



# Focus on Floradale

Volume XXXVI, No. 3

Floradale Mennonite Church

July, 2020

What have we been  
doing for the last few  
months?



The Towns family:

“We have been hatching duck eggs; we now have 4 ducks!” says Jeanette. Spencer and Carson are enjoying their new pets.



The Woeschkas  
stay busy

We have done lots of crafts, baking and enjoying the sunny weather! Video calls have made keeping touch with friends and family easier. We are excited to have play dates again and Everly looks forward to going to preschool.

- Everly and Liam Woeschka



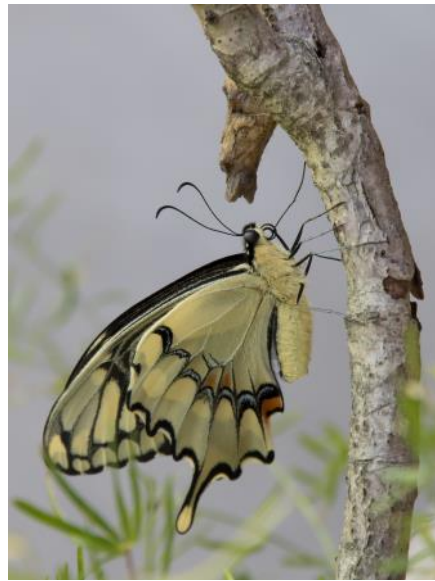


# Photographing nature

By Merri-Lee Metzger

The past months have tested patience, resilience, and relationships for many of us! No visiting, no touching, no group activities, no connecting with others in the usual ways—these restrictions have been challenging. Zoom is better than nothing, but it is a far cry from a good face-to-face visit (especially when Internet is sketchy).

In our area, we are blessed to have beautiful outdoor spaces into which we can escape. I have spent many hours walking the fields, roads and trails in and around Floradale. It's amazing to see the diversity of life that appears everywhere in the spring of the year. My camera has had a real workout during the COVID season! Here are a few of the little miracles that have been present right around us. Oblivious to a pandemic, these creatures have been thriving, perhaps as a result of less human disruption than usual.



*Giant Swallowtails are emerging from their dead-leaf-like chrysalises after nearly 10 months.*



*Spring migration was spectacular this year. I'm not sure if there were actually more birds than usual, or if one of the blessings of being in quarantine was that we were simply more attuned to their presence. The Rose-breasted Grosbeak is always a welcome spring visitor.*



*Eastern Bluebirds are presently raising young in nest boxes and natural cavities, and generally just looking gorgeous!*



*Baltimore Orioles have been plentiful in 2020; at one point, there were 10 of them eating grape jelly and oranges at our feeder.*



*Eight little Chickadees, mini replicas of their parents, fledged from a nest box in the front yard.*



*Foxes and their kits played outside their dens in the early evenings of May.*

Spending time in the solitude of nature has been one of the advantages of being self-isolated. I have no recipes to share, I'm afraid—I have been outside!

Looking forward to reducing the “physical distance” between us soon.



## Valerie's collage

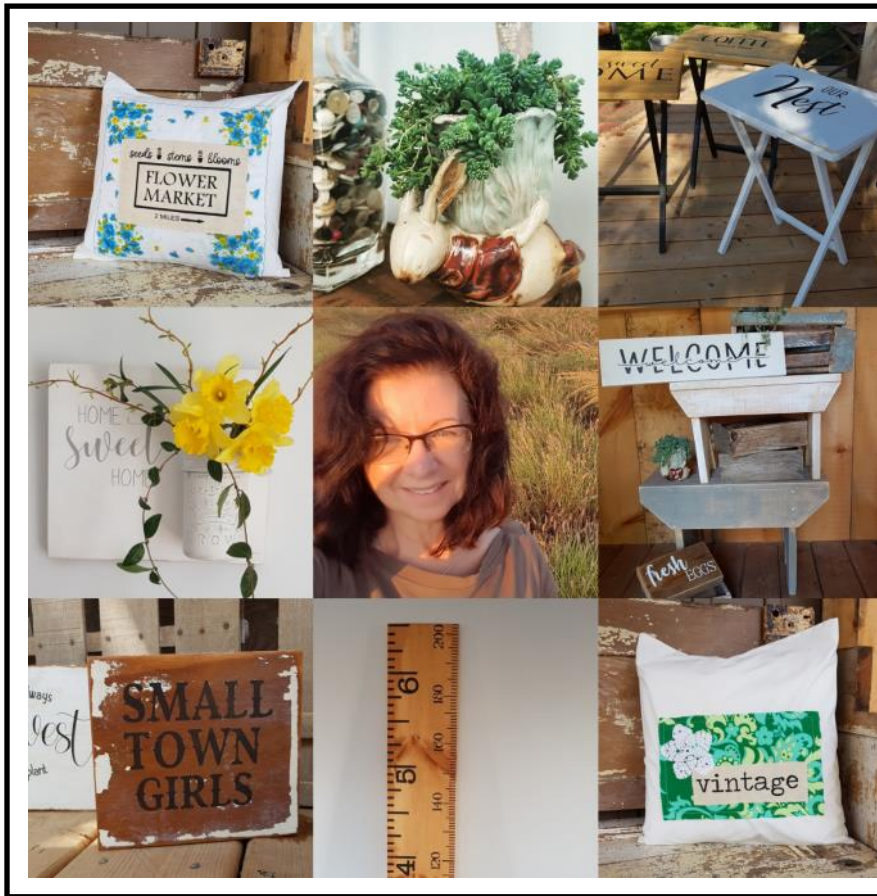
By Valerie Cheaney

It has been a long, sad shutdown. I am so looking forward in getting back to a somewhat normal lifestyle.

