



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.

Jan Collins, *Editor*; Carie Good, Janet North & Virginia Schlabach, *Newsletter Staff*

February 2010

"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

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## Give it up for Lent

*"What are you giving up for Lent?"*

If you stop to think about it, this is really an odd question, especially for Mennonites who did not grow up with the tradition of celebrating Lent. But this question suggests that we might be holding onto something. Perhaps something we would rather not "give up".

This tradition of giving something up for Lent is borrowed originally from the Catholic custom of fasting (from meat, among other things) during Lent, to identify with Jesus' forty day fast in the wilderness. It is a spiritual discipline; a time of purification and penance, in the sense that one chooses to repent (turn away from, or "give up") a vice or pleasure, large or small (chocolate?) in order to experience drawing closer to God. As far as I know, Mennonites have never emphasized this practice. I would like to think it's because living simply, prayerfully and reflectively is pursued as a year-round reality, not a seasonal experience. However, the discipline of self-reflection is an important part of embracing the glorious truth of the Resurrection, whether one is Catholic, Protestant or Anabaptist. We each must recognize our own need for salvation in order for the gift of forgiveness and redemption to make sense and touch us deeply.

This year at Taftsville, Randy will be using the Psalms as a source for reflection during our Lenten Sunday morning services. He will be asking us to consider what we might be "holding on to" that interferes with our relationship with Jesus, and inviting us to "let go". He will also be reminding us to "hold on" as we draw near to God.

As a way to encourage us to "hold on" to God during Lent, we are also providing additional opportunities for reflection. Dave and Caren Swanson are preparing a few afternoon and/or evening gatherings for worship, meditation, and prayer (see p. 6). We hope many will be able to come out and join us for these special services. Also, the worship committee (well, Elinor mostly) has prepared a Lenten Devotional Booklet, written by You. Do you remember the devotional journals you used during Lent a year ago? And the personal reflections you passed along to Elinor? These have been compiled into a booklet as a way of providing daily devotions during the 40 days of Lent (actually 47 days because we also included Sundays). You are encouraged to find a quiet place where you can retreat for a few moments each day, to read and meditate on the day's scripture and devotion. We hope the worship gatherings, and reading the scriptures, reflections and experiences of others in our group will touch each of us as we prepare together to celebrate the greatest news of all on Easter Sunday.

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## LENTEN SEASON

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As Lent approaches, it is time to take stock of our lives and open our hearts to Easter. Toward that end, Caren and Dave Sawnsen will be organizing a few services at Taftsville Chapel to provide us, and the community, with an opportunity for meditation on Christ's work through song, words, and prayer. The singing will consist of songs taken from the Taize community in France. Taize is an international community where many different folks with their varied cultures and languages come together to worship God through simple, meditative singing, building relationships, and focusing on the Scriptures and the life of the spirit. You can learn more about this community at [http://www.taize.fr/en\\_article6525.html](http://www.taize.fr/en_article6525.html).

We will also share in some interactive prayer and Lenten meditations during the services. If you are interested in coming, please consider inviting folks you know who would benefit from this opportunity to seek the center of things.

There will be services on February 17, Ash Wednesday, from 7 to 8 pm (the ashes are free!), and then March 7 and 21, Sundays, from 4 to 5 pm. We may also do one on Good Friday from 7 to 8.

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## STUDENT ABROAD

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*Ruth Ellen Dandurand is currently traveling in the Middle East through Eastern Mennonite College. She is enrolled in their Cross-Culture Program. She along with 27 other students and leaders (Linford and Janet Stutzman) are learning and experiencing "the fascinating and volatile mix of religions, cultures and historical movements that have shaped the world. Beginning in Egypt, wandering through the Sinai and Jordan, living in Israel and the West Bank, and traveling to Greece and Rome, participants will be immersed in the ancient/modern world of Jews, Christians and Muslims. Living in Palestinian homes, working on an Israeli kibbutz and at the Nazareth Village, exploring ancient histories and current conflicts."*

