

Oak Leaves

March
2011

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

First Crocus

by Christine Klocek-Lim

This morning, flowers cracked open
the earth's brown shell. Spring
leaves spilled everywhere
though winter's stern hand
could come down again at any moment
to break the delicate yolk
of a new bloom.

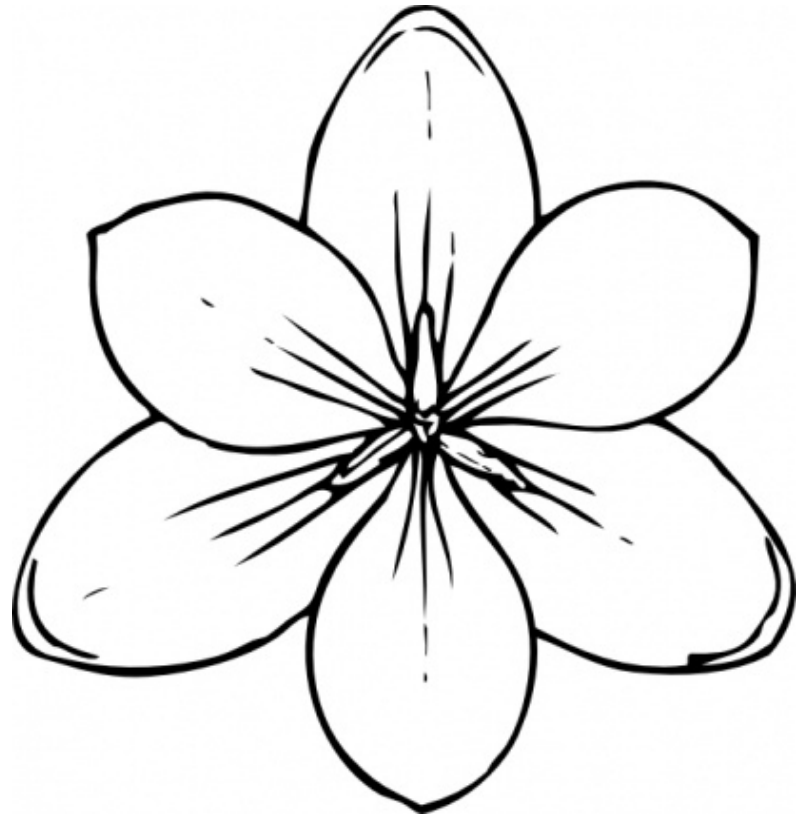
The crocus don't see this as they chatter
beneath a cheerful petal of spring sky.
They ignore the air's brisk arm
as they peer at their fresh stems, step
on the leftover fragments
of old leaves.

When the night wind twists them to pieces,
they will die like this: laughing,
tossing their brilliant heads
in the bitter air.

March Wind

March wind is a jolly fellow;
He likes to joke and play.
He turns umbrellas inside out
And blows men's hats away.

He calls the pussy willows
And whispers in each ear,
"Wake up you lazy little seeds;
Don't you know that spring is here?"



You can't see Canada across lake Erie, but you know it's
there. It's the same with spring. You have to have faith,
especially in Cleveland. ~Paul Fleischman

"It's snowing still," said Eeyore gloomily. "So it is." "And
freezing." "Is it?" "Yes," said Eeyore. "However," he
said, brightening up a little, "we haven't had an
earthquake lately." ~A.A. Milne

No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow.
~Proverb

Springtime is the land awakening. The March winds are
the morning yawn.

Quotes from www.quotearden.com

In this issue: 764 bags of food! Cooking demonstrations! Quilt piecing! 60,000 vitamins, Throwing rocks in the middle of 68! New Christian radio station, What does an elder do? Are you making room for God? Baby dedications: what do they mean? Prom King: 1985. . .guess who! And much more!

Thank you for all the contributions we received this month!

The deadline for the April issue is March 20.

The OL Committee: Lisa Hershberger, Esther Witmer and Valerie Kauffman.

