

## Connecting with Chet and Gerry Raber

Chet and Gerry reflect on their full life with amazement and gratitude for sixty-six years of rich experiences together. They talk about life in the metaphor of a bike hike. "The bike hike of life" encompasses life as journey, a pilgrimage, development and a ride. They learned early in their marriage that it takes two to tandem.



Their riding adventures began the summer of 1970 in Goshen, Indiana, when Chet rented a tandem bike and coaxed Gerry to join him on that first ride. That was the introduction to their travels, first local and, after forty years they had biked twenty-five states, ten national parks, and five countries.

The flat terrain of Indiana was a good way to break in to what was to come. With friends, they formed The Magnificent Six, riding together over thirty years.

The move to Lancaster in 1981 was a major change. It was challenging in many ways when, at age fifty-two, Gerry and Chet left friends and professions, to find new friends, church, and territory.

Chet's new career change was organization development consultant. He accepted an offer from High Steel Inc. to lead their organizational development.

Chet's beginning years were in Detroit, Michigan, where his parents developed a city mission for the Mennonite Church.

Church was a big part of Raber family life. Chet remembers going to church five times a week! Summer Bible School was a highlight with teachers coming from Goshen College to encourage the program of the city mission. This was the inspiration for Chet to consider and plan to go to college.

When Chet graduated from high school, his parents wanted him to go to Eastern Mennonite College, an initial disappointment, since he was looking forward to Goshen College.

However, in the bigger picture, this was how his life unfolded. It was at EMC that he met bonny Gerry Landis. In a short time, Chet was hooked.

Geraldine Landis had come to campus from eastern Pennsylvania as a fourteen-year-old Freshman in high school. She developed some independence and confidence in this new setting. Her high school years were rich with boarding school experience, excellent teachers and friends.

Family, church and school were her life. Gerry attended Rocky Ridge Mennonite Mission with her family where her father became pastor for a number of years. This was an immigrant community with people from mostly eastern Europe. Sunday services included scripture reading in German and Italian as well as English.

It was in sixth grade that Gerry received two gifts that liberated her to a larger world. Her personal radio intro-

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duced her to classical music, and later she found the New York Metropolitan Opera Company. The second gift was a new bicycle that offered wide horizons and more freedom.

High school away from home opened even more horizons. It was during her senior year that her roommate, Ann Raber, from Detroit, introduced her to brother Chester, a college Freshman. Chet was smitten.

They happily dated that year. Chet suggested they have an understanding at the end of the year, but Gerry was determined to focus on nursing school for three years.

There was no communication until the end of her third year of nurse's training when Gerry wrote a friendly letter to Chet. The result of that connection was an invitation to attend Goshen College where Chet was finishing his degree. By Thanksgiving they were engaged.

Gerry and Chet were married October 13, 1951 at Rocky Ridge Mennonite Church. Their two minister fathers performed the ceremony.

Goshen, Indiana became their home while Gerry worked in a physician's office. Chet was finishing seminary and working. The goal was to go to graduate school the following September.

First wedding anniversary was a time to celebrate. Little could they have known how much their life would be changed.

Gerry became ill and was hospitalized, and learned that she had polio. She remained in the hospital a number of weeks for treatment.

Gerry's parents lived in Woodstock, Vermont, and Dartmouth Medical School had a hospital nearby with an excellent physical therapy department. Gerry spent three months there in therapy, living with her parents.

When Chet came to take her home, Gerry was faced with public life and all its trappings. Chet gently encouraged and coached her as they faced their new life.

Gerry found her bout with polio to be a rock on the road, not a blockade. Grad school for Chet came right on their original schedule. They moved to Louisville, Kentucky where Chet enrolled at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

After receiving a master's degree, Chet returned to Goshen College as a pastor to students and taught General Psychology and Pastoral Care.

During these three years, they welcomed Jon and Kris into their family.

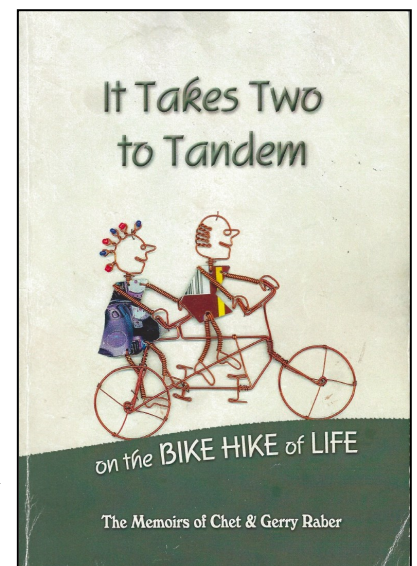
After Chet completed his PhD, the family moved to Hagerstown, Maryland where Chet became the first chaplain at Brook Lane Psychiatric Center. Following six good years of work and family life, they decided to take a leave and moved to Singapore. Chet helped to develop a counseling center at Wesley Methodist Church.

After seven years at Brook Lane, a move to Oaklawn Psychiatric Center in Elkhart, Indiana seemed to be a good move forward. This became their home for twelve years while Jon and Kris finished high school. Gerry worked at High Park Physicians and Greencroft Retirement Center.

