



# 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*

May 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*

## You Come Too Taftsville – A Gift

I've been thinking a lot about Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Fellowship. It's the church I'm part of. I've been wondering why it feels like home, why it feels like church, why it IS church in a way that is rare.

There is some special working of God's spirit at Taftsville that marks and permeates our community in a way that is powerful when you experience it. All my attempts to articulate it have fallen pretty short but I'm too stubborn to stop trying. I WANT to keep trying. Here are some of my attempts:

One beautiful thing is the quiet spirit of respect and acceptance that just kind of hangs in the air. You don't "notice" it, you just relax into it. You breathe a little easier. Without announcing it, folks demonstrate a kind of commitment to one another that could never be without first accepting and valuing everyone. Is this really that rare? Yeah it is. In churches, in all sorts of places, it is rare.

Another thing that's linked to this accepting spirit is the way we relate to our children. As the father of a young girl, I see every week that Clara is not only acknowledged and accepted, but celebrated and encouraged to just be as she is. She is included as a community member, not seen as a down payment on a future "contributing adult," or a distraction to be carted off. Of course she can be a distraction, (yes, we know), but not one that her parents ever need be ashamed of due to the attitudes of the larger family.

We run over our scheduled time for the Sunday morning service every single week. That, in itself, is not a great gift, but the reason we do it is. It's the prayer and sharing time. No matter how much time we leave for sharing and prayer at the end of service, it's never enough. It's never enough because people care, because people trust one another. It's never enough because Carol's standing up and finding me in the back row wondering about the prayer request I mentioned three weeks ago. It's never enough because people love each other with some serious determination.

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*Photos by Virginia Schlabach & Richard Glick*



Good Soil

A few weeks ago, Randy and Caren read that beautiful and terrible list of the things we, as a community, were holding on to and letting go of during lent. Despite the fact that many of the things mentioned were hard, or painful or dark, I was happy to hear it. I was happy because it was like this wonderful, long invitation to me and to everyone saying: "Here is a community where you don't have to pretend that everything is just fine all the time." That made me want to say to everyone else in my life, like Robert Frost does in one of my favorite poems... "You come too."

*- Dave Swanson, Interim Pastor*

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## Preparers of Good Soil

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*"The Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow... We are God's fellow workers; you are God's field..."*  
I Cor. 3:6&9



As a community, Who Are We? What is the task that God has assigned to us? What is our unique calling and vision as a congregation? On Sunday, April 11, Randy led us in reflection and celebration of the work that God seems to be calling us to do.

The children gathered at the front to help Dave Swanson understand Jesus' parable of "the soils". The seeds planted in the "good" soil are already taking root and sprouting! Good soil is essential is the spreading of the gospel. There are some congregations that are called to sow the seed of the Word. There are some congregations that are called to water. Perhaps we are called to be preparers of good soil, so that when the seed of grace lands, it can find a deep, nourishing place to take root and grow, both in ourselves, and also in those around us who are enriched as they watch us live out our faith, for God's glory.

So, what makes for good soil? Lots of organic matter, to make fluffy loam; the "truth" of life and faith. Lots of compost, rich in nutrients; the "scraps" of our lives, lived honestly. Randy illustrated this for us by mixing a batch of good soil, blending the gutsy realities of our lives together as represented by the shreds of paper we nailed to the cross during Lent. The seeds planted in this good soil are already poking wispy shoots of green into the sunshine. Randy and I expect to be back from Alaska in time to see them blooming!

Before the slips of paper were shredded, I assembled all that we had written into a litany. Randy, Caren and Heather blessed us as they read the words. The words that we wrote in private, and sacrificed as an offering at the cross, became almost sacred as they were read aloud. Our spirits became one, and we knew we were not alone; not alone with each other, and not alone before God. What a testimony to the richness of our soil together!