*Ruth Ellen is writing about her experiences through her blog called Keeping the Path: <http://www.keepingthepath.blogspot.com/>. Here are some excerpts.*

### Wednesday, January 13, 2010

This week we have been going through the orientation process. Much of our discussion has been how to interact with the people and what will be expected of us however throughout the discussions we have already started talking about the meaning behind traveling to the Biblical sites. The places are beautiful but it is not necessarily what we will see that is important but the spiritual relevance and growth that will be very present as we travel. We have been encouraged to go without preconceived notions and cognitive dissonance in our ideas and opinions of the people and the situations we will become a part of. This openness will be more challenging for some but still difficult for all of us as we have all heard the stories second hand. I look forward to being able to talk with the people myself and hear directly what the people think and believe on both sides of the conflict. There will be hopes and fears but there cannot be one without the other, which will truly enrich our many experiences.

### January 23, 2010

Yesterday our group sat down and just reflected together on things we've thought about so far. It was a good time for our group to get together for the first time since we arrived and talk. One of the things many of us have struggled with is trying to find how the things we are learning and trying to grasp about the culture and conflict here are relevant to our lives now. Though it's an amazing experience, sometimes it's difficult to wrap my mind around everything we have absorbed so far. It is hard to believe that we have only been here a week. I'm glad that we have a lot more time but many of us are weary and perhaps discouraged. But God is good and so are our leaders. Our group is connecting well in a short amount of time and we are all anxious for what comes next....

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## LETTER FROM LEAH AND CAITLIN BEIDLER ON HAITI

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Hello Everyone,

As many of you have seen over the days, Haiti is struggling. I have had the chance to talk with many of you through emails, texts, and phone calls and many of you are expressing that you want to help. I really want to encourage YOU to do so. These last couples of days have been very hard on both Caitlin and my heart. Tuesday night my sister and I were talking and we both were just thinking about how the streets of Haiti were wailing. I went to bed on Tuesday night and in my mind all I could hear was the wailing and weeping of the Haitian people. We have received little news, but the news we have received has been hard. One of my friends lost his home. He was able to get in touch with his mother today and he said that he is too scared to go outside because of the bodies in the streets. We also heard yesterday that the hotel we just stayed in has collapsed and some of our friends were inside. We have yet to hear from people in Cite Soleil.

Last night my roommate told me that there are reports of people who are under the debris and rubble, but the people outside could hear them praying and worshipping the Lord. I had to smile, in the midst of what I believe to be Haiti's hardest hours, they are WORSHIPPING.

I know that you all have been watching the news and the reports are unimaginable. Many of you have said, "What can I do? I want to do something?" Caitlin and I just committed last night to going over at the beginning of February. We will be going into Cite Soleil with Help Tammy Help Haiti. Tammy, will be over there for a month helping with relief to her people and family in Cite Soleil. Relief will be food, water, rebuilding, and medical distribution. Caitlin and I will be coming alongside her to help through translating, being hands, giving prayer, and distributing. We have also felt it on our hearts to provide funds for this work.

We have yet to hear anything out of Cite Soleil. Cite Soleil is the slum outside of Port-au-Prince and we believe that they could be suffering the worst right now. We are writing to you because WE NEED YOUR HELP. We are fundraising for the cause of Haiti's people. We are asking people to send money to help in the efforts

of providing food, water, medical care, medicine, and rebuilding in Haiti. I am calling out to you all to act. Not just watch, but act for the cause of our brothers and sisters in Haiti. The earliest we will leave is the 3rd of February. *(Editor's note: Since the writing of this letter Leah and Caitlin have decided to wait to let Tammy decide when the best time for them to travel to Haiti. They are still hoping for an early date in February.)* We will be taking donations. Checks can be made out to 180 Degrees and sent to Leah Beidler, PO BOX 255871, Dorchester, MA. 02125-5871. We have recently formed a partnership with Caitlin's church, 180 Degrees, in Myrtle Beach, and they will be supporting us in our future work, ministry in Haiti, and trip in February. We ask that all donations be sent by January 26th because we will be leaving at the beginning of February.