Upcoming Community Events

Saturday, April 9 A Day of Inspiration with Rebecca Miller on "The Gift of Hospitality."
Jubilee Mennonite Church, Bellefontaine
See next page for more information

Friday, March 11 EMU Chambers Singers Spring break tour. Bethel
Mennonite Church, West Liberty



West Liberty Cares Food Pantry



Food given in the year:

- 2010** 764 bags: nearly 16 bags per week
30 families requested Thanksgiving food boxes and those boxes served 119 adults and children.
- 2009** 621 bags: 12 bags per week
- 2008** 672 bags: 13 bags per week

Thank you for giving to those in need in our community.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

March:

- 2 Alan Kauffman
- 3 Jennifer Seymour
- 5 Arlis Gascho
- 8 Phil Neer
- Joe Hartsel
- 9 Stan Thoman
- 10 Jenna Hostetler
- 11 Gretchen Christopher
- 12 Melanie Park
- 14 Reed Jones
- 15 Nicholas Yoder
- 19 Anna Kauffman
- 20 Andy Alspaugh
- 21 Alyssa Hostetler
- Beth Yoder
- 22 Caleb Siegenthaler
- 23 Bia Stoltzfus
- 24 Steve Yoder
- 27 Michael Hostetler
- 29 Lucas Stoltzfus
- 30 Jason King

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

March:

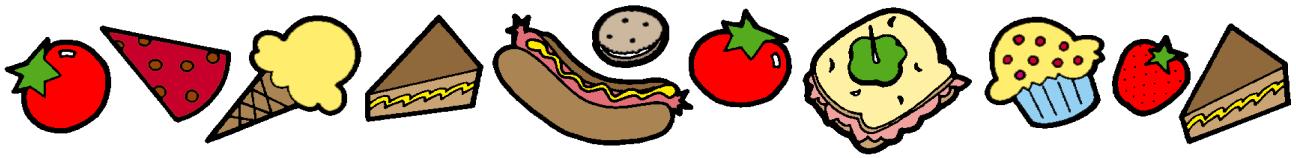
- 1 Tim and Kristen Siegenthaler
- 11 Phil and Shan Neer
- 27 Kirk and Tara Larson



Proverbs 30:18-19

"There are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a maiden."

TRIVIA: The name of March comes from ancient Rome, when March was the first month of the year and named Martius after Mars, the Roman god of war. In Rome, where the climate is Mediterranean, March was the first month of spring, a logical point for the beginning of the year as well as the start of the military campaign season. January became the first month of the calendar year either under King Numa Pompilius (c. 713 BC) or under the Decemvirs about 450 BC (Roman writers differ). The numbered year began on March 1 in Russia until the end of the 15th century. Great Britain and its colonies continued to use March 25 until 1752, which was when they ultimately adopted the Gregorian calendar. Many other cultures and religions still celebrate the beginning of the New Year in March. -Wikipedia.org



OHIO MENNONITE WOMEN DAY OF INSPIRATION

APRIL 9, 2011
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

JUBILEE MENNONITE CHURCH
BELLEFONTAINE, OHIO

O TASTE AND SEE

9:45 Prelude	Grace Leichty
10:00 Welcome	Belinda Yoder
Worship in Music	Mary Esh
Business and Reports	Jean Emery
Offering	Adriel School, Warm Clothes for Kids
Special Music	Peace Singers: Peace Mennonite Church: Elyria, OH
Speaker	Rebecca Miller

Lunch provided (Donations accepted)

1:00 Workshops

1. "Blessed are the Peacemakers" presented by Erin Dye, Chaplain at Adriel. Be an advocate for God's desire for reconciliation by spending time getting to know more about Adriel's youth. You'll have an opportunity to learn more about how God is working through Adriel to care for troubled youth as well as how you can carry the burdens of the broken in this world. As Adriel has a history of using quilting as a ministry, we will piece together a representation of the variety of emotions our youth experience. Please join us in caring for our youth.
2. Rachel Moreland wrote a study guide to go with the cookbook, "Simply in Season". She will be sharing about living our faith "simply" in all the seasons of our life.

2:00 Worship in Music	Mary Esh
Special Music	Peace Singers
Speaker	Rebecca Miller

3:00 Dismissal	Jean Emery
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Rebecca Miller is the owner of "Rebecca's Bistro" in Walnut Creek, Ohio. She enjoys cooking with her husband, Jim. They are parents of two married sons and attend Grace Mennonite Church. Rebecca has a real gift of hospitality which she uses entertaining guests in her home as well as the "Bistro". She feels hospitality is a God-given gift we can all use daily. She will tell us how we can use things we have in our homes to use our gift of hospitality. She will share about using this gift from a Biblical perspective and give us practical advice we can use in our daily lives. She will be doing a cooking demonstration in the afternoon.

