



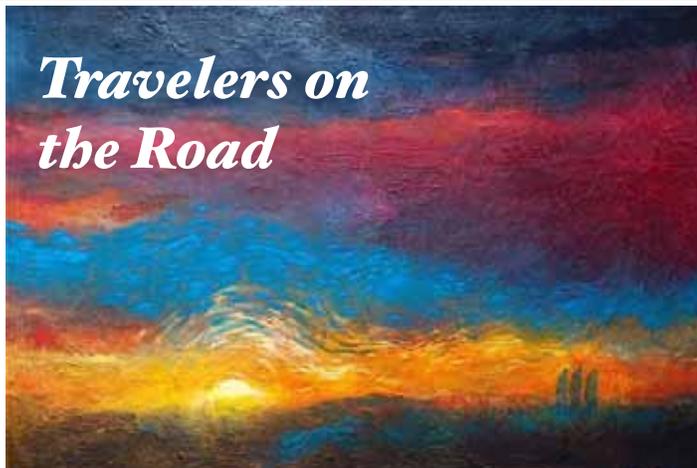
# The Taftsville Chapel Current

*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.*

Sam Carbaugh, *Editor*, Carie Good & Virginia Schlabach, *Newsletter Staff*

February/March 2012

## *Travelers on the Road*



“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”  
Nathaniel wondered out loud (John 1:46).

Creation, Evolution, Literal, Metaphor, Inspiration, Authority, Sin, Judgement, Atonement, Discipline, Heaven, Hell, Satan, Old Testament, Liberal, Conservative, Fundamentalist, Military, Pacifist, Charismatic, Liturgical, Communion, Baptism, Old earth, Young earth...

We all have them: One or two words that, when we hear them spoken, can trigger a cascade of dread, anger, concern and, sometimes, superiority and judgement about what the words represent to us. Depending on who says them and with what tone, these words summon up whole realms of potential meaning for us. They are like labels on bottles that contain the dangerous thoughts of others that we have identified over the years in an effort to limit our exposure to them. When we hear these words, we are suddenly shaken by the possibility that someone is about to smash the bottle, and the toxic contents will burn both us and those around us. There is often a strong initial desire to distance ourselves and protect our friends from both the concepts suggested by these loaded words, and from those who spoke them. All this happens in a fraction of a second, but the source of the reaction is old and deep.

Now, put all this potential energy into one room filled with people with diverse stories who may have opposite reactions to the same words. Instead of revulsion

when they hear these words, they feel known and safe – a part of something restful and good. The words summon memories of warm fellowship and deep faith, and a quiet confidence in the goodness of God. Again, it happens in a split second, but emerges from somewhere profoundly connected to the truth of who one is and the events that shaped them over time.

Is there room for both (and everything in between) in any given fellowship of believers in Christ? Can it be lived out in a way that includes integrity and respect, not resorting to pretending, hiding and murmuring? There is, but not by accident.

The first, and greatest asset we have is the prayer of Jesus Himself for us: “May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” (John 17:23b) We’ve talked about this before, but unity based on sameness is no testimony of God at work. The world does it all the time: creates a sense of faux-community based on agreeing about what’s wrong with everyone else not like them. These groups tend to be self-conscious and self-congratulatory, and, oddly, even if their banner is something like “peace” there is a brittle edge of harshness under the surface. The quality of unity Jesus prayed for is startling and worthy of notice by the world precisely because it is so humanly impossible. It takes radical dependence to release a compelling witness to the love of God. The Chief Shepherd is clearly in favor of such a project.

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*\*painting “The Road to Emmaus” by Lyndel Littleton*

## ***Photo Update from Tuscon***

“Each week feels eventful, each client’s life story compelling--if only we can bring a little hope, express that somebody cares, show them that they are not totally alone--that is what matters.” (from Elinor’s latest update)

### **Ted and Elinor doing service work in Tucson.**



Then, there is this: “Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.” (Philippians 2:4) All those strong reactions to those trip-wire words have a story behind them. Most people don’t set out to be reactive for no reason. Taking an interest in others includes giving them the space to feel what they feel when these things hit. No one wants to be bound over into a category of either “dangerous” or “backward”. No one’s journey of faith is ever helped along by silencing, or by having their real story ignored or minimized. No one wants to have to face their reactions alone. No one wants to be automatically lumped in with anyone else just because they use words that also happen to represent ideas that have been co-opted by extremists somewhere else.

