

The Taftsville Chapel Current

God calls us as followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as a community of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to our world.

"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." John 3:8

Speaking To Sorrow

He tells the story calmly, his even voice veiling the horrors of the tale. A flight from the murderous carnage of bleeding Sudan, a sojourn in the cruel and unwelcoming land of Egypt, and a family divided when they tried to escape to Israel. Now he sits in a tiny Tel Aviv apartment with two young sons, remembering. He tells us about his wife who was shot in the leg by Egyptian soldiers and taken back to Egypt. He tells us about a son who became lost in the Sinai desert and starved to death. It is a story of sadness, the cry of one suffering soul.

In the recent past, I've heard many similar stories of pain. Some are sorrows from long ago that have never healed. Stories of sickness, war and death. Some are present struggles to survive. Stories of unemployment, mounting bills, and hungry children. The characters vary, the details differ slightly, but the plots remain the same.

And as I listen, I wonder. I wonder how to respond, how to empathize, how to care. Is it possible to do or say anything that can ease the pain? Is it really possible to identify with someone whose pain has been far more intense than anything I have experienced?

It is never easy to respond to sorrow. We painstakingly choose the words in the cards we write; we weigh carefully the words we say to a grieving family. And yet sorrow demands a response. Perhaps we find it so difficult to respond appropriately because we recognize just how essential such a response is. We have seen that the support of fellow humans can be instrumental in easing sorrows, and that compels us to ponder the way we respond to people in need.

Often, however, our ways of dealing with the unpleasant matter of another's grief are less than satisfactory. Perhaps we find ourselves minimizing the trauma they have faced because it makes us uncomfortable. We may tell ourselves that the individual is used to such things, that they do not feel as deeply as we do, or that their cultural values better prepare them for such calamities. Other times we may subconsciously shift blame to them for the problems they face. We assume that the unemployed are lazy, that the oppressed did something to deserve the oppression, or that the people just aren't quite intelligent enough to figure a way out of their problems. Those of us who have known easy, trouble-free lives are particularly susceptible to this way of thinking.

On the other hand, we may respond to sorrow by placing too much emphasis on the tragedies that people have experienced. Sometimes we shower individuals with excessive pity, letting everyone else know how terrible their

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lives have been. This tends to turn a person into something of a victim-hero who is continually reminded of his grief and may use it as a way to bolster his self-esteem and legitimize his every action. Still another tendency may be to unite with a person against the ones who inflicted his pain. The problem with these approaches is that they focus on the calamities rather than pointing to a solution.

In light of all these problematic responses, how indeed should we respond? Several days ago, these question in my mind collided with the music I was listening to. Words from the prophet Isaiah in Handel's superb musical setting seemed to offer an answer, "Surely, surely, He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." Sorrows borne away, carried, taken, removed...surely that should be consolation for the grieving. Surely that is a message worth sharing with sorrowing souls. And yet what does it mean in the real terms of every day life? Could quoting such a verse offer any consolation to people who feel their sorrows have been taken anywhere? What kind of direction does that give for the dilemma of how to respond?

No, the verse itself is not necessarily a pre-packaged answer that will instantly numb pain and heal hurting hearts. It does not relieve me of my responsibility to empathize with individuals and try in my limited way to identify with their suffering. But it does contain the answer. For the suffering soul, it has the only genuine tonic that can erase the pain. Sparse in words though it may be, the verse is rich in healing concepts.

It tells us that we are not alone. As humans, our pains are lessened when we realize that others have faced them too. And when we realize that not just any human, but God Himself, in the person of Jesus, has also been subject to sorrow and grief, we are comforted. We are told elsewhere that "he is touched with the feelings of our infirmities" and "that He has been tempted" as we are. He understands grief because He has experienced it. And because He made us, he knows how much we can take. He will not allow the grief to overwhelm us, by being more than we can bear.

It tells us that we are loved. No matter what kind of suffering and pain humans may suffer on earth, those things pale in comparison to the suffering of eternal separation from God. And because God loved us, in order to ensure that such separation never happens, God chose to send His Son to save us. It was in the process that Jesus experienced tremendous suffering and grief, not only His personal sorrow but the sorrows of the world that He also assumed. Yet through this action, He made it possible to have a joyous relationship with Himself that can counteract the sorrows of life.

It tells us that things are not the way they seem. The circumstances of our physical existence are often out of our control, but nothing and no one can shake our inner spiritual existence. It is there that grief and sorrows can be borne away as we meditate and reflect on the truths of God's nature and our place in God's great design. Such meditation allows us to ask with David, "what is man that thou art mindful of Him?" in a spirit of gratitude that is a wonderful tonic for pain and sorrow.

