

KALEIDOSCOPE

BETHEL COLLEGE MENNONITE CHURCH

August — September 2012 6:4



Home from Zambia by Alison Schmidt-Tieszen

Editor's Note: Alison Schmidt-Tieszen returned to Kansas in July from serving with Mennonite Central Committee's SALT (Service and Learning Together) program in Zambia.

Home. After 11 months of being away from home, I finally walked off the plane into hot, muggy Kansas. Waiting at the airport were my parents, sister, and brother-in-law. I was home. The first night I barely lay down on my bed and my eyes closed. Finally I could sleep on a mattress without a caved in center, or wake up to sounds of cars, dogs, or at 5 a.m. I didn't have to unlock multiple locks on the door or slide squeaky bolts to get outside to use the toilet at night. Rather it was just down the hall. And for breakfast I could eat cereal with milk! Or eggs or fruit, or really anything I wanted instead of plain white bread with nothing on it. And now, when I want to go somewhere I just get in my car and go. I don't have to walk to a bus station or get into a crowded mini-bus. I don't have to plan on an hour to go six miles. I am home!

But the longer I'm home, the more I think about waking up to four beautiful brothers pulling on my hand or

asking to read a book with me. Or stepping out of my house, to feel the African sun, glowing red as the dirt that covered my shoes. The people that I had become friends with at work or at the gym, had finally come to accept me and called me a true Zambian. And while I still don't miss eating white bread, if I'm honest, I have a small craving for nshima and deleyay cooked with lots of oil. And while most days just walking to work was my biggest headache, there were also moments when I could just stop and kick a handmade ball with some of the local kids, and forget that they were Zambian and I was American.

But more than anything, I think about the things that can't be vocalized, the feeling of being completely content. Because the longer I think about it, the more I realize that I had never really left home in the first place. Instead, I had brought home with me through the love that everyone had shown me in the U.S. And now because of the love that people had shown in Zambia, I am able to bring that home back with me. And if you ask me what I learned, the most striking thing, is that



Alison and her family in Zambia



This is my bedroom in Zambia with all the cards that were sent to me over the year. Thank you for all your support!" ~ Alison

people are just people everywhere you go. And your family can be as big or as small as you decide. So now, I'm lucky enough to have not one but four mothers, two fathers, and more brothers and sisters than I could ever possibly count! And for that lesson, I'm grateful to Zambia.

I have hopes of expanding my home even further with plans to move to Maine this fall in search of a social work job.

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Happy 80th Birthday LaVonne Godwin Platt!



August 16, 1932, in Marquette, Kansas, LaVonne was born, the second of three children, to C.E. and Roberta Mann Godwin. Both parents taught in the public schools and her father also was a school administrator and county superintendent of schools. So LaVonne grew up all over Kansas, living in Marquette, Windom, Assaria, Greenleaf, Bern, and Long Island. The family attended Evangelical United Brethren and Methodist churches and LaVonne joined the Methodist church in Bern.

In May, 1950, LaVonne graduated from Long Island High School and that fall entered the University of Kansas. At KU she was active in the Wesley Foundation and Methodist Student Movement. She spent one summer "caravanning" with a group of Methodist young people visiting and providing leadership for congregations in Texas. Also memorable was meeting Dwight Platt at a Wesley Foundation Cell Group! Upon graduating in 1954 with a degree in Home Economics, her first job was teaching in the Little River (KS) High School.

Life took a definite turn when, in May 1956, LaVonne joined the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) development project in Barpali in western Orissa, India. She and Dwight (who had been working there already two

years) were married June 21. LaVonne served as Administrative Assistant and worked with village women along with the Lady Social Education Organizer from the Indian Government. Leaving Barpali to return by steamship to the U.S., she wrote a journal entry dated October 23, 1957. "This was such a hard day for us. I can't express how I feel about having been at Barpali, and lived in rural India, but it is so deep in me and so much a part of me that I can hardly pull away from that physical environment even though the spirit and depth of it will live on as part of me."