I would also like to ask if anyone would feel it on their hearts to support Caitlin and me in any way with funds. This is a sudden, unexpected trip and financially we are not equipped to go. If any of you feel it on your heart to support Caitlin and me in this endeavor we ask that you write in the lower left corner of the check, Caitlin and Leah.

Thank you so much for your prayers, support, texts, and phone calls. In this all I just keep hearing the word REDEEM. I believe God is redeeming HIS beautiful Haiti!

I ask that you continue to pray. I also ask that as Haiti begins to disappear from front-page news and CNN in the next couple of weeks, that you DO NOT STOP PRAYING. I pray that Haiti does not leave your hearts. Thank you all for everything. I believe God is beginning to move in a MIGHTY WAY!

Love, Leah and Caitlin

Leah's Email: [leahbeidler12@yahoo.com](mailto:leahbeidler12@yahoo.com)

**To contribute to the relief efforts in Haiti, see page 6 for options, including Leah Beidler's ministry.**

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## UPDATE FROM TED & ELINOR IN ARIZONA

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We have been having reasonably cool weather here with snow at the higher elevations in the Catalina Mountains just to the north of Tucson. We have had frost on the windshield some mornings. During the daytime temperatures have been mostly in the 50s and 60s, so we are not complaining!

We currently are working on electrical upgrades (a new electrical panel, etc.) for several different clients. The electrical panels have passed the initial inspections. Now we are waiting for Tucson Electric Power to set up a time when they will come and do the cut-over to the new panel. Things have been going quite well although Ted has had some days with a lot of back pain. We are trying not to work as long hours as we have in previous years.

On Thursday we worked on a mobile home in a mobile home park called "The Palms". Sounds very idyllic, doesn't it? They do have palm trees but it is one of the worst parks there is! We immediately noticed that the lot of a client that we had worked for a couple of years ago was empty. When we inquired, we were saddened to learn that he had died since we were here last.

The client we were working for this year was in the hospital. She is on oxygen and the power in half the mobile home was out. We worked for five hours trying to find the problem. We did find a number of electrical problems but not THE problem. It is the first job in six years that we had to give up on and tell them we could not fix it. The problem is probably somewhere in the walls. We have often peeled back the siding on mobile homes to follow the wiring and locate the problems. In this case the siding was a fiber board that was in very bad condition and we could not take it off because we would not have been able to put it back on. The siding would have just disintegrated. At this place Ted took the cover off a switch box and it was filled with cockroach remains and droppings. The smell was awful. Ted couldn't seem to get that smell out of his head for the rest of the day. We were disappointed that we could not be of more help to the client. Fortunately we have always been more successful at trouble-shooting than we were in this case.

The same day we worked for a family of five. Some of the children sleep in the living room. They smelled something hot and told their parents who discovered that an outlet in the living room had melted and the wall was "glowing orange". They were not sure why the whole place did not burn up. We weren't sure why it didn't either! In the same home one of the boys pounded a nail into the wall and sparks flew. Murphy's Law would have it that he hit an electric wire dead on. At least we were able to make repairs in this home, but the mobile home has aluminum wiring which has been illegal since 1972. We always feel uneasy about this because aluminum wiring is a fire hazard, yet we know that this is the only housing that these families can afford.

That's a little bit of what life here is like for us.

- *Elinor*

### EMAIL NOTE FROM GERETY'S

We wanted to give you all our new address:

2201 Orchard Place Apt K66  
Fort Collins, CO 80521

Ezra Grace is doing wonderfully -- she has two teeth and is doing pretty well at standing all on her own!

Our contract on the house we were going to buy fell through, but we're not disappointed -- it allowed us to move on and rent a bigger place that we really like.

