

KALEIDOSCOPE

BETHEL COLLEGE MENNONITE CHURCH

April — May 2013 7:2



Adoptions — Take In and Accept as One's Own

Our congregation is filled with generous, loving and caring families, who offer love and acceptance to others in our community, our nation, and worldwide. The adoptions finalized in two of our families at BCMC demonstrate this well.

Orvin and Janet Voth

Most members and friends recognize the children with Janet and Orvin Voth, Jonathan “Jon” and Ian, who have attended BCMC most of their lives. Janet and Orvin made an intentional decision at the time of their marriage to help care for children whose families are not well equipped to care for their own children, not knowing in what medium

that would be accomplished. They met Jon’s birth mother when another young woman was living with them, someone Janet had met while working in North Carolina, and moved with Janet when she returned to Newton. The two young women met while riding bikes and soon became friends. Both were single mothers with babies. With the encouragement of the Voths, both young women, Crystal and Jessica, earned their high school diplomas. Janet and Orvin’s goal for both families was for them to be able to provide a caring home for each of their children. The Voths applied for a foster care license through Youthville. Crystal eventually

returned to North Carolina and now provides a good home for her child. Janet and Orvin created a living space in the lower level of their home for Jessica and Jon.

Jessica and Jon continued to live with Janet and Orvin, who continued to work within the system of foster care. Seven and one-half years later, Jessica gave birth to Ian. Janet and Orvin hoped that Jon and Ian would eventually be able to permanently live with their birth mother. Later the Voths purchased a home for Jessica where she and her children lived, and they continued mentoring her and assisting her with parenting skills. At the same time, the children continued to spend many hours and nights with Janet and Orvin. During these years, the school system – Sunset Elementary School and Santa Fe and Chisholm Middle Schools – provided a safe daily environment for the boys. The Voths always maintained their foster care license, and about one and one-half years ago, it was the decision of the state foster care and court systems that the children move permanently into Janet and Orvin’s home. After a long, tedious process of paper work, the Voth family received a wonderful gift on December 20, 2012, when Jonathan Michael and Ian Jakob became the sons of Janet and Orvin Voth. Jonathan exclaimed, “This is the best Christmas present ever!” Ian said, “I just want to live with my brother Jon.” They have

always shared a close sibling relationship. Janet and Orvin’s family is complete, and they joyfully accept the serious responsibility of continuing to provide a home as the parents of Jon and Ian.

Jane Wagoner

Jane, who grew up in The Church of the Brethren in McPherson, has a very different story. She obtained her degree from Manchester College in Indiana and then went to graduate school at Boston University. She became an Occupational Therapist. After her marriage, she and her husband moved to California, and when her marriage failed, she returned to Kansas. She joined a circle of single women who were looking into becoming parents. This group provided support for each other. Jane worked with Catholic Charities in Wichita and was open to a child of mixed race. A very young mother, who lived with friends, chose Jane for her two-day-old baby Christopher “Chris,” who came to live with Jane at the age of two weeks.

Chris was four when Jane began the process of looking for a second child. Daniel’s



A happy day for the Voths! Judge Dickinson, Janet, Jonathan and Ian, Orvin and their attorney after the adoption was finalized on Dec. 20, 2012.

Bethel College Mennonite Church
2600 College Ave., P.O. Box 364, North Newton, KS 67117
316-283-3667
office.bcmc@sbcglobal.net web: bcmc.ks.us.mennonite.net
Editorial committee: Karen Penner, Lois Goertzen,
Ruth R. Harder and Monica Lichti

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Daniel, Christopher, and Jamel

birth mother was from out-of-state and was living at an unwed mother's home in Wichita. When Jane met Daniel, he came to live with her the following day as a baby. At this point, Jane felt all her prayers had been answered and her family was complete. Chris graduated from Newton High School and went on to serve with Mennonite Mission Network in North Carolina and is now a student at Bethel College. Daniel has grown up to be a tall young man who loves to play basketball, playing basketball all over in Kansas. However, unknown to Jane, there was something more on the horizon for her family.