LaVonne and Dwight settled in their home in rural Newton. LaVonne joined BCMC in 1958 where she taught Junior High Sunday School for many years and served in other leadership positions. Children Kamala and Richard blessed the family in their early years in Newton. LaVonne began involvement in community groups, such as the American Association of University Women (AAUW), Newton Human Relations Fellowship and an interracial Extension Homemakers Unit. She added to her writing skills with writing courses from KU when the family lived in Lawrence 1960-62. She joined (with baby Richard in a stroller!) in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963. She wrote articles for *Our Family Worships*, *The Mennonite*, *Builder* and other publications for many years.

The family spent the academic year 1970-71 in India. LaVonne was asked by AFSC to do a follow-up study of the Barpali development project. Her work was

published and LaVonne presented her findings to a U.S. Agency for International Development conference in Washington, DC.

In the '70s and '80s her writing and teaching skills were used to further knowledge about world hunger concerns in "More with Less" workshops and work with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Hunger Concerns Committee and faith and farming issues as editor of *From Swords to Plowshares* for the General Conference and editor of the book *Hope for the Family Farm*. She took a course in maternal and child nutrition in Jamaica and was part of the research staff in a study on nutrition and aging in Goessel. "Working with the AFSC in village development in India and later doing a follow-up study of that project, and applying my concern for world hunger/justice issues by working with Kansas MCC Hunger Concerns through workshops and seminars for adults and young people, I have attempted to look at root causes of hunger, to relate faith to food issues and lifestyle choices, and to seek understanding between peoples."

A capstone was receiving a grant from AAUW to return to India in 1982 to research the life of Bela Banerjee, a nurse and friend from the 1950s in Barpali. Not able to find a publisher interested in a biography of a little known person, LaVonne formed her own company, Wordsworth, to publish *Bela Banerjee, Bringing Health to India's Villages*. Wordsworth subsequently published 19 books for other persons and organizations, including Western District and Eden Mennonite Church.

In 1992 Bela came to North America for medical

care. She visited the Platt home. When it became apparent that Bela would not recover she was given loving care in their home until her death. LaVonne wrote *In Memory of Bela Banerjee, A Coda to her Biography*. LaVonne, thank God for the faithful stewardship of many gifts! My prayer is for God to bless you with deep peace and fulfillment in this 80th year of rich life.

~ Susan Wheeler



Bethel
College to
celebrate
its

125th Anniversary

Bethel is in its quasiquintennial. That is a fancy word for 125th anniversary. As a part of this celebration, the college will publish a new history book. Bethel received its charter in 1887, began classes in 1893, and has been going ever since. The official 125th anniversary will be at Fall Festival in October of this year. In 2007, President Barry Bartel asked me to write the new history, to be a part of the anniversary celebration, and I said "yes."

My usual field of history is the seventeenth century -- events and people far in the past. The new Bethel history book will discuss people and events up to the present time. If the book does not "get the story right," the writer can expect plenty of reaction. Most of us probably have a copy of P. J. Wedel's maroon-clad history of 1954, *The Story of Bethel College*; this was an heroic achievement of over 600 pages. The new history will cover the entire 125 years -- from a different perspective

Bethel College's 125th contd.

-- in about 300 pages. There has been a great overlap of the histories of the college and the college church; and this connection is a part of the story. Many of us have strong connections to the college. "It is a small college, and yet there are those who love it." So may it ever be.

Advanced orders for the book can be made now, through *Context* magazine. The launch of the book will be at Fall Festival, October 13. ~ Keith Sprunger

Salt and Light Youth Choir Visits BCMC

The concert presented on June 25 by the Salt & Light Youth Choir from St. Andrew United Methodist Church, Plano, Texas, at BCMC is one of those musical experiences listeners won't soon forget. Energetic, excited, and thoroughly competently trained, they presented a wonderfully enjoyable concert. Their conductor and accompanist have done an excellent job of sharing their own enthusiasm and competence with the young musicians.

The preceding comments were written from the point of view of a listener who thoroughly enjoyed the concert. On a perhaps more important level, the members of

the choir have obviously absorbed into their young brains the Biblical words and pictures of the Gospel message. Those words and pictures will pop up into their minds years from now when they are adults in ways that we are only beginning to understand. The Salt and Light Youth Choir is Christian education at its best.

~ Marvin Dirks

One delegate's perspective regarding the 2012 WDC Assembly

Summertime often is a time when many families have family reunions—sharing food and fellowship, celebrating additions to the family, grieving family losses, and perhaps even sensing or being aware of some family tensions or disagreements. Yet, family ties can often overcome differences and members can love and respect each other.

