



Oak Leaves

January
2011

The newsletter of Oak Grove Mennonite Church, West Liberty, OH

1 Timothy 1:6

This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you ... (NLT)

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (NKJV)

Lamentations 3:22-24

The unfailing love of the LORD never ends! By his mercies we have been kept from complete destruction. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each day. I say to myself, "The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!" (NASB)



Ecclesiastes 3:11

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. (NIV)

Philippians 3:13-14

No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven. (NLT)

Announcements:

Student Aid Fund

The Oak Grove Congregation has a Mennonite College Student Grant Fund to assist any full-time student attending a Mennonite College, University or Seminary. The purpose of this aid is an attempt to expose our youth to educational and service opportunities, preparing them for participation in the life and mission of the church. Oak Grove also assists students, who, during or immediately after college choose to participate in the Mennonite Voluntary Service.

The Mennonite College Student Grant Fund is to offset part of the difference that exists between the cost of education at a state college and a church school. Persons eligible for financial aid must attend a Mennonite Institution of Higher Education and regularly attend Oak Grove. Mennonite colleges/universities/seminaries match the amount that Oak Grove gives each student up to \$1000. *Esther Witmer*

Children's Services gifts

A gigantic thank you to all of you who enthusiastically came forward to embrace a last minute outreach opportunity to help out with Christmas for families in need!! Logan County Children's Services received requests for help from hundreds of families, and exhausted all of their community resources helping as many as they could, but this left about 20 families still in need. Ryan offered to see if he could find some help outside of the agency's typical sponsors, and we sent out mass emails to our friends & families to see if maybe we could cover a family or two. Imagine our surprise when we found that we were getting enough response to help FIFTEEN FAMILIES!! At Oak Grove alone, we took care of 9 families!! Although this was never our intent when we brought up the idea to our Sunday school class, it is greatly appreciated, and all of the families who asked for help received some kind of Christmas, thanks to the generosity of people like you!

Thanks again!! *Ryan & Amy Pratt*

West Liberty Cares Food Pantry was very popular in December since families knew that there were gifts for children available along with food. We also gave bags of apples and citrus that were donated. Several new families signed up and received New Testaments to go with their bags of food.

We gave out nearly 150 bags of food in the first 3 weeks and invited parents to take several new toys for each child. Wrapping paper and tags were popular with many wrapping the gifts on the spot.

Final totals will be announced later. Toys and gifts that were not chosen were given to crisis pregnancy centers, Our Daily Bread and the W.L. Fire Dept. and Police. Thank you for all the ways Oak Grove supports West Liberty Cares.

PEOPLE IN AGRICULTURE

John Seymour Degree in Ag from Ohio State. Grew up on a farm in Ashville, OH. Have done soil testing and water testing in the past. Currently raise shetland sheep, turkeys, chickens and ducks thanks to Cathryn and 4H. Last year she raised her first dairy feeder. We sell fresh eggs and various poultry. June and I have 21 acres and are also 4H advisors in Union County.

Joan & Myron Yoder have been involved in farm life all their lives. We both grew up on farms and have continued in agriculture after we married. Our farming experience was dairy for 28 years and now mainly corn, beans & hay. Joan continues to enjoy her vegetable garden and flowers.

Andrea Kauffman I'm trying to keep our family connected to their farming roots through gardening & taking the kids to the field for tractor rides whenever Grandpa Jake (my dad) calls!

Roberta Yoder Bookkeeping for the farm, gardening - canning & freezing vegetables, feeding my favorite pig farmer

Jim Bartlett

I am using my 35 years of experience as Ohio Division of Forestry service forester in my forestry consulting business. I mainly help farmers and other woodland owners sell their timber.

Jim & Anita Bartlett Growing and selling Christmas trees for the past 30 years. Selling extra produce from the garden at our roadside stand.

Jake Leichty Even though I taught school for 33 years, we also have a small farm that we moved to in 1973. We've added on to the farm several times over the years. In the early years I did some experimenting with truck farming, particularly with strawberries, apples and sweet corn.

In 1980 I began raising hogs. I farrowed and finished about 500+ hogs per year for 28 years, until 2008. During the time of hog production I raised all of my own corn that went into the hog feed. In 1996 I began to raise soybeans as well. Today in retirement, I raise corn and soybeans as cash crops on my 91 acre farm. I help my brother-in-law Phil Neer and nephew Steve Neer with their row crops as well.

