



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.

Caren Swanson, *Editor*; Carie Good, Janet North & Virginia Schlabach, *Newsletter Staff*

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“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

Giving Thanks In Everything

by Randy Good

*“All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and **thanks** and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!” (Revelation 7:11-12)*

I’ve read that in Africa, there are several tribes that have remarkable ways of expressing their gratitude. In East Africa, the Masai express thanks by placing their foreheads on the ground and saying, “My head is in the dirt.” Another tribe communicates gratitude by sitting for a long time in front of the hut of the individual whom they want to thank, saying, “I sit on the ground before you.”

These Africans understand that a core attitude of thanksgiving is humility, and their way of expressing it clearly represents that attitude. The passage above reflects the same thing: angels, elders, and living creatures all fall on their faces in humility and gratitude to God for who He is.

Again and again, the Scriptures tell us to offer thanks to God, regardless of circumstances. When good news comes, this seems easy. But when things go wrong the command to be thankful can feel like a cruel joke. Unless...

Humility changes our focus from us as the recipients to God as the provider. It shifts the transaction from receiving something we deserve (good or bad) to something God has designed to fit with His plans (always good). Most of the things we thank each other for have some context that makes the gift make sense: A birthday gift, help with a project, a compliment for a job well done, or just the provision of a small courtesy. But the context in which God operates (the Spirit) is reliably beyond us, and the normal “rules” for understanding what is going on, and why, are out of reach. Humility is an appropriate posture.

When tough times are on us, the instruction is to give thanks *in* the circumstance, not necessarily *for* the circumstance. It may well be shown later that the trial at the time really did have some practical blessing that we missed just then, but that’s not what we are to be thankful for in the moment. Humility in the moment reminds us that it is God who is at work, whether we understand or not.

Giving thanks without humility emerges from a fleshly sense of entitlement; that God is obligated to behave as we feel we deserve. Giving thanks with humility recognizes, by faith, that God is always both powerfully beyond us *and* fully for us. He acts according to His character, not ours. Good thing. He acts for His glory, and our eternal benefit in Christ.

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Wild Mushrooms

by Caren Swanson

Giving Thanks In Everything ... *continued*

Please don't think that this means we must feel a sense of happiness accompanying our gratitude to God when disaster strikes. Humble thanks for God's character in the circumstance leaves ample room for grief in all its messiness and honesty.

The throng in heaven must have known something always true about God in order to fall on their faces before Him in thanksgiving and praise. The posture of gratitude shown among the Masai illustrates the kind of humility that knows that real kindness cannot be earned, demanded or repaid.

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (I Thess. 5:18)

Church Life

Pass the Globes!

Mission Giving Project for South Africa

For three Sundays, beginning September 5, we have taken special offerings for a Mennonite Mission Network project, "We All Belong in God's Family," for MMN ministries in South Africa. During worship the children (and, of course, all adults with listening ears) have heard a story and seen pictures to learn about ways God is at work in the lives of people in South Africa, and even learned a South African dance! Then the children have passed the globe banks to collect loose change (and folded paper money!) for the project. So far over \$400 has been collected, with last week's total alone coming in at \$263.53!



REMINDER! The final Sunday to collect change for this project is November 7. Don't forget to look in the Millen Room for a special display highlighting the project.

The Eighth Annual Bethany Birches Camp Auction



The mountains of Plymouth, Vermont were the backdrop for the Eighth Annual Auction benefiting Bethany Birches Camp. On September 25th, a beautiful fall day, many people traveled to help support the vision and mission of BBC.

There were many of the same qualities to this years auction as years in past: good conversation and catching up with friends, apples for sale by Jeff and Jane Rosenberger, a bake table of goodies run by the youth group, an amazing array of items for auction, Sandy Alderfer as our auctioneer, and many generous attendees. The new and exciting changes this year were the auction being held at BBC, cider making spear headed by Dave Beidler, a silent auction going on simultaneously, and online bidding that started a week before the auction and ended the night before. The older youth were charged with making the bids for the online bidders. Online bidding netted a total of \$1600. A delicious lunch after the auction was also a new and great addition this year.