Western District Conference of the Mennonite Church USA also has its annual meeting and conference during the summer, this year being July 6-8 in Oklahoma City, OK. It was a good time of coming together with the theme "Becoming one to be sent in Christ". The weekend focused on unity, of oneness, of being "family" in Christ.

While we came together, aware of the different

stances on homosexuality and the tension over same-sex unions performed by Mennonite pastors, the desire to be "family" in Christ was also evident. The church bringing a recommendation to the assembly from one stance on the issue and the church bringing an amendment to that recommendation chose to meet and join in prayer together before the meeting. As we celebrated communion together in worship, everyone shared in the "bread and cup", knowing there were disagreements within the circle and yet choosing to commune together "in Christ."

We celebrated the new member into the WDC family when Iglesia Menonita Casa

de Dios in Dallas was officially received as a WDC congregation. We rejoiced as others have come together to embrace Anabaptism as their theology and are exploring membership into the Western District Conference.

Worship in song, word, drama and communion together were inspiring and encouraging. Overall, I felt a sense of hope and a vitality within WDC, its leadership and its congregations to "be sent in Christ." While the details may not always be clear, and while we may have disagreements, the desire to be "one in Christ" will be our witness. ~ Mary Ann Boschmann



BCMC delegates at a breakfast meeting 2012 WDC Assembly-Oklahoma City, OK

Long Range Plan now called *Living Stones: Gratitude for the Past, Building for the Future*

The BCMC Board has appointed an Implementation Task Force (ITF), which includes myself (Dick Koontz), Annette Lamp and Vern Preheim. We have been meeting weekly to work on details related to our Long Range Plan.

I want to thank the Long Range Planning Team (George Leary, Sondra Koontz, Harold Thieszen, Adam Robb, Jenni Koontz and Heidi Regier Kreider) for

providing excellent leadership through the planning process. Thanks to all members of the congregation who also participated in the planning process by sharing your thoughts and prayers.

It is time to move from the planning phase into the implementation phase. Therefore, it seems appropriate to retire the term "The Long Range Plan" and adopt a new



The Salt and Light Youth Choir from St. Andrew United Methodist Church, Plano, TX

theme: *Living Stones: Gratitude for the Past, Building for the Future*, which was approved by the Church Board at their August 2 meeting. We will be using this theme throughout the fund-raising, final planning, implementation and construction phases.

We are not planning to do the Pony Express this fall. Instead, we are planning to ask all members to indicate their intents to give both to the 2013 annual budget and to the *Living Stones* plan during a personal contact this fall. Gifts to the *Living Stones* plan may be fulfilled over a three year period.

The conversations we will be having this fall during the fund-raising phase will be an exciting opportunity for us to reflect on God's blessings freely given to us, and to consider how we can respond, with gratitude and praise.

~ Dick Koontz
Chair Implementation Task Force

The group later met in the home of Jim Rich and Maynard Janzen and then, for an extended period, met in the "Alcove" of the Fine Arts Center. Over the years membership has changed, as well as location and format of the group. Because meeting in the Fine Arts Center meant difficulty in getting there in bad weather, especially for those with physical disabilities, and problems of assuring the building's availability each week, the class opted for moving to room 24 on the second floor of the church building when that became available about ten years ago.

Traditional social activities have included an annual summer picnic and a Christmas potluck in one of the members homes.

The format has shifted to selecting a book or article for discussion with leadership changing frequently. Currently the class has subscribed to the Christian Century magazine and participants discuss the many thought provoking articles. The class name has remained, "The Fine Arts Class," because of the original meeting place.

New members or attendees are always welcome. (Information submitted by Merrill Raber.)

Current class membership includes John and Iris Banman (in absentia), Floyd Bartel and Justina Neufeld, Thelma Bartel, Loretta Baumgartner, Marv and Ruthann Dirks, Mary Ann Gertsen, Martha Graber, Esther Groves, Leland Harder (in absentia), Maurine Hean, Arlo and Kathryn Kasper, Ralph and Evelyn Lehman, Merrill and Boots Raber, Raymond and Gladys Regier, LaVera Schrag,

Janet Stucky, Carl and Louise Thieszen, Vi Unruh, Violet Wildeboor (names furnished by church office).