It tells us that someday we will understand. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now we know in part; then will we know even as also we are known." The grief and sorrows of mortality will surely reveal their higher purposes when we experience immortality.

The stories that I hear from sorrowing hearts are not isolated phenomena. Rather they are individual voices that make up the collective groan of humanity as it struggles against sin and its effects. And for all humanity, including the next sorrowing individual you or I meet, there is one effective tonic for the soul. It is the man, Christ Jesus, the one who has taken our grief and carried our sorrows. Other solutions will always fall short. And so I pray that God would enable us, would give us the wisdom, compassion, and zeal to offer Jesus to sorrowing hearts.

*By Daniel E. Miller*

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- Submitted by Ted Shattuck

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## Haiti Project Update

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*The small change offering at Church is yielding large results. We have collected \$522.33 to date. March 29<sup>th</sup> was the last Sunday to pass the globe banks at church. Thanks to everyone for your generous hearts. Please return your banks if you have not done so.*

*Phase II of our project will be making 40 school kits. I have posted a sign up sheet in the Millen Room. After we gather the ingredients to go in the bags and the bags are sewn, the children's Sunday school classes will fill the bags. I would like to finish this part of our Haiti Project by mid May. I have received a \$500 donation to assist with this part of the project. We will be using most of this money to purchase Children's bibles translated into Haitian Creole. Each kit will contain a bible. A copy of the bible is available in the Millen Room also.*

*My hope is that we will be able to continue supporting Leah's ministry in the future. I see many opportunities ahead for Taftsville to help grow God's kingdom in Haiti.*  
*- Dave Beidler*

### Note from Leah Beidler

First I want to say thank you so much for your efforts to support our missions to carry Jesus to the children and people in Passe Cataboise, Haiti. My heart smiled when I opened the email from David writing that your church was going to be able to sponsor 40 Creole, picture bibles for these children. I immediately had visions of the children opening their bags and finding a beautiful, colorful, brand new, bible that had words in Creole. For all of them this will be their first, personal, picture, Creole book. Your blessings have showered over this community and for that I am so grateful for your hearts, support, and love. I believe that the Lord is using your church, our missions to begin to set some of the captives free and bring joy to these children. In the upcoming weeks I am gearing up for another trip to Passe Cataboise, Haiti. This trip is unique in many ways. First, it will be the smallest team I have ever brought to Haiti. It will be leading a young woman and her son. Their names are Paula Sylvester and Sasha. She is Haitian and we are reconnecting her to her country. She has lost all connections to her country and her calling and dream is to go back and serve her country. I have been working very closely with her to begin to develop the idea of starting an orphanage/school in Haiti. She just started a faith based non-profit called Ray of Hope. Together we will be traveling over to have conversations and look into the idea of an orphanage in Passe Cataboise, Haiti. Our dates of travel are the 16th

to the 25th. Please join us in prayer for safe travels, that the Lord would use us to be a light, and that he would give confirmation and clarity if Ray of Hope should begin to develop in the town of Passe Cataboise. My sister and I will also be traveling to Passe Cataboise, Haiti in the month of July to facilitate Camp Hope. We are very excited to develop this camp with the Haitian community. This year it is our hope to serve more than 120 children. We are also praying that finances would allow us to feed the children five days a week. One last prayer is that the Lord would provide honest, hard-working Haitians that want to work under us and support the camp. We believe that the Haitian community could one day run the camp and it is our hope that we can begin to train the people. We pray that the Lord will use us to transform their hearts and see the Lord. Thank you for your prayers. The support of your church has brought me countless smiles and hope for Haiti and its children. If any of you want to discuss more about our missions to Haiti please do not hesitate to contact me. I love discussing Haiti. Be the light in the darkness and stand firm. Walk loudly and reflect Christ. Thank you for being a vibrant light to Haiti's children.

*- Leah*

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## What is Post-Christendom?

What is Post-Christendom? What is the Anabaptist Network? What does that have to do with Taftsville?

These are some of the questions that were addressed as a group of about 36, including a few friends from Bethany Mennonite, gathered at Taftsville on Tuesday evening, March 24. We sat together at four prepared tables, and each group participated in a creatively written responsive liturgy at their own pace, which included the serving of a delicious meal. We welcomed one another by name, reflected on the provision and grace of God as we read aloud portions of the liturgy to each other, and shared in broken bread and poured out juice as we took communion together. Then we all went upstairs to the meeting room, to learn more from our special guests from Pennsylvania.

**Stuart Murray Williams** was representing the Anabaptist Network of the UK, with whom we are in partnership through Franconia Conference; **Krista Ehst** came to share about her recent experiences in the UK as an intern with the London Mennonite Centre; **Gay Brunt Miller** is the Conference liaison with our partners in the UK, and **Jessica Walter** is the Conference Associate for Communication. Our congregation helped to support Krista during her recent time in London, where she met Stuart; and Gay recently returned from a visit to London as well. We were encouraged about the growth of Anabaptism in the UK as we heard from our friends across the sea.

