are able to have a Junior Youth program again this year.

It has been such a blessing to watch these children over the years as they mature into young adults. The children have enjoyed the program. As one Hopping Thursday kid put it: "I love Hop on Thursdays."



The children themselves wrote the script for the Noah's Ark musical.

Moses Moini reports on Refugee Sponsorship Grant

“It is mind-boggling to see the global displacement of people,” said Moses Moini in his sermon on Sun. Nov. 10, 2019. Working with Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, Moses helps as many refugees as possible re-settle in Canada, but there are so many who need help. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that the world is experiencing the highest displacement of people ever and most of them are under the age of 18. His sermon referred to Jesus feeding the 5,000. We have limited resources, but if we give what we have, God can do “heavenly math,” and help more people.

Moses described some of the living conditions of those who have fled from Syria. The refugee camps have no running water or electricity; they have little



fresh produce and they live in metal shelters in high heat. There is increasing despair and lack of safety as some are becoming increasingly aggressive and violent.

“As Jesus’ followers, how can we turn away?” asked Moses.

In our mailboxes and in his sermon, Moses Moini also reported on the \$60,000 that the Floradale Generosity Fund gave

to establish a Generosity Refugee Sponsorship Grant at MCCO to help other groups sponsor refugees. The Blended Visa Office-Referred Program is run by the Canadian government and pays six months of financial support for refugees privately sponsored in Canada if the refugees have been identified by the UN. This refugee sponsorship grant would help with the remaining six-month costs.

The original \$60,000 donated by Floradale began the grant fund and to date \$95,000 was disbursed to 20 sponsoring groups who were able to sponsor 86 newcomers. Moses emphasized that the fund enhanced what could be done—it allowed more groups to sponsor more refugees.

“It is a story of hope,” said Moses.

Sharing Noah’s Pudding

On Nov. 10, which is designated as Peace Sunday, Ali Ihsan Okan, the president of the Intercultural Dialogue Institute of K-W, thanked our church for our contribution toward the cost of hosting five Iftar meals in Waterloo Region earlier this year. The Intercultural Dialogue Institute works at promoting respect and mutual understanding among different cultural and faith groups.

There were several Muslim visitors at church that morning who offered the gift of Noah’s pudding to us. On the table with the coffee after church were servings of this treat as an offering of friendship and peace. Noah’s pudding is a dessert porridge made of a variety of grains, seeds and fruit. According to Turkish Muslim tradition, when Noah’s ark landed, he gathered all the leftovers and made a porridge. To commemorate the ark’s landing, it is made in large quantities to share with friends and neighbours as an offering of peace and love.

This was a fitting gift on Peace Sunday.



Ali Ihsan Okan (left) presented this gift to Pastor Jim Loepp Thiessen on Peace Sunday to thank us for our donation toward the cost of hosting Iftars meals earlier this year.

Junior youth attend Make a Difference Day

By Anita Schroeder Kipfer

On Sunday Oct. 6, four Junior Youth from Floradale attended the annual Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) Make a Difference Day (MADD) at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp: Wesley Wilson, Jack Diehl, Lena Kate and Daniel Schroeder Kipfer. We were a great little group and had a fun day together hanging out with other Jr Youth from area Mennonite churches. The theme of the day was "Discovering God's Heart-beat."



Lena Kate, Daniel, Wesley and Jack participate in the drumming circle.

The day began under the picnic shelter with some wonderful worship and reflection. The rest of it was spent mostly outdoors playing large group games, going for trail walks, doing the climbing wall and being part of a drumming circle. We also participated in a session led by two speakers from Warden Woods Underground, a church plant in the projects in Scarborough.

The central activity of the session was to draw a line or "map" of one's life, depicting highlights and lowlights (ex. getting a good mark on a test, death of a grandparent, etc.). Then we were asked to draw another "line layer" depicting how we feel now about that event as compared to the moment it happened. A third line layer depicted how we thought of God in that time.

The main message was that God is with us and loves us unconditionally in good and bad times. The speakers emphasized how tiny actions can make ripples and become huge, life-changing ones, and that

we all have the power to start the ripple.

Please feel free to chat with anyone in the Jr Youth group about the activities of MADD or anything at all, anytime! 😊 We like connecting with people in the church as we get to know each other better that way. You're always welcome to come downstairs and check out the Jr Youth Cave near the multipurpose room. You might even be interested to share with us some of your own life's ups and downs, and how you saw God in those times, and what were some small sparks that turned into ripples.



Jack on the climbing wall.



On Oct. 6, a group from Teen Challenge led our worship service. Teen Challenge is a Christian addiction recovery organization that operates in nine centres across Canada. It uses a faith-based 12-month approach. The group of singers at Floradale was from the Ontario Men's Centre in London. For more information visit www.teenchallenge.ca.



Kim Parker and Garrett Bender were married on Sept. 21, 2019 at the Stratford Golf and Country Club. Garrett is the son of Dan and Karen Bender. They have purchased a home in Gowans town where they are living. Garrett is co-owner of his own millwrighting business. Kim grew up on a farm near Sebringville.



Hannah Redekop married Ala'eddin on Nov. 22, 2019 in Jordan. Hannah is the daughter of Fred and Shirley Redekop.



Ray and Heather Clemmer are proud first-time grandparents with the birth of their granddaughter Marie Elizabeth Beeler, daughter of Mark and Lauren Beeler who live in LaSalle, Ont., a suburb of Windsor. She was born Sept. 23, 2019 and named Marie after Heather's mother Mary (who passed away Oct., 2018) and Elizabeth after her mother's middle name. Heather says she is the "apple of our eye."

Do you remember the
Christmas slide show
 presented by
Floradale Mennonite Church
in 1969?



50 years later we will show it again
Friday, December 27, 2019
 at the church
Finger food potluck at 12 noon
1969 Christmas slide show, 1 p.m.

