



# Mustard Seed

Kalona Mennonite Church

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## BEYOND OURSELVES

This is the time of the year when we find ourselves spending more hours inside and looking out at the snow and ice. Hopefully, we will find more time to spend in Bible study and it will give us more time to spend in prayer. We not only have an abundance of food to eat but also warm houses to be comfortable in. Let's never forget these and the many other blessings that have been given to us and that we have not earned them. Many times I have to remind myself often that I did not choose to be born in North America and to a large degree, I have not given myself the good health that I have.

From January 24th until February 7th, four of our brothers and one of our sisters will be giving up the cold to go to Haiti on a work trip for "Water For Life" missions. (Ronnie and Fannie Miller and Merle Beachy from KMC, and Gay Widmer and Mike Bates from Washington Mennonite).

Pray for them as they help Troy Miller and others with their work to give the people of Haiti

water for healthy living and introduce the desperately poor people of Haiti to the "LIVING WATER" that Jesus describes in St John chapter 4 verse 13. The living water that we all depend on. As Troy is doing every day, they are willingly giving up family time, and work time to give back to the Lord.



To learn more about Troy's work for Jesus in Haiti, "Water for Life's" web site is [www.wflhaiti.com](http://www.wflhaiti.com)

Any monetary gifts toward this project can be sent directly to WATER FOR LIFE, PO Box 456, Kalona, Iowa 52247.

*dave koerner*

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### Special Points of Interest:

- Through it all she remains thankful for the gift of eyesight she received so many years ago.
- God is very good at new beginnings!
- We need every Christian to work together.
- Stop in and see us in the library! You'll be glad you did.
- "All Church Nite" is coming soon.

## About Ruth Fisher

*This article was printed in the Fall 2011 edition of the University of Iowa Health Care Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences publication Iowa Vision. Many of you know Ruth, who is a charter member of KMC, but you may not know this story of her life. It was written by Joe Schmidt.*

At 97 years old, Ruth Fisher of Kalona, Iowa, still enjoys her eyesight. She credits her good vision to the treatment received several decades ago at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinic, then known as the State University of Iowa Hospitals.

In 1953 Ruth returned to her home in Iowa after serving three years abroad as director of a Taiwanese orphanage, a job she planned to return to after a year off. With her leave nearing completion, she decided to get medical, dental and eye check-ups prior to returning overseas. Her visit to an ophthalmologist uncovered some news that would dramatically change her plans.

Ruth had eye problems as a teenager that worsened as she got older. Her appointment with the late Drs. P.J. Leinfelder and Alson E. Braley confirmed that her declining vision was from keratoconus, a condition in which the cornea becomes cone-shaped. The cornea tissue thins and can scar, sometimes severely. An individual's vision may be severely impaired if not treated. For Ruth, her best hope for continued vision was corneal transplantation.

The procedure was very new at that time and Ruth admits she was nervous before surgery. She didn't hesitate, though, as there was a strong chance she would go blind otherwise. Dr. Braley, head of the de-



Ruth Fisher now and then (1954).



partment of ophthalmology at the time and an early pioneer in the field of corneal transplantation, performed the surgery in her left eye in July 1954. It was among the first corneal transplants in the state.

In those days patients were told to lie flat for two weeks after surgery and there was a great deal of concern regarding the risk of infection. "Cornea transplants were so new, I had to go to the hospital three times a week at first for them to keep checking my eyes," Ruth remembers. The procedure went well so she proceeded to have a transplant in her right eye later that year.

The initial risk of infection meant she could not travel after surgery and would not be able to return to her position overseas. Ruth wondered what she would do for work after the surgery. That question was answered when, as Ruth recalls, "Dr. Braley said, 'how about you come work for me? You can start next Monday'."

It was 1955 and Dr. Braley was in the process of forming a new eye bank, the first in Iowa and one of the first in the country. He needed some administrative help to get the effort off the ground and recruited Ruth at the executive secretary. On her first day, Dr. Braley handed her a shoebox with paper and pens. Office space was limited so she took an empty desk in the clinic area until a small space could be remodeled into her first office. The job suited Ruth well as she not only had the organizational skills needed for the task, but was also a living testimonial of what corneal transplants can achieve.

Her early years with the Eye Bank involved countless presentations about the importance of eye and tissue donation and the benefits to which she personally experienced. She presented to Lions Clubs across Iowa and at the Iowa State Fair. Ruth spent 28 years leading what became the Iowa Lions Eye Bank through its inception and continued growth until her retirement in 1983.

Today Ruth enjoys reading, playing cards, meeting with friends, and is busy with activities and frequently attends the local Lioness Club she helped to create. Through it all she remains thankful for the gift of eyesight she received so many years ago.

## A Hole in the Lining

There is a hole in the lining of my purse. I have no idea how long it has been there, but I would guess that it started out fairly small and grew. Then one day my flash drive, that I use to back up files from my computer at work, fell through that hole. I don't use the flash drive every day, so I am not sure how long my flash drive was down there. But the day I needed my flash drive, absolutely everything that was in my purse came out and still I hadn't found my flash drive. I couldn't believe it, so I ran my hand along the inside of my purse and soon enough I felt a bulge where my flash drive was, but I couldn't easily get to it because of the lining. I had to find the hole in the lining in order to retrieve my flash drive.