In Daniel's circle of friends was a 14-year-old young man named Jamel. He came to spend an overnight with Daniel, and she learned he was in an unfortunate living situation. In a short period of time, when Jane learned Jamel was possibly going to move to an unknown home in Texas, she began looking for ways to provide a home for Jamel. School personnel helped facilitate the move into the Wagoner home which happened September 26, 2011. She checked into legal guardianship, which would terminate at age 18, so she chose not to do that. Soon, with the blessing of Jamel's

grandparent, she proceeded with plans to adopt Jamel Allah. The adoption became final on April 24, 2012. Jane shares Jamel with his birth family. The adoption of Jamel creates a very different experience than Chris and Daniel's adoptions. It is a gratifying, as well as a challenging new dynamic to her family. She, Chris, and Daniel are welcoming a new member to their family, one who was older at the time of adoption, and has another family history. Together they are working to form a new family identity. Jane looks forward to the challenges and welcomes the support of their church family. While these are two uniquely different stories, both families ultimately created a welcoming family environment for these children/young men by opening their homes and hearts through adoption, taking in and accepting these children/young men as their own.

~ Karen Penner

Maggie Goering's Social Work Project

Throughout the month of January and February I had the privilege of leading four discussion based sessions with six girls from BCMC. Our discussions revolved around topics such as women leadership,

empowerment, how women and girls are influenced by society, stereotypes, and the media. We watched a documentary film entitled, "Miss Representation," addressing these issues as well.

Within our changing world and society it is important to engage young women and girls in these topics of conversation. Women and girls need to hear from others and deeply believe themselves that their worth does not lie in their beauty and sexuality. Women have to combat this message daily. My hope is that through these group sessions the girls were able to engage in new ideas and wrestle with questions that the group discussions might have aroused within them. The awareness of how media views women and girls is something that needs to be addressed, talked about, and changed.

The girls were great to engage with and get to know! I want to thank them for their dedication, willingness to rearrange schedules, their openness, and participation!

Thanks again,
Maggie Goering

BCMC Members Attend Western District Conference Immigration Gathering

Several weeks ago a group of members of BCMC attended the WDC/Mennonite Church USA regional immigration event, *Citizens of God's Kingdom: Immigration and Christian Faith*. The main resource people for the event were Jason Boone, Coordinating Minister for the Peace and Justice Support Network of Mennonite Church USA, Saulo Padilla, Immigration Education Coordinator with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. and Tammy Alexander, Legislative Associate for Domestic Affairs for MCC U.S. in Washington, D.C. Presentation titles were: *Biblical stories and our stories of immigration; Citizens of God's kingdom; Root causes of immigration; Theological reflection; Understanding immigration history and law; Problems and profits from immigration enforcement; Christian advocacy and networking*. Those attending included Margaret Toews, chair of Witness Commission; Valetta Seymour



Back row: Sarah Turner, Serena Wong, Laura Tran
On couch: Maggie Goering and Erin Bergen
Front row: Elizabeth Tran and Zoe Siemens

from Witness Commission; Patty Shelly, Nathan Koontz (on WDC Immigration Task Force, Ron and Lois Preheim, Leah Bartel, Ben Kreider, Karen Sheriff LeVan, Susan and Lee Wheeler, and Heidi Regier Kreider. It was a valuable experience to those who attended. Following are comments from some of those attendees.

* Heidi Regier Kreider writes: "I think this is a significant link to what is happening in WDC, MC USA, the local community, and the national scene."

* Lois Preheim's observations: "Hearing the immigration journey of Saulo Padilla, immigration education coordinator for MCC US set the stage for exploring reasons families emigrate. The issues of economics, militarization, safety, religious freedom, and opportunity haven't changed from those in Bible times and that of our forebears. Addressing the root causes of immigration has implications for international economic policies. Much is spent on security and border enforcement when root causes should be examined. Tammy Alexander, MCC US legislative associate for domestic affairs, explained that our government spends \$18 billion annually on immigration enforcement. It costs \$165 a day to detain an undocumented immigrant compared to a \$13 a day alternative such as an ankle bracelet for monitoring. In addition to recognizing reasons for immigration and addressing root causes, the church's role in 'welcoming the stranger' was examined. Stories were heard of how undocumented people were experiencing the church. How does a congregation relate to the undocumented? This is a question for congregations."

