



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*

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Advent—the time of waiting before Christmas arrives—has become inextricably tangled with “the holiday season”. Many of us love this time of year; the joy, the celebration, the gift-giving, beautiful lights and family traditions. Most of us also despair at the commercialism; feel sickened when stores put up Christmas displays after Halloween, hate going into West Lebanon during December, wish we weren’t standing in long check-out lines and wonder what is wrong with people on Black Friday. How do we untangle these mixed emotions? How do we as a church, differ in our celebration from the secular celebration of the season? A “holy day” of the Christian church has been co-opted by much that is not holy nor Christian.

Carie and I began thinking about and planning for our Advent services even before those awful store displays were put up. We hope our Advent services this year will provide something that’s often missing—a quiet space that is an escape from the commercial reality of the holiday season swirling around us. We have chosen to focus our services on quietness and stilling our inner selves—listening for the heartbeat of God.

We are encouraging you to also create a quiet time at home on Sunday evenings during Advent (or a weeknight). Try limiting your use of electricity, using oil lamps and candles, also turning off the TV, computer and cell phones. Perhaps spend time listening to The Messiah or other Christmas music, reading or in whatever activity is truly enjoyable. Does the thought

of being quiet, without our technological “noise” scare you? Think about this quote from Loretta Ross-Gotta, “. . . holiness is not personal achievement. It is an emptiness you discover in yourself. Instead of resenting it, you accept it and it becomes the free space where the Lord can create anew.” We hope that through the Advent Services and spending some quiet time at home each of us will be able to capture a new sense of The Advent: the coming of the Christ child who is Immanuel, God with us.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote:

. . . God wants to always be with us, wherever we may be—in our sin, in our suffering and death. We are no longer alone; God is with us. We are no longer homeless; a bit of the eternal home itself has moved into us. Therefore, we adults can rejoice deeply within our hearts under the Christmas tree, perhaps much more than children are able. We know that God’s goodness will once again draw near . . .

And author Meister Eckhart wrote this:

Here in time we make holiday because the eternal birth which God the Father bore . . . is now born in time, in human nature. St. Augustine says this birth is always happening. But if it does not happen in me, what does it profit me. What matters is that it shall happen in me.

Elinor Shattuck

*The passages quoted above are from Watch for the Light—Readings for Advent and Christmas (The Plough Publishing House). A copy can be found in our church library.

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Update from Pikangikum

by Colleen Estes

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Taftsville Mennonite Church,

Greetings from Pikangikum First Nation! We just want to express to you how thankful we are for the help in feeding hungry kids! Most of those who call for food are motherless, with the families' welfare check just not stretching far enough with the high cost of groceries. The food bags contain staples -- macaroni, oatmeal, spaghetti sauce, canned milk and sugar -- it helps to hold off the hunger pangs.

Linda and I continue to press ahead, realizing it is indeed the strength of the Lord that sustains us! We are thankful for many opportunities to teach God's Word throughout the week -- Sunday School, Christian Ed. classes at the school to 500 kids a week, "Hope Night" which draws 55-60 junior and senior high students, after school clubs, and one on one discipleship times. We love kids, but we enjoy Monday night prayer meetings at my home with ADULTS and times of fellowship on Sunday mornings with Christian teachers.

Our community continues to be in need of deep healing from all of the losses it has experienced over the past few months, and over the years. Six youth suicides in July and August have traumatized many families. When I am not teaching, most of my time is spent with motherless girls, "can you wash my clothes?... can we take showers?... do you have any food?... can you give us a ride to our kookums?... can we visit? can we live with you?... can you bake me a birthday cake?"

We are thankful for our Christian Chief, Jonah, and the majority of the band council who are saved and have an ear to the Lord. Pray for their strengthening and for wisdom for them.

Gichi-Meegwetch.. big thanks for all of your prayers and support! May the Lord use you mightily in the areas of service He has called you to!



Shown are some of "my girls". Their mom died of hypothermia after their snowmobile malfunctioned at -30 a few years ago... their oldest brother suicided in August. 6 girls, 2 boys in the family -- dad struggles a lot. They come over at least once a week for pizza and showers.. and a safe place to be. We have so many motherless kids.