This litany is available through a page on our website: <http://taftsvillechapel.org/at-the-cross/>. There has also been a suggestion that we make a link to an audio recording and perhaps an illustrated booklet as well. What a treasure God has given us in each other. May Jesus hold each of us, as we let go. Amen.  
-Carie Good

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## Getting to Know You: Dave, Caren, and Clara Swanson

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*Dave Swanson has been commissioned by our congregation as interim pastor during Randy Good's four-month leave of absence. In answer to questions posed by Current staff, Dave, Caren, and Clara tell about themselves.*

**Where did you grow up? Share a bit about your family, local environment, school, church – whatever might have shaped who you've become as an adult.**

Dave: I grew up in Lansdowne, PA, a suburb of Philadelphia. My home was a unique house built into the middle of a block surrounded by really tall trees and shrubs. It was like a little island in the middle of a town. My house and yard were often where my whole gang of friends would end up.



The spirit of hospitality was always at the center of our family life. My two older sisters, now 37 and 39, also usually ended up bringing their friends home. My father worked for an international Christian non-profit and there was a regular flow of folks from all over the world through the place.

My folks started a Christian youth group with a teacher from my sisters' public school, so for most of my childhood and into my teenage years, my living room would be full of 30-60 teenagers every Friday night.

I think it was this experience of growing up in my particular family that gave me the sense that Christian vocation was something you lived out, not merely in the attitudes you bring to relationships, but in the stuff, the structure, and priorities of life. I learned from my parents that it is possible to let the values of the Kingdom shape your life instead of work, money, or – ironically – even family itself. Our family (without having to have a meeting about it!) gathered around the question of how can we be who we need to be together. And that's what shaped our life.

Caren: I grew up in Andover, NH (the town we now live in) in a Christian family with parents who had been very influenced by Anabaptist thought. After getting pretty burnt out on church via a number of disillusioning experiences, they started meeting in a house church with a few other couples. Their example of continuing to seek out fellowship and support from other Christians, even when it is difficult, has certainly contributed to my stubborn belief in the Church as the Body of Christ.

I have a younger sister, Lindsey, who has also come back to our hometown. She and her husband Scott work at Proctor Academy, the prep school here in Andover, and have a son, Camden, who will be two this summer, and another one on the way! Living close to my family has become more and more important to me over the years. Growing up here, I spent a lot of time in the woods and developed a sense of wonder that is very rooted in the land of this area. That has stayed with me and is one reason I feel so happy to live here again.

**Briefly describe higher education, jobs, settings, experiences before you met and married.**

Dave: Before Caren and I married I was a nutty teenager, then an intense/angsty/nutty college student. I was studying Bible, theology, literature, sociology, and whatever else I could learn. I spent a semester in the Middle East, which was incredible and formative for my faith, my understanding of

human nature, and my politics, and gave me a real love for the cultures over there and especially the history, sad as it is.

Caren: At Gordon College I studied literature, writing, and sociology. I developed my passion for people and their stories, I made life-long friends, and I found wonderful professors who mentored me and challenged me. I was involved with Gordon's outdoors program, taking people into the woods for 12-day wilderness trips. I also was involved in a lot of activism work, specifically around peace and justice issues and women's issues. These experiences developed in me a love for creating spaces in which people can encounter God and themselves in new ways. I discovered my capacity for helping people find their voice and tell their own stories, as well as for nurturing community. And I fell in love with the Atlantic Ocean.

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

Dave: I love woodworking, gardening, working with animals, walking, hiking, reading, sitting around fires and talking late, hot drinks, cold drinks, and jumping in mud puddles. Lately, I think my favorite songs have been "Make It Rain" and "Come On Up to the House" by Tom Waits. They both ring true for me in the sense that, when I'm honest, I know I need someone else to come through for me for everything to be "all right." I guess that's grace.

Caren: I love to take walks in the woods, work in my garden, hang laundry on the line, read by the fire, do crafty things, write on my blog, sing with Dave and Clara, drink tea with friends and talk about what matters to us, and find beauty in the everyday with my camera. I am learning to grow my own food and live more self-sufficiently. I am hoping that THIS is the summer I will learn how to can! I love our little farm on the hill, and I love raising my daughter in the same area where my father and I grew up. I feel very held by God in my own little section of the earth here. I love songs and scripture verses that reflect finding the Creator in the natural order. And I love words that remind me that I can trust that God is always with me, which is why I love the hymn, "Give to the Winds Thy Fears."