Medicine of the Month Campaign (Haiti Mission 2011)

Preparations are being made for select members of local congregations to participate in a medical and dental ministry in Haiti. While the weeklong trip in October is made up of a medical/dental team, the primary focus is sharing God's love.

A very important component of this ministry is the medical supplies that the team needs to take with them. During a typical clinic week, a team will see approximately 2,000 patients. Nearly 35~40% will be children or infants. When the team arrives in Haiti, they will divide their medications among the villages. Whatever the team is able to bring with them is all that they will have available during that week. More is always welcome. God always has and always will provide. Here is how you can help.

Below is a list of over-the-counter medicines that are needed for this mission trip. Here are some things to remember when purchasing medicines to donate.

- Medicines do not need to be name brand or extra strength.
Haitian people are not accustomed to taking medication, hence a smaller dosage aspirin will have a positive effect on their system.
- Make sure all medications are sealed and have an expiration dates well beyond October 2011.
Outdated medicines cannot be used.

The Outreach Committee "Medicine of the Month" campaign begins Sunday, February 27. There will be a medicine box in the narthex to accept your medications and a large medicine bottle to accept cash donations for prescription drugs that will be purchased for the trip. Outreach will periodically report the progress of our "Medicine of the Month" campaign. This medicine is simply a tool that we can use to show people that Christ is the Great Physician. God bless these efforts.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Ttl Count Needed</u>
Multi-Vitamins	60,000
Children's Vitamins	30,000
Vitamin infant drops	200
Acetaminophen	25,000
Ibuprofen	20,000
Acet/Ibu Liquid	1,000
Antacid (chewable)	40,000
Zantac/Tagamet	5,000
Eye Drops (saline or w/THZ)	1,000
Antifungal skin cream	1,000
Topical cortisone cream	400
Topical antibiotic cream	1,000
Vaginal antifungal cream	200
Skin lotion/Burn cream	250
Bandages, gauze, tape, etc	200



The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.
He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;
he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.
For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.

Psalm 103:8-13 NIV

WHO AM I? *Answer can be found hidden in this issue of the Oak Leaves marked with an **

I grew up in West Liberty, Ohio

I have great childhood memories of going on the truck route with my grandfather and turning off the truck while we were driving and listening to it backfire.

My first job was working with my dad at the gas station.

I am currently reading some things by Bruce Hooley.

Not many people know that when I was young, I got caught throwing rocks in the middle of Route 68. The milkman brought me back to my grandfather's house. My dad and grandfather were not happy!

I would love to visit Alaska. I also think it would be fun to travel to all the football stadiums in the US.

If I had no work responsibilities and could do whatever I wanted for the day, I would watch sports.

I verse from the Bible that is meaningful to me is Matthew 6:34 ~ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

I appreciate how, in crisis, our church rallies around each other and supports each other.



WHO AM I? *Answer can be found hidden in this issue of the Oak Leaves marked with an ***

I was born in Union County, Ohio and I grew up in a farming community near Raymond.

A favorite childhood memory is riding our bicycles to and from our grandparents and spending time with them.

My first job was working on a dairy farm milking cows.

John Grisham is one of my favorite authors. I am currently reading *A Hole in Our Gospel* by Richard Stearns.

Not many people know that I enjoy drawing (still life portraits).

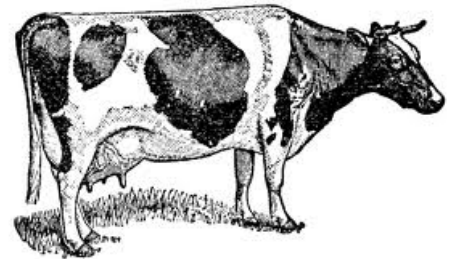
I plan to return to Italy to vacation versus just traveling on business.

I buy/sell antique furniture, enjoy home renovations, gardening, and am interested in genealogy (local history).

If I had no work responsibilities for a whole day I would spend it by going crazy! I don't do well with sitting around. I have to be doing something.

A meaningful passage of the Bible to me is Philippians 4: 4-7 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

I appreciate Oak Grove's generosity towards those who are less fortunate and/or dealing with a hardship



DID YOU KNOW...

