



MUSTARD SEED

Another Chapter Finished

Inside this issue:

Our Apple Tree	2
Update from the Elders	3
Our Apple Tree cont.	3
What's Happening	4
Library Notes	5
Tips for Strengthening	6
Apology	6

Special points of interest:

- It is a joy to share life's experiences with others and keep reliving the happy times and to gain support during the unpleasant times.
- We also ask that you pray for Kalona Mennonite and its future. If you have questions or concerns we ask that you contact any Elder.
- The apple tree fully intended to do its best to produce a bumper crop of apples for this fall.
- You know those mushrooms do taste good, and there are still more fun to find.

Over six years ago, our family started writing the college chapter of our lives. For the past six years, we have prayed much, shed many tears after leaving our children far from home, traveled countless miles, packed and unpacked lots of boxes and suitcases, and enjoyed many phone calls and e-mails. We now will celebrate one more final college graduation ceremony on April 29. With Jill's graduation comes the realization that another chapter of life has been written so to speak, and with this comes a sense of rejoicing along with a feeling of amazement as to how quickly the chapters of life are written.

As God's people who are on a journey through life, we can be most grateful that we have a loving God to lead us, the Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and Jesus Christ to give us

grace and mercy in the times we stumble and fall.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the prayers and support we have received as we have gone through these past six years. It is a joy to share life's experiences with others and keep reliving the happy times and to gain support during the unpleasant times. For those of you who will also be celebrating special graduation ceremonies with your loved ones, our joy and prayers are with you as well. May we all praise God for the good work He has begun in us and His promise to complete it for the purpose of equipping us to do His marvelous will – that of glorifying God in all we say and do throughout our life here on earth.

Scott Swartzendruber

Our Apple Tree

My Mom and Dad have an apple tree that is treasured by our family for a variety of reasons. For Ben, he loves the apples on it. It wasn't unusual during his high school years to stop, coming or going past it, to pick an apple for a quick snack. For all the kids, there were years when Mom and Dad would pay them a penny an apple to pick up the apples that fell to the ground. Yes, the money they appreciated, but some of the times they had together under the tree will stay with them much longer. Memories are what made that tree treasured.

This spring the apple tree became even more special to me. It is hard to pinpoint exactly why this is true, but the apple tree became a symbol of acts of faith and hope. You see, the apple tree produced thousands of blooms this spring. It was a thing of beauty to look at the tree standing by the barn in all its magnificence, blooms everywhere. The apple tree fully intended to do its best to produce a bumper crop of apples for this fall. Now I realize, this is what apple trees do, but this tree is special. If you look closely at the base of the tree you will see how hollowed out the trunk has become. Over the last few years, every time there is a windy day, we have wondered if our beloved apple tree will continue to stand. Yet the apple tree has stood and continued to produce apples for us to enjoy. This spring the tree appears even more hopeful than usual and has lead me to see it as a symbol of the type of faith God is calling me, and everyone else.

This spring, time and time again, the apple tree has reminded me of one of my favorite passages. Romans 4:18-21
"When it was beyond hope, he had faith in the hope that he would become the father of many nations, in keeping with the promise God spoke to him: That's how many descendants you will have. Without losing faith, Abraham, who was

nearly 100 years old, took into account his own body, which was as good as dead, and Sarah's womb, which was dead. He didn't hesitate with a lack of faith in God's promise, but he grew strong in faith and gave glory to God. He was fully convinced that God was able to do what he promised."

There has been no logical reason for the apple tree to expect to produce fruit the last few years, yet the apple tree has done its part and there have been apples. This year the tree is faithfully putting forth more blossoms. To me, it is an act of faith. Abraham is credited for living out acts of faith in his life.

I Samuel 17 tells us the story of David vs Goliath. There was no logical, physical reason for David to think he could defeat the giant with a stone and a slingshot, yet David acted in faith. We are called to do the same. God wants us to rely on Him. He wants us to keep our eyes focused on Him. He wants us to trust Him, no matter what happens or how the situation may appear.

Look at Peter walking on the water. (Matthew 14:22-33) Peter took an act of faith and got out of the boat, put his eyes on Christ and walked on the water. Now, I realize Peter lost his focus, took his eyes off Christ and sank, but think about the fact that for a brief time Peter walked on water! That only happened because of his act of faith in Christ. (I remember as a child in the bathtub trying to be like Peter. Needless to say my faith was lacking because my feet always managed to hit the bottom of the tub.)