**The remaining questions were answered by Dave and Caren together.**

**How/where did you meet? When/where were you married? Share about your life together before moving to New Hampshire – setting, work, church, etc.**

We met at Gordon College and were married on August 9, 2002, at Musterfield Farm in North Sutton, NH. After college we both worked in a furniture business, Dave constructing and Caren finishing and painting wooden furniture. We lived in Gloucester, MA, until moving to NH. We attended Christ Church of Hamilton, MA, a very "high church" sort of place with incense and candles! Actually, we still find a rich depth in higher church liturgy, even as we find a different kind of depth in the discipleship, community, and peace traditions of the Mennonite church. When we were at that church we helped start a fellowship for peace and justice that focused on helping folks live out their discipleship creatively.

**What led you to choose the rural New England life? Describe your current setting, jobs, etc. What are the biggest challenges and greatest rewards?**

We wanted to live rurally because we wanted to be involved with our own food production, to live more closely to the rhythms of the land, and because we think that a real economy, within which the food economy plays an important part, provides an awesome opportunity for neighbors to meet the needs of neighbors, building community and getting to know one another.

**How have your spiritual journeys taken the path to Dave's call to ministry? What experiences at Taftsville Chapel have helped you on this journey?**

This community has been the haven in which we could both do some much-needed healing, taking stock, and wing stretching with regard to our vocations, supported by a safe and loving family. Dave has been feeling and wrestling with a call to pastoral ministry for years but it was not until coming to Taftsville that the call began to be realized in a consistent way. Sometimes we wonder if Taftsville as a group has any idea of the uniqueness of the health, vulnerability, grace, beauty, strength, authenticity, and mutual support that lives in our community. These wonderful things are so rare in any gathered group anywhere.

**And we can't forget Clara! With help from Mommy and Daddy she answered questions, too. When and where were you born? Why was your birth so special?**

I was born in 2005 on June 7th at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Hospital. My birth was special because all my mama and papa's friends came to visit me. It was also special because I came two months early and was tiny, tiny (3 lbs., 9 oz. at my smallest).

**What are your favorite things to do indoors and outdoors?**

I like to play hopscotch, have tea parties, draw on my easel, play in my sand box, go for hikes (and if you know, we're going to go hike up in the White Mountains, so that will be my adventure hike), and pick flowers outside. Inside, I like to color, play my play kitchen, read books (and my best thing of all are my new books that I got!), paint, sew, play games, do puzzles, make notes, play with my dolls, and stand on my papa's belly and do the plane on his feet, and have pillow fights.

**What do you like about church?**

I like that I have two friends who are my new teachers but I also wish that my other old teachers were still my teachers but I guess I just have to hang on to what I've got for teachers!

**Name a favorite song, book, or Bible verse -- or all three!**

Favorite Song: This Land is Your Land –Favorite Books: *Charlie Brown's Christmas*, *17 Things I'm Not Allowed to Do Anymore*, and *The Hair of Zoe Fleefenbacher Goes to School* are my favorites.

-Favorite Bible Verse: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

**Give to the winds thy fears**

Give to the winds thy fears;  
Hope and be undismayed;  
God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears,  
God shall lift up thy head,  
God shall lift up thy head.  
Through waves and clouds and storms,  
God gently clears the way;  
Wait thou God's time; so shall this night  
Soon end in joyous day,  
Soon end in joyous day.

Paul Gerhardt, 1607-1676  
(translated by John Wesley)

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**Easter Morning Cross Walk**

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## Children & Youth in Worship Service

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## A Letter from Randy & Carie

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Dear Taftsville Family,

We are excited to be going off on our big adventure and grateful for this amazing opportunity. Randy leaves on April 27 and will return July 11. Carie leaves on May 19, returning June 12. We will try to keep our blog <http://lubberlines.blogspot.com/> up to date as time and internet connections permit. (Comments welcome!) Also, the web site for the boat <http://pacificcatalyst.com/> has links to the itinerary (2010 schedule) and may have some photos posted as Shannon can post them to the website.