* Ben Kreider: "It was a rich

and full time of learning. A lot was packed in – from biblical and theological perspectives on immigration to the ins and outs of U.S. policy, to practical brainstorming on what can be done in our communities and churches. And there was lots of good food and conversation.

* Valetta Seymour: The conference was very informative in many respects. It made clear that many Mexican and Central American immigrants left their countries because of the difficult economic situation that U. S. trade policies caused them. The conference also effectively pointed out the extreme difficulty of obtaining legal status here. It was very worthwhile.

* Leah Bartel: I found the immigration workshop to be meaningful and helpful. There were opportunities for dialogue about our own family migration stories, learning about root causes of immigration and the role our government has in those, education on current proposed immigration reform and ideas for how we might advocate for immigrants. We heard a moving testimony from an undocumented immigrant attending a WDC church. It was a valuable experience!

~ Karen Penner

Chancel Bells Go "On the Road"

Chancel Bell Choir played in two worship services at Whitestone Mennonite Church on Sunday, Feb. 24. We adapted to a new set up arrangement and played all five selections beautifully! In between the services, the church served us a nice brunch.

In April, the bell choir will be performing in the Kansas Mennonite Men's Choir

concerts. We'll do one selection with the choir and will also perform a special number on our own. (Sunday, April 21, 7 p.m. at Bethel College Memorial Hall and Sunday, April 28, 7 p.m. at Central Community Church in Wichita).

These extra performances add a little stress to all of our lives. But it's nice to be invited to perform in the larger Mennonite community and we're up to the challenge!
~ Vada Snider, Chancel Bell Choir director



Some members of the BCMC Youth Group traveled to Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp, Colorado, for Snow Camp, February 15, returning February 17. Pictured below are Brad Burch, Ruth R. Harder, Serena Wong, Angus Siemens, Gus Williams and Suzy Burch. (Brad, Ruth and Suzy accompanied the youth as sponsors.) The group traveled on a charter bus leaving from Hesston with 37 other youth and sponsors from area Mennonite churches.



Back to Back Snows

February 20 and 25, 2013 brought back to back snows to the Newton/North Newton area. On February 20, 14.2 inches of snow fell. This was the biggest snow on record since 1962; 6.8 inches of snow fell February 25. (Snowfall totals are from *Wichita Eagle* newspaper reports.) Following is a quote from the February 26 *Wichita Eagle*: “This was less than initially forecast but still enough to help set a record for the snowiest month in the city’s (referring here to Wichita) history. Combined with last week’s 14.2 inches of snow, this storm raised the total to 21 inches. ‘That’s an any-month record, not just February,’ said Jerilyn Billings, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. The storms broke a record that was exactly 100 years old: 20.5 inches of snow fell in February 1913.”

Newton schools were closed for a couple of days and BCMC cancelled all of its Wednesday evening activities on February 20. Other activities such as commission/committee meetings were also cancelled on Thursday. BCMC is very grateful to Kevin Neufeld and his crew for clearing sidewalks and we also thank Wade Brubacher for clearing BCMC parking on the east side of the church. Thank you to Mike Crawford, BCMC custodian, in doing his part to moving snow around. A big thank you also to Facilities Committee members Marlin Lichti and Lowell Stucky—pictured here—for their help in clearing entrances, sidewalks, steps, etc. The intrepid BCMC staff made it to the office every day throughout both snows!

~ *Monica Lichti*



Marlin Lichti



Lowell Stucky

Meet the Issues and Christianity Sunday School Class

About forty years ago a Young Adult SS class was formed with former pastor Esko Loeven as their leader. When the class increased in size, they split into two groups and the

other named itself the Dialogue SS class. The original Young Adult group eventually named itself the Issues and Christianity Class and now includes 19 regular members.