Yes, in the big picture Peter faltered, but he still acted in faith. Then he failed and Christ picked him up. Remember that. Peter acted in faith and God took care of the rest. When I think of Peter sinking and then think of all the amazing things that happened (cont. on page 3)



Update from the Elders

Since the loss of Mick and Julie, the Elders have been working closely with the leadership of the Central Plains Mennonite Conference to figure out what we should do as we work to continue the mission of KMC. Tim Detweiler, our conference minister, has been particularly helpful.

An immediate concern was continuing the work Mick and Julie had developed with the youth from the church and community. After meeting with the youth and their parents, we asked Jeremy and Renee Pickard, and Rodney and Jodi Gehman if they would be willing to meet with the MYF at least through the end of May, when the MYF typically stops meeting for the summer. A parent's council including Todd and Sheri Thompson, Joel and Betsy Schillerstrom, and Curt and Dawn Wyse agreed to provide oversight and support to the Pickard's and the Gehman's. Larry Pickard graciously offered his home as a meeting place. Attendance has averaged between 40 to 45 youth. Over 60 different youth have attended from at least six different school districts. We are grateful to those who stepped up to help meet the needs of our youth.

Guest speakers have been invited to help with preaching and Karen Schrock was asked to help schedule worship leaders and to work with planning worship. Again, we are thankful to those who have helped fill these roles.

The conference leadership and others with whom we consulted have strongly encouraged us

to hire an interim pastor for a period of one to two years. This person would help with preaching, visitation, and other work under the direction of the Elders and Scott as the lead pastor. The interim period will allow congregation members time to grieve as well as time to better discern God's will for our future mission and to determine our future leadership needs. An interim pastor does not typically become a candidate for the long term position.

At this point, with the help of conference, we have identified one person we have invited to become our interim pastor. Depending on schedules, we hope this person could start by the end of May or by early June. At the same time we are pursuing the idea of asking one to three other persons to help with different aspects of KMC's ministry. These persons would be offered a stipend as partial compensation for their work.

We anticipate forming a search committee sometime in the fall of 2012 or the beginning of 2013 to begin the process of hiring a longer term pastor.

We ask for your prayers as we finalize these arrangements, and pray it will be a blessing for both our congregation and the interim person we will be hiring. We also ask that you pray for Kalona Mennonite and its future. If you have questions or concerns we ask that you contact any Elder.

Marcus Miller, writing for Todd Thompson, Joyce Ropp and Carla Slaubaugh

(cont. from page 2) to Peter after Pentecost, I can see where this act of faith led Peter to take more and more acts of faith, each giving him more focus and confidence in Christ.

The book of James tells us faith without works is dead. It doesn't tell us that faith without success is dead. God will take our faithful acts that appear to fail, in our estimation, and use them in His victories. We are called to take steps of faith. I pray that I have the courage and focus to keep my eyes on Christ and take each step God asks of me.

Our apple tree was made to produce apples. It did its part to produce apples this year by produc-

ing a magnificent display of blossoms. To my family's dismay, a wind blew the apple tree over this past Sunday. Were the blossoms a waste? Not to me. To me, they are a great example of how I want to live my life. Like Abraham, David, Peter and our apple tree, I want to live my life with acts of faith and leave the outcome in the mighty hands of God.

As always, in pursuit.
Dawn Wyse



WHAT'S HAPPENING!!!

What a great time of the year. Everything is nice and green, the birds have returned and its baseball season once again. It also feels good to dig in the soil and plant things outside.

Now for the news, and first for the newborns.

Dan & Julie Fisher are the proud grandparents of a new grandson, Beckett Clarence Fisher. Beckett weighed in at 7 lbs. 4 oz. and was 20 inches long. He is the son of Seneca & Jen Fisher. Beckett also has a sister Grace and they all live in Anamosa, IA.

Jack & Glenda Seward had their newest grandchild born on Friday, April 20th, a 7 lb. 7 oz. grandson. His name is Knox Holden Seward and he resides in Wellman. This is their 9th grandkid and all are under the age of 9! Wow, those family gatherings will be action packed!

The newest "Iowa Hawkeye Fan" was born in Harrisonburg, Virginia on Friday, April 20th. His name is Kinnick Lee Ropp and he weighed in at 7 lb. 8 oz. He is Nick & Courtney Ropp's 1st child. The proud grandparents are Phil & Joyce Ropp.

The Mid-Prairie High School Choir and Band traveled by bus to New York City in early April. There they performed at several places and also got to stay in a Hotel. They left on a Tuesday and returned 4 days later. Those making the trip from KMC were: Megan Bontrager, Elizabeth Fanatia, Ben & Carrie Fiordelise, Brittney Miller, Ian McDowell and Nicole Murray. Good job, MYFers!