I have some grandchildren who love to ride with grandpa in the tractor. Grandpa loves to take them for rides when he is in the field. They also like to go for rides on grandpa's old antique tractors. Sometimes I hook one of the antiques up to the trailer with straw bales in it and take the kids for a "hay" ride. When they are old enough I will take them in the trailer for the Labor Day parade.

I continue to have a garden where I raise vegetables and strawberries. I like to help harvest, can, and/or freeze strawberries, sweet corn, broccoli, beets, cucumbers, tomatoes, green beans, red peppers and several kinds of squash each year.

One of my specialties is raising sweet potatoes. We have been propagating the same variety for the last 30 years. Darrin raises the plants at school in his green house window. Fifty plants usually gives us plenty of sweet potatoes (about 2-3 bushels) for the next year until the new crop is harvested each fall. Care must be taken after they are dug. They need to be washed and dried and wrapped individually in old newspaper and packed away in crates soon after they are dug. They go through a sweat in a week or two and then they are better to eat. We eat them fried, baked, boiled and mashed.

When we moved out to the farm I told Grace that this was the only way I knew how to raise kids. For Grace and I raising our children and now our grandchildren here on the farm is truly an agricultural adventure.

Some of the things that remind me of the Creator is a beautiful spring sunrise, a fall harvest moon, a litter of newborn, pink wiggling pigs, tiny plants pushing up through the earth or a newborn grandchild with all the fingers and toes in place and working. God shows himself in many ways.

These are some of the things I enjoy in retirement here at the farm.

Jerry Kauffman I have been working with Walters Buildings since 1994. Our business has its origins completely in agricultural buildings. Many of these early buildings were solely for livestock and machinery storage. Today we construct in about any category, including agricultural, suburban, commercial, and horse.

Darrel King

Darrel has been a farmer all his life and loves what he does. He was a dairy farmer for 27 years. After turning the dairy over to Tony twelve years ago, he planted most of his ground in hay and began his hay business.

NOTE: This is certainly not a complete list, just those who responded to our request for "people in agriculture." And if you didn't have a chance to respond, that's ok, we know you're busy! Thanks!

WHO AM I?

- I was born in Allen County, Ohio and grew up on a farm.
- I have many fun childhood memories. Some favorites include gathering around the piano with my mother playing and singing, playing in our playhouse, and skipping over to Grandma and Grandpa's and listening to their stories of growing up in a log house.
- My first job was picking strawberries.
- I am currently reading "The Greatest Lie" by Michael Youssef.
- Not many people know that I used to suck my thumb when I was little.
- A place I would love to visit sometime is the Billy Graham Museum and Library.
- I have many hobbies including baking, cooking, canning, sewing and working in my flower beds. I also like to go visit with friends who can't leave their home.
- If I had no responsibilities for the day I would spend my time listening to music, reading, and watching a good movie.
- A favorite passage of the Bible is 1 John 1:9 ~ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

I appreciate many things about Oak Grove. I especially appreciate our wonderful ministers, our music and my Sunday School Class and teacher. I appreciate that the people of our congregation are friendly, loving and caring. (Answer can be found hidden in this issue of the Oak Leaves marked with an *)

A Trip North

On Nov. 20, Joel & Andrea, Paul, Lena and Brady Kauffman flew to ND to spend almost a week with Joel's dad and sister's family. About a foot of snow accumulated while we were there, with high temperatures mostly in the teens, so cold weather didn't shock us when we got back! Following is an account of some of our time there according to Paul. Since he skipped Sunday, I'll say we enjoyed going to Joel's home church and spending the rest of the day at his sister Laura's. Other noteworthy happenings were the decision not to substitute swan for turkey and Lena's attempt to taste snow on a metal pole, but I digress....

When we went on our Thanksgiving trip we took an airplane. When we got there, we got in Uncle Kim and Aunt Laura's van and drove to Wolford. On the way we stopped at Denny's. When we got to Grandpa's house we got unpacked and then went to bed.

When I woke up on Monday I went downstairs and ate breakfast. For breakfast we had pancakes. Lena, Brady and I played with the toys Grandpa had. Alexis (Lexi) came and went outside with Lena. When Kyle and Emily got home from school I played a board game with Kyle. Lena played with Emily. Lexi took a nap. That night I went to Kyle's house to play Wii Sports™ Resort. I went back to Grandpa's.