During the auction many campers served as helpers for Sandy Alderfer, from Alderfer Auction House in Pennsylvania. As usual Sandy kept the crowd engaged with his humor and lively banter. With his encouragement people gave generously for items such as home made pickles by Althea Derstine, home grown and ground organic wheat and spelt flour from Brent and Regina Beidler, a quilted table runner and a quilt by Mary Guntz, handmade jewelry by Jane Glick and the ever popular cedar Adirondack chairs that garnered top dollar by Dave Beidler at \$400 a piece. Other high dollar items were \$600 for 1 day of work by Gerry Hawkes and Forest Savers, \$410 for 200 gallons of oil delivered by Dead River Company and \$400 for a hand made Spanish Cedar potting bench by Brain Goshow. The grand total which included the bake sale, silent auction, apples, and additional donations will clear the \$18,000 mark.

There were many positive comments on the new setting and plans are already being made for next years auction, which will take place on Saturday, September 24th.

Bethany Birches Camp's Vision & Mission

BBC's core mission is to help young people to develop their relationship with God by providing them with a Christ-centered camping experience in a natural and nurturing environment.

Our priorities are:

- To serve young people, with or without church or religious experience, living in Vermont and surrounding areas.
- To insure a physically and emotionally safe environment for everyone under our care.
- To maintain the lowest possible fee structure for the Bethany Birches Camping Experience.

Our Vision is simple - to continue building a community of love where no one is cast out. In this community, God's reality is realized. Peace, love, justice, grace and compassion are central in our relationships. Life makes sense because the Creator of life is met and known. And what a wonderful Creator!

We envision a facility that enables relationships and communities to form. Our facility is natural, simple, and comfortable. Our vision includes program that is absolutely fun, educational and unique. In all we do, create and build, we point to God as Jesus did.

The Current Youth Status Update

If you've been following the Youth on Facebook.com, you already know what they've been up to. If not, here's what you've been missing!



Youth helping during the BBC auction for online bidders.

The following excerpts were taken from Facebook. This is to give insight into the happenings of our youth.

- September 6 at 9:47am - For Sunday School read Mark, chapters 2-7 this week. We read chapter one in Sunday School.
- September 6 at 9:49am - Also this Saturday is our plant sale. If you are interested in going to conference this summer, plan on helping on Saturday if you are not working. We need people from 9:30-12:00 and 12:00-2:30. Let me know which one you can do or if you can't come.
- September 11 at 2:31pm - Part One of the plant sale was sorta successful today. We will continue with part two tomorrow at church. Free plants with a donation to the youth group!
- September 13 at 4:52pm - We read Mark 8-9:14 in Sunday School. Read the rest of chapter nine through 14 for Sunday the 19th.
- September 22 at 7:44pm - We finished reading Mark in Sunday school. Read Matthew 1-4 for this Sunday at the treehouses.
- September 22 at 7:45pm - This weekend the youth will be helping with the auction at BBC. After the auction we are going to brave the cold and sleep out at the treehouses at BBC!

- September 28 at 9:08pm - At SS in the woods, we read Matt 5 and 6. Read 7-10 this week. It is only four chapters, you can do it! (Max can probably read it fastest!)
- Friday, October 1, 2010 at 5:00pm - Pie Making Party at Tim and Allison's House. Making lots of pies to sell on the 10/2. In-between peeling apples, we will play games and stuff!
- Saturday, October 2, 2010 at 10:00am - Sell pies! A fundraiser for conference. Sign-up for 9:30-12:00 or 12:00-2:30.
- October 2 at 2:13pm - The pie sale was a scrumptious success! Thank you to everyone who donated pies (and cookies!). Stay tuned for the next round of fund raisers.
- October 3 at 8:45pm - Read Matt 11-16 this week. Ms Whit is teaching Sunday school and there is no youth group on the 10th.

