

October 2012

Special points of interest:

- Life is a series of decisions to act, or not to act. Get something done for God by deciding to take action. You will be amazed at the results.
- We believe that there is great wisdom among the gathered body of Christ's believers at Kalona Mennonite.
- We now have two families at KMC that own grocery stores.
- There are many times when the ache in my heart is still so real, but I must remind myself that it's not the end of my story.

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Mustard Seed



Get Something Done

After our all-church meeting in June where we discussed future ministry and building update needs, a reoccurring statement leadership kept hearing was, "let's not just talk about our needs, let's get something done." Since that meeting in June, we have been working at getting some things done. A committee was formed to look at what building updates should to be done and how much they would cost. Along with this, the committee also spent time prioritizing the needs in order to determine what should be the first on the list of things to get done.

However, the other more important challenge before all of us is to get some things done in our spiritual lives as well. We tend to be people who have good intentions, and yet we can be quick to make excuses as to why we aren't getting things done for the Kingdom of God. We need to be encouraged to set some spiritual goals for ourselves. This could include such things as, books of the Bible to be read, peo-

ple to forgive and make peace with, relationships to build, attitudes to get readjusted, asking someone to pray with you, discovering what brings joy in your life, witnessing to a person who is not yet a Christian, etc.



I have found that to get things done in my spiritual life it is important to make a list, and then begin to take the steps to accomplish my goals. What would you like to get done in your walk with Christ? Put your faith into action and begin to carry out what you would like to accomplish. Life is a series of decisions to act, or not to act. Get something done for God by deciding to take action. You will be amazed at the results.

Scott Swartzendruber

A Word From the Elders



*We believe that
there is great
wisdom among the
gathered body of
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Mennonite.*

As we begin a new church year the Elders would like to gather some feedback from the congregation as we look to the future of Kalona Mennonite Church. We have taken care of our immediate needs in hiring Jeff Miller as interim Associate Pastor and Jeremy Pickard as the interim Youth Leader for one year. The remaining question is, "What next?" To begin answering this question, the Elders have scheduled a congregational meeting for Sunday, October 28, during the Sunday School hour.

The goal for this meeting is to gather feedback from the congregation as we seek to be faithful to God's call. As part of the meeting, we will be asking you to consider several questions:

Who is God calling us to become as a people?

Where is God calling us to go?

What are the signposts to show we are on God's chosen path for us?

Where are we now on this journey?

What circumstances might cause us to make adjustments along the way?

What are the next steps on the path?

These questions are taken from what the Mennonite Church USA calls "The Purposeful Plan" which you can read at http://mennoniteusa.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/11/PurposefulPlan2012Feb22_ApprovedByEB.pdf. If you would prefer to read the summary plan it is available at <http://mennoniteusa.org/about/purposeful-plan/> The "Purposeful Plan" is based partially on the message of Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount, the texts Scott and Jeff will be preaching from over the next months.

As Elders we have been thankful for the support of people at KMC and the cooperative spirit which has prevailed. We believe that there is great wisdom among the gathered body of Christ's believers at Kalona Mennonite. As we prayerfully gather to seek God's leading we trust that the next steps we should take as a congregation will become clear. As always, we encourage you to talk with an Elder at any time to share your ideas or concerns.

Marcus Miller For the Elders

Marcus Miller, Joyce Ropp, Carla Slaubaugh, Frank Yoder



We Apologize!

The following students were inadvertently omitted in the September issue of the Mustard Seed. Please add them to your list.

The Editor

11th Grade:

Larissa Wyse

Elysia Stastny

Elizabeth Fanatia

MYF Happenings

Expectation is everything. It influences what we do and how well we do it. It can make us feel big, but it can also make us feel quite small. A couple Sundays ago at MYF we were looking at Luke 1. We focused on the first two stories of the chapter, the foretelling of the birth of John the Baptist and the foretelling of Jesus' birth.

When Zechariah was told that he and his wife, Elizabeth, were to have a child, he questioned it. He literally asked, "How can I be sure of this?..." and after he questioned it, he even gave proof that he didn't believe it could happen, "...I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." (Luke 1:18)

Now Mary had a completely different response. One thing that both Mary and Zechariah had in common was that they asked a question. Mary asked. "How will this be, since I'm a virgin?"(1:34) We went over this a few times and came to the conclusion that it was more in how was this physically possible then I don't think God would do this.

Mary accepted what was to come. Zechariah not being accepting of what the angel had to say was silenced until the birth of John.

Mary was probably just a teenager. She had to go through a lot of rough stuff after the angel came to her. The type of society

she was in expected people to be married before they had children. They expected her to be shameful of having a child out of wedlock. Here is the great part though, God didn't expect that out of her. God expected more out her. He expected her to be willing. He expected her to be righteous. He expected her to be the perfect holder for His son. And she was.