While we are away this summer, please feel free to contact the Pastoral Care Team (Ruth Ann and Richard Glick as well as Carmeleta and Dave Beidler) or the Leadership Team (Omar and Janice Zook) with any concerns that may occur. Also, Dave and Caren Swanson will be assisting both teams during the

interim period. As was mentioned Sunday, please do contact Dave Swanson with any and all pastoral needs as they arise. We also have a Prayer Circle in place for additional. That group consists of everyone mentioned above as well as Mary Fullerton. You can activate the Prayer Circle by calling anyone on it and they will call the rest.

We will be praying for you all for a joyous few months while we're away. We'll miss you!

Love,  
Randy & Carie

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## 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Bethany Birches Camp Benefit Auction-NEW LOCATION

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After reviewing the recent survey results the Bethany Birches Camp auction committee has decided to hold the 2010 auction at the Camp in Plymouth, Vermont. It will be held on September 25, 2010, preview 9am, and Auction 10am. Mark the date on your calendar now and plan to join in on this fun day at BBC.

Many things were discussed regarding the change in location and the change will result in a savings of about \$1000 in rental costs.

Hopefully you have given some thought to what you could contribute to the success of this fundraiser. We will need about 125 quality items, value of at least

\$25 to be auctioned off. It could be a handmade craft item, gift certificate, tickets to an event, theme basket, or some service you could provide. We are also seeking donations of merchandise or services from local businesses.

Contact Allen Guntz or Fred Schlabach, auction committee members, for questions or ideas on something you could contribute. Notify Allen as soon as you know what you are contributing as the 2010 list has already been started.

## Schedule for May

Each Sunday morning: **9:30 am – Worship Service**  
**10:45 am – Coffee and Fellowship**  
**11:00 am – Second Hour/Sunday School** (ends on 5/30 for the summer)

### May

- 1** 10:00 am – Spring clean up at Church
- 8** 7:15 am – Men's and Women's Breakfast @ *Dana's*
- 13** 7:00 pm – Church Council
- 30** 9:30 am – Song Service / Birthday Song

May Birthdays	May Anniversaries	Lawn Care
2 Lynda Knisley	11 Allen & Mary Guntz	May
9 Karen Cox	25 Mary & Glen Fullerton	9, 16, 23, 30 Guntz
28 Phare Deitrich	28 Janet North & Fred Schlabach	

Song Leader	Childcare	Coffee	Cleaning
May	May	May	May
2 Janet North	2 Janice Zook	2 Richard & RuthAnn Glick	2 Snader
9 Virginia Schlabach	9 Jane Glick	9 Karen Cox	9 Snader
16 Richard Glick	16 Nancy Pejouhy	16 Abner Schlabach	16 Schlabach
23 Carmeleta Beidler	23 Karen Cox	23 Ken & Jane Glick	23 Zook
30 Janet North	30 Mary Guntz	30 Janet North	30 Zook