Perhaps it boils down to a choice: comfort based on enforced outward sameness, or comfort based on miraculous inward acceptance. Neither of these is a point of arrival, both are only ever a direction. Groups that opt for sameness are often exhausted (and, weirdly energized) by hyper-vigilance, never able to rest in case something threatens their tiny safety zone. Groups that choose the harder work of biblical unity are thrust onto the ever-growing realm of faith, which sometimes includes the discomfort of conviction and repentance. But then, there is indeed forgiveness and restoration, and the joy of certain closeness with the Lord of the Church.

Long ago, Taftsville chose, and at the same time was perhaps chosen (called) to demonstrate the very thing Jesus prayed for. During this season of delving into the Old Testament (Old Testament! Can anything good come from there?) to follow the history of Redemption, many pre-loaded words and concepts will be said out loud, and there will be reservoirs of feelings tapped into. Let’s continue to treat the real stories behind them with the honor they deserve, both your own and that of others. It creates a kind of challenge and personal searching that absolutely requires a loving Savior.

On the way to Emmaus,

Randy

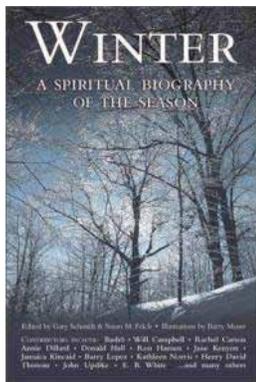
## ***Everence Grants Increase Our Thanksgiving Offering***

As part of the Sharing Fund from Everence we were given 2 grants in the amount of \$500. each to add to our Thanksgiving offering for The Haven and New Beginnings Community Church.

Everence is a financial services organization based on the idea that it is possible to incorporate your faith and values with your decisions about money and is incorporated as a fraternal benefit association and as such can help members with funds that would have been claimed by taxes if not for the tax-exempt status. From educational resources to Sharing Fund grants to college scholarships, these benefits are made possible by member participation and the corporate tithe.

Allen Guntz

Everence Advocate for Taftsville Chapel



## ***Book Review***

*By: Lynda Knisley*

### **WINTER - A Spiritual Biography of the Season**

You will find this with other new books and there is still time to explore the "Sorrow and Barrenness", the "Time of Sharing Ourselves" and a "Time for Purity and Praise". These are a few of the categories which feature such authors as Rachel Carson, Annie Dillard, E.B. White, and Henry David Thoreau. There are several approaches you can take to this book. Reading it straight through opens our eyes to all of winter's works, but it's also fun to dip into single writers and poets; into favorite pieces and into some new voices as well. There are comments from the editors preceding each entry, so you're prepared for thoughts on each change in writing and movements within the "still time" of winter.

## ***New Books in the Library Collection***

*By: Karen Cox*

Recently Melissa and Lynda have started collecting a wonderful series of books for our church library. The books are the AD Chronicles and I believe at least a few books from the previous series The Zion Legacy Series. The authors are Brock and Bodie Thoene, a husband and wife team who excel in the genre of historical fiction. I have read quite a number of their books and have never ceased to be entertained of course, but I also feel like I'm learning something... and even more precious than that my faith has been deepened: I have learned to recognize the hand of God in the great unfolding story of humanity as well as in my own life, even as one chapter may not have ended to my liking - I know a better chapter is being crafted for a more profound return.

In the Zion Legacy series we meet characters who are trying desperately to hold on to the Old City of Jerusalem. Starving and surrounded we get a glimpse into the struggle for the birth of Israel in 1948. Some of the characters in this series were introduced in the previous series retelling the story of Nazi Germany. The characters can easily become friends.