. . .that Reed Jones is the new bass player for *Audie Blaylock & Redline*, an award winning bluegrass band based out of Fort Wayne, Indiana. He started playing with them in January. He joins Audie Blaylock (guitar, lead vocals) from Fort Wayne, Patrick McAvinue (fiddle) from Maryland, and Russ Carson (banjo) from Pennsylvania. Audie Blaylock & Redline has an impressive tour schedule this year and the band will be traveling to shows in Colorado, Texas, Arizona, Minnesota, New York, California, Canada and more.



Audie Blaylock & Redline began the new year with the #1 bluegrass song in the country with “*Cryin Heart Blues*” topping the respected Bluegrass Unlimited Magazine’s National Bluegrass Survey Top 30 Song Chart for January 2011.

Check out the website at <http://www.audieblaylock.com> where you can watch a video of a recent performance on the home-page.

Christian Radio Station coming to the Area

This month's Outreach Committee meeting was highlighted with a guest speaker, Mark Boyer, from Soaring Eagle Promotions on the introduction of a new FM radio station (SHINE FM) to the West Central Ohio area. Mr. Boyer stated that the decision to locate in the Logan/Campaign county areas was an easy one to make after research showed there was no consistent Christian radio station signal within the immediate area.

In 2009, this 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization of Soaring Eagle Promotions (SEP) acquired the permits for two FM signals with the intent to create a radio station that reflects God's love by serving and supporting the community. Their focus is to collaborate with local churches and organizations “to build a bridge into the community” to meet spiritual and physical needs while providing the church and local organizations a voice into the community.

SHINE FM representatives have been working with local pastors and organizations in Logan County sharing their vision. As of this date, SHINE FM owns the permits for 88.5 FM and 88.9 FM, has finalized office/studio locations in downtown Bellefontaine, has launched an on-line streaming through their website, and most recently hosted the Barlow Girl and Reilly concert at the Holland Theatre in Bellefontaine with over 500 people attending.

SHINE FM's next step is to begin broadcasting, from Logan County, on 88.9 FM signal by June 1 with 88.5 FM signal start-up scheduled for the fall of 2011. A fund raising drive called The SHINE 2011 campaign will be launched this spring to develop a group of 2011 contributors supporting the station. The Outreach Committee is considering inviting Mr. Boyer to speak to the congregation, in the future to answer any questions members might have.



Memory Fun: (Ages 4 to 10) 1 or more players Collect 10 to 20 small objects on a tray. Study them for a few minutes and then cover them up with a towel. Try to remember what was on the tray.

From 101 Activities for Siblings who Squabble by Linda Williams Aber

The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You by John Ortberg. The Peacemakers Sunday school class will be studying this book starting today. You are welcome to join them. They meet in the basement near the water fountain.

So. . .What Do Elders Really Do, Anyway?

Part II of a series on leadership at Oak Grove

By Willie Stoltzfus



Recently Valerie Kauffman asked me if I'd write something for Oak Leaves about what an elder does at Oak Grove, so this article stems from that request. I hope it gives some insight as to what the elders really do.

The primary function of the elders is "to provide spiritual leadership to the life of the congregation, overseeing its spiritual and organizational life and articulation and implementation of its vision". So what does that really mean and what does it look like?

Prayer - We elders are committed to praying for each one of the members of our congregation. "Care Groups" are in place so that each elder prays regularly for their "care group". This means that you are being prayed for regularly! Our prayers also include special needs in our congregation, community and the world. So if there is something in particular you would like prayer for, please do not hesitate to contact an elder or pastor.



Visioning - As elders we spend time "visioning". Recently we spent time reviewing and processing Oak Grove's vision statement. We have read books such as "Twelve Keys to an Effective Church" to help us in this process, to evaluate the "health" of Oak Grove, as well as seek direction and vision for the future. Our goal is to be sensitive to God's leading as we explore spiritual direction for Oak Grove. During elder retreats we spend time in prayer and worship, and have discussion and sharing of ideas regarding the spiritual and organizational life of our congregation. Particularly meaningful times to me, have been sharing our own spiritual journeys, times of encouragement and prayer (corporate and individual), and times of sharing communion as an elder body.

Accountability and support - As elders we are

committed to being the group that interacts more personally with our pastor and Associate pastor. We encourage the pastors and serve as sounding boards for issues and concerns, as well as review the time spent in administrative work and ministry at Oak Grove, providing accountability and encouragement in all aspects of their life.