It was during these years that tandem biking became part of their lives. They were serious riders, joining TourMagination for a bike tour of Holland and Switzerland.

Meanwhile Chet's growing focus on a model for participative management, with clients in several states, did not fit with a community mental health center. An offer from High Steel in Lancaster brought Chet and Gerry to Pennsylvania in 1981.

AMC became their church home and they became a vital presence in our community life. They were part of a house church that has continued with three original members and rich additions along the way. They are truly church to each other.



Gerry served a term on Pastoral Team with Truman Brunk, Urbane Peachey, and Norma Johnson where she offered her gifts of reaching out in many ways and being a presence for our community.

Chet served on numerous committees and chaired the Board for DSECC. In the larger community, he was chair for Welcoming Dialogue from 2001- 2014.

Chet and Gerry frequently biked to AMC on Sunday morning. They also joined the AMC biking group on the Sky-line Drive.

Chet retired in 2007 from his participative people management system, Greenfield Management System, now Core4. During these twenty-five years, his company facilitated seventy organizations to restructure and move in to the 21st century. This includes MCC, High Steel, and Auntie Anne's Pretzels.

Travel has been a major focus and pleasure in their lives. With Kris living in New Mexico there were numerous trips to be with grandsons.

Jon had moved to Japan and married Kimiko, and Chet and Gerry welcomed this opportunity to travel there and develop warm ties with the Shimazaki family. The lovely connection has continued over the years, and even now after the death of Jon.

Friendships are of prime importance to Chet and Gerry. Friends span many years and experiences of their lives. They continue to find new friends in their community where they currently live at Luther Acres in Lititz.

Major interests these days include reading, communicating with friends, opera, walking and even some biking.

It has been a great ride on the bike hike of life for Gerry and Chet.

*~Priscilla Ziegler*

## ***Pastor's Perspective***

### **Advent Worship: Yes! Let it be!**

This year our Advent worship theme is drawn from Mary's prayer in Luke 1:38, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Mary's response to the angel's announcement of God's plan is "Let it be." Mary's response may seem like passive compliance since she is often characterized as a meek, obedient servant. But the original Greek language conveys Mary's active commitment to participate in God's plan as wish or prayer. Scholar Sarah Klitenic Wear wrote, "Mary's response to God's plan is nothing short of radical. For, she does not merely accept this plan but she prays for it. Mary's holiness lies in not merely accepting God's path for her, but in wishing for it." Her response might be better translated as "Bring it on, God!"



Our prayer this Advent season is to be co-participants in God's work in our world. In this prayerful stance, we watch and wait to see what God is doing. In the midst of the busyness of this season, we wait. In this prayerful stance, we wake up to God's activity. We enter into living mindfully—the art of living awake and ready to embrace the gift of the present moment. In the midst of planning for the season, we are mindful of the present moment. In this prayerful stance, we will take moments to breathe. Just as athletes in training are mindful of their breath, we will be mindful of our own breath. Our worship services during Advent will be more contemplative allowing time to wait, watch and wake...allowing for time of silence and breath.

*~Rachel Nolt*



## *Reflections on Safe Church*

by Amy Herr

Last May, Deb Helt from Samaritan Counseling Service spoke to us during a Moment in Mission. She presented the Samaritan SafeChurch program's vision to equip and inspire people of faith to become proactive in protecting children from sexual and other

abuse—not only at church, but in the community; and to empower adult survivors. Our congregation was invited to join the Samaritan SafeChurch cluster process that brings several congregations together for one year to bring new life to child protection practices and policies incorporating new PA laws. Samaritan SafeChurch is also creating a safe environment for people who experienced sexual, physical or mental abuse during their life. For many people, this occurred during their childhood or early adulthood. But even though it may have occurred many years ago, the experience still affects them now, as adults.

I was intrigued since I'm the mother of two daughters, and the grandmother of two granddaughters and a grandson. Following Deb's words, Rachel invited anyone who would like to be involved in exploring this program to be in contact with her or Karyn Nancarvis. I spent the next several weeks praying and pondering the invitation. Finally, I got the courage to respond and thus began a powerful and enriching time in my life.

Many of you are familiar with bits and pieces of my life prior to becoming part of the family at Akron Mennonite Church. I grew up in a fairly typical Lancaster Conference Mennonite home, with my father holding the position of Deacon at our home church. I felt safe in my home and my congregation. Our family was also fairly typical, with the father being the 'head' of the home and the mother being the 'supportive partner'. But there were ways that weren't so typical. My mother seemed to be suspicious of men, and the relationship with one of my uncles was somewhat strained. I'm sure that being the mother of five daughters was somewhat difficult for her, but she did the best she could. As a teenager, she warned me that how I behaved and dressed was very crucial in my relationship with boys. Naturally, I ignored her, but the messages stayed with me. I wondered at times why she was so concerned when it appeared that other issues weren't important. She spent a lot of time reading her Bible and praying.