The Taftsville Chapel Youth Group has been very busy raising money for the next Mennonite Youth Convention to be held in Pittsburgh, PA on July 4-9, 2011. They had a perennial plant sale on September 6th in front of Taftsville Country Store with plants that were donated by church members, family and friends. At this same venue they had a very successful time selling pies during a fall foliage weekend.

The convention's theme is "Bridges to the Cross" based on 2 Corinthians 5:16-20. For more information on the convention go to: <http://www.mennoniteusa.org>



After the Bethany Birches Auction the youth braved the cold and spent the afternoon and night at the treehouses at BBC.

Getting to Know You—An Interview with Carol Whitney



Question: *Only a few our members have actually lived in Taftsville. What was it like growing up in this village? Share a bit about your family, local environment, school, church – whatever might have shaped who you’ve become as an adult.*

Carol: Growing up in Taftsville in the 60’s and 70’s was (for me) “Leave It to Beaver” iconic. My mom was a stay-at-home mom who could sing and sew and cook and create magic out of almost anything. My dad was a great provider, knew something about everything, and could fix absolutely anything. He was an old-time Vermonter with an independent streak three miles wide. He had a love and understanding of nature like none other I have ever known. We didn’t have a lot of money, but we lacked nothing. I had a sister who was sixteen years older than I and a sister about two years younger than I. We always had a dog. At times we had a bird, an iguana, and some guinea pigs. We usually had ducks on the Ottaquechee river. They were featured in *Vermont Life* more than once, floating picturesquely by the Taftsville Bridge.

Taftsville was at that time a bedroom community for Woodstock and, as such, was home to many families with children. TV was not a part of the environment for most of us then, and I remember unfettered play from dawn ‘til dusk. It seemed that the doors flew open in the morning, releasing a stream of kids and dogs into the village. We wandered into neighborhood houses and stores at will – playing, snacking, lunching – and returned to our own houses at dusk for a bath, dinner, and bed. Every door was a portal of safety (although every adult was to be respected, obeyed, and had the unspoken authority to punish as well).

Taftsville Chapel was one of those open doors during the wonderful evenings of Vacation Bible School. There I fell in love with Joanna Beidler and the stories and songs of Jesus. Oh, how Omar Zook could sing and how alive he made the magical stories of the Bible!

Question: *How did you become a Christian? What led you to Taftsville Chapel and what is it in our church life that helps (or hinders) you in your spiritual journey?*

Carol: The seeds planted in those warm summer evenings of childhood took root and burst into the flower of faith in March 3, 1973, when I responded to an altar call at the Word of Life snow camp in Schroom Lake, New York. My life since that time has been an adventurous, swerving, wobbling struggle toward the high calling of my loving Lord. Everything that has happened since my conversion seems to be just blips and stepping stones – blazing adventures, if you will – in a story so much larger than mine that mine is hard to pull into the focal spot. Taftsville Chapel opened its doors to me at a very painful time in my life and offered only honest, loving acceptance in the name of Jesus. I fell into those open arms and haven’t budged since.

Question: *Briefly describe your higher education, jobs, settings, and experiences. What have been your biggest challenges and greatest rewards?*

Carol: Salutatorian, Woodstock Union HS, 1976; Magna Cum Laude, Gordon College, BA Mathematics, 1980; MAEd University of Vermont, 1987; Indiana hog farmer, 1981; secretary to Hitchcock surgeons, 1982; math teacher, South Royalton, 1982-1997; math teacher, Hartford, 1997 - present. All of those things are just a backdrop to an amazing story of the grace of God at work in my life. “All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife, but He made something beautiful of my life.”