Through the years their hours together consisted of some structured and some unstructured programming. They at times had speakers or videos, but often time was spent catching up with each others’ lives.

An amazing amount of trust has been built among the members, and through death of one member, divorces and remarriages of two, divorces of children, and various health issues and surgeries, they have been open to sharing these and many other things freely with each other.

About four years ago thirteen of the class went to Paraguay with Harold and Lotti Boschmann. This was an amazing trip. This past January six of the members went to the

Palestine/Israel interterm trip led by Patty Shelly. At least twice a year social occasions are held, once in fall for a wiener roast at the home of a class member, and at Christmas for a dinner at someone’s home. A few weeks ago after the Palestine trip, those who went hosted a Nazareth dinner (a meal like Jesus would have had growing up there). Meeting for pizza for Sunday lunch pretty much every Sunday began about 30 years ago.

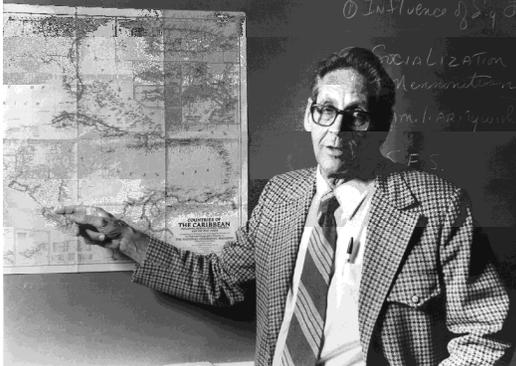
Class members are Harold and Lotti Boschmann, Jim and Lois Brubacher, Jerry and Carol Buller, Weldon and Bonnie Epp, Judy Friesen, Allen and Margret Gaeddert, Joe and Lil Peters, Howard and Marilyn Schmidt, Orvin and Janet Voth, John and Sandra Zerger. (Class list furnished by church office.)

(Information for this article was furnished by Lois Brubacher.) Editorial comment: It appears that this is another SS group which is a “small church within the larger church”. What a blessing it is to find community and comfort with each other in this way. ~ *Lois Goertzen*

Members of the Issues & Christianity Sunday School class at their annual wiener roast—pictured (clockwise) are Judy Friesen (back to camera), Sondra Zerger, Bonnie Epp, Jerry Buller, Weldon Epp, John Zerger, Lois Brubacher and Jim Brubacher (back to camera)



Howard Snider Celebrates his 90th Birthday



Howard Mervin Snider, son of Clemens and Samantha (Biehn) Snider, was born March 19, 1923, in Guernsey, Saskatchewan. He had two sisters and one brother. The family farm, a substation in the experimental farm system of the Canadian Department of Agriculture, was located halfway between Sharon Mennonite Church and Waterloo School. Religion and education have been key throughout Howard's life. After graduating from Rosthern Academy, he was drafted. As a conscientious objector, he served in a cordwood-cutting camp and a meat-packing plant. Following CO service, Howard went to Canadian Bible Institute where several returning soldiers were studying for the ministry. In this social and theological context, he became convinced that his Mennonite heritage was a better way. In 1948-49, Howard attended Eastern Mennonite College. When he returned home, he purchased a farm, and in 1950 was ordained minister. In 1952, he went to Goshen College where he met Marie Gingerich. They were married November 27, 1954. Howard took a one-year break to work as a writer/editor at the Mennonite Publishing House. In 1957, he completed his seminary degree and Marie earned a master's in religious education. Howard accepted a

call from the newly formed Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton, Alberta. At the time, many young Mennonites were leaving the farm and attending university. Howard's enthusiasm for progressive theology appealed to these students and life-long friendships were formed. However, this same theology proved threatening to leaders in the larger conference, so he left the ministry in the fall of 1959. For the next three years, he served as a social worker for the city of Edmonton welfare department. Then, he began graduate school at the University of Alberta. While in graduate school, Howard was invited by Dean Al Meyer to teach at Bethel College. In the summer of 1966, the family moved to Kansas. Both Vada and Conrad were born in Canada. Howard earned a Ph.D. from the University of Kansas and taught sociology at Bethel for 30 years. In the 1970s, he initiated interterm seminars that introduced rural students to city life in Denver, Kansas City and Chicago. In the 1970s-80s, he spent sabbaticals in Central America, studying transplanted Mennonites. It was a volatile time in Central America, with violence used to suppress the masses. He became interested in the success of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and presented a slide-lecture to more than 100 groups in Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma.

