



# Oak Leaves



*The newsletter of Oak Grove Mennonite Church, West Liberty, Ohio*      *September 2011*

## The Oak

*by James Russell Lowell*

What gnarled stretch, what depth of shade, is his?  
There needs no crown to mark the forest's king;  
How in his leaves outshines full summer's bliss!  
Sun, storm, rain, dew, to him their tribute bring,  
Which he, with such benignant royalty  
Accepts, as overpayeth what is lent;  
All nature seems his vassal proud to be,  
And cunning only for his ornament.

How towers he, too, amid the billowed snows,  
An unquelled exile from the summer's throne,  
Whose plain, uncintured front more kingly shows,  
Now that the obscuring courtier leaves are flown.  
His boughs make music of the winter air,  
Jewelled with sleet, like some cathedral front  
Where clinging snow-flakes with quaint art repair  
The dents and furrows of Time's envious brunt.

How doth his patient strength the rude March wind  
Persuade to seem glad breaths of summer breeze,  
And win the soil that fain would be unkind,  
To swell his revenues with proud increase!  
He is the gem; and all the landscape wide  
(So doth his grandeur isolate the sense)  
Seems but the setting, worthless all beside,  
An empty socket, were he fallen thence.

So, from oft converse with life's wintry gales,  
Should man learn how to clasp with tougher roots  
The inspiring earth; - how otherwise avails  
The leaf-creating sap that sunward shoots?  
So every year that falls with noiseless flake  
Should fill old scars up on the stormward side,  
And make hoar age revered for age's sake,  
Not for traditions of youth's leafy pride.

So, from the pinched soil of a churlish fate,  
True hearts compel the sap of sturdier growth,  
So between earth and heaven stand simply great,  
That these shall seem but their attendants both;  
For nature's forces, with obedient zeal  
Wait on the rooted faith and oaken will,  
As quickly the pretender's cheat they feel,  
And turn mad Pucks to flout and mock him still.

Lord! all Thy works are lessons - each contains  
Some emblem of man's all-containing soul;  
Shall he make fruitless all Thy glorious pains,  
Delving within Thy grace an eyeless mole?  
Make me the least of Thy Dodona-grove,  
Cause me some message of Thy truth to bring,  
Speak but a word through me, nor let Thy love  
Among my boughs disdain to perch and sing.

## The Camp Luz Board of Trustees announces that. . .

Andrew Michaels has been selected to be the new Director for Camp Luz in Kidron, Ohio. Andrew's experience at Camp Luz includes being the Program Director the past six years as well as serving on summer staff the previous six years. He has a Bachelor of Science in Camping Recreation and Outdoor Ministries from Eastern Mennonite University and believes passionately in the Camp Luz purpose statement: "Freely Proclaiming the Radical Hope of Jesus Christ to the Next Generation."

Andrew has a vision for the future of Camp Luz, and the board welcomes him as the new director. Please continue to pray for Andrew and the staff at Camp Luz as they prepare for this transition which "officially" begins September 1st.



Deb Horst

Camp Director

Visit Deb's blog: <http://theresasermonineverything.blogspot.com>

## Stewardship University



Saturday Nov.19, 2011, from 8 am to 1:15 pm (includes lunch)

First Mennonite Church in Bluffton, Ohio

Workshops focusing on faith and finances including:

Living With "Enough"; Raising Money-Smart Kids; Investing Can Glorify God; Making your wishes known; Do Your Future A Favor; Developing a Stellar Credit Rating

Instructors include; Geoff Bullock, LSS, Lynn Miller, Vyron Schmidt, Beryl Jantzi

Sponsored by Everence. *Need a hand? Practical solutions for your life.*

Call (800) 348-7468, ext. 3269 for more information.

## Kindling available

Larry Steider has lots of extra kindling that he would like to give away.



If you could use some, please contact Larry at 465-3183.

**Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's great mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual [reasonable] act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, according to the measure of faith God has given to you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern dilligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

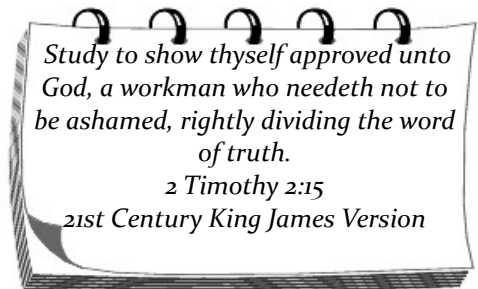
*Romans 12:1-8*

# Summer Favorites

*We asked the Youth, Jr High, and Primary Department kids to share some of their favorite things from this past summer...*

- I worked at Camp Luz for most of the summer and went on a cruise with my family to Key West, Florida & Cozumel, Mexico. I also went to Youth Convention. I also really enjoyed spending time with family and friends. - *Alyssa Kauffman*
- This summer I enjoyed sleeping a lot, running a lot, going to Youth Convention, going to Neo Cross Country Camp and zip lining. -*David Patterson*
- My favorite part of summer is sleeping in late and staying up late and I liked the break from school. Some fun things I did were athletics and traveling to New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Virginia. - *Lucas Stoltzfus*
- Some fun things I did this summer was going to Youth Convention, Band Camp, golfing and camping. We took a vacation camping at Sleeping Bear Dunes in Michigan. – *Matt Kauffman*
- A fun thing I did this summer was going to see Harry Potter at midnight. – *Katie Overholt*
- This summer I was a part of Fair and Youth Convention. I also enjoyed a vacation to Tennessee and had fun at Dollywood and The Dixie Stampede. – *Bekah Kratz*
- This summer I enjoyed being at home instead of school, and being with my sisters all summer. We took a trip to Michigan like we always do. Some fun thing I did were playing soccer, hanging out with friends, going to Youth Convention and Band Camp. – *Rose Yoder*
- This summer I had a lot of fun playing soccer. We also took a vacation to North Carolina. – *Josh Childs*
- This summer I went to West Virginia for Soccer camp and had fun going to a Kenny Chesney Concert. –*Brad Stengel*
- I went to New York this summer and had fun spending time with my family and friends. – *Erin Barrett*
- Some fun things that our family did is that we went out west! We went to California and Oregon. We hiked a lot. We even hiked in snow! Vacation was a BLAST!! – *Nikolas Yoder*
- My favorite part of summer was Camp Luz with a lot of my friends. Also, my family went on a 5-day cruise! – *Isaac Kauffman*
- Our family went to California for vacation. My favorite part of the summer was going to the beach. I also had fun at Camp Luz. – *Lily Yoder*
- This summer I went to Band Camp and Camp Luz. Our family also went to Lake Michigan for a camping trip. – *Christy Kauffman*
- Our family went to Colorado for a family reunion. A favorite memory was going to the Badlands. – *Jason Yoder*
- My favorite thing about this summer was doing the swim team and eating out with my best friends after a swim meet on my birthday. – *Jacob Regier*
- I went rappelling at Camp Luz. We took a trip to Tennessee too. – *Josiah Kratz*
- My favorite part of the summer was going to Camp Luz. – *Katie Hartsel*
- A fun thing we did this summer was going to North Carolina. – *Jacob Childs*
- Having friends over was great! – *Jarrod Shoemaker*
- Eating ice cream and going to Camp Cotubic were my favorite things – *Paul Kauffman*
- Vacation was great! – *Peter Kratz*
- Swimming at Camp Cotubic was really fun. – *Matthew Childs*
- Spending a week at Grandma & Grandpa's house was really fun. – *Anna Kauffman*
- We played "Just Dance 2" with my cousins. – *Rosie Neer*
- We went to San Francisco and walked on the Golden Gate Bridge! – *Evan Kauffman*
- I liked starting flag football practice. – *Hayden King*
- We went to Deer Creek State Park and I learned to water-ski and played in the pool. – *Brittany Neer*
- Learning to water-ski was fun. – *Courtney Neer*