Christian ed -- half of a Grade 5 class. Linda and I teach over 500 kids a week the Word of God!



Two girls - my neighbour girls, one lost her daddy to suicided this fall. They often will bring a little note asking for sugar and milk -- with tea, that tides them over until welfare check time. There are about 22 people living in their grandmother's house across the road from me, with the adults struggling with alcohol and grief.

The History of the Advent Creche

By: Anthony Alloway

The creche and some of the figurines were handmade by my mother's third husband, Bill. It was originally intended to be played with by his three children, but they lost interest in it as they grew and it was eventually boxed up and forgotten. My mother and Bill, who had been friends since college, became a couple in their "twilight years" and as part of their Christmas celebrations, my mother wished to have a manger scene. Bill dusted off his handiwork and a holiday tradition of their own was started.

My mother loved to travel and on her journeys, some of which they made together, she collected other carvings to add to the group. Having an increasingly eclectic group became part of the holiday tradition; hence the moose (her favorite), the elk and the other seemingly out of place animals.

Bill and my mother married long after my brothers and I had become adults, and we became introduced to the unusual manger scene during the only Christmas that we were all able to spend together (Sadly, Bill passed-away that following May). Even though we were "grown-ups", my brother's and I spent that Christmas playing with the creche, though not always as intended. For instance, we made two teams out of all of the figurines and played a football game! Regardless, Bill was very pleased to see the creche being appreciated and played with once again, and the memory of his joy became very special to my mother.

Every Christmas thereafter, my mother and our family would continue to display (and play with) the creche, which, with Bill's death, had taken on even more significant meaning (for various reasons, his children were not interested in it). Upon my mother's death, the creche became mine and I know that both she and Bill would be very pleased that it is being treasured once more.

Thank you for all of your work. It is greatly appreciated.

To My Church Family,

I offer a much belated note of gratitude for your support during my struggles with the aftermath of Irene.

Loving hands rescued and restored inundated and defiled belongings.

Loving ambassadors waded through political and legal systems to help decode and address my rights and responsibilities with respect to property restoration.

Loving ears and shoulders gave me of their time, experience, and care to listen, comfort, and encourage me in the seemingly endless hurdles in getting the house habitable once again.

Loving hearts heard and lifted my needs in prayer to our loving Lord.

As I transferred tubs of sparkly-cleaned dishware, and oiled and shiny hardware from the chapel back into the property, I was moved by each sticky note (cleaned for Carol), extra wrapping of tissue paper, and evidence of your personal care. I am blessed to be counted as a member of this loving family in our communal journey through thorns and thistles to glory.

Gratefully,
Carol Whitney



(A trunk-full of food for the Haven)

Work Done at New Beginnings



Thanksgiving Offering

by Randy Good

Half of our Special Thanksgiving Offering was delivered to New Beginnings Community Church in Bristol, PA, a Mennonite congregation near northeast Philadelphia. When Hurricane Irene whipped through New England, much damage was done in Vermont. Damage was done in Bristol as well. New Beginnings suffered a flooded basement which ruined walls, doors, cabinets and much of the supplies for the neighborhood children's after school computer and reading programs that Pastor Jon Moore has developed.

Ted and Randy traveled down there for a few days (11/28-11/30) to do an assessment of what could be done to help, and to begin some of the work. A new pump was installed in a deepened sump pit with appropriate wiring, and a new buried drain line was pitched to get the sump water well away from the building. There was also some earthquake damage to the walls that was repaired with hydraulic cement, which hopefully should keep water entering the building to a minimum now. A temporary downspout extension was put in to channel roof water further from the foundation.

Much remains to be done. The site has significant drainage problems and lots of underground water. A more permanent drainage system for the gutters and perhaps a perimeter drain need to be dug in. All the interior door units and kitchen base cabinets need replacing, and energy efficient windows for the sanctuary are sorely needed. A new front door is also way past due.

Thanks to everyone for your part in contributing to the ministry efforts of New Beginnings. A warm, dry building is essential for the calling they have in their community. Pastor Moore was deeply encouraged.