Needless to say, like most people I've gone through all of the emotions, lonely, frustrated, grateful, and thankful. I've been keeping really busy (not in any particular order) baking, gardening, learning about my chickens and ducks, and crafts.

Since I have the time, I would have loved to have traveled to visit my parents, or go to Walnut Creek, Ohio. I was to attend a vintage fair in Walnut Creek.

I'm doing well and looking forward in seeing my church family.



## Staying home is a privilege

By Eleanor and Zenas Buehler

Zenas and Eleanor Buehler have been enjoying having Carmen and Owen, two of their grandchildren, be their part-time gardeners. Carmen and Owen, who were hired for the summer months, have done excellent work and have been a huge help in making it possible for their grandparents to keep their property an enjoyable place to continue living. Zenas and Eleanor are still enjoying a scaled-down version of gardening and thank God for the privilege of living in this beautiful setting.

Eleanor stays connected to her friends by setting up definite times to talk on the telephone. They are also blessed to have members of the family drop in on the weekends for deck or garage visits.

A pastime that Zenas enjoys is playing Candy Crush and word games on the computer. Eleanor

enjoys these as well and is also a puzzler.

A major incident happened on April 23 when Eleanor unexpectedly suffered a heart attack. Zenas found her unconscious and called 911 and she was rushed to the hospital. Her one artery was 100 percent blocked and another 75 percent blocked. She had a stent put in the one artery and is waiting to see if she will need another stent in the other one. They both thank God for the excellent recovery that Eleanor is experiencing.

Since they had already been choosing to live a quieter lifestyle, the pandemic has not affected them nearly as much as some people, so in some ways they can honestly say they have been enjoying much of it.

Zenas and Eleanor really appreciate receiving the daily devotionals from Jim and Anita. They enjoy reading them at the start of their day and find it a blessing to be able to do this.

## Not that much different

Eleanor Metzger, as told to  
Barb Draper

I can't say that the past three months have been that much different from our ordinary lives. I haven't done anything new, other than stay at home. I am looking forward to having the pandemic over with so I can see my friends again. I miss socializing.

The children had us in lockdown for six weeks; they did the grocery shopping but now they are allowing us to go out if we go early in the morning and follow the rules.

Our son-in-law is a truck driver so he has gone to the United States and back, but because what he does is considered an essential service it has not been a problem.

I am thankful that we are not locked up in an apartment; we could spend time outside or go for a short drive.

# Back to work after two years of retirement

By Mary Frey-Martin

At first this COVID-19 staying at home was an adventure. I was enjoying “having to stay home” and got some books read and movies watched. I made more phone calls, and sent out cards to some people who I knew were alone. I took long walks. At first I was glued to the news with every new update on this pandemic.

But then after a few weeks I was restless. I was sick of cleaning out closets and drawers. As a retired nurse, I wanted to help. I contacted the hospital but did not get a reply. Then I started to realize that the real crisis was happening in the nursing homes, and I decided I wanted to be helpful in the nursing home in Elmira where I once worked part-time. I contacted Barnswallow Place, and they offered me a position as a care support assistant. I had given up my licence to practice as an RN. So I started back to work after two years of complete retirement. I will tell you, I was exhausted!! But I enjoyed it, and really did feel useful.

I got used to wearing a mask for eight hours at a time. I helped feed residents, did some other tasks, and assisted on the dementia care unit. With no families allowed in the building, and with staff overworked with the burden of all the isolation precautions, I was able to lighten their load a bit.

The residents in long term care have really paid a price for this isolation. I don't care what the article in the *Observer* said, the residents are very lonely. Saying hello to family through a window or a telephone call is just not the same. They do not understand why their families cannot come in and sit beside them and give them a hug. The usual activities in the

nursing home of music groups coming in, church services, hair-dresser, ice cream socials, etc., have all been stopped. Even inside the home, residents are supposed to be distancing from others. It is confusing for them. These people are paying such a huge price in this pandemic, the ones most in danger of losing their lives, and the ones being isolated from loved ones. I will say though, that I saw Clarence Martin and Alice Weber on a regular basis, and they have been coping fairly well. I always said “Hi” to them.

Unfortunately, I developed a medical issue which necessitated a number of tests during the past few months. I got used to donning a mask and cleaning my hands as soon as I entered a medical building and talking to doctors and technicians with them all wearing masks and face shields and gowns. It is a real pain to have a hearing deficit when trying to make out what medical people are saying when we are both wearing masks and I can't read lips. I always had to be alone, as no family could come with me. Then I got results over the phone from the surgeon. A different world for sure.

I have had to stop working for the time being and will be facing surgery in this strange new world. But, I am glad that I can be safe from not just this virus, but many bacteria and viruses that abound.