One day in January I felt like Eeyore from Winnie the Pooh with the attitude of Rabbit from the same story. Eeyore has a very negative outlook on life and Rabbit just has a rotten attitude. I tell you the smallest inconvenience seemed huge. Everything and everyone appeared to me like they were trying to make my life difficult. Truth be told, it was just an ordinary day, but it sure didn't seem like it to me.

Then I had to go somewhere for an errand. So I was alone with my own thoughts in my car, when a thought crossed my mind. Is God all-powerful or not? I was glad I was at my destination and could park the car and think a moment on that thought. All day long I had lived with the wrong outlook on life. I wasn't seeing God as all-powerful. Because of this it affected everything in my life. My attitude change was immediate. It was like a light switch. Suddenly, my Eeyore/Rabbit attitude was gone and I felt positive in the same life I was so negative about a moment before. The only thing that had changed was that I was focusing on my God, the all-powerful God.

What strikes me is that I had allowed the Holy Spirit who is willing to work diligently within me to fall through a hole in the lining of my life. The Holy Spirit was still in me, but I had put a huge limitation on how effective I would allow Him to be in my life.

At the end of Luke, the disciples are told to wait until they are furnished with Heavenly power. In John 16, the disciples are told they are better off if Christ goes, so He can send the Holy Spirit to them. Having God the Holy Spirit inside them was better than just having God the Christ beside them.

How could I have allowed Someone (the Holy Spirit) so vital to my life slide so far away? Billy Graham in his book The Holy Spirit: Activating God's Power in Your Life, writes, "We have two natures within us, both struggling for mastery. Which one will dominate us? It depends on which one we feed. If we feed our spiritual lives and allow the Holy Spirit to empower us, He will have rule over us. If we starve our spiritual nature and instead feed our old, sinful nature, the flesh will dominate." I was feeding the wrong nature. Once I confessed this, everything changed for the better.

This is a battle for all Christians, but we can't win it until we acknowledge that it is there. We need every Christian to work together to allow the Holy Spirit full power in our lives individually and together as the Church. Ephesians 2:19-22, says this: "So now you are no longer strangers and aliens. Rather, you are fellow citizens with God's people, and you belong to God's household. As God's household, you are built on the foundation of God's apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. The whole building is joined together in Him, and it grows up into a temple that is dedicated to the Lord. Christ is building you into a place where God lives through the Spirit." We, the



Church, must be actively making ourselves, as a unit, the home of God the Holy Spirit. I believe when we do this we will see the full power of the Holy Spirit in ways too amazing for our imagination to grasp.

I want to see God glorified in amazing ways, both through my life and even more through the Church. To see this happen, I need to sew up the holes in the lining of my life. I need to continually be checking myself and make sure I am feeding my spiritual nature and not my sinful nature. There is also a responsibility I have to encourage my fellow Christians to do the same. God's vision for us, as He shows us time and time again in the Bible, is for all of us to be His Temple. Each one of us is only one small but vital part of the temple. Let us all work together, encouraging one another to let God the Builder use us to His Glory.

*As always, in pursuit. Dawn Wyse*

## New Beginnings

Well, the year of 2011 is definitely behind us, as we're almost a full month into 2012. The end of 2011 brought an end to the video series the MYF had been doing on the persecuted church in Vietnam, and it also allowed for a bit of fun! We finished off the year with cookie decorating and games at the church. The night was filled with laughter, good friends, and way too much sugar!

Being well taken care of seems to be a theme around here. We have been blessed by different people in the church donating their time and resources to provide food and other items for our use. We are so grateful for the way our congregation supports us with material things and with their prayers!

As the New Year has come in, we have been looking at questions from a biblical standpoint that the youth submitted. These anonymous questions ranged every-



where from the use of different substances to how much faith a Christian is supposed to have.

To start things off, we have been looking at broken relationships. Knowing that messed up friendships, dating relationships, and home lives are very real struggles, we have looked at why our relationships are broken and how they can be mended. We have been reminded that God created everything to be perfect, but the sinful nature we deal with brings imperfection.

The conflicts and bad decisions we make lead to anger, loneliness, and often revenge. The brokenness is real, but it does not have to be the end of the story. With grace and love comes healing and peace. God is very good at new beginnings!

*Nicole Murray*

## Library Notes

There is no better time than today to pick out a few books to take home with you to read. We have a wide selection of new books and books on the shelves to match your reading style. Stop in and see us in the library! You'll be glad you did.

There are a number of new children's books that have been donated. Look for these if you have young ones. You may find several that you have not read aloud yet! You will find they are for moms and dads too!

Of special note are the books, Longing, the newest book by Karen Kingsbury. Also, Courageous is in the library. You won't want to miss these.

There are also new DVD's, ranging from kids interest to humor. Check one out today!