Leadership, direction, discernment and encouragement - One elder is a representative for the elder group, and serves as a member of Church Council. The goal is to communicate issues, concerns and provide discernment in the processing of church decision making, as well as offer encouragement and support to the church leaders at Oak Grove. As you may have noticed, elders are often seen in leadership roles during Worship services (communion, baptisms, etc.) and at other church events. The elders are also called to be leaders in the absence of pastor(s), such as this past summer when Dick was on sabbatical.

Listening, loving and caring - One of our roles is that of "caring for the body". As I already mentioned we spend much time in prayer, but we also spend time listening to and responding to needs, concerns and issues that arise particularly in our congregation. This is one way we attempt to "carry each others' burdens" and rejoice in "the joys of life". I can't help but observe that we are very blessed at Oak Grove, to have a church family that is great at responding to the needs of others when needs arise! Good teamwork in action!

When I look at the Elder job description it's a bit overwhelming, and with all the listed expectations, I often feel unworthy and unprepared for all it requires. But because I have felt called to be an elder, I am committed to fulfill this calling, to serve to the best of my ability, continually seeking God in the midst of "living life". Does it mean that I (we elders) "have it all together"? Heavens, no! Just as each of you, we are called to serve at Oak Grove-fellow believers responding to God's call!

IMPORTANT NOTE FROM STEWARDSHIP AND THE CHURCH TREASURERS

February 2011 (Was also distributed the bulletin and by email)

First, we want to thank you for your faithful giving! You make the work of Stewardship Committee much easier when you give and provide for our church and help others as well.

In order to comply with IRS regulations on tax deductible gifts to churches, we are implementing some changes to the giving of receipts. (Cancelled checks and an envelope system are no longer sufficient documentation for the IRS.) We now have software to track and report giving, so each contributor will be given a number to use on each contribution. You will then be issued yearly giving statements with all contributions listed by date and amount. You have several options for giving:

1. **All persons who write checks** will write their assigned number on each check. (If you already have a number, you will just continue to use it.) This number should be put on all contributions. Your number on the check is sufficient; however, if you are giving to several different funds, you should use an envelope to indicate the different funds to which you are giving. **Kelly Taylor



2. **Cash gifts must be** put into giving envelopes with your number on the envelope if you want a receipt. If you do not need a receipt, you do not need to use your number. However, we ask that you use the assigned number if you think there is any chance you will need a receipt.

3. Another option is to use “**direct giving**” in which donations are automatically withdrawn from your checking account on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis. Forms to fill out for this are on the narthex table--filled out forms should be given to Joel Kauffman. This direct/electronic giving is then automatically imported into our software and makes processing very easy. You can also indicate which funds you want to give to on the form.



4. Gifts may also be given by going to the **link on the Oak Grove webpage** and using your credit card. (There is a 3% fee with this method, but it makes giving very easy for those who wish to use this option--perhaps while on vacation, or from someone who is not local but wishes to give to OG, etc.

If you have questions or need more information, please talk with Sara, Joel, or Grace.

Our life is a short time in expectation, a time in which sadness and joy kiss each other at every moment. There is a quality of sadness that pervades all the moments of our life. It seems that there is no such thing as a clear-cut pure joy, but that even in the most happy moments of our existence we sense a tinge of sadness. In every satisfaction, there is an awareness of limitations. In every success, there is the fear of jealousy. Behind every smile, there is a tear. In every embrace, there is loneliness. In every friendship, distance. And in all forms of light, there is the knowledge of surrounding darkness. . . But this intimate experience in which every bit of life is touched by a bit of death can point us beyond the limits of our existence. It can do so by making us look forward in expectation to the day when our hearts will be filled with perfect joy, a joy that no one shall take away from us. HENRI NOUWEN

If knowing the answers to life's questions is absolutely necessary to you, then forget the journey. You will never make it, for this is a journey of unknowables--of unanswered questions, enigmas, incomprehensibles, and most of all, things unfair. MADAME JEANNE GUYON

I think all Christians would agree with me if I said that though Christianity seems at first to be all about morality, all about duties and rules and guilt and virtue, yet it leads you on, out of all that, into something beyond. One has a glimpse of a country where they do not talk of those things, expect perhaps as a joke. Every one there is filled with what we should call goodness as a mirror is filled with light. But they do not call it goodness. They do not call it anything. They are not thinking of it. They are too busy looking at the source from which it comes. C.S. LEWIS