We learned that Post-Christendom is the culture that emerges as Christianity loses its influence in a society. This has been true in the United Kingdom for decades, as it is in much of Europe, and the same trend is beginning in the United States. As the presence of Christianity is dying out in England, Stuart related that the unchurched population is surprisingly receptive to the Anabaptist expression of Christianity. Anabaptists (of which Mennonites are a part) were rejected when they tried to immigrate to Britain in the 1500's, and there has been no Anabaptist presence at all in the UK until about 50 years ago. Stuart described how eager he was, after discovering Menno Simons and other Anabaptist writings, to come to America to meet "Real Anabaptists" for the first time.



**Krista Ehst and Stuart Murray Williams**

The Anabaptist Network is a way for those in any church tradition to connect and learn about Anabaptism. As this tradition is just beginning to gain ground in England, he challenged us, as American Anabaptists, to not lose touch with our fervent and evangelical roots.

George Abetti agreed with this challenge. The highlight of the evening for him was to be reminded that in the midst of such great spiritual darkness is the very real evidence that God maintains a witness independent of numbers, power, status or any other normal human requirement for success. "I am in awe that in a culture where many people do not even know many of the basic bible stories, there are a 1000 witnesses pursuing Christian faith and practice," he said. "I feel at times we do not tell our stories very well. I would like to see more passion about our need for prayer, for love, for help with our lives-- that allows [us] to share [our] faith. God has done so much in and for us--it seems it should be waterfalling out of us."

Brandon Bergey and Steve Moyer, both from Bethany congregation, were blessed and inspired by the evening as well. "I truly felt it was a blessing to participate. It was nice to share in the liturgy and communal dinner with some folks that I do not see often. The presentation was informative and inspiring. I think there is a lot to learn from each other's experience between those in the U.K. and those in the U.S.," commented Steve. "What a special time," wrote Brandon. "I continue to pray for opportunities like this to obey the two greatest commandments."

As Stuart and Krista returned to Pennsylvania to continue sharing their stories with other congregations of Franconia Conference, the challenge is still before us. As we look around, do we see a culture that is moving away from its early Christian roots? Are we convinced that we have a powerful story to tell to a darkening world?

- Carie Good



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## The Mystery Diner Review

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The Mystery Diner travels the Upper Valley searching out good food wherever it may be found. The Mystery Diner frequents restaurants, diners, church suppers and even individual's homes. Occasionally the MD will share his reviews with various publications. Recently the MD has learned that Taftsville Chapel has a reputation for hosting excellent potlucks. Having attended some less than stellar potlucks the MD was intrigued. The Mystery Diner set out to learn more and discovered that the Taftsville Youth group was putting on several fundraiser meals. MD was able to make it to the latest youth Group meal. The MD thought it was especially appropriate that the meal was billed as a Mystery Meal. Not knowing what to expect and being open to new adventures in dining, the Mystery Diner took his seat along with a number of friendly folks in the chapel dining room. The wait staff initially seemed to be friendly and numerous. The one exception was the "Maitre d'". His attire was more appropriate for a mob hit man and his attitude menacing. The menu was confusing and the wait staff turned out to be quite unhelpful. The Maitre d' reprimanded the MD for asking a fellow diner to recommend a course selection. Other diners were treated similarly.

The MD ended up making his four course selections completely baffled and waited for the first course to be served. As the first course was served the MD observed that some folks were having salad, others spaghetti and others dessert and others Jell-O salad or veggie sticks. Some people had silverware and others none! When the MD asked his server for silverware the Maitre d' approached and suggested that the MD should pay for his utensils, The Mystery Diner was appalled! It appears that the airlines tactics for extorting money from their customers have trickled down to a youth group in Vermont. Despite an unhelpful staff, courses being served out of sequence and inappropriately, the Mystery Diner was able to enjoy an excellent tasting meal. The Rainbow Jell-O was especially beautiful. The Mystery Diner enjoyed the company and sympathy of fellow diners. The Mystery Diner is withholding judgment until the Mystery Diner is able to sample one of the upcoming potlucks that the Taftsville Chapel Fellowship hosts. The Mystery Diner recommends that you bring your own silverware and napkins however as there seem to be a shortage at the Chapel.

