

Mustard Seed

We Thank God

“We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.” II Thessalonians 1:3-4

Several things stand out in these words that were written to the followers of Jesus at Thessalonica. Giving thanks to God for one another and for your willingness to serve Christ and His church are things we need to do on an ongoing basis. As we end a church year and begin another one in September, this is a good time to express great appreciation and thanks for all the ways you have helped the mission of the church this past year. Your willingness to share your gifts is truly a blessing to the spiritual life of our church. Thank you for your faithful service to Christ.

This passage also speaks to the topic of growth and love. Are we growing in our love for Christ and in our love for others? This is something that we should all desire as followers of Jesus. Paul is reminding us that one of the ways we know we are growing in faith

is when our love for other people is increasing. Take a few moments to reflect on your own love condition. Does love flow freely to others, or do you find it more difficult to love as Christ loved?

This passage also speaks to the issue of perseverance and endurance in the face of life’s trials and the subtle and not so subtle persecution that comes from being a Christian. Paul is encouraging all of us to keep a strong backbone so to speak in the face of challenges that come. He wants us to push past the pain; we are to grow in our ability to endure and preserve in all kinds of situations.

My hope and prayer for the new church year is that we as a body of believers can continue to grow in faith, love, and in our ability to endure all things. We are blessed in knowing that we have the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and the body of Christ to help us accomplish growth in faith, love, and perseverance. May God’s strength carry us through the new church year as it did this past year. God is faithful, and He will not leave us or forsake us.

Scott Swartzendruber

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Special Points of

Interest:

- May God’s strength carry us through the new church year as it did this past year. God is faithful, and He will not leave us or forsake us.
- The work completed was 73 school kits, 22 bandages, and 2 comforters. It is amazing what one small group of women accomplish during one short workday each month.
- What matters most is to dig into God’s Word and to expect it to change you and your life.

WHAT'S HAPPENING!!!

School is back in session and wouldn't you know, it's hot again. The vacations have ceased and the days grow shorter. The garden is still yielding tomatoes, peppers & okra, which make for good BLT's, salsa & fried okra. And yes I'd much rather eat fried okra than a fried twinkie on a stick at the State Fair. Oh well, at least I can say I've tried it. OK, now for what's happening.

Gertie Chupp had a big birthday celebration. Over 40 people "surprised" her for her 80th birthday at Pizza Ranch in Washington. Most of those in attendance were KMCer's, plus her neighbors, and her work family (Kalona Bakery).



There were balloons and gifts and everyone had

a great time. Gertie received gifts of money and "dessert plates." There will be no more serving pie on paper plates at Gertie's house. Congratulations on the Big 8-0!

Sharayah Williams has moved to Albuquerque, NM, where she is the leader of a Mennonite Service Adventure Team. She had taught 4th grade in Newton, Kansas for the last 3 years, but was looking for a chance to do some service work when this opportunity came up. This is something she has always wanted to do and the time seemed right. She enjoys Albuquerque and plans to be there for 2 years. Sharayah is the oldest daughter of Sam & Cindy Williams.

Curt Wyse attended his 30th high school class reunion in Dallas, Texas. Curt's parents were missionaries in Peru and Curt went to school (K-12) in Peru at the Yarinacocha School where all the missionary kids attended. His graduating class had 16 students and 6 made it to the reunion. This was the first reunion Curt has attended so it made for a very interesting time. Curt's parents live in Harrisonburg, VA and came to Iowa and together drove to Texas for the reunion. I am sure they had lots to talk about on their return trip home!

We had another KMCer win the weekly drawing at JW's Foods here recently. This time it was Dorothy Showalter, who won the \$40.00. She was pleasantly surprised.

Emma Beachy won a blue ribbon at the Iowa State Fair. She is a member of the Deer Creek Ramblers 4-H group. Her entry was a health poster about the various food groups. She did get a chance to eat several things on a stick including a corn dog and she tasted "deep fried butter on a stick"! Ouch, my tummy just did a flip-flop! Emma is the daughter of Wanda & David. Congratulations on your award.

RidgeLee Gingerich is attending KMC this school year. He is the son of Greg and AlidaLee, who live in Oak Creek, Colorado. Oak Creek is about 20 miles south of Steamboat Springs. RidgeLee is attending Iowa Mennonite School and is a senior. He is staying with his grandparents, Jim & Sandy Gingerich. He loves playing ice hockey and hopes to find a team to play with this winter. Welcome, RidgeLee! And one more thing, he has a younger sister named AshLee.

Now it's Monday morning and I need to finish this column. People ask, so how's retirement? Each week's different, I received a phone call last evening and got invited up to Iowa City to be with my two grandsons, who have an early out due to the heat. I also got a call from Springfield, Illinois and my friend told me they have too many doves, so I may go help them with that. It's nice to be needed!

Have a great September and "Go Hawkeyes".

So long for now, Ed V. & Carol Miller

TRIP TO INDIA?