The first several books of the Zion Legacy series deal with the the birth of Israel in 1948 but then the reader is transported back in time with the books The Jerusalem Scrolls and Stones of Jerusalem. As the Old City of Jerusalem falls, Moshe Sachar, an archeologist pressed into action as the Old City's leader, escapes into a labyrinth of hidden underground tunnels, where he discovers a treasure trove of ancient scrolls. "Opening a scroll, Moshe becomes immersed in an extraordinary story from the first century A.D., that of Miryam, a beautiful yet troubled young widow and Marcus, her Roman suitor." Of course these characters hear rumors of a mysterious prophet and soon familiar vignettes from the New Testament are given fuller expression in these well written tales.

These two books set the stage for the A.D. Chronicles where the reader will meet many of their favorite new testament characters. Yet the reader is also introduced to many new characters who add a dimension to first century life I have in the past taken for granted. My favorite characters from the series are Zadok the chief shepherd of the temple flocks and his wife Rachel the courageous midwife of Bethlehem. Through their eyes many deeper truths are revealed as they connect in a different way with the deeper truths of scripture. I know you will like them if you give yourself the chance to "meet" them.

“Everything means something”... You will definitely discover delightful nuances about the old testament and the searching of scripture for it’s true meaning as many characters in these stories come to faith in Yeshua. It’s wonderful to see each character’s process. My own faith has been strengthened as I hear the testimony of others! For example, I love the way Lily prays in *The Second Touch*. Because Lily is discovered to have leprosy she is forced into exile by her family and community. You will be fond of her too, I’m sure!

I loved learning about the stars through the eyes of Melchior in *The Fifth Seal*. His journal entries are interwoven with Mary and Joseph’s story the year Jesus was born!

I hope I have written enough to intrigue you! I think you can tell that I highly recommend these books! Enjoy!

## ***Children Create Blocks for Comfort Quilt***

*By: Virginia Schlabach*

During January and February, the children’s Sunday school lessons focused on quilts. We read Bible stories which inspired quilt patterns\* and read a book from the church library - *Reuben and the Quilt*\*\* - which not only told the story of a family making a quilt to help someone in need but also illustrated Jesus’ teaching about turning the other cheek. Carmeleta Beidler and her mother Ruth Miller visited the class one morning to show quilts that Ruth and her husband Howard had made. Besides making quilts for family members, Howard made a quilt each year for the auction to benefit the ministries of Beaver Camp, a Mennonite camp in New York similar to Bethany Birches. The children were impressed by the tiny pieces that made up the design of Howard’s Postage Stamp quilt, which he donated to the camp and his family bought back at the auction.

Using the themes of LOVE, JOY, PEACE, FAITH, HOPE, and COMFORT, the children designed quilt blocks and transferred the designs and words onto cloth with fabric markers. The blocks will be bordered in colored fabrics chosen by the children and, after the top is pieced, they will help to tie the quilt. This comfort quilt will be given to someone in need although at this point the recipient is unknown. Beginning February 26, the children’s

class will be taught by Jane Glick using the Gather Round curriculum with stories from Luke. - Virginia Schlabach

\*Quilt designs inspired by the Old Testament are Garden of Eden, Jacob’s Ladder, Children of Israel, Joseph’s Coat, David and Goliath, King David’s Crown, Job’s Troubles, and Job’s Tears. Designs inspired by the New Testament are Star of the East, Star of Bethlehem, Christmas Star, Crown of Thorns, Cross and Crown, and Golgotha. This isn’t an exhaustive list; there are probably others.

\*\* *Reuben and the Quilt* is a charming Amish story by Merle Good, illustrated by P. Buckley Moss. The featured quilt is a Log Cabin.



