

Branching Out

Volume 28 Number 8 July 17, 2011

Youth lead worship

Many of our members enjoyed their MUSA experiences. Our delegates, Jim Witmer and Larry Herris and their spouses, along with MYF members and advisors, Jen and Matt and Megan and Dave and families and Retired Pastor Mel and Lois Leidig attended the entire convention. Others spent a day or two there.

Beech MYF and young adults, among the 4000+ attending, included Logan and Blake Hershberger, Meagen Behrenf, Kat Helmuth, Andrew and Alec Leaman, Matt Miller, Micah Neuenschwander, Kayla and Corey Wilson and Taj Hartman who was visiting from AZ.

The youth and advisers led last Sunday's worship service, each briefly speaking about a facet of their experience – worship, music, seminars small groups. Most went well beyond attending the 8 seminars agreed to in their "Covenant". Their enthusiasm and spiritual growth was evident.

Preparations for Relief Sale

MWS quilts and comforters and individual wood projects have been displayed and sent to Kidron, melons are ordered; many are prepping for the annual Ohio Mennonite Relief Sale on Friday and Saturday, August 5th – 6th. Food stands open at 4 p.m. Friday with brief auctions and music. Saturday, breakfast begins at 7 a.m. followed by the 5K run at 8 and live auctions starting at 10 a.m. Delicious food, cornhole and volleyball tournaments and children's activities continue throughout the day. Enjoy seeing old friends and supporting our MCC missions with everything you purchase - meals, auction items, baked goods, plants, crafts....



Mission news

MWS meets all day Wed., Aug 3rd. The combined July-August project: school kits for MCC. (See bulletin and bb for specifics.) The cloth bags for supplies were made by MWS and during ELF night by Helping Hands and Hearts crafters..

Throughout summer, Missions Commission is collecting loose change for Penny Power Project which provides clean water to third-world countries. Sandy Roth has presented children's stories and two of our members will match the children/s donations; our penny jug goes to the MCC Relief Sale in Kidron on August 5th.

Backpack Festival

Beech will participate this year in Louisville Community Backpack Giveaway and Family Festival Aug. 13 at Aljancic (former Broad Street) Playground, Louisville. Students entering K through 6th grade may sign up until July 28 to receive a backpack (filled through a series of activities). Applications are available beneath mailboxes. Everyone is welcome; food and games for all ages. (no registration for this.) Check Mission bbd.

Rudy gives testimony

Thursday evening Mission Commission presented a picnic/ program featuring Dr. Rudy Barlaan, a mechanical engineer turned Bible translator with his amazing testimony

A native of the Philippines, Rudy, was brought up Catholic. He graduated from college and began his career, but attending a Summer Institute of Linguistics in Bababag, "turned on the light." He left his job to spend his life helping translate God's Word into the languages of indigenous Philippino people. While doing so, he earned a master's degree and PhD at the University of Texas.

Dr. Barlaan spent years translating the Old Testament in Isnag. His friend, James Miller, met him during one of his volunteer trips. Rudy is currently supervising translators in five different languages.

Rudy is visiting us while on a three month furlough in the U.S. An offering for Wycliffe was taken.

Bible School report

On Sunday, June 19th, our children who attended Vacation Bible School that week enthusiastically shared their Bible memory verses, songs and skits. Approximately 45 three-year olds through middle schoolers attended classes learning to "Taste and See!" Leaders Stephanie Miller and Ann Leaman thank the many adults and youth who helped to make the program a success.

A mountain of displayed canned goods was taken to the Louisville Community Cupboard and donations were sent to the Akron Canton Foodbank. All were invited to the Sunday School picnic in the Scenery Center.

Corner

Barnabas'

Just as Barnabas encouraged others in the New Testament church, let us encourage others here at Beech Church. If you would like to thank someone for a job well done, place your item for "Barnabas' Corner" in Deanna Slater or Rachel Witmer's mailbox

from the editor's desk

MCUSA memories

Experiencing the MCUSA Convention in Pittsburgh, July 4-9, was an awakening of many senses, both physical and spiritual. Visually, The Convention Center is located on the Allegheny River with a view of magnificent bridges, -some historic, others more modern,- connecting to many areas. The theme, Bridges to the Cross, (2 Cor. 5:16-20) focused on being a bridge to Christ and spanning individual differences. The relevance in this city of bridges was striking. Another unforgettable visual is simply the gathering of 6000 plus people, yellow packups (convention handout) moving in an orderly fashion to meetings, seminars, meals and more.

There were many wonderful sounds: all sorts of music, something for every musical taste... sound of greeting from and to old friends and the excellent sound of young voices with high levels of enthusiasm. Services were provided for the youngest participant (12 week-old baby) to people in their 80's. The remarkable organization by convention planners left very little complaining. The exhibit hall featured many interesting displays and was a good place to see people manning exhibits - special greetings to all from Rhoda and Brooke Blough! But the real event was the gathering of all these people for the express purpose of worship and spiritual growth. Adults and youth entered large meeting rooms and participated in times of worship. Seminars covering many topics drew at times both youth and adults. Delegate sessions were well organized, permitting discussion of issues concerning the church. (continued - 2nd column)

Branching Out is the newsletter of Beech Mennonite Church. Its purpose is to keep the members and regular attendees informed of coming events and of the church organizations' activities.