Cal & Shirley Hochstedler were on a trip out East and returned via Indianapolis and made a call to Al & Kathy Yoder. Well, Al was at work in Mississippi, however they did meet up with Kathy for a big breakfast. I am sure they all had a good time.

Fred & Judy Yoder had a fun time this

year hunting mushrooms. The season was about 3-4 weeks ahead of normal, but that didn't stop the Yoder's. You know those mushrooms do taste good, and there are still more to find. Good job!

So where are they now? Charletta Erb & husband Tim Nafziger will be leaving Chicago on May 23rd for Hawaii where "Youth With a Mission" will receive training from Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). Then from Hawaii they will travel to Columbia, South America and spend one month with CPT on project. They then arrive in Los Angeles in July and plan to spend one year with "Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries", again working in peace & justice. If you would like to connect with them their e-mail is charlettaerb@gmail.com Charletta is the daughter of Gary & Sylvia Erb.

Remember "Penny Power", which can include all kinds of coins and bills! Also be thinking of how you can



volunteer for the MCC Sale on June 1 & 2.

Well, that's it for this time. Keep those cards & letters coming with your news about KMC. Thanks for all your input.

Blessings to all, Ed V. & Carol Miller

NEWBORN NEWS



Library Notes

The early garden is planted, morels eaten, and it is time to kick back with a good book from the library at KMC! There is no time like right now to read something to enrich your life, whether it is for personal and spiritual growth, or a relaxing read from the fiction section. We have many good books to choose from, and you know that any fiction here can be read "safely".



The newest and last book in the Bailey Flanigan series, *Loving*, from Karen Kingsbury has arrived and is in the library. You may need to put your name on the reserve list for this one. We are happy to do that for you. If you enjoyed the

Yada Yada Prayer Group series by Neta Jackson, you will enjoy meeting your friends in *Stand By Me*, #1 in the Souled Out Sisters series. Other fiction titles include *An Unexpected Love*, and *A Surrendered Heart*, #2 & 3 in the Broadmoor Legacy Series by Tracie Petersen, and *While We're Far Apart* by Lynn Austin. There are also new Guidepost Series on the shelf. A Large Print book by Jan Karon, *A Common Life*, is also available.

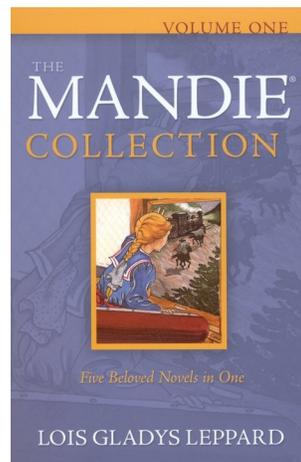
A copy of the book Pastor Scott talked about in a recent combined Sunday School session, *Congregational Trauma: Caring, Coping and Learning* by Jill Hudson is in the library for you to check out. Check out some of the other new titles in Christian Living as well: *Out of Control and Loving It* by Lisa Bevere, *When the*

Game Is Over, It All Goes Back in the Box, by John Ortberg, and *A Different Dream for My Child* : Meditations for parents of critically or chronically ill children by Jolene Philo.

Especially for Women: *Remarkable Women of*

the Bible by Elizabeth George, *Didn't My Skin Used to Fit?* Martha Bolton; *Chocolate Chili Pepper Love* by Becky Freeman and *Made to Crave* by Lysa TerKeurst.

If you are traveling and want to Mennonite your way across America, or inter-



nationally, for that matter, do your research before you go with the hot-off-the-press copy of *Mennonite Your Way* #12!

For the younger set, look for some new Mandie books, Lily Books, as well as Three Cousin Detective Club books. A new Shalom Readers Club Book, *Snow in Jerusalem* has also been added.

Is there a book you would like to see added to the library? Talk to one of the librarians and your request will be considered. Thank you for your continued use of our library at KMC!

Shirley Hochstedler, Librarian




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MENNONITE
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APOLOGY

Thanks to avid Word Search fan, Gene Miller, for noticing that a designated word in the Search was missing! My apologies to those who searched and searched but could not find AWAY.

The Editor

**We're on the web:
kalonamennonitechurch.com**

TIPS FOR STRENGTHENING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

When you find yourself doubting God and whether He is working in your life say aloud, "I believe that God is working." A statement of faith does wonders.

As you are driving pray for the people you see or the people you know are in the buildings: schools, factories, malls, hospitals, etc.