When this pandemic first broke out, Orval was quite disturbed that his hockey season was brought to an abrupt halt. He has really missed the social contact of the coffee shop and church and visiting in homes and having people in. But, he is getting used to this new world. Some evenings he goes to Tim Hortons with a lawn

chair and sets up outside with some other people for some distanced visiting. We have already gone for a drive and pulled up to someone's place and opened the windows and had a visit. He likes that.

We are all different, as I have a sister who has admitted that when the world opens up and she has to mingle in a large crowd of people again, she will find it very difficult.

One thing that I have enjoyed is getting to know Jim and Anita better in the daily devotional. It seems they have been able to be more personal in these written devotionals, and it is nice to see how they think and feel.

But let's get back to normal! Maybe there is no back-to-normal. Who knows?

## The effects of COVID-19 on my life

By Mary M. Martin

I don't know if I can really articulate yet how COVID-19 has affected me. I know there were times when the restrictions were an inconvenience. I know I have missed seeing my grandchildren and connecting with some friends, but when I hear of how lack of water, food and medical aid has affected many adults and children in the world, my inconveniences were and are minor.

I am more concerned of how COVID-19 is affecting world leadership and the decisions these leaders make. Are they truly for the public good or for personal gain or power? I limit how much I watch or read the news because I find it too frustrating. After one exceptionally difficult and dark newscast I turned it off and scanned some mail that lay nearby and came across the newsletter from Conrad Grebel University College. I want to quote some of

what the president, Marcus Shantz wrote:

“Long ago, on childhood camping trips, I learned that when you are lost in the dark, reaching for a flashlight is not always the best strategy. The flashlight will only illuminate a small area right in front of you, and blinds the eye to wider surroundings. It’s counter-intuitive, but the flashlight actually narrows your vision. If you have the patience to pause, look around, and give your eyes time to adjust, you can begin to see in the dark and find the path forward. The night becomes less frightening.

“In a crisis, the temptation is to reach for fast and comforting answers, and hope that life will quickly go back to normal. However, I think we need to accept that this pandemic will continue to disrupt our lives for many months to come. We need to pause, reflect, pray, face facts, assess our surroundings and adapt our sight to a new reality.”

It is my desire to be courageous enough, when I feel lost in the dark, to have patience to wait until I can see more clearly before I quickly grab for a flashlight. I want to face facts such as the idea that I don’t know when I can see my son Dale and his family. I want to face the unknowns of the financial impact of the pandemic on my resources with grace, not fear. I am reminded of the serenity prayer which says in part, “accept what I cannot change, change what I can and have the wisdom to know the difference.”

In the past months I have not tried new recipes, done puzzles or found new hobbies, but I found ways to connect with the people in my life and for that I am grateful.

## My pandemic experience

*By Mahlon Martin*

Over the past four months, my life has changed dramatically. In early March I spent a weekend in the Emergency Department of Grand River Hospital after falling and passing out while getting out of my van. This very quickly brought on a series of changes.

My son Ron came up from North Carolina for a week and my daughter Sharon made numerous trips to Elmira while we figured out what changes it was time to make. It was wonderful spending time together again as a family. At that time I didn't know how grateful I would be for those visits, as it was just before all the shutdowns started. We didn't know that Ron wouldn't be able to come across the border again for quite some time.

Together we toured Parkwood Mennonite Home and were impressed with their great suites and all the extras that came with living there. We decided, following the tour, that I would put my name on the 2 - 3 year waiting list. God had other plans for that wait! Within 6 days I got a call saying a suite was mine if I wanted it. I signed the papers the next day.

This began a busy seven weeks of preparing to move into my new home in early May. God again paved the way. Sharon was allowed to come to my apartment weekly to help pack, even though there was a "no visitors" rule for the building. The 60-days notice was waived for giving up my apartment and it was immediately rented out. God worked out all the details!

I have so much appreciated being able to watch the church service online. It's certainly not

the same as being there, but still a great way to hear God's word preached every week.

On May 9 I moved into my new home. Again Parkwood made things as easy as possible during the COVID-19 closures, allowing four family members into my apartment to help with moving in all my furniture and unpacking every box. We even got all the pictures hung on the walls. By supertime it looked like my home! After two weeks in isolation following my move to be sure that I didn't have Covid, I was able to leave my suite and begin spending time with the others living on the suites side. It's truly wonderful being with friends and even some family members! I really enjoy swimming in the pool, using the gym and playing pool and crokinole with friends! Even in challenging times, God brings blessings into our lives!

I am grateful for all the staff at Parkwood who work hard to keep everything clean and cheerful. The food is wonderful. It's a good thing that I can work out in the gym!

While Covid has brought challenges like Ron not being able to come across the border anymore and having to visit with Sharon and the rest of my family by phone for now, I am still so very grateful for all of the blessings that I have!

*[Editor's Note: Since Mahlon wrote this article Parkwood had another two-week lockdown, so things have been more frustrating again.]*



# Coping with quarantine

By Mary Bauman

Cliff and I left for six weeks in Florida on Feb. 3 and although we had heard about the coronavirus on the news, it was in far away China and that's where we assumed it would stay. But as the weeks went by, we heard more and more on the news, however nothing that affected us. When it was time to get ready to come home, there was talk of the border closing, but not for Canadians returning home, so we were fine.