Other activities: Helped design and develop a real estate addition in North Newton (Regal Crescent area);

Did ham radio communication for Kansas-Paraguay Partners; Took summer and winter (skiing) vacations in the Rocky Mountains. He and Marie developed many friends with whom they square danced, and still play mah jongg, bridge and pinochle. Bethel College Mennonite Church and the Catacombs Sunday School class have always been at the center of Howard's life in Kansas. Since retirement, Howard has published three books: "The Cultural Creation of Christianity," "Jesus or Christ," and "Two Gospels." His fourth, based on research in Central America, is in progress. And for those of you younger than 90, take note: - Howard says the past decade has been the most creative! ~ Vada Snider

Happy 12th Birthday Lulu Williams!



Adelaide Lucille Williams, best known as Lulu, was born April 5, 2001, in Newton, KS. Lulu attends Hesston Middle School where her favorite subject is math. "It's easy and I love my teacher," she said. Her love of math will serve her well as she hopes someday to be a nurse or doctor. In her spare time Lulu loves to do gymnastics and crafts. She enjoys singing in the BCMC Jun-

ior choir because she likes to sing and because she loves laughing with her BCMC friends. Her favorite color is orange because it is "a very cheerful color." For her 12th birthday this year, she plans on going to Worlds of Fun with two of her friends. I asked Lulu if she had any embarrassing stories to tell about her grandma and grandpa, Lois and Edward Brubacher. This was her response: "One time our family went to Florida for Thanksgiving and I was sitting next to my grandma Lois on the plane and I threw up all over her because of the altitude." Oh my. Lulu, maybe you could consider being a doctor or nurse in KS where it is flat.

We're glad you are a part of our BCMC community, Lulu. Thank you for leading us in worship through song and for filling our church building with your laughter. Be safe at Worlds of Fun (I hope you don't throw up!) and remember that you are loved by a cheerful and gracious God. Happy 12th birthday!
~ Ruth R. Harder

Living Stones Update

On March 24 following worship at BCMC, a kingdom report was presented by Implementation Task Force chair Dick Koontz, with an update on Living Stones, BCMC's long range plan: The Facilities Committee is recommending a contractor for replacing the roof. The Organ Renovation Task Force is working with their preferred contractor to determine the cost and work schedule for organ renovations. Church Board approved a contract with PBA Architects of Wichita to provide architectural services, which will allow BCMC to

continued next page

work collaboratively with the Architect (Ed Klock) and a general contractor to accomplish the renovations in the most cost-effective manner. Additional projects (the roof, organ renovations, creation care elements, Fellowship Hall and kitchen upgrades, and signage) will be pursued separately from this contract. Integrated Consulting Engineers, Inc. (Dwayne Vaughn) is helping the Implementation Task Force, after options considered from the HVAC Task Force, recommend a plan for heating and air-conditioning.

The estimated cost for Living Stones is \$1.2 million. Known resources are approximately \$845,000 over a three year period. This includes \$95,675 from the Beatrice Buller Estate, \$121,309 designated for the Living Stones Organ Fund, \$249,500 already contributed, and an additional \$378,500 that members have expressed an intention to give. The difference between the cost estimate and known resources leaves a funding gap of almost \$400,000.