~ Lois Goertzen



Ralph and Evelyn Lehman (above) and Martha Graber, Louise Thieszen and Carl Thieszen (pictured below) are members of the Fine Arts Sunday school class.



Youth Group Trip to Uplift Mountain July 15-20, 2012

The promise of cooler temperatures, high adventure, and team building led six BCMC youth and four sponsors to choose Uplift Mountain near Westcliffe, Colorado as the site for our most recent summer experience. We left on July 15, and first made our way to a cabin owned by John and Elsie Sheriff for a night. We then headed over the mountain to the Uplift Mountain Christian Camp, where Dean and Jay Selden and their families treated us to some excellent mountain hospitality. While at Uplift, the group participated in many physical activities, each of which was designed to promote team building and provide a sense of worshipping God through giving all we could physically give. Challenge course activities, archery, an obstacle course, disc golf, and a cold

tub all challenged us to find spiritual connection to God through accomplishing difficult things. Then, in the evenings, we were challenged by messages designed to help us think about whether we were going "all-in" for God, whether we were living with God or above God, and whether we were willing to take the many risks that following God might include. On Wednesday, the majority of the group traveled to Buena Vista for a day of whitewater rafting, relaxation (our bodies needed it!), and delicious pizza. Throughout the week, the group was challenged in many ways; through these challenges, we came together as a group and found strength in both each other and God. We are so thankful for the great amount of support the

Continued next page

The Fine Arts Sunday School Class

This is the second in our continuing series highlighting BCMC Sunday school classes.

Sometime about 1966, a group seeking a less structured Sunday school class, began meeting in the drama lab in Krehbiel Auditorium. Current class members who were part of that beginning group were Arlo and Kathy Kasper, Merrill and Boots Raber, and Justina Neufeld. The typical format of the group, at that time, was to meet with no agenda or structured leader and discuss issues, concerns, or ideas that related to group members in the moment.

congregation has shown for us as we've prepared for, experienced, and returned from this trip! ~ *Adam Robb*

Below participants in the youth trip: (left to right—back row) Nat Dick, Jill Robb, Erin Bergen, Mark Kreider, Adam Robb, Gus Williams, Peter Wintermote, Jennie Wintermote, Austin Prouty, Serena Wong in front row



Group building exercises



Thank you Peter!

 Peter Wintermote served as the Bethel College student intern at BCMC in 2011-2012, in the area of youth ministry. To complete the year of youth activities, he and his wife Jennie (Warkentine), who were married in June, traveled to Colorado in July together with the youth group and sponsors Adam and Jill Robb for their adventure trip to Uplift Mountain. Thank you, Peter, for sharing your many gifts and time with BCMC's youth and our congregation! Peter and Jennie will be living in Halstead, where Peter will be serving on the ministry staff at

Halstead Mennonite Church, and Jennie will be teaching school.

2012-2013 BC Intern



Introducing 2012-2013 BC intern, Katie Schmidt!

We will soon see a new face around BCMC. Katie Schmidt, a sophomore at Bethel College, will begin work as our 2012-2013 student intern late August. Her work will focus in the areas of outreach and witness, with special emphasis on

creation care. As a freshman, Katie was involved in an organic waste composting initiative for the BC cafeteria. She is especially interested in working with our Creation Care Committee on environmental friendly initiatives, perhaps involving education for children. As she wrote in her application, "It is my firm belief that a respect for the creation has to start young to really take hold in the next generation." People who know Katie say that she is a bright student who has many interests, one of the strongest of these being environmental science and environmental issues generally. She is outgoing and seems to get along well with many different people. In her application, Katie said that she has enjoyed volunteering for Community Playschool for the past several years and has gained experience in reaching out to children that come from different backgrounds and situations. Ruth R. Harder will serve as Katie's primary supervisor as she works approximately four hours a week doing BCMC-related projects. Let's be sure to welcome Katie when she begins her work in late August! ~ *Ruth R. Harder*

a year of student teaching. Megan plays and teaches classical guitar, and enjoys choral music with a special interest in children's music. She grew up in a family of music educators, and participated in choirs and orchestras in her youth. She is excited for the opportunity to work with children at BCMC, building on the good musical foundation prepared by her grandmother and former Cherub Choir Director, Norma Preheim.