At the border, a polite officer asked us three quick questions: "Do you have a fever, a cough or a runny nose?" Although we had no trouble anywhere in the U.S., it did feel good to be back in Canada.

That was March 14 and the next day things began to shut down, including churches, all sports—both amateur and professional and all entertainment.

My oldest daughter didn't miss a beat and was on the phone first thing Sunday morning to get our grocery list and to make sure we weren't going anywhere. Just when did the children become the parents? And thus began our two-week isolation period.

For anyone like Cliff, who enjoys watching hockey and baseball on TV, having no sports leaves a big gap in their evenings. When we returned from Florida, we were planning to pack up the next weekend for Sudbury to support Jay and Kate in their provincial speed-skating tournament. And the next two weekends we were planning to go to Toronto for girls hockey tournaments. Of course, all of these events and a multitude more were cancelled. What a dis-

appointment this was for the children to have worked so hard all year and then not knowing there they would have finished.

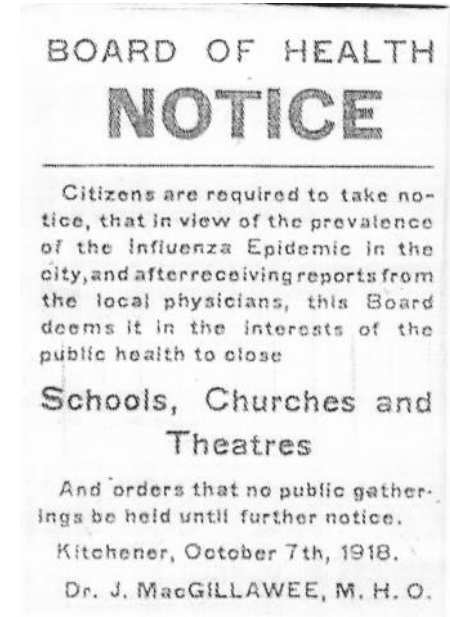
It soon became evident that the children would not be returning to school in the foreseeable future. Traditionally, children don't want to get up in the morning, don't want to go to school and don't want to see their teachers. It's a different story though when all this is suddenly taken away from them. They missed their friends and school buildings and teachers more than they could ever have imagined.

For Cliff and me, the hardest thing was knowing how sad and disappointed our grandchildren were. Learning online worked better for some than for others. The two oldest had to vacate their rooms at university and move home. Two of the girls were looking forward to graduation—one from grade 8 and the other from grade 12. One had already bought her dress and the other had been shopping. Another granddaughter was preparing to get her beginner's driver's license. As she said, "I turned 16 during quarantine."

Back to Cliff and me. When our quarantine was over, we started getting our own groceries again. We felt that because neither of us had any sort of respiratory condition, this would be okay. However, the night before grocery shopping, we set the alarm for about 6:20 a.m. so we can be to the store by 7 a.m. Now, that's a first—setting the alarm to get groceries. We do have some friends though whose children are still doing their shopping—folks who are not real well and just don't want to take the risk.

We are so fortunate to have all of our family nearby and have visited with most of them on our back porch. Sitting on our front porch, we see a lot of our neighbours who stop for a little while to say "Hello" and "How are you?"

We have also had two nice day road trips with a picnic lunch. We hope to do more of that.



There was an article in the newspaper back in March about the 1918 Influenza Epidemic in the city of Kitchener. This notice was included with the article. I found it particularly interesting because the M.H.O. who issued the order was my great-uncle, Dr. J. Mac (should be Mc) Gillawee who my father affectionately referred to as Uncle Jack.

These are unprecedented times and we are so thankful to all who are going out of their way to keep us safe, healthy and informed. The church services have also been so meaningful (even though I couldn't connect to all of them.) We must continue to pray for those who have the daunting task of trying to keep all of us doing the right thing, at the right time, in the right place.



## A quilt project

By Kathleen Cober

When the COVID-19 lockdown was announced I gathered the bags, Rubbermaid container and two large Tupperware containers of pieces of material leftover from making dresses and quilts. The pieces in the Tupperware containers were from my Mother.

I placed the table silencer cloth on my bed, spread all the

pieces in rows according to colour, ironing those pieces that needed it. Now I was ready to begin cutting and sewing. I bought a few 1/4m pieces of light material to finish the one top.

Did I use all the pieces? No. I sorted the pieces that were left when I was finished sewing.

Some went to MCC thrift store and the rest was placed in the Rubbermaid container, ready for the next project.

My neighbour was making a quilt top and needed a blue piece and I had the right colour. It was a longer piece so she made the border and gave me the pieces left-



ver, plus some squares which I could use in my project.

Pictured below are the two quilts which I made, Lord willing, to be quilted next winter.

Oh, in case you were wondering, the chesterfield makes into a bed so I slept in the living room until I was able to pack the leftover material in the container for next winter.

Have a great summer—stay well.



## Lockdown in Jordan

By Hannah Redekop

I never would have believed that during my first six months of marriage I would be literally locked inside my house with my new husband! In early March, after the first few COVID-19 cases had entered Jordan, the country began to close schools and businesses, and even the airport to all incoming and outbound flights. But on the 17th of March the situation quickly escalated and martial law was announced, effectively shutting down the whole country for five days. Only water and natural gas services were able to function, and anyone out in the streets would be fined or put in jail.