*(Carmeleta points out familiar fabrics from her childhood in a scrap quilt pieced and quilted by her mother Ruth. L-R; Evelyn and Mabel McCrory, Matthew duPlessis)*



*(Ruth and Carmeleta show the Ocean Waves quilt pieced by Carmeleta’s father, Howard, and quilted by an Amish woman in northern New York. Howard made a quilt for each of his daughters and granddaughters and finished the last one just months before he died.)*



*(Twelve comfort quilt blocks made by the children are displayed on a Log Cabin quilt.)*



*(Evelyn transfers her butterflies and hearts illustrating LOVE onto a cloth block. The children used their own ideas and creativity to illustrate abstract ideas.)*

*(Mabel makes a JOY block while Calvin draws a cozy fire to illustrate COMFORT. He was inspired by the Log Cabin quilt design with the red or yellow center blocks representing the chimney and hearth.)*



## ***Lean on Me***

*A Gospel Song by Gary Mathena*

*“I’ve been singing this catchy little gospel song all month. Thought you all might like it. When you come to the place where I’m all you have you’ll find I’m all you need. It sure is hard for me to go there willingly.” - Carol Whitney*

### **Verse 1**

When no one cared about me if I should live or die,  
and no one bothered asking why I’d go alone and cry.  
When burdens got so heavy that I could not face the day,  
then I’d feel His arms around me and I’d hear Him gently say,

### **Chorus**

“Lean on Me when you have no strength to stand.  
When you feel you’re goin’ under, hold tighter to my hand.  
Lean on me when your heart begins to bleed  
when you come to the place that I’m all you have, then  
you’ll find I’m all you need.

### **Verse 2**

When the road ahead seems rugged and the path is getting steep,  
I feel that I can’t make it and my heart begins to weep.  
Then I turn to see who’s comin’ to join me in the way,  
and I see that it’s my Savior and I hear Him gently say,

### **Chorus**

“Lean on Me when you have no strength to stand.  
When you feel you’re goin’ under, hold tighter to my hand.  
Lean on me when your heart begins to bleed  
when you come to the place that I’m all you have, then  
you’ll find I’m all you need.

### **Chorus**

“Lean on Me when you have no strength to stand.  
When you feel you’re goin’ under, hold tighter to my hand.  
Lean on me when your heart begins to bleed  
when you come to the place that I’m all you have, then  
you’ll find I’m all you need.

I’m all you need.

## **TAFTSVILLE TIDBIT TRIVIA**

Do you remember when...

### **40 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH**

*February 13, 1972*

It was decided that all games and equipment will be locked on Sunday mornings.

*February 13, 1972*

At the close of the meeting, a request was made to remember our young people in prayer. The group shared in warmth and closeness, and also in some loss of closeness in our congregation.

*March 6, 1972*

A suggestion was given to reserve the rear seats for the families who have small children. Hopefully this will ease the noise during services.

### **35 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH**

*February 6, 1977*

"Salt and Light", a singing group from Windsor, will present an evening of special music at Taftsville.

*March 13, 1977*

The first practice for the Easter play will begin at 6:30.

*March 19, 1977*

This is the weekend of the Boston Flower Show. How many ladies would be interested in going together by bus? The cost of admission is \$2.50 and the bus fare would be \$10-12.00.

### **25 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH**

*March 8, 1987*

At the quarterly congregational meeting, the role of children in communion services is discussed.

### **20 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH**

*February 2, 1992*

Well known hymnologist Mary Oyer will be with us for our morning worship. Bethany congregation will join us for a special Sunday of Worship, with a potluck lunch after.

*February 10, 1992*

Richard and Ruth Ann presented a signed print of the Russian deportation, featuring a Russian church. It shows the beauty of the Russian Mennonites' new religious freedom.

*March 9, 1992*

Ruth Ann Glick's brother working in Africa says there is a great need for books there. We hope that everyone can bring books from home, and perhaps go through the church library to meet this need.

### **15 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH**

*February 2, 1997*

Shannon Jarosh will be sharing during the worship time about her experiences working with the Sisters of Charity in India.

*March 1, 1997*

Randy will be distributing letters in mailboxes further explaining his idea of Ekklesia Sundays.

### **Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Fellowship**

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



**Randy Good, Pastor**

[www.taftsvillechapel.org](http://www.taftsvillechapel.org)

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