Tuesday and Wednesday were about the same. Mommy did some cleaning and baking. Daddy worked on the computer and broken toilet (there were two bathrooms). On Wednesday Lena and I went over to Kyle's house to sleep for the night. *Joan Thoman

On Thanksgiving I woke up to see Kyle playing Wii Sports™ Resort. I played then switched over to Wii Fit™. Later Lena, Emily, and Lexi woke up. They played the Wii until close to Thanksgiving dinner. Dinner was very good. That afternoon the men watched football while the kids played upstairs. I slept at Kyle's again.

Friday was kind of the same but no Thanksgiving dinner. For lunch I had a sandwich and then said my goodbyes. We went to the airport and got on a plane, and I got comfortable in my chair. We arrived at Minneapolis and got on another plane. We arrived in Dayton around 9:45 PM.



A Time for Prayer

When Oak Grove started having a weekly prayer service three years ago, I began attending and really enjoyed the time spent with fellow believers for discussion and solitary prayer time. This time helped me center on God, listen to Him and enter into intercessory prayer for others. It became a very special hour in my week. Currently the prayer service is two times a month, second and fourth Wednesday evenings, at 7:00 PM. There is more involvement within the group with scripture reading, singing, meditation, quiet time, sharing thoughts, and group prayer time. We end each service with communion and pray the Lord's prayer together. Both types of prayer service remind me of the refrain of a hymn we used to sing:

*Alone with God, the world forbidden,
Alone with God O blest retreat!
Alone with God, and in Him hidden,
To hold with Him communion sweet.*

Even though the format has changed, "A Time for Prayer" continues to be very meaningful to me. I invite you to join us. *Esther Witmer*

In 2011, Oak Leaves plans to look at the ways each of the leadership elements at Oak Grove function, starting with the position of pastor. Below is an article Dick Barrett graciously took the time to write in response to some questions we sent him about being a pastor.

A Typical Week in the Life of a Pastor

by Dick Barrett

I recently experienced “a typical week,” if there is such a thing as “a typical week,” in the life of a pastor. Which is one of the reasons why I like my job so much. Every week, every day, is just a little bit different. For the last several years I have tried to take Monday’s off, but recently I have been experimenting with switching it to Friday’s. The purpose being to try and get an earlier start on my week, especially preparing for the sermon on Sunday, in case other situations or emergencies arise later in the week.

I started preparing for my next week’s message on Sunday afternoon and evening. First reading the Scripture passages and spending time in prayer with God, trying to discern what He is trying to say to me in His Word. What is the message that He has for me and the congregation?

On Monday morning I visited a member from the congregation at the hospital who was preparing for a same-day surgery. While it is impossible to meet with everyone before surgery, I have found it to be one of the most important aspects of my ministry. After the person was wheeled off to surgery I headed to the office to take care of some administrative responsibilities. On the way I stopped for coffee at *The Cream & Sugar Café* and met with a pastor friend who I normally meet with on Monday’s. On Monday afternoon I spent some more concentrated time on preparing the sermon for Sunday.

Tuesday morning found me back at my desk working on my sermon and planning for the worship services, which takes a little more time during the Advent season. Alex and I meet regularly on Tuesday mornings just to check in with one another, plan the week ahead, and spend some time in prayer. Tuesday afternoon found me continuing to work on my sermon and catching up on reading and answering e-mails that come in on a regular basis. In our busy lives it seems like e-mail has become one of the primary forms of

communication, replacing that of face-to-face contact. After a brief stop at home to have dinner with Mary and Erin, it was off to the Presbyterian church to meet with some of the pastors and members from the other local churches to plan for this year’s *Community Christmas Dinner*.

On Wednesday I attended several of Mr. Robert’s American Government classes at West Liberty-Salem School as part of the Bio-ethics Committee from Mary Rutan Hospital to talk about such things as end of life issues and organ donation. It was nice to see so many children and youth from the congregation while at the school. In between classes I returned to church to return some phone calls about requests for assistance from the West Liberty Cares Emergency Fund and to send out my weekly e-mail.

Thursday morning found me at one of my other most popular hang-outs, Bob Evans Restaurant, catching up with someone from church. No wonder why pastor’s struggle with their weight :) It was then off to the office to try and put the finishing touches on my sermon and finalize the services for Sunday. I usually try to have lunch at home with Mary on most days during the week. After lunch it was off to visit several from the congregation who are homebound. I try and save at least one afternoon a week to do the visiting, which I find to be one of the other most enjoyable aspects of ministry, just to get out and talk to people.