On the fifth day, the government decided to open up corner

stores and later, larger grocery stores, in order for the population to buy their groceries again. Cars were still completely banned for the next two months, and each weekend the full lockdown was imposed, so that the government could do more testing and contact-tracing.

Overall I have been very impressed with how the government quickly handled the situation, knowing that the health care system here would have never been able to handle a major outbreak. Jordan has recorded only 1,000 total cases and nine deaths. Thankfully, I have also been able to keep working.

The tourism industry has crashed, but I am fortunate to have been transferred to help out with administration of an Arabic language school which has been thriving through online sessions. Unfortunately, Ala'eddin, as a

freelance artist was not able to work during this time. Many of our artist friends are daily wage earners, and they, along with many in the tourism, service, and hospitality business are struggling without an income and no end in sight. I worry for the Jordanian economy.

In spite of the stress and anxiety of the unknown, we really enjoyed our time together under lockdown. We directed our energy towards creating and building on new ideas for the arts scene in Amman. We enjoyed more time in the kitchen. I attempted *zweibach* and *paska* for the first time and he worked on perfecting his mom's traditional Palestinian dishes like *mandi* and *maqlube*. And of course we spent a lot of time teaching new tricks to our bunny Sufi. It's definitely a first year of marriage we won't forget!

## We feel blessed

By Barb Draper

During these last months of enforced social distancing, we have been feeling really blessed that we don't have young children to supervise, or elderly parents to worry about. Roy and I both were able to continue with our work with only moderate modifications.

Much of the work at *Canadian Mennonite* magazine can be done from home. After a couple weeks I decided that now was the time to reduce my hours to two days a week instead of half time. So now I go to the office on Tuesdays and work from home on Wednesdays. It mostly works, except that Zoom meetings are not really satisfactory.

Roy no longer goes into the thrift shop to sort books or work in receiving, but fortunately he is kept busy delivering chickens. Frey's Hatchery has been crazy-busy this spring with everyone trying to buy chickens. Veg has been working evenings and Saturdays in the office, just trying to keep up with all the orders. In the last two weeks in June they needed an extra driver so I also got the chance to do a couple chick deliveries, something I had not done for almost 20 years.

Frey's Hatchery regularly takes baby chicks to Illinois. Roy doesn't do this run on a regular basis, but he did a delivery in early May. As an essential service provider, he had no problem getting across the border, but he did have a problem when he needed to see the dentist for an emergency root canal. The dental work had to be delayed a week so that he could honestly say he had not been out of the province in the previous 14 days.

It's fascinating to me to see some of the outcomes of this pandemic. At first there was hoarding of toilet paper, but other things that hit peak demand were flour, yeast, chickens and seeds. It seems that this health threat made people think about the basics of life and growing

their own food. I bought my normal amount of seeds, but I have probably spent more time in the garden than other years, and I began more plants indoors than previously.

That's not to say that my garden in St. Jacobs is doing better. My strawberry crop was a bust and I'm struggling to keep the rabbits and groundhogs from eating all my peas and beans. They ate up every scrap of spinach something they've never eaten before!

Although other people have spent their time productively cleaning out closets, I have not. There are always more interesting things to do such as study genealogy. The online resources are amazing and I have been able to trace some of my ancestors all the way to Switzerland. That's been fascinating.

I like to re-use things, so I braided a mat for the bathroom and made a lightweight blanket out of an old sheet, previously worn clothes and scraps. It's not a thing of beauty, but it will be useful. I



also learned how to sew masks early on, in case they would be needed, and more recently have shared them with friends and family.

Roy and I really miss going to the library, browsing through the books and bringing them home to read. Another thing I miss is chatting with others at work. Only a couple of us work in the office on any day and so things tend to get discussed in a clumsy way on Zoom or by email. It's not the same.

In spite of all these complaints, I feel really blessed. We have a Sunday morning routine of hooking up the computer to our TV and

watching the church service from a large screen while sitting in comfortable chairs. Participating in the sharing and prayer time at 11 a.m. is also a blessing. I appreciate the daily devotional provided by our pastors; it's a great way to start the day.

## Staying out of everyone's way

- Jim Maurer

For the past three months I've been doing as little as possible and staying out of everyone's way. I'm retired and am a firm believer that when you are retired you do what it means.

One thing I have been doing is supervising Randy when he works in the flowerbeds and garden. You know the old saying, "A job well-managed is a job half done!"

Generally we have been keeping to the rules and only the people who live here come and go. Because I don't have internet I'm not able to watch the church services, but Anita brings the printed daily devotionals and other items from church. I appreciate that.

I miss eating out at restaurants. I support Bonnie Lou's for take-out, but I really miss the socializing. We had a regular group of guys who got together on Friday evenings. Over time we have gotten older; the group has dwindled and now seems to have disbanded.

I am very thankful that I didn't pick up the virus because with my breathing problems and COPD I am in a vulnerable category. I have a friend who works at a hospital in Toronto and she was telling me that of 100 people in her ICU with COVID-19, only 25 went home again. One of her patients was only 22 years old and yet it took him.

Another thing I appreciate is that Lester Kehl has kept in touch and called every couple weeks. I will be glad when it will be legal to visit the neighbours again.