Do you want to see God in a new way? Are you interested in seeing first hand how God is working? Pastor Jeff is considering another trip to India in February or March. Start praying now, asking God if He wants you to go along. Start saving now, too. If He isn't calling you to go, maybe He's asking you to support someone else on this journey. It will be two weeks that will change your life. *Curt Wyse*

Serving in Managua

The time is near that I'll be on a plane to Managua to begin my two-year term of service. It's hard to believe how fast the summer went; with weddings, vacations and work there hasn't been a slow moment. I have really come to appreciate being home for the summer after spending last summer in Nicaragua on Goshen's Study Service Term. Little did I know that I would be going back there a year later. God really does do more than we can ever ask or imagine.

During my trip to Nicaragua I saw a lot of poverty, but I also a lot of things that brought me hope, one of them being the Batahola Norte Cultural Center on our visit to Managua. There I witnessed a community that has come together to fight poverty, unemployment and violence with education; finding ways to give people resources and skills that cannot be taken away. When I came back to finish my last year at Goshen, Nicaragua stayed on my mind. As I was thinking about what to do after graduation I came across a volunteer position at Batahola Norte on Goshen's job network and knew I had to apply. After a long application process of both the Voluntary Missionary Movement position in Nicaragua and a Mennonite Voluntary Service position in the states, I waited to hear back about what my future would hold. When I heard that I had got the position at Batahola Norte I knew I had to take it. Some greater power was aligning my future for me.

As my summer comes to a close it seems like every day becomes less and less predictable as I try to fill my schedule with last-minute plans. Then I think back to my time of service last summer in rural Nicaragua. I remember waking up every morning having no clue what the day would hold. I wouldn't even know what clothes to put on or when my next shower or meal would be. I'm normally a pretty flexible person, but for someone who likes having a schedule I was frustrated and nearly at my breaking point. One night I even broke down in uncontrollable tears (to the dismay of my host family who thought I hated living with them after I couldn't explain why I was crying). As I worked through this challenging time, I came to find not having a schedule liberating. I felt so much more in tune with God, with myself and with creation as I had to intentionally rely on God every day.

Now as I look at the next two years, most people ask "Aren't you scared? Two years is a big commitment." But to me, I don't look at the two years, I don't even look at the first month—I have learned to take things one day at a time. As our Sunday School class was reading through the

book of James, I was struck by James 4:13-15: Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are the mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

Who am I to plan tomorrow, let alone the next two years of my life? As I look ahead to the future I find comfort in trusting God day by day as I begin potentially one of the most challenging and rewarding adventures of my life.

Once again thank you for all of your support financially and otherwise. I am blessed to be a part of such a generous and loving church family. I hope to continue writing updates in the Mustard Seed throughout my time down south, but also feel free to contact me at kelseyschrock@gmail.com. I look forward to walking, praying and serving together day by day through these next two years and beyond. *Kelsey Schrock*

(Kelsey will be leaving for Managua on September 9.)



Who am I to plan tomorrow, let alone the next two years of my life?

SHALOM READERS CLUB

Congratulations! Madelyn Bender read 7 books from the Shalom Readers Club book list this year and completed the Shalom Readers Club requirement of 2 book reports. Her reward was a free book of her choosing from the SRC reading list. Good Job, Madelyn!

Watch for more info on Shalom Readers Club beginning this fall!

Little, Big

A couple Sundays ago we had our Youth Group kickoff. The first activity we did was a scavenger hunt. We were given an envelope filled with close up pictures and we had to go out around Kalona and find the places these pictures were taken. So often I find myself concentrating on the little things in life too much. Whether it's homework or work or TV time, I find myself getting so caught up in it all. Now I'm not saying that liking (or disliking) the little things are bad, but I lose sight of what God has for me.

For me, it's not just in my everyday actions that I get preoccupied with the little things instead of looking at the big picture, it's also in my devotions. I love taking one or two verses and just having it be my theme verse for the week, or maybe just reading and reading that one verse and analyzing it, but sometimes I get so caught up in those couple of verses that I forget the rest of the Bible. Once I remember the rest of the Bible I then see how each part fits together into a perfect puzzle. First Corinthians 13 tells us what love is. "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil

but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

When I first read this I was little so I thought that it was how I was supposed to love my mom and dad and maybe my brothers. It only applied to people I was supposed to love. Family, friends, a future spouse. That was it. But if you recall a verse from Matthew 5 it tells you to love your enemies. Earlier in Matthew 19 it tells you to love your neighbor. So if you take all those small verses and bring them into the big picture you are called to love EVERYONE with the love described in 1 Corinthians. It is not always easy. We all have bad days. But this is my challenge for you this week: Love. *Larissa Wyse*

Ashley Sojka hovercraft bowling.