God bless,  
Silver & Heather Gerety

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## SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

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Each Sunday morning:    9:30 am – Worship Service  
                                     10:45 am – Coffee and Fellowship

### February

- 6    7:00 am – Men's Breakfast @ *Crossroads Cafe*
- 13   7:30 am – Women's Breakfast @ *Farmer's Diner*
- 19   Pastoral Care Team Meeting
- 21   First Sunday of Lent
- 24   7:00 pm – Church Council
- 28   Birthday Song  
     Leadership Team Meeting

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### Birthdays in February

- 6   Marie Hackman
- 11   Tim Good
- 15   Seth Dandurand
- 16   Dmitri Eisenberg

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### Anniversaries in February

- 11   Marie & Dennis Hackman

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### Childcare

#### February

- 7   Mary Guntz
- 14   Carmeleta Beidler
- 21   Carie Good
- 28   Dave/Caren Swanson

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### Coffee

#### February

- 7   Abner Schlabach
- 14   Ken/Jane Glick
- 21   Janet North
- 28   Mary Guntz

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### Cleaning

#### February

- 6   Guntz
  - 13   Guntz
  - 20   Hackman
  - 27   Hackman
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### *In honor of Valentine's Day*

#### **The Love of God**

The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell;  
It goes beyond the highest star, and reaches to the lowest hell.  
The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win;  
His erring child He reconciled, and pardoned from his sin.

O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong!  
It shall forever more endure the saints' and angel's song.

When hoary time shall pass away, and earthly thrones and kingdoms fall;  
When men who here refuse to pray, on rocks and hills and mountains call;  
God's love, so sure, shall still endure, all measureless and strong;  
Redeeming grace to Adam's race the saints' and angels' song.

O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong!  
It shall forever more endure the saints' and angel's song.

Could we with ink the ocean fill and were the skies of parchment made;  
Were every stalk on earth a quill, and every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry;  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky.

O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong!  
It shall forever more endure the saints' and angel's song.

The Mennonite Hymnal, copyright 1969, page 538  
F.M. Lehman, c. 1917

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## TAFTSVILLE TIDBIT TRIVIA

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*Do you remember when...*

### 40 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*February 3, 1970*

An interesting treat is coming to Taftsville. Glenn Eshelman will present a program of slides and stereo music at 7:30 p.m. Four projectors are used to show scenes of Western United States, Florida, Pennsylvania and Vermont. The title of the program is "Our Father Planned it All".

*February 10, 1970*

It was suggested that a change in the Sunday School format might be called for in that the children should be encouraged in singing and memory work.

### 30 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*February 12, 1980*

The group will be presented with a proposal that we as a group sponsor one of the new shelters to be built at Bethany Birches. The design has not as yet been approved by the Camp Board.

### 25 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*February 10, 1985*

*"Angelos", a group of young adults active in Mennonite Missions, will present an evening program. Five persons in this group will need overnight lodging for 2 nights, and will be on a work project on Monday.*

*February 26, 1985*

Youth Class will share supper at the Zook's home and work at Prospect Street, WRJ. *(Does anybody remember what this work project was?)*

### 20 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*February 12, 1990*

A thank you is in order to Steve Knipe for contributing oak boards for the "small room" project which Dave Iott is working on.

### GIVING TO HAITI

For those of you who want to give to support relief efforts in Haiti, here are some contacts for that. It is recommended that folks make sure to donate through these or other organizations that are verified as to their legitimacy and that a large portion of donated funds actually goes to the relief efforts themselves as opposed to administrative or other costs.

#### Leah Beidler's ministry

Make checks payable to: 180 Degrees Church - Mail to: Leah Beidler  
P.O. Box 255871  
Dorchester MA 02125-5871

#### Some other good sites at which you can donate are:

**Mennonite Central Committee (MCC):** [www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org)

The MCC has a long standing presence in Haiti and is currently focusing on safe drinking water projects. (This is where the church's offering will already be going on Jan 31)

**Partners in Health:** <http://www.standwithhaiti.org/haiti>

This is an organization doing community health work that has been in Haiti for years and seeks to empower Haitians to meet their own medical needs.

**American Red Cross:** [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

They are doing a variety of medical and other relief work in Haiti currently.

### Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Fellowship



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

**Randy Good, Pastor**

<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