Zechariah, however, did what society expected out of him and God silenced him.

God uses young people, He expects more out of us than most people expect. He forces us to live up to higher standards, to become something great, to be the Light. We, teenagers, are very competitive; we thrive off of challenges. When you expect more out of us, we take that as a challenge. Now, I'm not talking about when we get in trouble how our parents say "I expected more out of you" I'm talking about our spiritual expectations; the ones that make us willing. If you give us low standards we will meet those and most of the time we won't rise above them, but if you give us higher standards, we have no choice but to rise. What do you expect out of us?

Larissa Wyse



If you give us low standards we will meet those and most of the time we won't rise above them, but if you give us higher standards, we have no choice but to rise.

"Autumn, the year's last, loveliest smile."

William Cullen Bryant



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There are many times when the ache in my heart is still so real, but I must remind myself that it's not the end of my story.



Greetings From Nicole in Lynchburg!

Hello, church family! First, you should know I miss you all and wish every Sunday morning that I could pop over and give you all a big hug. You have been such a blessing, and I know I am still blessed by your prayers.

College is going well. I am enjoying my classes and new friends, although making sure I have my school work done before I enjoy the relationships can be a bit of a struggle. We have enjoyed everything from painting our nails together at "nail parties" to hiking to trying out new restaurants. Other adventures include figuring out how to get up onto my bed (which was clearly designed by tall people!), staying dry in the town nicknamed "Drenchburg," and attending home football games.

As many of you know, I started an online blog called "Life as We Know It" where I share thoughts and events. I have found it so therapeutic and encouraging to be able to write things down and share them. Life gets busy so I don't post very often, but when I do, I usually make note of it on my Facebook status. As requested, I am sharing the following post written soon after my arrival here at college.

August 17, 2012

After the accident, things changed. Some of the obvious changes were our living situation and simply not having Mom and Dad here. But things changed inside of me, too. I suppose it's natural, but I don't like most of the changes I've seen. Sometimes I feel so hard-hearted and like I don't even care about people anymore. That's not true, but it seems more often than not, I shut out the bad news because I just can't take any more. And I've done an awful job at having regular quiet time. Devotions were something Mom and Dad stressed and I have come to value over the years, yet in the midst of my biggest trial, regular devotions just weren't a part of the picture.

So recently, I decided it's time to give up

and fight, all at the same time. I've got to give it to God, and I've got to give Satan the fight of his oh-so-pathetic life. No more letting him tear me apart and have the upper hand.

Well, I'd been in my dorm for one whole night!! And in light of all that, I decided I was ready to hear Dad's voice—a piece of wisdom straight from his mouth as I look at the days and weeks and months ahead.

I went onto our church website where you can listen to the services and was amazed to see that Dad's last sermon was titled, "Prepared to Fight." My heart was grabbed, and I clicked *play*, ready to hear Dad's voice.

Instead, I heard my own. I heard myself reading from James 1:17 about how "every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." Then I went on, "This morning, I want to encourage you guys to let yourselves be amazed by God—to remember that every good thing *does* come from Him. And even if it feels like your life is crashing down, and like every good thing you have has been stripped away, you can rest in the fact that God does not change. He will always be faithful. And that is a very good thing."

That was one day short of exactly two weeks before the accident, and part of the week between those two milestones, Mom and Dad were away at a conference. I didn't realize how much I would have to be practicing what I had just preached.

As Dad went on in his sermon, he talked about the battles we will fight as Christians. No matter how peaceful we may wish to be, Satan has other ideas. The question is not whether we will find ourselves in a spiritual battle, but rather if we will be prepared for it or not.

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(Cont. from page 4)

Dad always stressed the power and authority that the bible has and reminded us that, "He will indeed inspire us with His Word."

Like always, God has come through with His promises. My life had gone from being beyond easy to presenting a challenge bigger than I ever thought I'd have to face. But, God is indeed faithful. He has provided for us financially and given us friends and family to support us emotionally. He has given me His Word. When I actually read it, it sustains me and encourages my weary heart. It challenges me and makes me want to be better for Him.

I didn't make it through Dad's whole sermon, but one of the questions he asked really stood out to me: "How do we begin to rebuild after life has fallen apart?" There are so many days I wish he was here to tell me where to begin with the mess before me. But as I sit and wonder, remembering who Dad was and the Truth he stood for and preached, I know what he would say.