WMSC

Have you ever wondered what WMSC means, and what *do* those women *do* once a month when they meet at KMC? Although the official title of this arm of the Mennonite Church is now Mennonite Women, (MW), KMC still uses the acronym WMSC which stands for Womens Mission and Service Commission. This speaks of the focus of this group, as they work together to serve others and send needed items to missions thru MCC and other agencies, both locally and abroad.

A typical workday will find women quilting and embroidering. Can't quilt or embroider? There are many other things to do: knotting woven rag rugs, sewing strips for and rolling bandages, putting strings in bags for health and school kits, sewing on the sewing machines, and working in the kitchen to prepare lunch for all. Still don't know what you would do? Then come for the fellowship. There is an unusual camaraderie that takes place each Wednesday.

A short meeting is held, including a devotional. This past year focused on the book of Amos, the theme being

Let Justice Roll Down. There are brief reports on the projects finished, thank yous from things sent, and even a show and tell, giving women a chance to show some of the things they work on at home. And of course, there is always lunch!

This past month 23 women and 9 children attended, including special guests, the Venture Club girls. The work completed was 73 school kits, 22 bandages, and 2 comforters. It is amazing what one small group of women accomplish during one short workday each month.

There is no age limit on who can and does attend. From young moms with their children to great grandmas, there is something for everyone, and everyone has a good time, besides giving back some of the abundance we have been given. Please join us this month on September 4!



In Pursuit

As my youngest child has just entered her senior year of high school, I realize I am ending another season of my life. I think back to the things my children had to learn in order to get to this point. There was walking, talking, manners, responsibility and many more things. Each of my three children had to learn many of the same things to grow up. But they didn't always learn in the same way.

A good example of this is reading. My oldest son took to reading like a fish takes to water. He was and is a natural reader. In fact, if he keeps accumulating books at his current rate, he will eventually be able to challenge the library as to quantity of books. Now my second son didn't take to books very quickly. We had to lure him into reading. It took comic books to draw him into the love of reading. It started with Garfield and various superheroes. But now he reads a variety of books (often borrowed from my oldest son's "library"). It took a much different approach with my daughter. She took a much longer route to get to reading. She started with audio books. She would go to sleep at night to the stories of "Adventures in Odyssey" and also other books on tape or cd from libraries. Over time, she transitioned from audio books to actual books, but I still find her from time to time listening to audio books. You see it didn't matter to me how they learned to read, but it was very important to me that they learn to read. It is an important life skill.

Now from the position of a Christian parent, reading the Bible while asking God to reveal it to you is a vital life skill. There is little that thrills me more than to see one of my children spending time in God's Word. It also is a pleasure when I see my parents in the Bible. It reminds me that no matter how much time you spend in the Bible there is still more to learn. The truth be told, I am tickled whenever I see anyone spending time in the powerful Word of God.

Psalm 119:9-16 tells us over and over again how important God's Word is to our life and the choices we make. David tells us to hide God's Word in our heart. "How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Praise be to you, LORD; teach me your decrees. With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth. I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches. I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

Knowing God's Word helps us to live the righteous lives that God intends for us to live. We cannot do it without knowing God's Word because we don't think or act the same way that God thinks and acts. God wants to work inside us and through us. When we allow God to do this positive things happen. Look at Isaiah 55:8-11: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

In order to achieve God's purpose in our lives we need to know God's Word. The only way I know how to do this is to read God's Word and ask for the Holy Spirit to reveal it to me.



The thing is that all Christians need to do this. However, God made us even more diverse than my three children. There isn't one effective way to read the Bible that will work for all of us. Some will be drawn to read it from

cover to cover. They may read the entire Bible over and over throughout their life. Others may enjoy meditating on one verse or section for a period of time and milking every nuance out of it. Some may be drawn to the prophets and others to the poetry. Some people may do word studies, or following the history of a particular city or every time a particular event happens. For some people an audio of the Bible may be their best resource for placing God's Word in their heart. Some may need to read aloud and others may need total silence. Memorizing may be a tremendous tool for some people. What matters most is to dig into God's Word and to expect it to change you and your life. If the way we are studying the Bible isn't working for us, we need to keep trying something different until we find what works. And we need to encourage our fellow Christians to do the same. God's Word is powerful and we shouldn't ignore it.

(Cont. on page 6)

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Find us online:

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.

Congratulations!

These people have reached a milestone, 50 or more years of marriage, or 80 or more years of life!

Birthdays:

Robert K Yoder, September 7
Owen Miller, September 12
Mary Ellen Miller, September 13
John Snyder, September 16
Emil Ropp, September 18

Wedding Anniversaries:

September 9...57 years
Owen and Ruby Miller

September 12...59 years
Mahlon and Delores Leichty

In Pursuit (Cont. from page 5)

The bottom line is that I don't want to settle for "okay" when it comes to God's Word and I don't want you to either. I believe with all my heart that if every Christian would find a way that brings God's Word more alive in their hearts amazing things would happen, more amazing than we could ever imagine! So what are we waiting for? Let's get into God's Word!!

As always, in pursuit. Dawn Wyse