# Farm life during COVID-19

By Susan Martin

We have been asked many times how is it farming during a pandemic. Life on the farm doesn't really change that much, the jobs change depending on the season.

As winter turned to spring, now summer, we have the third group of ewes lambing. We have prepared the ground for planting, planted the seeds, made hay and so



*Ewe Hope and her twin lambs*

it goes as the seasons progresses.

When this started I was thinking about my garden, now its planted and we are harvesting pro-



*The farm garden*

duce from it. This year I did start some tomatoes from seed along with a few other things.

With many commitments cancelled due to COVID-19, the opportunity was there to tackle those tasks that can be forgotten—cleaning out your freezer, doing

paint touch ups and cleaning/purging your closets.

We finished the Three-Season room that houses our hot tub. The room doubled as a greenhouse for our plants until it was warm enough to be planted in the garden.

It's also a time to learn new things. Google is great but so are old books to research a new project. I learned how to make soap and made several batches which I will continue to do.



*Homemade soap*

When cleaning out the freezer I discovered some maple syrup from a few years ago. I always wanted to make Maple Sugar. So I did!

As a gardener and farmer, finding a hand creme or salve that works on your hands can be a challenge. As I was cruising the internet. I noticed an interesting Homesteading site. They made a variety of cremes out of herbs and “weeds.” Off I went to collect some dandelion flowers. They are presently sitting in my pantry in oil waiting to be made into salve. I did make



*From left: Dandelion jelly, Plantain salve, jelly from the freezer clean-out, maple sugar, dried chocolate mint.*

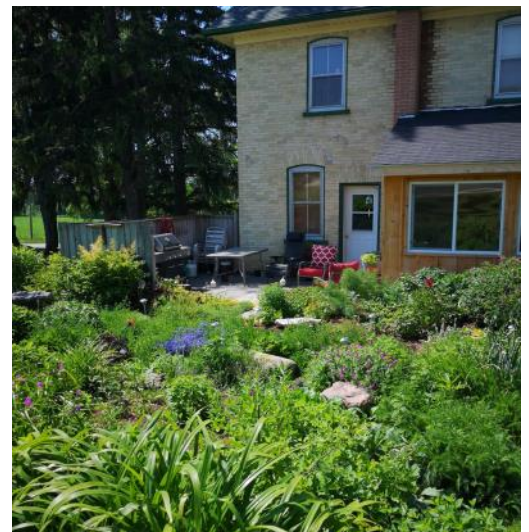
plantain salve. Thanks to my years in 4-H I was able to identify this healing weed. It grows in abundance by our bush lane. I still plan to make Comfrey salve. It is a healing herb used topically as a pain reliever. We have a large plant growing in the south flower bed.

A fellow sheep farmer and gardener had made dandelion jelly. Hmm that looked interesting. It's a good thing that they grow prolifically in the grass field. James was rather skeptical to try the jelly. It tastes like mild honey!

Dana encouraged me to try my hand at bread baking. I have a bread machine. I did master making no-knead bread in a skillet.

This Covid season has been a challenge but also a blessing.

Stay safe everyone!



*The pollinator/herb garden.*



# Greetings from Uganda

By Vincent Omot

Greetings from Uganda, in particular Gulu which is in the northern part of the country where I live with my family.

Due to COVID-19, Uganda effected a total lockdown for a period of two months. Learning institutions, churches, private and public transport had to stop and a curfew was in place. By 7 p.m. no one was supposed to be seen on the streets or road and the police and military took over until 6:30 a.m.



*Trees ready for transplanting.*



*My son Francis is a big help.*



*The children carry their pot-planted strawberries.*



*My small tree nursery bed.*

Life had to change and take a different direction. Staying home wasn't easy since it was start of our first rainy season and we had to embark on farming. My family and I managed to plant one acre of maize, and to prepare the garden for ground nuts and beans which are planted in the second season.

Above all, we have been able to do massive tree planting. Since I had enough time, I planted a variety of tree seedlings ranging from hardwood trees (Muvule, Teak Tectona, Mahogany, Shea tree, African Afrizila, Neem) to fruit trees (Mangoes, Avacado, Oranges, Jack fruits, Guava ). This was all possible because I raise most of my seedlings at home by myself, thanks to the support of my wife Immaculate and the kids, Marion and Francis who always support me with watering the seedlings at the nursery bed.

We learned how to embrace technology, because we had to follow prayers from the television or radios on Sundays and for my case I had to buy internet bundles to follow service and updates on the Floradale platform to keep me updated.

Since schools have been suspended indefinitely, my wife and I have been guiding our children in learning. It is helpful that she is primary school teacher.

I have been keeping in touch via WhatsApp with a village mate who is studying in Italy. Time and again we would check on each other. His greatest fear was due to our low medical standards in Africa since ventilators can be required for the patients. In our local hospital, less than five would be available.

Above all, Covid-19 changed our ways of living, as we follow ministry of health guidelines of social distancing, hand washing, putting on masks, avoiding unnecessary visits. As Christians our





*A harvest of avocado*



*Our planted maize.*

consolation has been in prayers, thanking God for the chance to live

each day since we are visitors on earth.

Thanks for the opportunity to share. Let us keep safe.