Dick's Dialogue

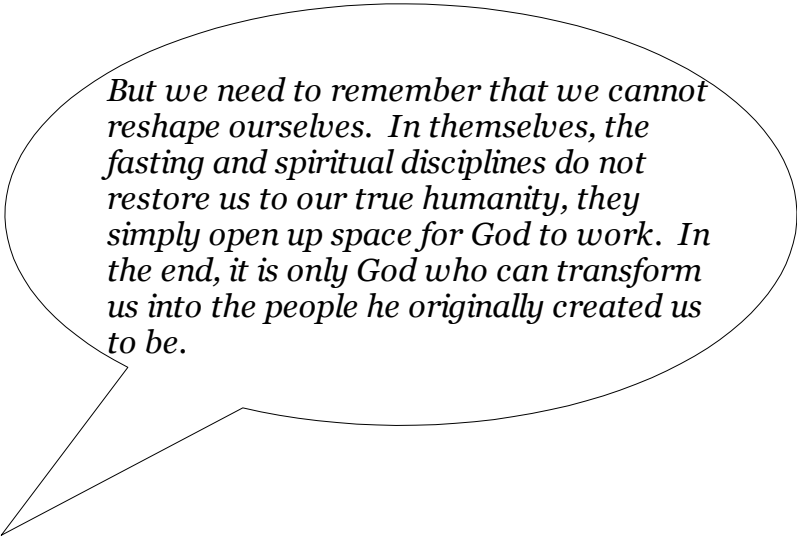
Becoming Authentically Human: Called and Shaped by Jesus

This month begins the Lenten season. This year Lent begins on Wednesday, March 9th, traditionally celebrated as Ash Wednesday by Christians throughout the world, and then continues for six Sundays, ending Holy Week which begins on Palm Sunday and ends on Good Friday, just prior to the celebration of Easter. Whereas Advent is the season of the year in which we prepare our hearts for the coming of the Christ child, culminating with Christmas, Lent is the season in which we reflect on Jesus' last days here on earth, culminating in his death on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. We need to be reminded each year that there is no resurrection, no offer of new life, without Jesus' death on the cross and the dying to our old life. Lent should be the season of the church year in which we focus particular attention on foundational questions of our existence.

This year our Lenten theme is entitled "*Becoming Authentically Human: Called and Shaped by Jesus.*" We are inviting you to ask such questions as: What does it mean for us to be created and then recreated in the image of God? How may we become *authentically* human? How do we become the people God created us to be?

The word *authentic* means to be genuine, real, worthy of trust. As humans, what is our *authentic* nature? The Bible tells us that we were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), but because of the fall our *authentic* nature has been corrupted by sin. There is only one person who ever walked the face of this earth who was not corrupted by sin and that is God's own Son, Jesus Christ. It is only through Him and what He did for us on the cross, dying and rising to new life, the power of His resurrection, and us being empowered by His Holy Spirit that we can be restored to our *authentic* human nature.

Becoming Authentically Human is first and foremost about what God is doing. Becoming human is the work of the triune God: God the Creator; Jesus the Redeemer; and the Holy Spirit. Leave God out of the equation, and there is no way that we can become truly *authentic* humans. The challenge for all of us is to try and determine what aspects of our lives cause us to be inauthentic. We are surrounded by a host of pressure which causes us to become less-than-human, to become much less of what God created us to be. Lent is a season



But we need to remember that we cannot reshape ourselves. In themselves, the fasting and spiritual disciplines do not restore us to our true humanity, they simply open up space for God to work. In the end, it is only God who can transform us into the people he originally created us to be.

to try and release some of that pressure, to "repent" (turn from) all that reduces our true humanity. It should be a season of fasting in which we choose to abstain from those things that we grasp hold of too tightly, whether it be food, television, the internet, Facebook, sports, too much work, or much more sinful behaviors, all which take us away from our relationship with God. At the same time it is a season in which we should be turning to disciplines which turn us towards God: Christian disciplines like prayer, solitude, Bible study, simplicity and service. But we need to remember that we cannot reshape ourselves. In themselves, the fasting and spiritual disciplines do not restore us to our true humanity, they simply open up space for God to work. In the end, it is only God who can transform us into the people he originally created us to be. Transformed into the image (likeness) of his own Son, Jesus, the image of the invisible God.