Shirley Hochstedler, Librarian



### Books Added to the Library

#### Non-Fiction

3:16, The Numbers of Hope

A Heart for Freedom --- Chai Ling

Beneath the Surface --- Bob Record

Come Thirsty --- Max Lucado

Fresh Power --- Jim Cymbala

Growing Up Amish --- Ira Wagler

Helping People Through Grief --- Dorothy Kuenning

Let Your Life Speak --- Parker J Palmer

Lulu --- Lulu Auger

The Color of Rain --- Michael & Gina Spehn

The Red Sea Rules --- Robert J Morgan

The Second Decade of Love --- Greg Johnson & Mike Yorkey

(Continued on page 5)

# WHAT'S HAPPENING!!!

Well, I guess it's too late to wish everyone a Happy New Year, so we will just say we hope you are enjoying the longer days, which bring hope for a future of green trees, gardens and flowers in our not to distant future. Wow, that was one long sentence—now for the news.

Darrel & Janet Showalter celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary by going on a Caribbean Cruise. Their two sons, Steve & Craig had given them the gift of a Disney Cruise. What made it very special is that the whole family went along. Their sons, spouses and all 4 grandchildren went along. They all spent 7 days together with stops at St. Thomas, St. Martins & Castaway Cay. Wow! What fun.

Congratulations to Amber Slaubaugh & Carson Miller on their recent engagement. Amber is the daughter of Doug & Carla. A March wedding is planned.

Congratulations to Vicki Bender and Brian Strasser on their engagement and upcoming wedding in March 2012. Vicki is the daughter of Derald & Marilyn. Brian works at Farmer's Supply in Kalona.

Jodi Ferguson and Solomon Rudy recently announced their engagement and are planning a wedding in June 2012. Jodi is the daughter of Mike & Emi. Solomon is from Lancaster, PA and the couple attended Hesston College together.

Troy Miller recently came home to visit with family & friends. He returned to Haiti to continue his work with "Water for Life." His parents, Ronnie & Fannie Miller

are planning a work trip to Haiti along with Merle Beachy & 2 men from Washington.

Several Sundays ago the Genesis S.S. Class prepared dinner at the church for the single senior citizens of our church. There were a total of 33 people in attendance and about half were guests. Jim Gingerich smoked two turkeys and the class provided the rest of the food.

Everyone had a good time.



"All Church Nite" is coming soon. Men, women and children are invited to participate in a fun filled nite. We will be packing 18 "college boxes", rolling bandages, knotting comforters and eating supper together. Reserve Wednesday nite, February 1<sup>st</sup>---you'll be glad you came.

Well, that about does it for this time. Have a good February.

*Blessings to all, Ed V. & Carol*

(Cont. from page 4)

**Fiction**

- Courageous --- Randy Alcorn
- City Girl --- Lori Wick
- A Wish for Christmas ---Thomas Kincade
- Cape Light --- Thomas Kincade
- Hannah's Dream --- Jerry Eicher
- Notes From a Spinning Planet-Ireland --- Melody Carlson
- Notes From a Spinning Planet-Mexico --- Melody Carlson
- Club Sandwich --- Lisa Samson
- Head in the Clouds --- Karen Witemeyer
- Wagered Heart --- Robin Lee Hatcher

- Any Minute --- Joyce Meyer
- Longing --- Karen Kingsbury
- City of Angels #1 in Series --- Tracie Peterson
- Angels Flight #2 --- Tracie Peterson
- Angel of Mercy #3 --- Tracie Peterson
- If Tomorrow Never Comes --- Marlo Schalesky
- A Clearing in the Wild --- Jane Kirkpatrick
- Love to Water My Soul --- Jane Kirkpatrick
- Youth** – *Tabby in the Tub* and *Misty's Twilight*

**DVD'S**

**Children/Family**

- The Berenstain Bears Mind Their Manners

- The Brainiacs.com
- The Secret Garden
- The Intruder
- The Outsider
- The Rescuer
- Lassie, The Painted Hills

**Adult**

- Left Behind, The Movie
- Left Behind 2
- 3:16, Stories of Hope
- A Piece of My Mind- Chonda Pierce
- Live, Laugh, Love – Women of Faith
- The Passion of Christ

P.O. Box 819  
902 6th St.  
Kalona, IA 52247  
Phone: 319-656-2736  
Email: kmcjanice@kctc.net

Editor: Shirley Hochstedler  
Design & Layout: Janice Hostetler

Articles for the Mustard Seed may be submitted to Shirley Hochstedler at shirleyh@kctc.net or placed in her mailbox.

We are on the web:  
[kalonamennonitechurch.com](http://kalonamennonitechurch.com)

**Our Vision** is to be a life-giving church: Presenting the life-giving message of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to the people of the Kalona area and the world, challenging them to accept Christ, worship Him and serve Him.

**Our Mission** is to fulfill the Great Commission: Leading people to Christ; discipling them in the faith; equipping them to witness; and sending them out to serve.



## Tips for Strengthening our Relationship with God

Put 5-10 pennies in a pocket. Use them as a reminder to bless others that day. If you encourage someone, move a penny to another pocket. Or if you let a person in front of you in line, move a penny to another pocket. Or if you take time to listen to someone who needs a caring ear, move a penny to another pocket.



When you hear an ambulance or fire truck siren, pray for the people involved, both the responders and the victims.