Treasurer's Report

by Tim Good

Weekly Target	\$1,832
Oct. 30	\$2,043
Nov. 6	\$2,415
Nov. 13	\$1,986
Nov. 20	\$1,860
Nov. 27	\$1,411
Dec. 4	\$2,650
Dec. 11	\$1,575
Dec. 18	\$1,532
Dec. 25	\$1,980
Total	\$17,452
Budget	\$16,497

Budget to Date	\$47,632
Total to Date	\$47,558

Thanksgiving Offering (Not included in above totals)
\$3,640

Thanks to everyone for your amazing support this year! We are almost exactly on target for meeting our budget so far for this fiscal year. As a comparison, last year at this time we were approximately \$3,000 short! So not only are we meeting our regular offering goals, but this is the highest Thanksgiving offering on record, which we split between the Upper Valley Haven, and New Beginnings Church in PA. Praise God for all of His blessings!

Getting to Know You

Mike, Judy, Calvin, Mabel, Evelyn. and Christopher McCrory

Mike and Judy responded to the following questions individually: *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. Briefly describe higher education, jobs, settings, experiences before you met and married. What are your hobbies and interests?*

Judy: I was born in Syracuse, N.Y., and adopted by Don and Hazel LaFavor when I was two months old. Mom and Dad and I spent most of my growing up years in Black River, N.Y., a small town due north of Syracuse located near Lake Ontario. In some regards, Black River resembled where Mike and I live with the children in Wilder today. Black River could claim the essential characteristics of small villages in that day – neighbors who knew one another, churches, a library, an elementary school, a post office, parks, small stores, hairdressers, a laundromat, a fire department and a pizza place. It was, in many ways, a great place to grow up in.

As an only child, I developed an early love for many of the interests I still hold today – reading, gardening, crafting, dancing and, if only I still could, roller skating!

I graduated from Middlebury College where I majored in Geography and Northern Studies. I moved to the Upper Valley after college when I began working for a local engineering firm and met Mike a few years later when he began working there as well.

Mike: I was born in Madison, Wisconsin, but don’t remember much of it – well, none of it. My family moved to Vermont in 1975 when I was one year old, when my father took a job with an up-start law school in South Royalton. I don’t remember much of that, either. I do recall that we had a railroad track in our back yard and my brother and sisters (there was five of us kids) placed pennies on it for the trains to flatten as they passed by. We moved-on to West Woodstock, downtown Woodstock, then South Pomfret. I spent my spare time growing-up – in between trips to school – playing and hiking around and delivering newspapers as possibly one of the last paper boys in Woodstock. My first regular job was working as an ice cream scooper at the White Cottage Snack Bar. During the



winters my family would go skiing at Suicide Six Ski Area and my sister and I eventually worked there as ski instructors.

As a teenager, after my siblings matured and left the house, I spent my summers traveling cross-country with my parents (’77 Volkswagen pop-top camper van) and had the opportunity to travel internationally. I really enjoyed these trips and appreciated the opportunities my parents provided. Unfortunately, these opportunities did not include spiritual guidance.

When in college I met a gentleman who offered to teach me about the Bible. Shortly thereafter I became a believer in Christ and graduated from college with a BS in Civil Engineering and a minor in Geography.

I enjoy mountain biking, backpacking, skiing, marrying a wonderful woman, and raising four very cool kids.

Judy and Mike answered these questions

together: *How/where did you meet? When/where were you married? Where did you live and work before settling in Wilder? What led you to become part of Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Fellowship?*

We met at work and closed the courtship when we shared lunch at a company meeting. Shortly after committing to our marriage, we searched around for a local church both to worship and to find someone to marry us. Friends recommended Taftsville Chapel and we met the congregation one day and were pleasantly surprised by the openness and warmth of the reception. We met Randy and he agreed to marry us. We were married October 14, 2000, in Quechee and had our reception at the Pomfret Town Hall. It was a beautiful day and the live music was worth every penny.