- Anonymous



*So... how do we eat this?—*

**How to eat spaghetti or salad without utensils (use your roll or a torn piece of paper plate or your fingers or your toothpick) - Or pay the "SPY" for something that didn't come with your course (\$2 for a fork, for example) - We all enjoyed drinking from witty NOSE cups. Photos were taken by various folks.**

## Schedule for April

**Each Sunday morning:** 9:30 am – Worship Service  
 10:45 am – Coffee and Fellowship  
 11:00 am – Sunday School

### April

- 4 7:00 pm – Men’s Breakfast / *Eaton’s Sugar House*
- 5 Leadership Team meeting
- 9 6:30 pm – Maundy Thursday love feast & service
- 10 Pastoral Care Team meeting
- 11 7:30 am – Women’s Breakfast / *Panera*
- 15 7:00 pm – Church Council Meeting
- 12 **EASTER ~ RESURECTION DAY!**  
 7:00 am – Cross walk  
 8:00 am – Breakfast  
 9:30 am – Worship Service
- 28 Deadline for May issue of *The Taftsville Chapel Current*

| Taftsville Tally |            |            |
|------------------|------------|------------|
| March            | Attendance | Offering   |
| 1                | 37         | \$1,405.00 |
| 8                | 47         | 1,484.00   |
| 15               | 62         | 1,125.00   |
| 22               | 54         | 1,158.00   |
| 29               | 45         | 1,534.00   |

*Please note that these totals do not always reflect the final tally.*

### April Birthdays

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 5 Ann Chalker    | 23 Melissa Ayers   |
| 9 Jake Reess     | 25 Ted Shattuck    |
| 20 Mabel McCrory | 25 Gavin Eisenberg |
| 22 Homer Welch   |                    |

### April Anniversaries

- 4 Dave & Carmeleta Beidler
- 14 Bob & Jan Collins
- 19 Skip & Ann Chalker
- 22 Ted & Elinor Shattuck

### April Childcare

- 5 Jane Glick
- 12 Mary Guntz
- 19 Karen Cox
- 26 Carie Good

### April Song Leaders

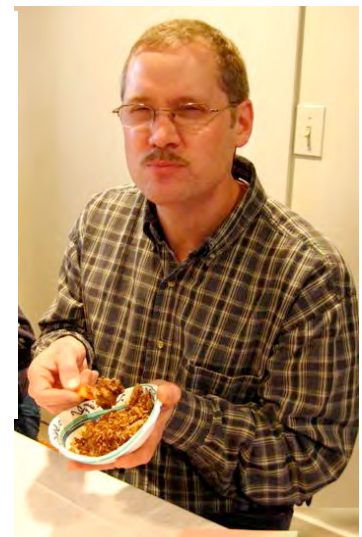
- 5 Omar Zook
- 12 Janice Zook
- 19 Virginia Schlabach
- 26 Carmeleta Beidler

### April Coffee

- 5 Nancy Pejouhy
- 12 Mary Guntz
- 19 Ruth Ann Glick
- 26 Janet North

### April Cleaning

- 4 Fletcher/Good
- 11 Fletcher/Good
- 18 Ken & Jane Glick
- 25- Ken & Jane Glick



– NO SWEAT ~ EASY!

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## Taftsville Tidbit Trivia

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*Do you remember when...*

### 40 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*April 3, 1969*

The Candlelighters are making up a "sunshine box" for Kristin Freed. She is four years old and is in the hospital.

*April 20, 1969*

A vote was taken on whether or not to use offering envelopes. This was voted down.

### 30 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*April 1, 1979*

The Vermont churches will join together for an afternoon and evening seminar on "Peer Counseling" led by Paul Miller.

*April 10, 1979*

Certain physical needs for the church were discussed. Would it be possible to procure padded folding chairs?

### 25 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*April 15, 1984*

The Great Taftsville Slide Show, featuring slides ancient and modern. Doreen is organizing pictures from our family collections and Dennis is preparing music.

*April 29, 1984*

If you have any artistic interest, please sign up to decorate the bulletin boards for one (or more) months this year.

*April 29, 1984*

Announcement reads: "Special thanks to Dale Snader for plowing the church grounds all winter!"

### 15 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*April 14, 1994*

Allen will buy a new fire extinguisher for the church building. This is a requirement of the insurance company

### 10 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*April 15, 1999*

Council unanimously approved the new carpet for the Millen Room, which may be installed next month.



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## Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Fellowship



*Located in the village of Taftsville,  
one block south of Rte. 4 on  
Happy Valley Rd.*

**Randy Good, Pastor**

**(802) 457-1516**

<http://www.taftsvillechapel.org/>

Send your contributions for

**"The Taftsville Chapel Current" to:**

[rdjgcollins@mac.com](mailto:rdjgcollins@mac.com)

OR slip a note in my church mailbox

OR contact a Newsletter Staff Member:

Carie Good, Janet North, and Virginia Schlabach