The publication date is the first Sunday of every month. The submission deadline is the last Sunday of the preceding month.

Editor: Deanna Slater

Assistant editor: Rachel Witmer

Printing: Diana Gruber

Pastor: Dan King

Church phone: 330-875-1133

Editor's phone: 330-875-7755

Editor's e-mail: d-rslater@sbcglobal.net

Perhaps the most memorable event from Convention is having a picture of the Mennonite Church broader than our own personal interests and desires. The speaker for the final worship service was Ervin Stutzman, executive director of Mennonite Church USA. His message led us to consider that we may feel we are on a bus lurching from side to side and even into the ditch in our daily lives. The bus driver changes but still the bus is unstable with riders disagreeing how to proceed. The question he asked the audience was, "What would Jesus do?" His answer was that maybe Jesus would tell us we are on the wrong bus! He suggested that reconciliation is not found in argument and confrontation. The message was effective and presented listeners with opportunity for serious thought at the conclusion of a challenging week.

On a personal note, all our children and grandchildren were there and we found moments to relate to them. Both Elizabeth and Daniel and Sarah and Joel were sponsors for MYF or Jr. MYF, responsible for these young people. One grandson asked, "Why didn't we do this before?"

The last day of meetings, I paused to chat with a Convention Center staff member. Asking him what event would be next, he told me a large group of people who play cards all day. He shook his head and said, "All kinds of people!" I hope the Mennonites left a positive impact after a week of worship in that same Convention Center.

Shepherd's Gate report

It's hard to believe that summer is halfway over. Our children are keeping busy and time passes quickly.

Summer activities include having child ID kits made by Western & Southern Insurance, and a story hour with Janet Metzger of Rodman Library. Aultman Hospital's bike safety program was an important learning activity and each child received a properly fitted helmet. Daily crafts, stories and play are ongoing with a Soil & Water environmental demonstration and cookie baking with the Helmuth family still to come.

We invite anyone in the church family to share with us during the summer months. You could read a Bible story, share a craft or sport, read a favorite children's book, present a cooking project, or share with our children in your own creative way. Call Shepherd's Gate at 330-875-3399 or email us at shepherdsgateccc@yahoo.com. Summer scheduling will adjust to your needs.

Special thanks to all those who helped upgrade both lower level restrooms. Also, thank you to Lavera Helmuth and her grandchildren for their painting and cleaning projects which help brighten our surroundings. Check out the new carpet in classrooms and base trim in the hallways. We also appreciate all the work Vernon Yoder does to keep the grounds well manicured.

(continued on page 3)

Congratulations!!!

James and Marilyn Miller celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Sunday, July 3 with an afternoon reception in Fellowship Hall.

Keith and Melissa Herris of McKenzie, TN announce the July birth of their third daughter, **Nevaeh Grace**. Paternal grandparents, Larry and Marilyn Herris are visiting them this week.

Brandon Mottice married **Julie Hartline** in Beech Church sanctuary on Saturday, June 18. The couple lives in Kent. Brandon, is the son of Fred and the late Martha Mottice.

Shelby Hostetler and Brandon Webb of Louisville, were married at Beech on Saturday, June 26. Shelby is the granddaughter of Marlene Hostetler. Marlene's FL family also came and her daughter, Shawna, spent two weeks here visiting and helping her mother.

Alec Leaman was one of the Louisville MS students honored for his 4.0 average and pictured in the **Herald**.

Did you know...

...**Jim and Rachel Witmer**, their four daughters, sons-in-law and grandchildren all spent the entire week of Mennonite USA Conference in Pittsburgh?

Dates to remember

Mon., July 25: 7 p.m. – Shepherd's Gate Board mtg.

Fri – Sat. Aug 5-6: Ohio Relief Sale, CCHS, Kidron

Sun., Aug. 7: Ministry Fair at Beech

Fri.-Sat., Aug 12-13 – Girls' Jamboree, Camp Luz

Sat., Aug. 13: 4-7 p.m., Backpack Giveaway & Festival

Aljancic (Broad St.) Playground, Louisville

Sat., Aug. 17: Shepherd's Gate Staff & Family picnic

Sunday, Aug. 21: 6 p.m. "Rock the Park" FREE church sponsored Youth Concert at Metzger Park, Louisville

The newsletter for Aug-Sept will be in mid-Aug.

Our deepest Sympathy to families of..

Marvin Hostetler: The brother of Glenn Hostetler died June 26th in Aultman Hospital. His service was held July 1 at Orrville Mennonite Church.