As she entered her later years, she became more difficult and unloving. She was no longer supportive of my father as he began his years with Alzheimer's and move to Landis Homes. My older sister and I were perhaps the most supportive of her during her last 20 years. But she became more critical and several times wrote notes to us that reflected her feelings of unworthiness. It was a challenge for us all, and my sister and I would discuss possibilities. I suspected that she may have been abused as a child.

My mother died in 2004 at Landis Homes. Her last weeks were agonizing for us. She received the best care and she acknowledged it, especially since one of my cousins was her nurse up to the end. I spent the last night with her, along with one of my brothers. We talked of many things, but never touched on what might have been Mother's demons. I doubt if he thought about it.

Soon after Mother died, my sister called. She told me that several evenings before Mother died, she asked Mother who had abused her. Mother refused to answer. But when my sister asked if it was her father, my grandfather, Mother simply said "no." So many things began to fall in place for us after that revelation.

This is also a reason I felt called to join the Safe Church Team this summer. The pain that my mother experienced throughout her life, how it affected my entire family, and her relationship with Daddy, made me want to do something to help others who have experienced this loss of innocence. If I can make a difference in one person's life, I want to be a partner in this.



For those who have interest and questions about Safe Church, other members of the team are Rachel Nolt, Karyn Nancarvis, Ethel Shank and Jim Shenk. All of us are open to dialogue and confidentiality.

Safe Church is about shifting congregational culture so that adults become proactive about protecting children from sexual harm – not just in church but in the community. It is also about building the institutional infrastructure -policy with best practices, training for staff and volunteers and clearances. I invite you to join us in this wonderful and meaningful path.

~Amy Herr



**A Safe Church presentation will be offered during Second Hour on Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup>.** It is our hope all adults will join us. This presentation is one-hour in length, and will focus on the core elements of "Safe Church", including the practical and theological developments of our church policy that is currently being updated by our Safe Church ministry team. Learn about the changes in the training and screening of volunteers. There will be education for parents and others about how to keep children safe in the world of school, sports, community and church. Also, there will be discussion on sharing in the journey with known offenders and utilizing the wisdom of adult survivors of

abuse within our congregation to raise awareness of the need to nurture a Safe Church environment for all.

We will look at the prevalence of child sexual abuse, as well as the long-term impact, assisted by viewing a segment of the DVD "Hear Their Cries: Religious Responses to Child Abuse." We will also discuss the places abuse is most likely to occur and why children often do not tell anyone what is happening.

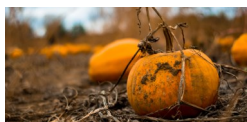
All adults in the congregation are invited to attend. Arrangements will be made for childcare providers to be present so the teachers, shepherds and others involved in caring for our children on Sunday mornings will have the opportunity to join in this valuable presentation.

AMC's Safe Church Ministry Team of: Rachel Nolt, Ethel Shank, Jim Shenk, Amy Herr and Karyn Nancarvis

### **Fall Garden**

(read during worship on November 26)

In fall  
the garden is spent  
having given its all.



Cucumber vines lie exhausted on the ground  
Tomato plants list to one side  
Cornstalks stand dignified and empty  
Sunflower faces droop earthward,  
shades of their former selves.

All that has not been claimed lies moldering in  
the dirt—  
a bruised tomato, a forsaken pepper...  
a misshapen pumpkin, a trampled  
stalk of beans.  
What came from the earth is returning  
to the place from whence it came.

There is an intimacy here,  
in the fall garden,  
gazing at living things in their demise.  
I want to avert my eyes, avoid this tender grief.  
Is this life or is this death? I cannot tell.

Ah, but there is beauty here  
amid all this death and dying.  
To have given one's self fully  
at least once  
that is the thing.



To have spent oneself in an explosion of color  
to have offered one's body for food,  
one's very soul for nourishment...  
It is an unseemly generosity,  
beauty of another kind.

In fall  
the garden says, "This is my life, given for you."  
And we are fed.

## Scenes from MYF



*The theme of MYF Sunday on October 29 was “A Puzzling Place.” Those attending reflected on “belonging” at AMC, and completed puzzle pieces that formed the picture shown at left.*

*Gathered are the MYF and their advisors.*

*Below are scenes from the first annual “Mennosgiving”. The MYF shared a Thanksgiving meal, heard from Kevin King about MDS work in Puerto Rico, played giant Dutch Blitz, and enjoyed the photo booth.*



### Upcoming MYF Events

- ◆ Dec. 2—volunteer with Meals on Wheels
- ◆ Dec. 3—Christmas Caroling in Akron, 6—8 pm
- ◆ Dec. 9—Supper club & movie night at Susan King’s, 5 pm.
- ◆ Dec. 15—Cookie baking in AMC kitchen, 6:30– 9 pm
- ◆ Dec. 17—Christmas program and Tea at AMC, 6:00 pm





## **Diamond Street Beat**

By Kim Bell  
December 2017



Now that Thanksgiving is over and the leftovers have all been eaten, the Diamond Street kids' thoughts are turning to Christmas! Here are a few ways we are celebrating the Christmas season at DSECC.