Of course God created us to be in community with other human beings. That is part of what being *authentically human* is about. We need to constantly remind ourselves that throughout history God has primarily not *called and shaped* individuals but has *called and shaped* a people to be his own.

This Lenten season we invite you to participate collectively as the body of Christ, the community here at Oak Grove, in a season of fasting and Christian Spiritual disciplines, which will allow God to recreate us and shape us into the people that He wants us to be, *authentic human beings*, created in his image, and re-created in the image of His Son, Jesus, the image of the invisible God. During the period of Lent we encourage you to fast from at least one behavior which is distracting you from your relationship with God, which is ultimately causing you to be inauthentic. And we invite you to participate in some of the Christian Spiritual

disciplines. During the Lenten season, beginning on Ash Wednesday, when we will be having a special prayer service, we will be holding our *Time for Prayer* each Wednesday evening from 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. We will try and mix up the different elements and format; some evenings their might be more quiet time, others more litany, others more music, some communion, etc. Even if you have not participated in the *Time for Prayer* on a regular basis, the six or seven Wednesdays during the Lenten season provide a manageable time for God to reshape you individually, and us collectively as a church. During the period of Lent the Scripture readings for each Sunday will be in the bulletin the previous week. We encourage you to read the Scripture passages during the week, perhaps one each day (which will still give you three days with no specific reading). Spend some time reflecting on how God may be speaking to you or the church through the passage and perhaps even write a personal devotion which you might want to keep in

a Lenten journal. In each of the Wednesday e-mails during Lent there will be three guiding questions to reflect on prior to Sunday's service and it is our hope and prayer that many of you will be willing to share during our *Testimony Time* in each of our services.

God will transform us and shape us only to the extent in which we allow room in our lives for Him to do that. It is my prayer that this Lenten season we may take the time and the opportunities provided to allow God to do just that. To transform and to re-shape us into the people He created us to be, *authentic* human beings created in His image and re-created through His Son, Jesus, through the power of his death on the cross, His resurrection, and the empowerment of His Holy Spirit.

*Sharing the Love of Christ in our
community and around the world,*

Pastor Dick

Our Very Best Friend

Imagine that you have a friend who lives in your neighborhood. Sometimes, she stops by your home or calls you every day, usually when she's struggling with some sort of problem. She talks for hours, though she rarely asks for your advice. You listen to her patiently. In fact, when she calls, you drop whatever you're doing just to give her your attention.

She seems to appreciate your friendship. What's strange, however, is that when your friend's situation starts to improve, you rarely hear from her. You can go days, even weeks, without hearing from her.

What's stranger still is that whenever you want to talk to this friend, she never has time for you. She never returns your phone calls. She never reads the letters or e-mails you send to her. When you finally meet up with her and start to tell her about something important, you can see she's not listening.

Unfortunately, we sometimes act just like this friend in our relationship with Jesus. We fall into the habit of talking to him only when we need something. When our lives are going well, we may avoid Jesus. Though He is always attentive whenever we call out for help, we don't always take the time to listen to what our Lord has to say to us through His Word.

When Jesus was transfigured high on a mountain, God's voice proclaimed from a cloud, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!" (Mark 9:7) Jesus continues to speak through us today through the scriptures and through the proclamation of His Word. When we fail to take time to regularly delve into the Bible, worship, and pray, we shut ourselves off from what Christ has to say to us.

One day our son came home singing a song he learned at Sunday school. "Oh, Jesus is my Friend," he chanted. Jesus is, of course, our Savior, the one who died and rose again that we might be reconciled with God and live eternally. As Sam is learning, Jesus is also our Friend, the One who walks with us through every moment of our life on earth. Jesus is our very best Friend, who would do anything for us, even give His life to save us.

One of our tasks as Christian parents is to help our children see that Jesus is also their best Friend. When we read the Bible, pray and attend worship as a family, we are taking time to listen to what our Friend has to say to us. So we ask ourselves: what kinds of friends are we to Jesus? Do we share all the moments of our lives with Him or do we talk to Him only when we need something? Do we listen to what He has to say? And what kind of example are we giving to our children? Do they know how to treat their very best Friend?