As the architect begins work on construction documents and a construction manager is selected, several factors will determine how we proceed: 1. Can we raise additional funds? The Implementation Task Force and Church Board are asking friends and members of BCMC to consider prayerfully whether they can increase their giving for Living Stones, either during 2013-2015 or by extending contributions for another year or two. Forms for this will be included with quarterly contribution report sent out at the beginning of April. 2. Are we willing to borrow? Two types of borrowing need to be considered. One type is for the purpose of cash flow. If contractors for

the building and the organ are able to begin work soon, bills may accumulate faster than contributions are made. While some limited internal borrowing from our own funds might be possible, it might still be necessary to establish a line of credit with a lender for cash flow purposes. Another type of borrowing is for a longer term loan to complete the work now, knowing that it might take 5-10 years or so to pay off the loan. For each \$100,000 borrowed for 10 years, monthly payments are approximately \$1,000. 3. Do we need to delay, reduce, or eliminate certain projects? If BCMC is able to raise additional funds and/or borrow for remaining project costs, then BCMC can proceed with all projects. If not, it may be necessary to delay some projects until funds are available, reduce the scope of some projects to save money, and/or eliminate certain projects entirely.

On March 24 following the kingdom report, a straw poll was conducted to get a feel for congregational support for options related to increased giving or borrowing. Thanks to all who were able to participate in the poll, in spite of snowy conditions that Sunday! The range of poll responses, together with revised intentions for giving to Living Stones, will be helpful for the Implementation Task Force and Church Board to develop a recommendation to bring to the April 28 congregational meeting.

Obituaries

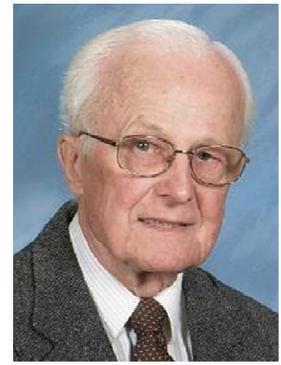
Marjorie Fast Schowalter (Franz) February 27, 1928 – February 5, 2013

Marjorie Fast Schowalter (Franz) age 84, died peacefully on February 5, 2013, at Kidron

Bethel Village in N. Newton Kansas, where she had resided for the past five years. She had been an elementary music teacher, an accomplished pianist and costume seamstress prior to the onset of crippling arthritis. Marjorie received her music degree from Bethel College in N. Newton, KS with additional studies at Wichita State University.

Marjorie's first husband, Duane Schowalter, a Boeing engineer, preceded her in death in 1987. In 2000 she married Earl Franz of Lind, WA, a former friend from Bethel College days.

She is survived by her husband Earl; two sons, Tim (and Cathy) Schowalter, and Steve (and Marna) Schowalter; two daughters Cynthia (and Don) Kinkade, and Stephanie (and Robbie) Pollack; two granddaughters Shannon (and Jed) Heuberger, and Corin (and Dave) Hammond; a sister Florence (and Merle) Siebert; brother Richard (and Mary Ann) Fast; three step-daughters Yvonne Redelfs, Gail Hudson and Jeanette Filan; seven step-grandchildren and two step-great-grandchildren. Also preceding her in death were her parents Dr. Henry and Ethel Fast, and an eight-year old sister Elinor. Marjorie has donated her body to the University of Kansas Medical Center. Interment of ashes will be at a later date.



**Leland David Harder
July 1, 1926 – March 21, 2013**

Leland Harder

was born July 1, 1926, in Hillsboro to Menno S. and Katherine Wiens Harder. He spent his elementary school years in Buhler and his middle school years in southern California. The family returned to Hillsboro, where Leland completed high school. He attended Tabor College for a year, then joined the Navy as a yeoman, a non-combatant position. Upon his discharge, he enrolled at Bethel College, graduating in 1948. After a year of teaching at Moundridge High School, he began graduate studies at Michigan State University, earning a Masters in sociology in 1950. He moved to Chicago to attend Bethany Biblical Seminary. It was here he met Bertha Fast, whom he married on August 8, 1951. They had two sons, John (1953) and Tom (1957). He served as pastor of the First Mennonite Church in Chicago. In 1958 they moved to Elkhart, IN, where he and Bertha joined the faculty of the new Mennonite Biblical Seminary, where they taught from 1958-1983. He was a member of the Commission on Home Ministries for the General Conference Mennonite Church. He and a colleague were the authors of a sociological study of the members of five Mennonite denominations, *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later*. He was also the author of a major book in Anabaptist studies, *The Sources of Swiss Anabaptism*. He retired in North Newton in 1983, where he was a part-time director of