Miss Sandi, our Bible teacher, will be busy this month teaching the children about Christmas using stories from Luke and Matthew. Lessons will include the angel visiting Mary, Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem, the birth of Jesus and the shepherds in the fields, the visit from the Wise men, and the escape to Egypt. Each Bible lesson will include a fun craft the children can take home to their families.

As a nonprofit, it's not easy to find funds for "extras". So at Christmastime, our teachers make a list of things they would like for their classroom, but that we don't have funds for in our budget. Those items are placed on tags and hung on our Giving Tree, located next to the clock in/out station by our office. We invite you to look through the tags, choose one item or a few items you'd like to purchase, and then wrap the item, securely attach the tag, and give to Kim in the office by December 18<sup>th</sup>. Thank you in advance for making our Christmas very merry!

I don't know about you, but nothing gets me into the holiday spirit more than Christmas caroling. All of us at the center will go Christmas caroling on Wednesday, December 13. Afterwards, we will enjoy hot chocolate and cookies at the center. If you'd like to join us and lend your voice to our choir, please meet in the Big Room by 9:30am on December 13.

Everyone at Diamond Street wishes all of you a very merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



*DSECC celebrated Thanksgiving with costumes and a special meal in the Assembly Room on November 16.*



## ***2017 Christmas Thanks Offering Projects***

Each year at the AMC Christmas program a special offering, beyond our regular tithes and offerings, is taken to provide financial support for projects addressing needs at the local, national, and international levels. From the 15 projects nominated for funds from this year's offering, the Outreach Commission selected the six listed below. One or more AMC members have been involved in each of the organizations.



### **Local**

#### *No Longer Alone Ministries*

No Longer Alone's Psychiatric Rehab Services are designed to help persons with functional disabilities resulting from mental illness to rebuild their lives in the community, equipping them with skills and connections.

#### *WellSpan Philhaven*

Philhaven's Ephrata Outpatient Office provides care for residents of northern Lancaster County, including many who cannot pay all of the cost of their therapy--this being particularly true in the Ephrata-Akron area, with the second highest concentration of people in the county living in poverty. The working poor add substantially to the number of people who don't have mental health insurance and are not covered by Medical Assistance.

### **National**

#### *Bridge of Hope National*

This organization assists single mothers and their children who are homeless. In 2018 it will introduce "a whole new curriculum for training churches for engagement with families facing homelessness, and all-new language from mentoring to neighboring." Costing \$75,000, the curriculum will be provided free to each of the organization's 19 locations.

#### *Mennonite Disaster Service*

MDS is engaged in relief and recovery efforts in hurricane-devastated Puerto Rico.

### **International**

#### *Friends of Shirati*

Because of advances in the treatment of leprosy, American Leprosy Missions is withdrawing its support at Shirati, and the leprosarium is being renovated as part of the general hospital. Older patients who have lived there for years were dependent on ALM for food and have no other homes. A gift of \$1,000 will provide them with rice and maize meal for a year.

#### *Shambhuganj Community Development Project*

AMC has been supporting this project in various ways, including a school. A Children Nutrition Program at the school was added in April to save the children from malnourishment and help them to better learn. Most of the 190 students come from desperately poor families; many walk to school from a substantial distance and arrive without having had anything to eat and with no guarantee of receiving any nutritious food when they get home. The community's economic situation has even worsened since a recent flood in Bangladesh.

~Mary Ellen Martin



## Portrait of Survival

### Tiara Coleman Breaks the Silence Surrounding Suicide

Posted by Denise Reesor / Goshen, Indiana  
9/29/2017

Tiara Coleman is a nurse, mother, and friend to many. She lives in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Editor's Note: Tiara first shared her story during chapel at Eastern Mennonite High School (EMHS) in Harrisonburg, VA. Her willingness to share candidly about her experience with bullying, depression, self-harm, and suicide is courageous... to put it mildly. When I asked Tiara what led her to share her story with others she told me that the negative attitudes and mistreatment of those who have attempted suicide, even within the church, is so painful. She hopes that by sharing her story more people will be able to find help and support.*



### Encounters with Bullying, Assault, and Depression

I grew up in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and come from a well-known Mennonite family. I moved from the local public high school to Eastern Mennonite High School (EMHS) at the start of my sophomore year. This is when I remember life started getting really hard for me.

Even though, like many of the kids at EMHS, I came from a respected Mennonite family (my grandfather was the high school principal, my uncles were well-known soccer stars, and my mom was a teacher), I felt different than the kids at EMHS immediately. I felt pressure to be smart, athletic, popular, and overall successful. I just could never fit that mold...and I became singled out.

Students made cruel assumptions about me and picked on me incessantly. Classmates called me awful names like, "The Harrisonburg Whore." I went out for the women's soccer team but the girls and even the coach talked about my body, telling me my weight made me slow. I was told that if I only "tried harder" to lose weight, I'd be a better soccer player. I was so embarrassed and ashamed.

To add to the torture, some popular and well-loved guys would harass me, grabbing my butt or trying to grope me when adults weren't around. When I protested, telling them to stop, I was mocked and made fun of by them and their friends. You see, when you're not popular or respected, people don't seem to take you seriously.