Finally, Friday, my day off! Yes, I thank God for Friday (T.G.I.F.) but I also thank Him for all the other days which I get to do the things that He has called me to do. I also thank Him for only one evening meeting this week. Tomorrow, Saturday, I will have breakfast with the Living Stones Sunday school class, which we just recently started doing once a month, go into the office for a couple of hours to practice my message and then spend the rest of Saturday looking forward to Sunday and the opportunity to worship my Savior and Lord, the highlight of my week. And then to start all over again.

A conversation with Jacob and Marceline Leichty

by Valerie Kauffman

Jake and Marce, as they like to be called, live on their own at Green Hills. They moved to West Liberty in 2007 from Rensselaer, Indiana. Jake Leichty, Jr., from Oak Grove, is one of their three sons. They love attending Oak Grove and having visitors at home. I had a nice time chatting with them recently about their lives.

They grew up in the Newton and Jasper County area of Indiana, not too far from Rensselaer and knew each other as kids. Jake's parents had been Amish and Marce's parents had been raised in Amish families. Both Jake and Marce grew up on busy farms. Jake was the middle of three brothers; he lost a sister to pneumonia as a small child. Marce had three sisters and one brother and was the second oldest.

The Depression affected many people in the area. Jake remembers that his father would let people have gardens on his land and pick the field corn when it was in the milk stage for food. Corn sold for about 10 cents a bushel and it was all hand-shucked. Sometimes Jake would herd cows along the railroad track. When a train came, the train would stop and let the cows get off the track before continuing.

Jake and Marce began dating at young peoples' get togethers. There were wiener roasts in the summer and pound suppers in the winter. A pound supper was where everybody would bring a pound of food. Marce was 16 at the time. They dated for a little over a year and decided to get married, with Marce's father's permission. Jake had rented a farm and they were married February 26, 1942, in one of the first "church weddings" at Burr Oak. After-wedding pranks were common, so after being driven around by their friends and thrown over a fence (Jake) they then, to their surprise, "had a kid the first night." Meaning that when they opened one of their wedding gifts, which was in a large box, a little goat inside said "BAA!"

Jake and Marce lived on their first farm for four years. There was no electricity or telephone and they lived on a dirt road. If the windmill didn't pump the water, they had to pump their own and also soften it with lye. They did have a washing machine with a gas motor. Along with other farm projects, they had 25 laying hens and 1500 broiler chickens. Jake also worked for a neighbor. Jake, Jr. was born in July of the year after they were married.

At their second farm, closer to town, they did have electricity and telephone service. They also had an icebox, but ice was expensive, so they often did without.

Jake and Marce were able to stay at their third farm for their remaining 40 years of farming. Their son Gerald was born in 1946 and Michael, their third son, was born in 1948. Through the years they were involved at Burr Oak Mennonite Church in various ways such as being a youth sponsor, trustee, and treasurer, teaching Bible school (Marce)—held in a public school in a combined effort with various churches—and driving the bus for Bible School (Jake). They remember the evangelistic "tent meetings" that were held for two weeks at a time. Later, in retirement, Jake mowed the grass in the church cemetery and around the church highway signs.

By 1967, the boys had all left home. While Marce had always helped on the farm, such as with the truck patch, she now became more directly involved in farm work—another tractor was purchased and Marce also helped haul grain to town. Their last crop year was 1985 and they lived on the farm for two more years after retirement, moving into town in 1987. The house in town was one that had been built by the students of the local school as vocational training; they were thrilled when their bid was accepted, even though it was lower than the usual selling price for the new house.

Marce has always loved to cook and entertain and wishes she could do more of that now. Her pastime is reading cookbooks. Jake used to collect interesting hand tools at auctions and try to figure out what they were used for. He also acquired some antique tractors and lots of hats.

Twenty years later, in 2007, they moved to West Liberty to start a new chapter in their lives. They now have 9 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren. Jake and Marce spoke of how the Lord has been good to them throughout their lives, in so many ways. They have gotten along well as a couple largely because they had both accepted the Lord before they were married and looked to the Lord for strength and guidance.

Now that they are living in West Liberty, Jake enjoys going places with Jake Jr., to machinery dealers and out for lunch, and Marce enjoys being near her daughter-in-law Grace, who does many things to help, such as bringing interesting articles to read or shopping. Jake and Marce especially enjoy being here close to some of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren where they can watch them grow and develop.