From Timeouts with God: Meditations for Parents by Rochelle Melander and Harold Eppley

My Thoughts on Baby Dedications

By Mike Hostetler

Every time we have a baby dedication at Oak Grove it brings back memories of standing up front three times with my own daughters (Erica was dedicated in Kansas). It's such a happy time, everyone is smiling, parents - grandparents - relatives and friends. New babies are the "life blood" of our church. They give us hope, joy and inspiration. Some move on to life elsewhere and some stay to give us the next generation of leadership.



Baby dedications are pretty much routine. Proud parents, siblings, and other family members stand up and say nice things and then the congregation is invited to stand and to "show support," reading #791 from the hymnal.

"You have offered your child
To the strong and tender providence of God.
We rejoice with you and give thanks
For the gift of your child.
We promise, with humility and seriousness,
To share in your child's nurture and well-being.
We will support, by our example and words,
Your efforts to provide a loving and caring home,
Where trust in God grows and Christ's way is chosen.
Our prayers will be with you and for you.
May our shared life and witness
Help make your task both joyful and fruitful."

That's when the hair always stands up on the back of my neck. "We promise to share in your child's nurture and well being. We will support, by our example and words, your effort to provide a loving and caring home . . ."

That really sounds good but do we really comprehend the implications? It's easy to watch children grow up over the years, do well in school, Sunday school, sports, and proudly see them go off to college or a good job.

But what if things don't go so well? Perhaps it's drugs, alcohol, hanging with the wrong crowd, or criminal activity? Would I still be willing to "share in your child's nurture and well being" or would I back off and say "wow what a mess they've got?" What if one of ours suffered a major disability? Now you see where I'm coming from.

I am amazed today as I was five years ago at Oak Grove's dedication and concern for Jenna's nurture and well being! The outpouring of concern and support shows no sign of slowing down. The time and effort given to Jenna's well being is humbling and almost embarrassing. "Surely, there are others who need help too!" Sometimes it feels like too many of Oak Grove's resources have gone to her, but I also recognize that her needs are unique. It has been well proven that when people stand and read #791 at Oak Grove, they take what they say seriously and commit themselves for the "long haul."

Jenna is faced daily with many difficulties, but thanks mainly to this church, her financial needs have been met and providing her material needs have not been an issue. You have well provided for her "nurture and well being." By your "example and words," through five difficult years, you have enabled Nancy and me to "provide a loving and caring home." It's interesting that Jenna's closest and supportive friends, Ashley Overholt and Grace Yoder were nurtured at Oak Grove.



I'm not sure how to end, except to say, "thank you - job well done!"

All God's Children

Even though America has come a long way in terms of race relations—far more than many other countries of the world—stereotypes do still exist. Perhaps there are some people you'd rather not have as neighbors. Certain nationalities draw your suspicions. They have customs and habits that feel—(to use a fitting word)—"foreign" to you.

But while home and family and patriotism are each good things, we must always be careful about letting natural mind-sets overrule biblical ones. Just because a bigoted attitude of yours is embraced and encouraged by your friends doesn't mean it's the right one for you to have. When you have an automatic, negative reflex that lights up whenever you see a person of another race or national origin, you're assuming a superiority that isn't really there. *Jack Overholt

And you're forgetting that one reason why heaven is so heavenly is because it's the biggest melting pot of all.

"After this I looked," the apostle John said, "and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9). This preview of heaven's population simply cannot be allowed to land on our ears and not logically affect the way we treat people whose heritage and skin color are different from ours. Jesus Christ can rule in anyone's heart. Let's make sure he's ruling in ours.

Prayer: I ask you, Lord, to take an axe to my prejudices, that I would not look down on anyone, but would rather be dedicated like never before to your call to make disciples of all nations.

From Joe Gibbs' Website at www.GamePlanForLife.com

Google Art Project

Had enough snow, ice, cold weather and gray? Visit an art museum--from your home computer!

Check out: <http://www.googleartproject.com/> Explore many art museums around the world, such as the Museum of Metropolitan Art (MoMA) in New York or the National Gallery in London.



Left: PROM KING 1985!

Can you guess who this man is?!?

Below: "Best Looking!"

*Who is this handsome dude?
(Same person as at left).*

*In case this doesn't copy well
or you just want to know the
answer, check out the
bulletin board by the library.
Hint: respect your elders!*