**I was so sad during those times. I didn't realize I had depression and how serious it was.**

### Coping with Depression

Under the weight of my misery, I started cutting. I needed some way of externalizing the agony of my internal pain. The cutting started out on my wrists. I would be alone crying, just sobbing, in so much distress. When I cut myself, I experienced a flood of immediate release. I felt like I could understand something about my life again. It gave me the sense of control that I desperately yearned for.

At one point, a classmate saw the scars on my wrist. She told me that she "knew" I was cutting in order to get attention. But she didn't understand that cutting for me wasn't about attention...it was about coping. From that point on, I started cutting under my breasts and on my thighs so that the marks wouldn't be visible and draw suspicion. At this point, my only friend at EMHS was a classmate who also cut. We found solidarity in our struggles together. However, when the school counselor found out that we were both cutting, she demanded that the two of us be kept separate at school. I guess she thought this would help and discourage the cutting behavior, but it only

made my isolation and grief all the greater.

I attempted suicide twice in my junior year, both times by swallowing a bottle of pills. The first time, it turned out that I'd only swallowed a vial of vitamins...so nothing happened. The second time was scarier. I swallowed a bottle of pain killers. Looking back at that moment, I know that I didn't actually want to die but...I didn't know what else to do. My grades at school were miserable, and I couldn't handle the constant disappointment I felt that I was to my mom. Feelings of failure and worthlessness had taken such a strong hold that I believed that everyone would be better off without me.

Swallowing the pills calmed me down enough to realize that I didn't want to die. I told my mom what I'd done, and she rushed me to the hospital where nurses shoved charcoal down my throat.

**It was eerily silent when I returned to school after being hospitalized.** Not a single teacher or student asked me about what had happened. Maybe they were told not to talk to me about it? I don't know. But it would have been a lot easier if I'd had support at school.

## How Things Got Better

Being hospitalized made my youth pastor realize how severely I was struggling. He reached out and became the one safe and consistent person I could cling to. He did a lot of things right, and my relationship with him marked the beginning of getting the supports I needed.

## Questions for Reflection

- Have you ever dismissed a person's struggles (regardless of his or her age) as being "attention seeking"? How did this help the person? If a behavior is indeed attention seeking, why is this considered negative?
- How might isolation—intentional or unintentional— affect someone struggling with mental illness? Tiara was kept apart from her only friend at school because they both practiced self-harm. This is an understandable, but unhelpful reaction. How might we plan to be alert to those isolated by mental illness so that we relate in ways that are helpful?
- What of your own biases or stereotypes about mental illness and suicide did you become aware of while reading Tiara's story?



## Pray For One Another

*James 5:16*

The purpose of "Pray For One Another" is to help us be aware of and pray for members of AMC who, for whatever reason, are unable to participate in Sunday morning worship services on a regular basis. Scripture **admonishes** us to pray. It is one of the joys of the Christian life and part of what makes us community. The names of people listed December change from time to time. If you know of someone you would like to be included with those named here, please be in touch with the church office.



Charlotte Biris

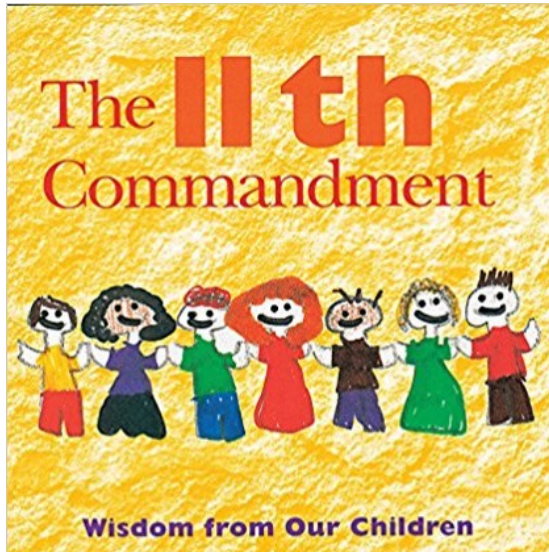
Al Claassen

Carolyn & John Horst

Paul Martin

Philip Rutt

Amela & Randy Puljek-Shank



When Rev. Urbane Peachey recently shared about his new book, "More Than One Thing is True" during the Second Hour Formation time, he turned over to my keeping an interesting relic. It is a bound booklet entitled "The 11th Commandment" by the Children of A.M.C. Vacation Bible School, July 1999.

According to him the children had finished studying "The Ten Commandments". The teacher asked the children, age 7 - 11, "If you could add one more commandment to the list, what would it be?" Following is a sampling of what they wrote and illustrated: They were just too dear to go into some trash can and into oblivion! Have a look at this precious piece on our library table! You will find other names, such as Ocasio, Hummel, Kidwell, Kuhns, Rosenberry, Gra-

ber-Miller, "Thou shalt not start wars but Prevent them!" Alyssa Martin, Age 12 "Thou shall not lose the valuables on earth" (rainforests, tigers, wolves). Justin Martin, Age 7 1/2 "Thou shalt treat everyone with respect." Nicole Weaver, Age 12 "Thou shall help your friend with his homework." Tim Fox, Age 7 "Thou shall be friends with people who aren't the same religion as you." Hannah Hess, Age 10 (Illustrated with drawings of a Jewish, Mennonite, Catholic, and Amish person) "Do not hijack cars or miss-use guns." Christopher Harms, Age 9 "Thou shall have what you need but no more." Matt Harms, Age 12

Makes you wonder what these young thinkers are thinking and doing 18 years later!