the Great Plains Seminary Education Program, served as Conference Minister for the South Central (Mennonite) Conference, and was involved in family history research and writing. He was an active member of the Bethel College Mennonite Church. A stroke in the spring of 2011 required him to move to the skilled nursing unit of Kidron Bethel. Preceding him in death were his two parents; a brother Marvin Harder; sister Lois Hiebert; wife Bertha; and daughter-in-law Julie (Wieler). He is survived by son John (Windsor, ON Canada), granddaughter Chani, her husband Alex Wiens, and great-granddaughter Julianne, granddaughter Leah and her husband John Wideman; son Tom (Wichita), daughter-in-law Lois(Nofsinger) (and granddaughters Hillary, Madeline and Anna; and his sister Joan (Kaufman, Winfield).

With Our Members

Marriages: Michael Boschmann and Kelsey Leonard were married March 1, 2013 in Yountville, CA

Births: Henrietta Faye Brubacher was born to Jesse and Kate Brubacher March 24, 2013



Congratulations to Janet and Orvin Voth 50th wedding anniversary May 31, 1963



The Western District Conference Basketball Tournament was March 19-22. The BCMC PaciFists played Tues., March 19 and Thurs. and Fri., March 21

and 22. They lost their first two games, but won their last game. Here Matt Schloneger shows excellent form shooting a basket. High school seniors, Mark Kreider, Abe Turner and Nat Dick were part of the team.



Pastor's Corner Heidi Regier Kreider

Over the last two years I have visited BCMC members in the context of their daily life, work or volunteer activity, in set-

tings such as a child-care center, motorcycle repair shop, Harvey County courthouse and health department, lunchroom at Prairie View, Meals-on-Wheels route, a dairy farm, and a technology designer's office. These visits are an opportunity to learn more about the ways that members of the congregation live out their faith and use their gifts to serve God and others. I have asked them, "What led you to do what you do? What skills and passion do you bring to your work? What issues, questions and challenges do you struggle with? What do you most enjoy about your work? What connections do you experience between work and faith? These questions are about more than just what someone does to make a living or finds fulfilling. These questions are about "vocation," which comes from the Latin term "vocatio" - meaning a "call" or "summons." Christian vocation is how God summons us as disciples to use our personalities, experience, interests and passions to serve God's purposes in the world.

In my upcoming sabbatical (April 8-July 7) I plan to ask these same questions of myself, to review how my faith and experience shape my discipleship as a follower of Jesus in the world. Early in life as missionary kid, I gained a sense that God's mission in the world should also be my mission, and that because "God so loved the world" (John 3:16), so should I. Yet, pastors can easily become preoccupied with the institutional church - its buildings, programs and people - and lose touch with the broader realities of the world in which the church community lives. Though it is my job to provide leadership within a congregation, my

vocation as a pastor also prompts me to give attention to how our congregation and its members (including me), participate in God's work in the world.

During my sabbatical, I plan to attend two week-long seminars to strengthen the connection between the "inner journey" of spirituality and the "outer journey" of service and mission. The first is *Living and Leading from the Heart of God*, a Five-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation sponsored by the Upper Room at the Spiritual Life Center in Wichita, exploring how scripture and the Spirit shape us as faithful disciples serving a global community. The second is *The Ministry of Reconciliation in a Divided World* at the Center for Reconciliation at Duke Divinity School in Durham, NC. Through worship, presentations and workshops, this institute nourishes Christian leaders in the ministry of justice and peacemaking, to help their communities live out alternatives to the destructive conflicts and social divisions that fragment our world. I also look forward to rolling up my sleeves to volunteer in the kitchen at Camp Mennoscah for two weeks, and continuing involvement in Circles of Hope as an ally with people in poverty. Finally, I plan to do some reading and writing as a way to reflect on my life experience related to vocation and mission; and to find refreshment in God's beautiful creation, playing music, and family activities.

I look forward to sharing with you about my experience when I return, and hearing how God has been at work at BCMC in the meantime!