After we married, we moved into a rental house at 206 Gillette Street in Wilder. A year later, we bought and moved into our first home at 205 Gillette St. All moves should be so easy.

What are the biggest challenges and greatest rewards of your family life? Share something special about each of your children.

After 11 years of marriage we have owned seven cars, taken our kids to the ER six times, had five jobs (between us), visited the DHMC birthing pavilion four times, renovated the house three times, adopted two cats, and enjoy being one family. The work is hard for both Judy and me in this early stage of our family and we love it to bits!! We have also had the wonderful opportunity to share our joys and sorrows with many at Taftsville Chapel and we count our blessings every day.

Calvin, Mabel, and Evelyn all attend Dothan Brook School and are in third grade, second grade, and kindergarten respectively. Calvin loves math, which he has always been good at, but reports that his favorite school subject is class council. Class council, from what we understand, sounds a bit like guidance counselor-led dispute resolution. Mabel is an avid reader, loves drawing and can be found climbing trees or enjoying cartoons when she's not doing the aforementioned. Evelyn's favorite subject is recess but she also loves to sit (believe it or not) and practice her letters, both at home and at school. Chris is home with Judy, which they both enjoy. Life revolves around trains and trucks these days and activities which can be attended to at a comfortable pace for a three year old.

TAFTSVILLE TIDBIT TRIVIA

Do you remember when...

40 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

December 6, 1971

The co-sponsored Mennonite broadcasts on WDEV will be cancelled. We will evaluate information about the Mennonite Minute program, Heart-to-Heart, and the Billy Graham program to consider for further sponsorship.

December 19, 1971

Several Sunday School classes will recite various poems Sunday morning.

January 23, 1972

A quiz program on the book of Luke will be held for Sunday evening service.

35 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

December 7, 1976

A telephone system will be made up to include all the Taftsville members, to inform members of any cancellations, member illness or hospitalization, etc.

December 23, 1976

There will be a Fellowship meal followed by caroling around Taftsville. We plan to wrap New Testaments and give them as gifts to community people.

January 4, 1977

A letter was written to the Franconia Conference regarding steps to securing the title to the church building. In order to secure the title, three trustees had to be named. Council appointed Brian, Allen and Harold as these trustees.

30 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

December 10, 1981

A large group met at Martha Glick's home to make Christmas stockings for the Fold. Thirteen stockings were made by the women, and filled by the Sunday School classes.

January 28, 1982

Candlelighters met at church to cut patches for two comforters; one wool and one corduroy. After cutting patches, Donna Hosang from Hartland demonstrated the rebound exerciser.

25 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

December 2, 1986

There is continued discussion on constructing a wheelchair ramp at the front of our building. Members are not enthused. Could the access ramp enter the building into the small room at the front of the auditorium?

January 19, 1987

Someone noted that the phonebook yellow pages list Taftsville Chapel under “nondenominational”. Council asked Nelson to write a letter to the phone company.

20 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

December, 1991

Allen distributed the financial report for the month of December. Giving averaged slightly above \$1000.00 per week. We are encouraged to keep up our strong giving.

January 6, 1992

Joanna Beidler led a discussion regarding the Lord’s prayer and terminology we should use. We decided to say “sins” instead of “trespasses”.

15 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

December 1, 1996

Earl Martin, MCC storyteller, will be here for our morning service, with a potluck meal to follow.

January 23, 1997

The handbook that was compiled for the Taftsville congregation is ten years old and in need of revision. It was suggested that this could be a project for the coming year.

Sunday School and the Art of Telling Stories with Pictures

by Sam Carbaugh

I had the privilege of co-teaching sunday school this fall with Virginia Schlabach. The first half of classes we read about the story of Joseph and talked about the dreams Joseph had. Some good insights were shared about how God can use our dreams to speak with us, and about how images can have many meanings (for example, the fat cows and thin cows represented the plentiful and famine years).

During the second half of class I taught about how to create comics out of words and images. We talked about dreams we’ve had that could become a sequence of images. We also talked about how storytelling and artwork is a gift from God, just like Joseph’s dreams.