- Submitted by Helen Peifer

Along the Road to Freedom, a new book by Ray Dirks, tells the stories of Mennonite women who made the long and difficult journey from the former Soviet Union to Canada.

The book is illustrated with photos and paintings. You might have seen the exhibit of full size paintings at Mennonite World Conference in Harrisburg. If you'd like to purchase a book, see Doug Dirks, the cost is \$30. We will also put a book in our AMC library.

## Along the Road to Freedom

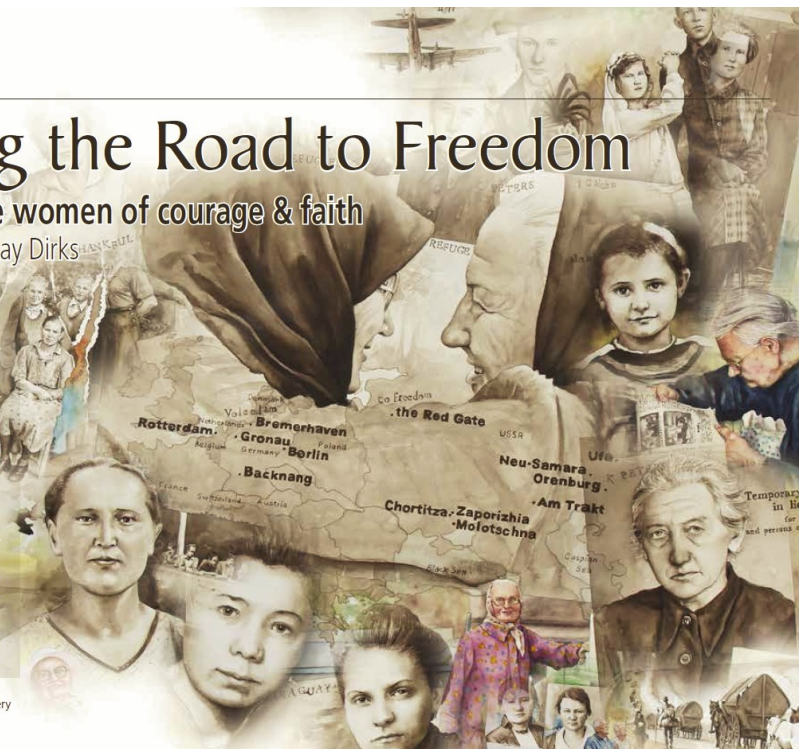
Mennonite women of courage & faith

paintings by Ray Dirks

art  
stories  
tragedy  
human rights  
dignity  
strength  
vulnerability  
loss  
honour  
love  
family  
faith  
even forgiveness

26 paintings  
7 didactic panels

a project of the MHC Gallery





## December (and beyond) at AMC & in the Community

### December Upcoming Events

- Dec. 3** F.L.I.P, Share-A-Life, and MYF Christmas caroling in Akron, 6:00—8:00 pm
- 5** Lunch Bunch @ Oregon Dairy @ 11:30 am
- 6** Library Committee Meeting @ 6:00 pm
- 6** Stewardship Committee Meeting @ 6:30 pm
- 7** Men's breakfast @ Udder Choice @ 7:00 am; Bob Peifer, presenter
- 13** Luther Acres Lunch Gathering 12—1:30 pm
- 15** Connect! event: Journey to Bethlehem at Woodcrest Retreat
- 17** AMC Christmas Program and Tea @ 6:00 pm
- 18** AMC Council Meeting @ 7:00 pm
- 19** AMC Women's Brown Bag Luncheon @ Janet Stoner's 11:00 am—1:00 pm
- 24** Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols Service @ 7:00 pm

### SAVE THESE DATES

- January 20, 2018** MYF Spaghetti Supper
- March 24, 2018** MYF Auction



## Community Meal

### 2018 Community Meal Schedule

Akron Mennonite Church serves three of the weekly Thursday evening community meals prepared and served by the Ephrata area churches. The dates and locations for the meals we are serving are:

**Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup>** at First United Methodist Church, 68 North Church Street, Ephrata

**Thursday, June 14<sup>th</sup>** at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 167 East Main Street, Ephrata

**Thursday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>** at First United Methodist Church, 68 North Church Street, Ephrata

If you enjoy helping with these meals, please save these dates.

During the Formation Hour on Sunday, December 31, Malachy Kilbride, Executive Director of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, will present an overview of NCPTF's grassroots advocacy for H.R. 1947, The Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill. This federal legislation supports conscientious objection to the payment of those federal income taxes that underwrite war and militarism.



### AMC Women's December Brown Bag Lunch



Our next brown bag lunch is scheduled for December 19. We will be hosted by Janet Stoner at her home in Akron: 728 Fulton Street. Come and join us in celebrating the Christmas Season by sharing memories of your earlier Christmas times.