Rebecca Schloneger, Music Coordinator:

Rebecca serves as Director of the Suzuki Strings program at the Bethel College Academy for Performing Arts, where she supervises strings faculty, collaborates with the Board and Executive Director, teaches group classes, organizes concerts and advises student assistants. Rebecca also plays violin with the Wichita Symphony Orchestra. She has a Bachelor of Music in violin performance from St. Olaf College (MN), and a Masters of Music in violin performance from University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory. Rebecca looks forward to contributing to the music program and nurturing musical activities and leadership in the congregation. Rebecca and her husband Matthew are parents of Jonah and Lily.

Introducing New Music Staff



Megan Siebert, Cherub Choir Director: Megan will be a senior at Bethel College this year, majoring in music education, with plans to graduate in 2014 following



William Eash, Chancel Choir Director: William (or Bill, as he is known by many) serves as Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Bethel College, where he has been on faculty since 1999. He has also served as a choir director in a Presbyterian church and a university chapel choir, and as section leader in the St. Mary's Cathedral choir in Wichita. Bill values the importance of music in the liturgical setting, and the vision and musical direction that former choir directors have provided at BCMC. He looks forward to working with the Chancel Choir and invites interested singers to participate. Bill received his bachelor's degree in music from Bluffton College (OH), and his master's and doctoral degrees in choral conducting from the University of Iowa. Bill is married to Esther, and they have two adult children and two grandchildren.



Continuing on our music staff will be:



Vada Snider, Hand Bell Choir Director



Renee Reimer, Junior Choir Director;



Eleanor Kaufman, Organist.

We thank each of these persons for offering their musical gifts and leadership at BCMC!
~ Heidi Regier Kreider



Ruth R. Harder with Chautauqua Institution Fellows



Pictured above: From July 22-28, Ruth participated in a writing conference with Kathleen Norris (pictured to my left) called Theology in the Real World. The conference was held at Collegetown Institute near St. Cloud, MN

Editor's Note: On August 14, associate pastor Ruth R. Harder will return from a three month sabbatical. Here is some news from her experiences.

On July 16, and after putting about 2,000 miles on our car, Jesse and I returned home from a wonderful week at Chautauqua Institution in New York. I was one of fifteen clergy (thirteen Protestant pastors and two rabbis) to participate as a Fellow in their New Clergy Program. (The fellows are pictured below.) As a Fellow, I had opportunities to forge interfaith relationships and converse with church leaders including Rev. Mark Labberton, the Lloyd John Ogilvie Chair of Preaching and director of the Ogilvie Institute of Preaching at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. Special sessions included speakers on Judaism, Buddhism and Islam. One day George Wirth, of the First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, spoke to

our group about church administration and coordinating a large congregation and the next day, Jared Jacobsen, organist and coordinator of worship and sacred music, and the Rev. Joan Brown Campbell discussed planning worship services and how music directors and clergy get along with one another. A highlight of the week was listening to Krista Tippett, host of On Being, interview people like Greg Boyle, Rami Nashashibi and Lawrence Krauss. It was great, too, that Jesse had an opportunity to take a drawing class during our week at Chautauqua.

During my sabbatical, people often asked me whether BCMC seemed far away. My answer was usually yes and no. I can actually see the south side of our church from my living room couch and so as I read or prayed, I would sometimes glance over and wonder what was happening. Even when I was 1,000 miles away at a preaching conference in Atlanta, GA, or walking the streets of Chautauqua, New York, or 700 miles away at Collegetown Institute in Minnesota, people kept asking me about home, BCMC, Mennonites and Kansas. Another question that people often asked and are still asking is, "What did you learn?" My response was usually, "I learned that I have a lot to learn." In other words, it will take time for me to unpack what I've experienced this summer. Overall, it was a rich time of interfaith and economical dialogue, travel, rest, writing, reading and time with family. I look forward to my return.