He'd get all teary-eyed, hold me close, and kiss the top of my head. And he'd say something along the lines of, "This really stinks, doesn't it?" I'd nod my head, unable to speak around the lump in my throat, and he'd go on, "It's no fun at all. It's one of those times I sure wish I knew what God's up to, but I don't. Hang in there, Colby. God knows what He's doing. He's still God. He's still good. He's still in control. Seek first His kingdom, and His righteousness, and He'll take care of the rest. ...Doesn't make it any more fun though, does it?" "Nope." That's about all I'd get out, and he'd squeeze me tight, tell me he loves me and how proud he is of me. Then, he'd tell me to, "Get some sleep, Babes." And everything would be ok for just a while.

I don't have the luxury of hearing Dad firsthand anymore, but I'm so grateful for the 18 years I was able to spend under his care and guidance! As far as Mom and Dad's work goes, I couldn't have been better prepared for the battle I now fight. I was

trained to trust, to pray, to seek, to fall apart, and to allow God's healing power to begin its work in my life. I was reminded daily that we are a work in progress. God is alive and working in our lives every day. He is sovereign, and I don't have to have all the answers. He does...that's why He's God, and I'm not.

There are many times when the ache in my heart is still so real, but I must remind myself that it's not the end of my story. It's merely the beginning of another beautiful chapter God intends to write if I'll let Him. So I'm trying. Shifting my focus from all that I'm not to all that He is, is a challenge, but it's so worth it!

As a dear friend told me, "We're told all our lives that God is our Rock and Shelter and all that, but we can't know God's comfort if we never experience pain. We can't know His power if we're never weak. We can't know the depth of His grace if we never mess up...Our struggles are what allows us to really see and know God's character."

God is not the Bad Guy. He is everything good and real and lasting that I have left—the only solid thing we have to hold onto during life's worst storms.

All around me, people are crying out in pain, and as God begins to patch my wounded soul, my heart and ears are being reopened to them—depending on the day or even moment, of course. Each time I let God pour into me, I have a little more to pour back out on those I do life with, and I am inspired yet again by His living Word. "...love one another deeply, from the heart....For all men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of the Lord stands forever." 1 Peter 1:22b, 24-25.

He is faithful, and that is a very good thing.

(Cont. on page 6)



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Since writing that entry, I'm happy to say that God has poured so much into my life since I've been here! While I still miss Mom and Dad deeply, this transition has been a good one for me. Getting back into a routine has helped me get back into the Word. God has taught me and has wrapped His arms around me in a way that has let me let go of so much baggage. As I drop all the old junk, it is replaced with the easy yoke and light burden of God's care and

guidance. Through this transformation, my heart has been filled with such love, and I am feeling so much more like myself—the Me that God intended.

Once again, thank you all for the love and support you have poured into our lives! The combination of your prayers and having Carrie and Mary Jo here has made this so much more pleasant. I look forward to seeing you at Thanksgiving!

Love to you all, Nicole

WHAT'S HAPPENING!!!

Well it's the end of September and I am looking out at our garden. We "tucked" it in several nights this week expecting a hard frost. Hoping to save our veggies a little bit longer. Well, now for some news from the KMC'ers.

Otis and Eunice Yoder went on quite a road trip this summer. They drove their van and pulled a trailer from Stringtown, Iowa all the way to Fairbanks, Alaska. Wow! Otis' sister and her husband also went along. They are from Hartville, Ohio. They all camped for 2 months (July & August) and saw lots of wonderful country. They saw glaciers, visited the International Peace Gardens & brought home salmon. And they only traveled 12,000 miles. Now that is an adventure!

Katie Stalter and Jeremiah Stapleton were married on September 1st at Katie's aunts' home near Williamsburg, Iowa. Katie started her new job on September 24th working for the National Democratic Institute in Washington D.C. "No" it is not related to the Democratic Party. "Google" it to learn more or ask Karen Stalter. Congratulations Katie & Jeremiah!

Bailey Schrock is doing well in Mennonite Vol-

untary Service out in Washington D.C. She helps in an "After-school program" and enjoys her work. She also has a "blog" you can visit, (baileyschrock.blogspot.com). Diane Schrock, her mother, will be going out to visit her in D.C. This will be very exciting because this will be Diane's 1st trip to Washington, D.C. However they probably won't see President Obama, he will still be visiting "swing states"!

Congratulations to Clint and Nicole Miller on their new endeavor. They are now the owners of Freeman's Foods in Wellman, Iowa. We now have two families at KMC that own grocery stores. So go and "Shop Local", because we would certainly miss our local grocery stores.

Vaughn and Betty Murray both had their 90th birthdays this summer. They have also moved from southern Indiana to the Indianapolis area. They now live close to their daughter Judy. When Mick was still with us, we would often hear stories about his parents. So I just thought you might like an update.

Well that's it for this time. Just go "out" and enjoy the nice fall weather. So long for now.

God bless you all, Ed V. & Carol Miller