Question: *We all perceive you as an unusually caring person, especially sensitive to kids who are struggling and people living on the margins. What motivates you?*

Carol: What motivates me is God’s love in Christ Jesus. What frustrates me is my own insidious sin which, though conquered, still can kick up quite a fuss. What discourages me is the devastating effects of unconquered sin in the lives of broken, desperate

people who don't know the loving touch of my Savior. What encourages me is a risen Savior and His family of believers scattered all along my journey – family who struggles too and serves their Lord with all the love and energy they can muster.



Question: *What are your hobbies and interests? Name a favorite song, scripture, and/or book that has special meaning to you.*

Carol: I'm not sure that I have time for either a hobby or an interest, but in the hustle-bustle of my life I have noticed that I share my mom's gift of creating things of interest out of uninteresting things. Favorite songs are songs with a message of power and a wiggly beat: "When the roll is called up yonder," "Guide my feet," "Lift your glad voices," "Will you let me be your servant," and lately, "In Christ alone." Favorite books are things that help Jesus be bigger in my mind than He has been before. *The Singer* by Calvin Miller is a well worn favorite: "Love never reaches out but that it does so with a wounded hand..."

My favorite scripture is Hebrews 11 and 12: "Therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith."

"Lift your drooping hands, and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord."

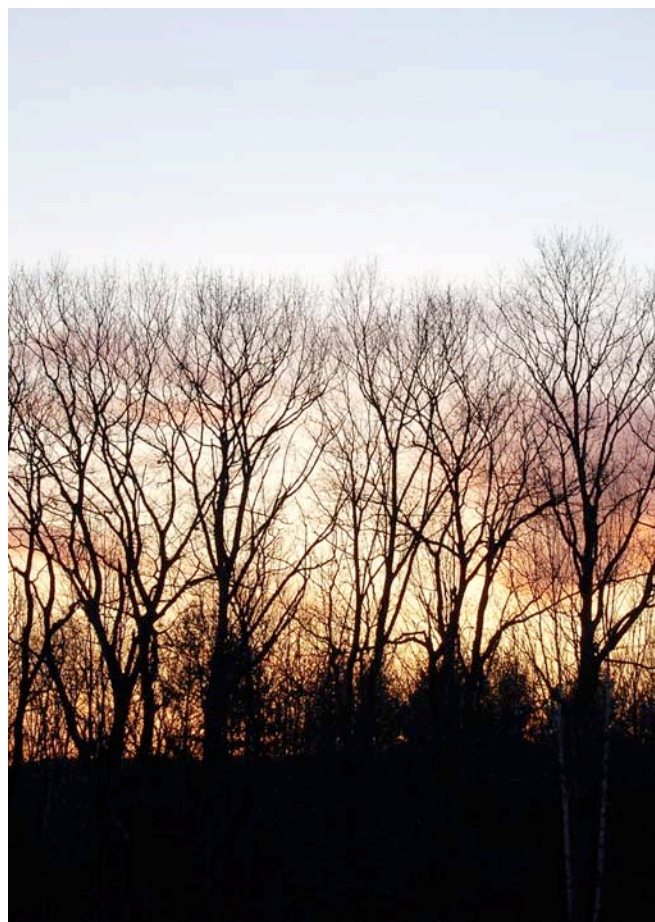
A Poem by Carol Whitney

Late autumn
Stagnant skies
Skeletal trees
Gunshots ring
 death in the forests
Wind gusts ravage
 the remains of summer

Exposed, brown, dead, dying
Depressive, oppressive, promise-less
 Late autumn

A Gust of wind
 and the sky becomes alive
 with a cascade of maple tree whirlybirds
Playfully dancing into the scene
With the unbounded joy and hope of a
 Creator's heart.

---C. Whitney, 2009



photos by Caren Swanson

An Update from the Library

NEW DONATIONS:

The Inspirational Writings of Philip Keller

The four best selling works that have set Keller apart as a warm and articulate writer are published in one volume. Included are A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23, A Layman Looks at the Lord's Prayer, A Shepherd Looks at the Good Shepherd and His Sheep, and A Gardener Looks at the Fruits of the Spirit. If you connected with Keller's first 1970's experiences with agriculture and animals, here are the following three books in one convenient volume.