The McCrory children are very talented and it was a joy to see how each of them approached making their comic. Evelyn dug in with her story, finding joy in the images and dream she was sharing. Mabel created several pages of stories, more than could be included in this issue of the Current, the stories seemed to come naturally to her. Calvin was very thoughtful in his approach, taking time to layout each panel and learned about the technique of using a “thumbnail” to rough out his story. In the end, each of the children created wonderful original comics about their dreams.

The following are selections of the work done by each of the children. It is good to see how God has blessed each of them with these talents, and blesses us through them.

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

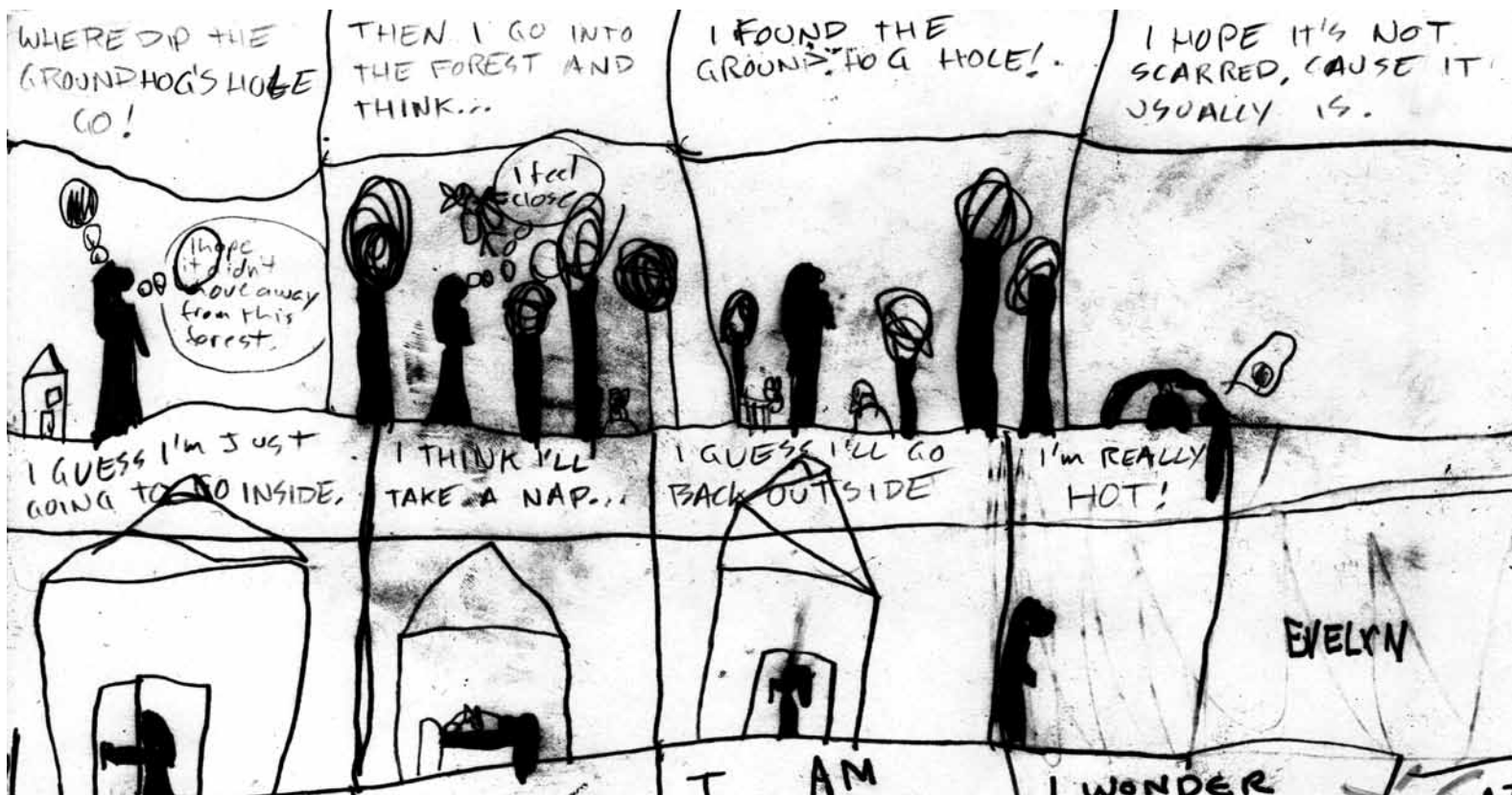
Send your contributions for the Current to: samuel.carbaugh@gmail.com or contact a Newsletter Staff member: Carie Good & Virginia Schlabach