Annett Hoffman, a long-time member of Beech Church, passed away July 3rd at Canton Christian Home shortly after Pastor Mel and Lois Leidig had prayed with her. She is survived by a California son, three grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and many Beech friends.

Alice Sommers, who lived most of her life in Louisville, died July 8th. Her service was held at Hartville Mennonite Church. Her survivors include Galen and Grace Sommers, formerly of Beech, as well as three other children and grandchildren.

Argentine Mission Partners update

(from e-mail sent on 7/10/11)

Hello brother: It is a pleasure to be able to write to you and tell you how things are going in Bariloche. I tell you that...I have not communicated with you (the last several months)...occurred because of the roof ..blown off the "house of refuge", as our brother Edgardo told you. I am sending you photos that will show you how it was left without a roof and how it is now, with a roof and two bedrooms that are almost finished in the part above. Also we are now planning to install natural gas. So the construction of the classrooms and auditorium (a separate building) could not continue this (past) summer because we had to pay attention to the house, in order to have a place to meet. These are the latest news items as a church.

I don't know if you were informed that a volcano on the Chilean side became active, so that all of Bariloche is a gray color because of the volcanic ash and cinders that fell. Bariloche in general is passing through a labor and economic crisis because there is no tourist income. (Typically, a popular ski resort this time of year.)

Since we hear of the sickness you have, we have been covering you with prayer, trusting that all has come out well with the surgery. I have had problems with my pc, so that I have communicated very little with this means, my pc being old. Does anyone in your family have Facebook? To add me to your contacts, we could stay more connected.

Well. Daniel, greetings from those who know you here, including my wife. And I send you a big hug and may God strengthen you in this time of sickness. Greetings to the church and to your family

Blessings, Enzo Inostroza

Shepherd's Gate report (cont. from pg. 2)

Enrollment openings continue to be offered at Shepherd's Gate. There is currently a waiting list for toddlers and we have places available for preschoolers or summer school agers up to age 12. If anyone needs childcare or preschool experience, including before or after school, contact us soon, as our roster is filling quickly. We offer a 25% discount to children of Beech members, sibling discounts for fulltime enrollees and a referral bonus to enrolled families who bring us more children. Please share with families and friends that we provide quality, faith-based child care in our community.

Happy Summer!

Lori Dickerhoof, Director, SGCCC

Pastor's Corner: Pittsburgh Trip – Short but Stimulating

Was it my message about “demons” on Sunday that caused me to sense that there were a number of these nasty little critters running around on Monday in Pittsburgh, trying to destroy my enjoyment of Pastors’ Day? The large ballroom was very cold at Westin Hotel, where over 200 pastors from across the US met for the day. I had only a light, short-sleeved shirt. A faulty PA system made it difficult to hear the speakers, until it was corrected during lunch. But worst of all, a miscommunication resulted in NO COFFEE for morning break or lunch! By the time I got some caffeine in my system at the 3 pm break, I knew what addicts feel like in withdrawal.

Thankfully those three enemies did not ruin my day. Those planning the event made an excellent choice of speakers. In the morning it was Mary Thiessen Nation. From a rural Mennonite community in Canada, Mary was called by God, after graduation from Tabor College, to live and minister among the poor in the Watts section of Los Angeles, where she spent the next 18 years. Now a professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, she is a member of Early Church, a congregation among the homeless in Harrisonburg, VA. Her gripping stories underscored the truth that the poor are not statistics, they are real people. Ministry among them, however, should be “transformational both ways”, with mutual learning taking place. In other words, the poor have much to teach us about faith. To survive in these kinds of settings, the follower of Jesus must be “prayed up, in the Word” and gifted with “Spirit-led discernment.” This quote struck me in particular: *“Many are leaving the church because we don’t have an adequate theology of evil.”* In other words, we haven’t shown how God can use the church to respond to the horrible evils in our world. During open mic time, one pastor from a rural church in PA shared how God began bringing refugees from Burma and Thailand to their doors. With some hesitancy, they responded with hospitality and have seen their obedience to the Spirit double the size of their church and transform many lives. She asked us this unsettling question: *“Are we willing to let Jesus mess up our lives?”*

In the afternoon, John Stahl-Wert shared about his ministry at the opposite end of the spectrum – to wealthy business leaders in the Pittsburgh area. Deeply committed to Jesus and his Kingdom, John works with Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation to “transform the culture of Pittsburgh by building the character of its leaders.” His stories were also gripping, showing how Christian business leaders need support from the church in discerning how they can be used by Jesus in the marketplace. *“Ministry is who you are where you are.”*

In the wrap-up session Mary and John affirmed each other’s particular call to ministry, took questions from the floor, and encouraged us in our pastoral ministries.

I’m running out of space... so I hope someone else from Beech will report on the joint worship service on Monday eve, with Shane Hipp’s clear call for reconciliation among the opposing groups in the church... on eating a “Naked Anabaptist” at Fernando’s Sandwich Shop, and much more... If not, maybe I’ll do a *“Pittsburgh - Part 2”* next month. **Dan King**