We will gather from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. Come for the whole time, or on your lunch break, or whatever segment of times fits your schedule. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn to know your AMC sisters better. Bring your own lunch and Janet will provide us with water and coffee and tea. See you there!

### End of Life video showing

Everence invites us to the free premier showing of a video titled *End of Life*. This new presentation, based on the journey of Daryl and Lila Garber, reflects on the value of each person sharing end of life wishes with family and making plans for final days in advance. Garbers were former members of AMC. Their end of life story grew out of what they learned as participants in one of the AMC End of Life seminars facilitated by Don Ziegler, Jerry Shank and Richard Leaman.

Everyone is welcome to this showing on January 21 at 3:00pm in the Westview Community Room at Landis Homes.



## ***Christmas Program and Christmas Eve Service***

Each year The Annual AMC Christmas Program involves the children and youth singing and playing instruments to celebrate Christmas. Plans are well underway for the Christmas Program which will be held Sunday, December 17 at 6:00 pm. In addition to congregational Christmas carols, the 4-year old the AMC Preschool will join the younger children to sing Christmas songs. The older AMC children will play the tone chimes to accompany two Christmas carols and then also play a Christmas song. Instrumental music will be provided by a string ensemble, some Jr. MYFers and Sr. MYFers. There will also be some Christmas carols played on the piano. Additional Christmas songs will feature soloists and the Men's Choir.



Come and be inspired by the many sounds of Christmas. Then stay for food and fellowship in the Annual Christmas Tea held immediately after the program.

A service of Lessons and Carols will be held on Sunday, December 24, at 7:00 pm at AMC. This annual event, which includes the well-loved candlelighting at the end of the service, tells the redeeming story of God's love for his people through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. This service includes the reading of nine different scriptures and an accompanying Christmas carol.

If you would like to read one of the scriptures for this service, be in contact with Patricia Martin.



**The annual Christmas tea will be held the evening of Sunday, December 17 following the Christmas program.**

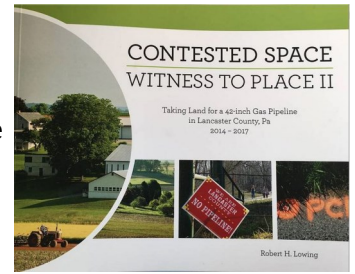
Hospitality Committee invites your contributions according to the first letter of your last name: A-H, 3 dozen cookies; I-P, 1 pound cubed cheese; Q-Z, 8-10 servings of washed and cut up fruit (e.g, strawberries, grapes, pineapple, oranges, clementines).

Food can be dropped at the kitchen the morning of December 17. **If you are willing to help with setting up tables in advance or with clean up after the tea**, please contact Marilyn Yoder, email: [msy9497@gmail.com](mailto:msy9497@gmail.com).

**SPARE PARTS CONCERT:** December 5, 6:30-7:30 at Forest Hills Menonite Church, Leola Moms group is hosting a free concert featuring Spare Parts, an acapella group will perform some Christmas favorites as well as other songs. Cookies and dough logs (to bake later) will be for sale at the concert, as a fundraiser to support the Leola Moms ministry.



**PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION:** Robert Lowing's photography exhibition, *Contested Space: Witness to Place II*, will be presented at DogStar Books and Gallery through 15 December 2017. Robert photographed the proposed pipeline right of way from Drumore Township to Lebanon County from 2014 to August 2017. His essays reflect the differences between FERC documents and conversations with landowners who were forced to negotiate easements for the Atlantic Sunrise pipeline project in Lancaster County. The book, covering the period of 2014 to 2017, contains over 100 color photographs, graphic maps, as well as written text.



DogStar Books is located at 401 West Lemon Street, Lancaster. Gallery hours are Tuesday thru Saturday 10 to 5; Sunday and Monday 11 to 3. The event is free to the public.

The Walking Roots Band, a well-loved folk band out of Harrisonburg, VA will be opening its CD Release Tour at Neffsville Mennonite Church on Saturday, December 10 at 7:00 pm. There's no cover charge but a free-will offering will be taken.

Some of the proceeds from the sale of their new Christmas album, *Hark!*, will be donated to MCC to support relief and development work around the world. Back the album's Kickstarted project and pre-order your copy at <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/thewalkingrootsband/hark-a-walking-roots-band-christmas>

#### ***From the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society:***

- **Pennsylvania German Folk Art Sale**—Come to the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society for their annual sale of handcrafted goods. Enjoy a variety of work ranging from textiles to pottery and beyond, all done in traditional forms. The sale runs 8:30 to 4:30, Tuesday through Saturday, until December 31 at 2215 Millstream Rd., Lancaster, Pa.
- **Christmas Candlelight Tours**—Experience the holiday season at the 1719 Herr House & Museum this fall. Candlelight Tours run from 6 to 8 p.m. on December 7 and 8 (Thursday and Friday), and from 5 to 8:30 on December 9 (Saturday). This year the tour explores the role of weaving in early communities, both Native and immigrant. For registration, and to learn more go to [hansherr.org](http://hansherr.org), or call (717) 464-4438.