With Our Members

Marriages:

- **February 26** — Wider Fellowship member Ruth Baughman Unrau married Robert Flick at Bluffton First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, OH
- **June 2** — Danielle Nicole Woolery married Orlando Martin Scalia at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton

Births:

William Kasper Fitzmons was born to Rachel Kasper and Tommy Fitzsimons, **June 9** in New York City

Baptisms — April 29:

Rebecca Trumble
Victoria Janzen
Cristopher Nelson

Membership Changes:

- Kenneth Kaufman changed his membership status to wider fellowship membership
- Ellen Awe changed her membership status to wider fellowship membership
- David and Sydney Stigge-Kaufman are terminating their wider fellowship membership at BCMC. They are attending the St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship, St. Louis, MO.



And we failed to mention in past issues new members who joined BCMC by transfer on March 4:

- Mike and Stahl Claassen joined by transfer from Hillside Christian Church, Wichita
- Karen and Lynn Loucks joined by transfer from Faith Mennonite Church, Newton
- Helen and Frank Nachtigal joined by transfer from Faith Mennonite Church, Newton
- Carol Longenecker joined by transfer from Bridgewater Church of the Brethren, Bridgewater, Virginia
- Jason Schmidt joined by transfer from Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater

Anniversaries



August 11, 1962

**50th Wedding Anniversary
Congratulations to
Louise (Dick) Thiesen
and
Carl Thiesen!**

August 25, 1962

**50th Wedding Anniversary
Congratulations to
Helen (Goering)
Nachtigal and
Frank Nachtigal**



**Pastor's Corner—
Susan Wheeler**

Ordination! Yes, we are celebrating this important covenant of ministry in my life, but this event also must include Bethel College Mennonite Church and the Western District Conference. As WDC guidelines point out, “Within the context of a worship service in the congregation, the ceremony of ordination should be celebrated as a special and significant occasion for both the congregation and the person being ordained.” I feel much gratitude toward this congregation as a whole and for the leadership, as well as for our active participation in WDC. One of the questions I reflected upon for the ordination interview with the Leadership Commission was to give an example of how my theological understanding has been influenced by the people I serve. Certainly my understanding of God has been

influenced by you at BCMC! I have been influenced in my role as pastoral care pastor as I listen to the unfolding of life stories. I often find myself somewhat mystified, yet deeply impacted as well, by the depth of knowledge and intellectual gifts, the wonderful insight, wisdom, and will for good works that, along with a depth of motivation and courage, gives witness to a variety of faith expressions. I am encouraged, inspired, and challenged. I have been influenced by those unafraid to express their doubts as well as by those unafraid to state what they clearly believe, and also by persons whose loudest testimony is a life of service to God and to the church. I wrote, “At BCMC I have found that the ability to name Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord lives along side an openness to diversity; less fear in naming differences and in having conversations. For me, this is a most freeing and hopeful atmosphere.” Also, it is important for us that my husband, Lee, and I have been warmly embraced and integrated into this unique body of Christ. We find ourselves energized by the creativity and focus of this congregation as well as regularly blessed by well-prepared sermons and coordinated worship services including glorious musical offerings and selections. Worshiping in this particular setting and working to offer pastoral care to congregational members over two years has most significantly impacted my ever growing and widening “theological understanding.” Thanks be to God, and to all of you! AMEN

Return service requested

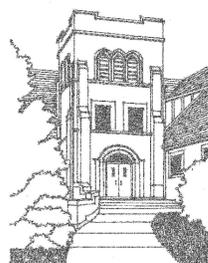
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Worship and events schedule *(Check weekly bulletins and church web site, bcmc.ks.us.mennonite.net, for updates)*

9:30 a.m.—Worship

10:30 a.m.—Fellowship time

10:50 a.m.—Christian education



August 2012

August 5

Worship with sermon by Susan Wheeler

August 12

Worship with sermon by Heidi Regier Kreider

3:00 p.m. Ordination Service for Susan M. Wheeler

August 19

Worship with sermon by Heidi Regier Kreider; Commissioning for children and youth leaders

Ruth R. Harder returns from sabbatical

Fall Sunday school classes begin

12:00 noon Local/seasonal foods potluck—Fellowship Hall

August 26

Worship with sermon by Ruth R. Harder

September 2012 Events

September 2

7:00 p.m. Dessert Reception for returning Bethel College students and staff—BCMC Front Lawn

September 23—

Peace Sunday

Worship with sermon by Nathan Koontz and Sunday school elective

11:45 a.m. Potluck Lunch in Fellowship Hall followed by Congregational Meeting in the Sanctuary