## Treasurer's Report

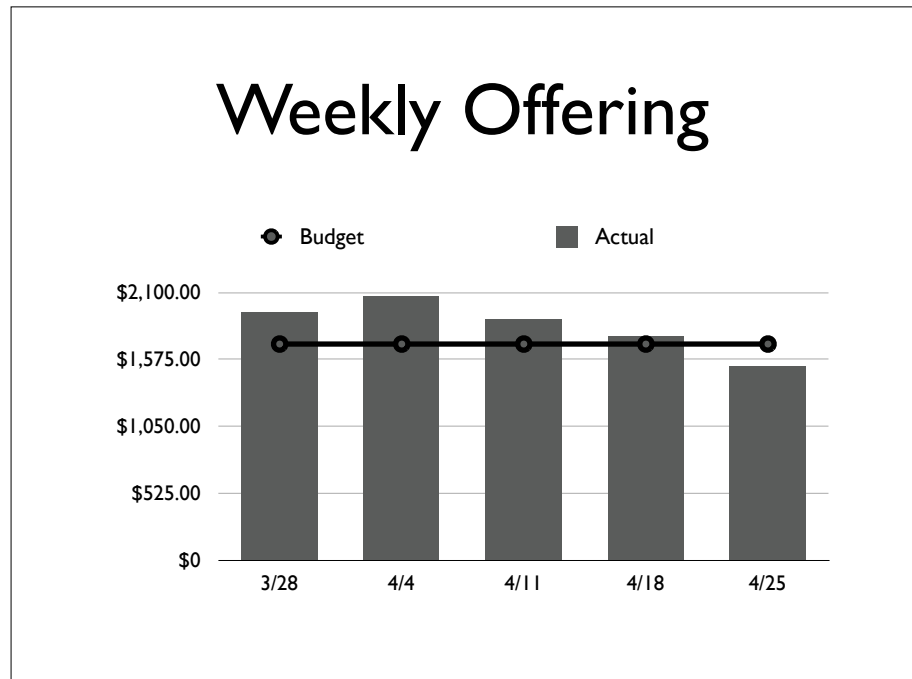
We're having a great start to the final quarter in this fiscal year! Our offerings are outpacing the expected budget. Praise God!

Thanks,  
 -Tim Good

Weekly Budget: \$1695

Offerings:  
 3/28 - \$1946  
 4/4 - \$2070  
 4/11 - \$1890  
 4/18 - \$1755  
 4/25 - \$1520

Total: \$9181



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## In the Library

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### Book Review

STONES INTO SCHOOLS by Greg Mortenson

On our recent trip to Arizona, in addition to getting in lots of grandkid time, some hiking, and biking I did read this book. It is by the same author as *Three Cups of Tea* and if you have not read that you may want to start with that book.

*Stones Into Schools* picks up where *Three Cups of Tea* left off in 2003. It is the continuing story of the effort of the non-profit Central Asia Institute (CAI) founded by Greg Mortenson to promote peace through education rather than bombs in remote regions of

Pakistan and Afghanistan. More than 130 schools have now been established in the region, most of them for girls.

*Three Cups of Tea* tells how this story began in Pakistan and in *Stones Into Schools* the story continues as the effort expands into the remote areas of Afghanistan and even into Taliban country. It also includes the devastating earthquake in October of 2005 in the Azad Kashmir region of Pakistan. It is a breath of fresh air to read about this effort to promote peace with books rather than with bombs. I would recommend both books as a "must read".

– Allen Guntz

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## Taftsville Tidbit Trivia

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*Do you remember when...*

### 40 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*May 12, 1970*

The Candlelighters meet at Carol Fisher's home. Mrs. Nevin Bender will be speaking on "The Christian Wife's Duties". The project is socks.

*May 16, 1970*

A work project is planned for the men in the afternoon to put in drainage pipe and culvert. An evening meal will be provided for all to participate in. The Lord's Supper and Feet Washing will follow in the evening.

### 30 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*May 25, 1980*

The council approved the purchase of a new volleyball net and ball.

### 25 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*May 27, 1985*

Church Council met at the home of Richard and Ruth Ann. A fast-flying bird careened into the picture window of Glick's living room while we discussed the treasurer's report. Nurse Ruth Ann rushed to the scene and found the critter belly-up in the bushes. Any interpretations of this omen are welcome.

### 20 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*May 12, 1990*

Keep this weekend open for sessions with Lynn Miller on "First Fruits". It promises to be a very enjoyable and inspiring weekend. I understand that we will meet Mrs. Anna Baptist.

### 15 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*May 9, 1995*

Omar will prepare a paper detailing various options for installing a handicap entrance.

### 10 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*May 19, 2000*

For a very special treat, come to the Mother / Daughter Tea, Friday at 6 p.m. at the Chapel.

Send your contributions for  
**"The Taftsville Chapel Current"** to:  
rdjgcollins@mac.com  
OR slip a note in the Collins mailbox  
OR contact a Newsletter Staff Member:  
Carie Good, Janet North, and Virginia Schlabach

### Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Fellowship



**Randy Good, Pastor**

Dave Swanson, Interim Pastor

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