Jake and Marce spoke very warmly of Oak Grove and its people, commenting how the pastors

and members are so generous in caring for others. We are grateful for the life and presence of Jake and Marce at Oak Grove and appreciate the time they took to share about their lives. The next time you see them,

look for the twinkle in Jake's eye and the smile on Marce's face and you may just hear another story or two that didn't make it into this brief introduction. . .

Meserete Kristos College (Debre Zeit, Ethiopia)

From a letter to Oak Grove from Carl Hansen, Director of College Advancement:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff and students at Meserete Kristos College I wish to thank you for your gift of \$2400 for our College scholarship fund for Tigist Alamirew and your gift of \$287.50 which was received in August, 2010. Your partnership with us in this great work is deeply appreciated!

The mission of Meserete Kristos College is "to produce servant graduates passionately committed to the transformation of society." Through the College, dedicated evangelists and pastors who have labored for many years in conditions of extreme poverty, often with persecution, have been granted the opportunity to attend our College where past achievements are evaluated, understanding are increased, minds are stimulated, faith is deepened, and skills are sharpened to minister more effectively on new levels.

Already 474 students have graduated and are making a huge impact on the churches and societies of Ethiopia as pastors, evangelists, teachers and administrators in the congregations, in Orthodox Renewal groups, in head offices & regional offices of the churches, in radio ministries, in prison ministries, in development programs, in child sponsorship programs, in HIV-AIDs programs, etc. Because of their faithful and effective work, many prayers of thanksgiving and praise ascend to God. **And it is the generous and sacrificial gifts such as yours that have made all of this possible!**

After a busy summer with special programs for evangelists, for university student leaders, and for our masters program in conjunction with Eastern Mennonite Seminary, our regular students are back and deep into the fall semester studies.

A highlight this fall was to be able to host 185 delegates to the Meserete Kristos Church's annual General Assembly. We were able to keep them in our new dorm. Yes, the first half of the dorm is now complete and occupied by our students. After almost 3 years in building and with an outlay of close to one million dollars, we now see the second half will be completed around years end! This will give us room for 384 students. For all of us, this is a great achievement! Our next building project will be staff housing.

We hope you will continue in partnership with us, supporting us in prayer and with your gifts. Checks may be made payable to "MK College Link". Be sure to designate it for "MK College Building", or "MK College Operations" or "MK College Scholarships." Send it to: MK College Link, PO Box 1701, Harrisonburg, VA 22803
God bless you for your partnership!

Mennonite Publishing Network

A letter to the church thanks us for our donation. ". . . Pastors and other from our congregations tell us how much they appreciate curriculum, periodicals and books that help to form their identity as Christians with an Anabaptist outlook. These resources have a growing appeal to some Christians in other denominations and in the emerging church. . ."

Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA

A letter to the church thanks us for our donation and support. ". . . Conference has recently sponsored two workshops designed to help our congregations function in healthier ways. The first weekend in October saw us hosting, in partnership with Mennonite Mutual Aid, a worship designed to help the smaller congregations within Ohio Conference assess their viability and to determine how to become more vital as congregations. More than 14 congregations sent representatives to this one-day workshop. Response has been quite positive to the input as well as the tangible ways they could follow up with what they learned as they returned home.

The second workshop was on the final weekend of October. It was led by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, providing training for Conflict Transformation in the local congregation. Again, this important skill was most appreciated by the more than 70 persons in attendance at this one-day event. . .

. . . We also rejoice in the many new pastors that have begun their ministry within our conference congregations. Countless hours of time and energy went into the search process that was guided by our regional pastors working alongside the congregational search committee members. There is a deep sense of satisfaction when the job is completed and a new pastor begins his/her ministry. . ."

Adriel

From a letter from Erin Dye, Campus Chaplain:

". . . We've had incredible opportunities to better understand the need for service and the importance of being involved in our community. We feel blessed to join this community as adults and to have an opportunity to give back to those who poured into us while we were growing up here. I look forward to working with your congregation. We want our youth at Adriel to have an understanding of how important it is to be involved in a community and the support we can give one another. Thank you for what you are already doing to support us through your prayers, financial support, and encouragement! I hope that we can only build on this strong connection between us! "

"I'm so thankful for a supportive Church! Thank you! Looking forward to how our connection will grow." --Erin Dye

We look forward to receiving any contributions you may have for the next issue of Oak Leaves. The deadline is Jan. 23.
The Oak Leaves Committee: Valerie Kauffman, Esther Witmer and Lisa Hershberger.