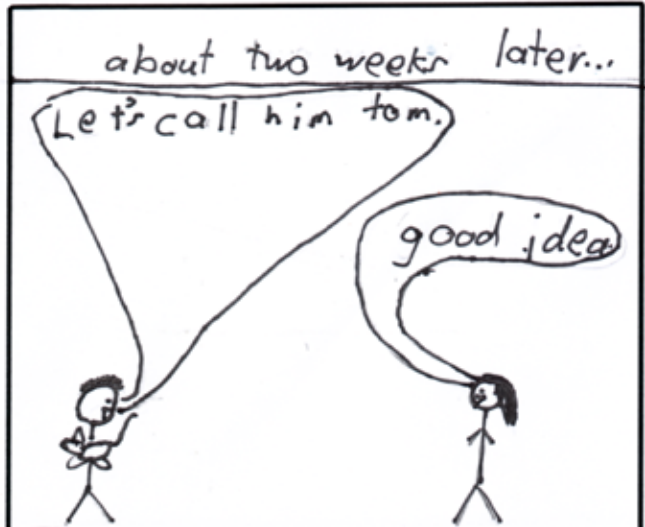
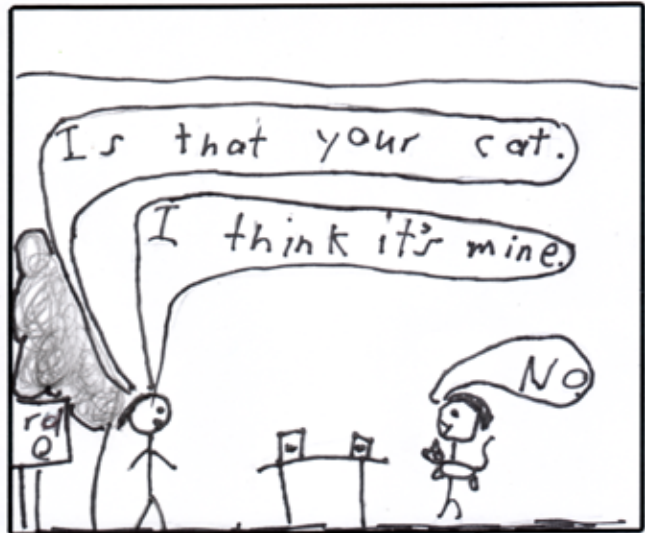
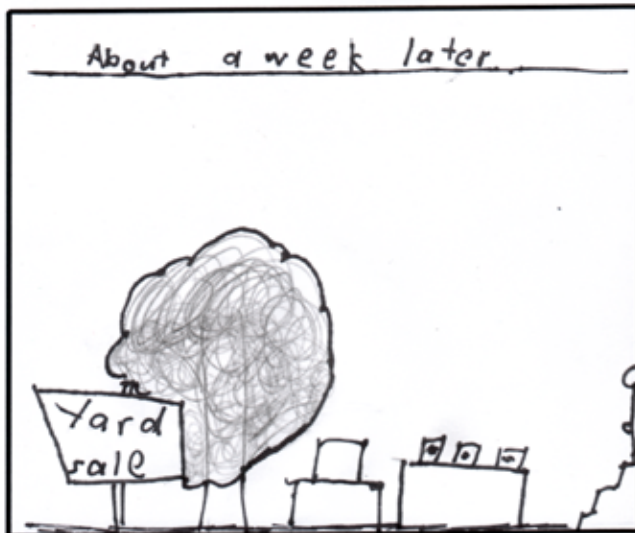
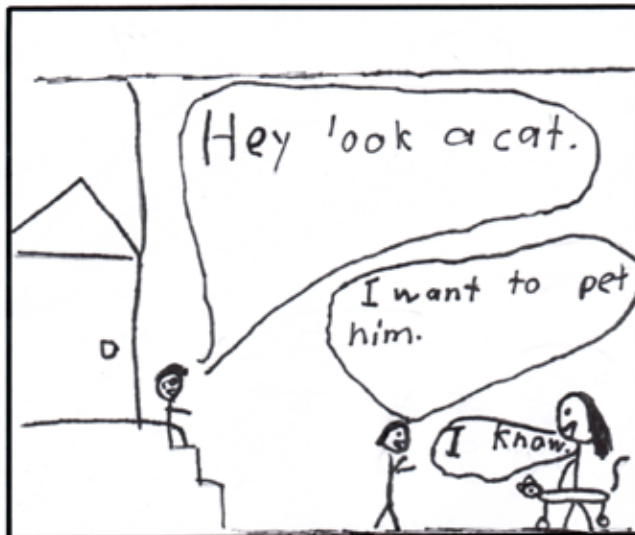