*Vincent Omit is a former IVEPer who lived with Ross and Veg from 2013 to 2014.*

## ‘I sewed a lot of masks’

*-Marilyn and Clarence Diefenbacher*

Life hasn’t changed that much for us; we don’t go away much, but we never did. For a while our daughter Andrea got our groceries for us, but now we are getting them again. We do a lot of visiting on the telephone because we don’t have a computer.

One day we went for a drive and ended up at Marilyn’s sister’s home. We sat in the car while they were on their lawn and we visited for a while. Last week the Diefenbachers got together at Newt and Edna’s and we social distanced in the back yard. We were celebrating that all the Diefenbachers (Clarence, Elsie Springer, Marie Uttley and Newt) are in their 70s. Newt just turned 70 and Clarence will turn 80 in July. When you do get together, it’s kind of special.

In the last three months, I (Marilyn) sewed a lot of masks, at first to respond to the request from Becky Ribble, and then for family and friends. Now I’m making some for little guys—my great-grandsons.

## Gratitude

*-By Sandra Petryschuk*

I am so grateful for the daily devotions written by our wonderful pastors. They have helped me through many a day! Every morning I write down one point that has resonated with me and now I have 82 reminders of why I love being part of this church and God’s family.

## Conversation with Paul

*By Mary M. Martin*

When I think of Paul and his approach to COVID-19 the words “plod” or “trudge” come to mind. Each time I called Paul his response was similar; he does what he needs to do, such as having regular testing so “I don’t get it.” I called him last week and asked him a few questions around his experience with COVID-19.

Paul “really misses church” and although he gets the service online, he misses the physical connections with people.

When I asked what frustrates him with the restrictions, his immediate answer was, “I can’t go to the library.” In response to what is the best part, his ready answer was, “the new computer.” I can attest to his delight because I happened to call the day after he got it. He talks to his sister daily on the computer and he also told me he watches the Ottawa news simultaneously with Toronto, one on the computer and the other on the TV.

Paul likes his connection with the Woolwich Seniors Program, another benefit of technology. He told me which streets he bikes on, but he “can’t go uptown yet.” However, we have a date for McFlurries at McDonald’s once the restrictions are lifted.

## Annual meeting

On Sunday, April 26, 2020, Floradale Mennonite Church held its first-ever virtual annual meeting using Zoom. Richard Bauman (chair), Veg Weber (secretary), Randy Martin (chair of finance) and Leon Kehl (chair of missions and resident techie) gathered in the board room at church, with many others joining from home. Enough people participated that we met the quorum requirements.

To simplify matters, all motions were made by people at the church. These motions were included in the agenda which was printed in the front of the annual report booklet and distributed back in March. Many of these

motions are formalities required by law.

Floradale is very blessed to be in a sound financial position. The offerings did not quite meet the budgeted request for 2019, but due to less spending than budgeted we still had a surplus of \$36,583. The Finance Commission recommended that the surplus be distributed with \$16,000 going to Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) and that \$20,583 be transferred to the Facility Fund. The Facility Fund paid for a new cemetery site plan and a storage shed for the cemetery in 2019. The meeting also approved a budget of \$354,060 for the next year.

The Finance Commission also reviewed the requests from the Generosity Fund and the an-

nual meeting accepted their recommendations of \$35,000 to Conrad Grebel University College to go toward a new walk-in cooler for their kitchen expansion and \$3,500 to One-4-Another, a project in Africa that Mary M. Martin is connected with. The organization helps children in Uganda who have severe medical needs due to accidents, congenital defects, or severe infections.

By accepting the slate, Rick Martin became the new Church Council Chairperson the following day.

This virtual annual meeting was also probably the shortest one ever held by Floradale Mennonite Church.

## The church remains closed through the summer

On Friday June 12, most of the province of Ontario moved into phase 2 of re-opening the province after weeks of shutdown. This change now allows places of worship to resume, but with important restrictions.

Church Council discussed the possibility of resuming worship services but decided to remain closed as a church and to outside bookings until at least September 1. They provided the following reasons for this decision:

- We would be unable to sing together should we gather together now.
- We would be unable to have coffee together and would need to remain more than six feet apart in our worship and for any fellowship.
- This physical distancing requirement would mean that we would have to limit attendance at a Sunday morning service to about 60 people.
- We would need cleaning protocols in place as well as spacing out our entering and exiting.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada recommends not opening until there has been careful assessment and planning for appropriate protocols for physical distancing, sanitation and all-around health safety.

The number of people who are viewing our worship services tends to be the same or higher than our regular attendance and Council is encouraged by the online participation. Other churches in the Elmira Ministerial are also remaining closed through the summer. We want to work at finding ways to creatively connect with each other in smaller formats.

The church will continue to be closed through the end of August and the pastors will continue to work mostly from home.

## New administrator

Nicole Woeschka will begin as our new church office administrator on a part-time basis on September 1. Nicole grew up in our congregation, the daughter of Ron and Rosie Martin. Nicole and her husband Tyler and their children Everly and Liam live in the village of Floradale.



# Heifer Sale report

By Clarence and Marilyn Diefenbacher

The 39<sup>th</sup> annual Ontario Mennonite Heifer Relief Sale was held on February 21, 2020 at the Carson's Auction Facilities, Listowel, Ont. The sales arena was again filled with a capacity crowd.