**CHECK OUT** the many Christmas music programs in the area that are posted on the community bulletin board. Here are three in which AMC'ers participate:

**LANCASTER CHAMBER SINGERS** present "This Christmastide!". The concert features Amy Yovanovich, mezzo-soprano and Richard Ney, viola and includes traditional Christmas music with compositions by Lauridsen and Gjeilo. Concerts are Saturday, Dec.2, 7:00 p.m. at St. Edward Episcopal Church, Lancaster; Sunday, Dec.3, 3:00 p.m. at Jerusalem Lutheran Church, Lititz, and Sunday, Dec. 10, 3:00 p.m. at Harvest Bible Church, Lancaster. For more information, contact Jan Brubaker or Diane Gehman. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.LancasterChambersSingers.org](http://www.LancasterChambersSingers.org).



**HERITAGE CHORALE:** Don Brubaker and Dennis Ernest from AMC invite you to attend one of the three Christmas programs presented by the Heritage Chorale of Lancaster. They are at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Neffsville on December 3; Trinity Lutheran Church in Lancaster on December 10; and Holy Spirit Lutheran Church in Lancaster on January 7. All programs begin at 4:00 pm. Tickets are not required but your contributions would be appreciated.

**THE FRANCONIA-LANCASTER CHORAL SINGERS** and orchestra will present a Christmas "Gloria" concert on Dec. 3 at 3:00 pm at the Lititz Church of the Brethren. Tickets are available in advance from choir members Cheryl Zook Justice and Tim Langeman, or at the door.



# December Birthdays

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 David Martin	2
3 Jeanette Bontrager Dot Shenk	4	5	6 Rachel Martin	7 Esther Nolt	8 Jim Wiegner	9 Betty Shenk
10 Evie Gerstlauer	11	12	13	14	15 Kevin Dundore	16
17 Rose Ernest Angela Zimmerman	18	19 Dylan Nolt Sara Wiegner	20 Charlotte Biris	21	22 Tom Buchen	23 Patrick Leaman Vel Shearer Richard Weaver Cyndy Zook
24 Eileen Byler Dave Helmus Phyllis Leaman	25 Sarah Eby	26 Gerald Kaufman Janet Stoner	27	28 Dwight Stoltzfus	29	30
31 Phil Hess Lawrence Rupley J.W. Sprunger						

## Akron Mennonite Church

1311 Diamond Street  
Akron, PA 17501  
P: (717) 859-1488  
E: [amc@akronmench.org](mailto:amc@akronmench.org)

[www.akronmench.org](http://www.akronmench.org)

- ◇ Worship @ 9:00 am
- ◇ Coffee/Tea Fellowship from 10:15-10:40 am
- ◇ Christian Education & Discipleship Hour from 10:40-11:40 am

### Staff

Rachel Nolt  
Pastor  
[rnolt@akronmench.org](mailto:rnolt@akronmench.org)

Karyn Nancarvis  
Interim Director of Children & Youth Ministries  
[knancarvis@akronmench.org](mailto:knancarvis@akronmench.org)

Melody Rupley  
Director of Equipping Ministries  
[mrupley@akronmench.org](mailto:mrupley@akronmench.org)

Patricia Martin  
Minister of Music and Worship  
[pmartin@akronmench.org](mailto:pmartin@akronmench.org)

Rebecca Pereverzoff  
Administrator  
[rpereverzoff@akronmench.org](mailto:rpereverzoff@akronmench.org)  
[amc@akronmench.org](mailto:amc@akronmench.org)



### Contact Updates

John & Vel Shearer:  
34 United Zion Circle, Lititz, PA 17543  
Email: [jvshearer@gmail.com](mailto:jvshearer@gmail.com)  
Vel cell: 717-585-1851  
John cell: 717-537-5256

Evie Gerstlauer:  
Fairmount Homes (currently in Healthcare #128)  
333 Wheat Ridge Dr., Ephrata, PA 17522  
Phone: 717-354-1621

Marion Schrock email: [belaire75@gmail.com](mailto:belaire75@gmail.com)

Melody Rupley cell: 717-892-2982

Nzabarinda Rwajekare and Jenni, Dusenge, & Esther Nzabarinda  
535 E. Main Street, Ephrata, PA 17522

### AMC Vision Statement

*Akron Mennonite Church will be fully engaged in God's mission in a broken world as we are called, equipped and sent by the Holy Spirit to follow Christ in life. Shaped by the gifts and vision of our members, we will keep Christ and church at the center of our lives as we reach out to neighbors near and far and witness to the world around us through an Anabaptist-Mennonite expression of faith.*

### Statement on Human Sexuality

*We are a community of believers seeking to respond with God's love to all people. We celebrate the strength of our unity in the midst of our diversity of experiences, perspectives and understanding of Scripture. We seek to be a community of grace and reconciliation and so welcome into membership all who confess faith in Jesus Christ, including those in same-gender covenant relationships. We are committed to engaging in God's mission in a broken world through an Anabaptist-Mennonite faith perspective.*