(The kids hard at work depicting their dreams and sharing God's gift of creativity)

Evelyn's Dream



Calvin's Dream

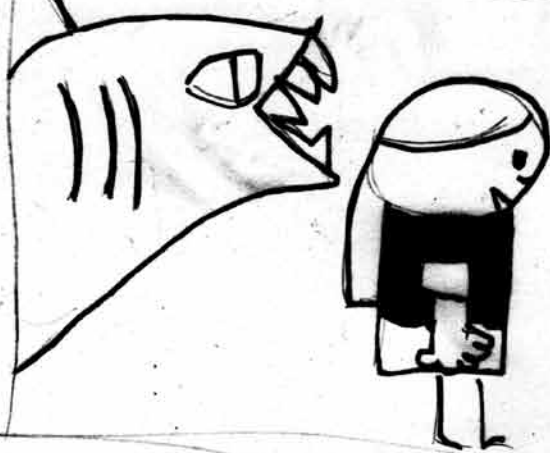


Mabel's Dream

one day I was walking along it was fun



Then there was a tiger shark I did not see it.



I saw it I said Help!!!!



oh no the tiger shark is destroying the town



The tiger shark was just my cat tabby.



I was flying away on a magic carpet.



Holiday Photos



(Carol singing on a cold night in Taftsville)



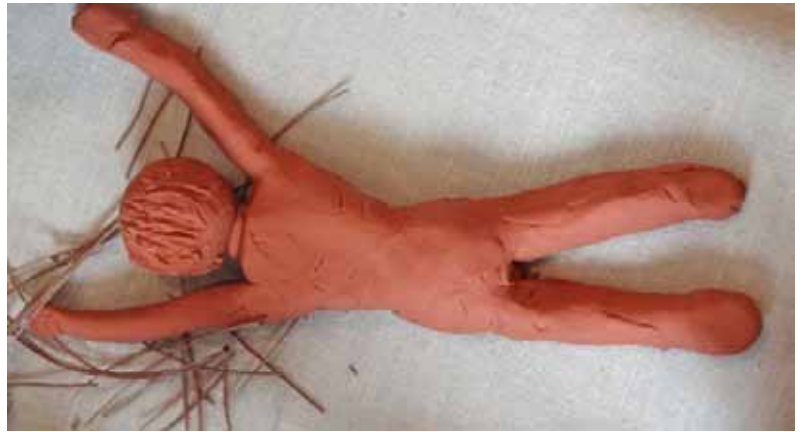
(Prayers offered for Ted and Elinor as they go to serve in Arizona)



(Children's teaching time)



(Clay figurines created by the members of Taftsville Chapel and placed around the manger in awe and worship)



(Paper angels made by Elinor)



(Placing the figurines around the manger was a powerful reminder of our connection to the birth of Christ as members of His body. Many paused and contemplated the power of the incarnation and the wonder it brings)



(Quilt made by Taftsville gals to go to pastor at New Beginnings Community Church in PA who lost personal belongings in Irene)