George MacDonald's At the Back of the North Wind, The Princess and the Goblin, The Princess and Curdie

Again, there are two of these stories in our library, but this volume is complete and unabridged, with original pen and ink illustrations from the late 1800s. George MacDonald's imagination had a powerful and lasting effect on C.S. Lewis—lofty praise indeed.

The Names of Jesus by A. B. Simpson

The author briefly addresses fifteen names and descriptions of Jesus as found in scripture. He explains what each term implies about the character of Christ.

Lynda Knisley, one of our faithful librarians, submitted this short meditation from Dr. Richard C. Halverson, who served as chaplain of the U.S. Senate from 1981-1994.

Jesus Transcends All

Jesus Christ transcends all religions! Judaism—Islam—Buddhism—Hinduism... He is greater than all these—including Christianity.

Religions are the inventions of men. They may begin with a great leader in mind—Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Budha...

But human tradition soon reduces the original to a mere set of ethical standards and a dead letter of the law which no one can follow.

The original sin was not murder, adultery or any other action we call sin. The original sin was, and still is, the human choice to be one's own god—to control one's own life—to be in charge—to be religious. Rising out of this choice evolved religion: mankind's attempt to please God.

Jesus transcends religion because he is the incarnation of all that is true, good, loving, gentle, tender, thoughtful, caring, courteous and selfless.

Jesus does not want you to become a Christian. He wants you to become a new creation! There is a great difference between the two.

Church Cleaning Schedule—Winter 2010-2011

<u>November</u>	19 th	A&V Schlabach
7 th	26 th	Snader
14 th		
21 st		
28 th		
<u>December</u>		
5 th		
12 th		

January 2011

2 nd	Snader
9 th	Wolfe
16 th	Wolfe
23 rd	Zook
30 th	Zook

February

6 th	Aloisio
13 th	Aloisio
20 th	Beidler
27 th	Beidler

Taftsville Tidbit Trivia *Do you remember when...*

40 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

November 8, 1970

We extend our sympathy to the Millen family in the loss of their husband and father, Jim.

November 17, 1970

Harold Fisher described some of the youth activities and problems as youth director. Any assistance or suggestions for this work would be appreciated.

November 19, 1970

Candlelighters will be meeting at the home of Joanna Beidler. We will be making Food Baskets for needy families and decorated soap ornaments for each patient at the Hillside Manor Home.

35 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

November 23, 1975

Each family is invited to bring something to contribute to the Worship and Praise part of the Thanksgiving service. Food items should also be brought.

November 4, 1975

After looking over a few estimated figures related to the cost of improving our building for a school, the consensus of the council was to actively look for land on which to build a new structure suitable for a church and school.

30 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

November 9, 1980

Each member of church council is to think of one family they might know personally that would appreciate a food basket.

November 26, 1980

Treasurer's report shows the disbursement of the Thanksgiving Offering as follows: Washer for the family from Laos-\$295.00; MCC -\$320.00; three checks for \$50.00 each which accompanied food boxes.

25 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

November 19, 1985

David is planning a reading contest of books from the church library. There will be prizes in three age groups.

20 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

November 18, 1990

Sunday morning we will have Ken and Kass Seitz here to talk about Israel. An Israeli or Palestinian breakfast is also planned to start at 8:30.

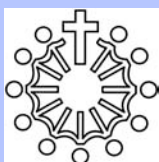
15 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

November 8, 1995

We voted to purchase the Church Music Copyright License, which will allow us to copy and use almost any music we might choose.

Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Fellowship

Located in the village of Taftsville, VT, one block south of Rt. 4 on Happy Valley Road.



Randy Good, Pastor

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

Send your contributions for the Current to:
carenswanon@yahoo.com or contact a
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North & Virginia Schlabach