Ralph Martin, chairman of the Heifer Sale Committee, extended a welcome to everyone at the sale and offered words of thanks to the consigners, corporate sponsors, sale committee members, auctioneers and workers. Ralph encouraged buyers to be generous, to buy and re-donate a heifer to enhance the sale.

Fred Redekop brought greetings from Mennonite Central Committee Ontario as did John Head, executive director of MCC Ontario. Fred spoke about the food that was sent to Ukraine 100 years ago for the people who were starving and mentioned the Fordson tractors that were sent to the farmers there from friends and relatives in North America.



This year is MCC's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The North American Mennonite Relief Sale Board commissioned a potter from Goshen, Indiana, to make 55 pottery water pitchers, one to be sold at every relief sale in North America. The pitcher represents MCC's efforts of offering a cup of water to the thirsty of this world. It also represents baptism by water. This pitcher was

donated by Mennonite Central Committee and was the first pitcher sold of the 55 at the Heifer Sale. The pitcher was purchased by Clarence Diefenbacher for \$1,100.00

## 2020 Heifer Sale results:

118 heifers sold for	\$122,659.00
Semen etc.	3,267.50
Misc items	<u>3,300.00</u>
Sale Total	129,217.50
Cash donations day of sale	<u>4,600.00</u>
Total	133,817.50

The 2020 sale was similar to last year. The heifers averaged \$1,040 this year and last year they averaged \$970 per head. The highest selling heifer sold for \$3,500. The heifer was donated by Kindred Credit Union and purchased by Dennis E. Martin of Palmerston. There were two heifers that sold for \$2,600 and one for \$2,500.

A heifer donated by Aveline Holsteins (Tony and Char Martin) sold for \$2,300 and was purchased by Jason Martin.

Harold Erb of Wellesley has been donating a carved wooden Holstein cow for the last 25 years and this year's model sold for \$1,500.

The heifer sale takes the cooperation of approximately 300 volunteers working together to make this project a success. It is a community and inter-denominational project that benefits many MCC programs.

The members of the 39<sup>th</sup> Ontario Mennonite Heifer Relief Sale Committee are very grateful to everyone who contributes to the project. May God bless the proceeds of the sale as it is used by MCC to bring relief, development and peace to the world.



A replica Fordson tractor

## Thrift Shop update

The Elmira MCC thrift shop did not hold its usual annual meeting this year but provided an update showing the value of the work done by all the volunteers during this last year.

The total sales for 2019-2020 were: \$1,064,406. This is \$5,812 less than last year (-.54%) and it made up 88.23% of the annual budget. Fifty percent of all sales continue to be in the fashion department and 74% of expenses are due to staffing. A new furnace was a major capital purchase this year.

Due to COVID-19, the shop closed 12 shopping days before the year end.

The store was able to forward \$633,300 to Mennonite Central Committee Ontario to work with existing projects. Thank you to the 170 volunteers for their work.



-Elmira MCC Thrift and Gift

The thrift store was closed for two months but offered online shopping through Facebook and Instagram. As of late May, the store has been open for shoppers with protocols to minimize interpersonal contact.

## Special Anniversaries

Congratulations to Clarence and Laurene Martin who celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on June 9, 2020.



Congratulations to Dave and Marj Metzger who celebrated their 55<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on June 12, 2020.



Ozie and Marilyn Martin were married 45 years on June 26, 2020. Congratulations!

Ron and Rosie Martin celebrated their 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on May 15, 2020. Congratulations!

Congratulations to Dan and Karen Bender who celebrated their 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on June 16, 2020.



Congratulations to Jeff and Gloria Bauman who were married 30 years on June 23, 2020.

Dennis and Marie Brubacher celebrated their 20<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on June 3.



Jim and Ingrid Loepp Thiessen will celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on July 22, 2020. Congratulations!

Congratulations to Tony and Char Martin who will celebrate their 15<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on August 5, 2020.

## Birthdays

Congratulations to Homer Martin who celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on June 15, 2020.

Clarence Diefenbacher will be turning 80 on July 22, 2020. Congratulations!

Vera Martin will be turning 80 years of age on July 26, 2020. Congratulations!



## Weddings

Mandy Martin and Brandon Leis were married on Saturday, June 27, 2020 outside at the bride's home farm on Reid Woods Drive. Mandy is the daughter of Rod and Karen Martin and the granddaughter of Homer and Melinda Martin. Brandon is the son of Paul and Marilyn Leis of Elmwood, Ont.



*Congratulations to Jocelyn Martin and Brett Shantz who were married on Saturday May 23, 2020 at a small outdoor wedding at the home of the bride's parents, Bonnie and Randy Martin, on Upper Woolwich Place. Jocelyn is the granddaughter of Joan and Oscar Martin and Vera and Sylvan Martin.*

## Births

*Congratulations to Ashley and Jake Albrecht on the birth of their son Lincoln William Albrecht born June 8, 2020. This is a first grandchild for Jeff and Gloria Bauman.*



Watson Grace Diane Greenwood was born April 28, 2020 to Ben and Cinthia Greenwood in Brantford. She is the first grandchild for Jane and Jerry Hesselink. The family now lives in Huntsville.

The name "Watson" is Ben's Grandmother's. It was her Great-Grandmother's middle name and her Great-Grandmother's (from Scotland) maiden name.

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