- I liked learning to water-ski and playing “Just Dance 2” – *Laura Neer*
- Swimming in the pool was fun. – *Daniel Neer*
- I had fun swimming at Grandma’s and going to the fair. I also liked school shopping with Mom. – *Emma Kauffman*
- I liked going down the waterslide at my cousin’s pool. I liked our vacation to Lake Michigan. It is a huge lake – I couldn’t see the other side and there was lots of sand. I also like going to our pool – it is very close to our house and we can just walk there. – *Neil Kauffman*
- I like soccer practice and I had fun at the fair. We went camping in Yellow Springs and then went miniature golfing and out to get ice cream at Young’s Jersey Dairy! – *DJ Yoder*
- I liked going on vacation to St Joseph in Michigan and riding on the carousel. I liked watching my brother play soccer too. When Paul was done playing soccer, the whole Bethel church and everyone that played soccer got to play games and I made a picture frame to remember my summer. – *Lena Kauffman*
- This summer I liked swimming and playing Barbies and going to the mud bog. Last summer we went to the Smoky Mountains and the Great Wolf Lodge. When Daddy hit his thumbs is my sad favorite memory. I love Daddy very much. A favorite memory is the day after my birthday when Becca took me mini-golfing at Young’s Dairy and then we got ice cream and stuffed animals and I got to be buried in a corn box. I got to go in a bouncy house and a play set made of straw bales. – *Renee Neer*
- I like swimming in swimming pools and lakes. I liked our vacation when we went hiking. – *Caleb Hershberger*
- We went to see helicopters and airplanes – *Isaiah Reminder*
- I like to swing all day. – *Alyse Regier*
- It was fun to sleep at the campout with the tent. – *Silas King*
- I like to swing. – *Samantha King*
- I like playing Frisbee – *Braden Hershberger*
- I saw big balloons. – *Simon Kauffman*
- I played in the water. – *Brady Kauffman*
- I played in the sand. – *Emma Childs*
- I like to swim. – *Abbie Thoman*



Watch your thoughts, they become words. Watch your words, they become your actions. Watch your actions, they become habits. Watch your habits, they become character. Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.

As you begin changing your thinking, start immediately to change your behavior. Begin to act the part of the person you would like to become. Take action on your behavior. Too many people want to feel, then take action. This never works.

A child is not a vessel to be filled, but a lamp to be lit.

When you teach your son, you teach your son's son.

**I'm nobody! Who are you?**  
*by Emily Dickinson*

I'm nobody! Who are you?  
 Are you nobody, too?  
 Then there's a pair of us -- don't tell!  
 They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!  
 How public, like a frog  
 To tell your name the livelong day  
 To an admiring bog!

**Jenny Kissed Me**  
*by James Henry Leigh Hunt*

Jenny kissed me when we met,  
 Jumping from the chair she sat in;  
 Time, you thief, who love to get  
 Sweets into your list, put that in!  
 Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,  
 Say that health and wealth have missed me,  
 Say I'm growing old, but add,  
 Jenny kissed me.

# Lessons Learned from Dannon! Everyday Rest!??

*Written by Mike King, by request*

Plop! I look over and I see Dannon (the black lab) fall down, and fall asleep for his afternoon rest. Hmm. . .perhaps a lesson to learn to take time to rest amidst the whirlwind of life (enabled by texting, internet, cable TV and the demands to do more and make more.) Everyday I hear the response to my question, "How are you doing? I am so busy, hurried and exhausted!" My internal question is: "Who is rested? Who practices rest?"

"Stand at the crossroads and look: ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls." (Jer. 6:16)  
"In repentance and rest is your salvation; in quietness and trust is your strength." (Isa. 30:15)

As I reflect on the subject of Sabbath Rest, I recall a few helpful resources:

*Margin* by Dr. Richard Swenson and  
*Grace Walk* by Steve McVey

Dr. Swenson encourages his readers to create MARGINS (the space between our load of life and limits. Margin is our reserves, the place where we rest, recharge our batteries, recover our passion, and renew our relationships."

My challenge to others and myself is, how do we do this on our jobs? (Perhaps 5, 10, 15 minute sabbaticals away from the cell phone, the customer, the child, the patient and/or the paperwork.)

I was blessed to work for a Christian school years ago that "mandated" each staff member to take a Day Alone (not for housecleaning, laundry, car repairs, but to create margins). Many of the staff refused or argued that they didn't have time to take a day alone. This is a challenge to unload, meditate, think and breathe for one day. A friendly challenge you may want to consider is taking a day along? (It would be good to turn off your cell phone).

Steve McVey shares, "Living in grace means that we express His life as a natural and normal part of our daily experience. We live trusting Him to express Himself through us everyday. We don't have to overanalyze our actions and attitudes. Life isn't a test, it's a rest. The test has already been given, and we have received a perfect score because Jesus took the test for us. It's now time to celebrate!"

Plop, hmm. . .maybe Dannon has a lesson for us, Rest!

*I would like to take this time to say THANK YOU, to my Living Stones Classmates for displaying their love for the Word, the church, prayer and for their families!!*

## The Road Not Taken

*By Robert Lee Frost*

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that, the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

## September birthdays:

4 Joshua Childs  
10 Jordan Kauffman  
16 Sharon Kauffman  
18 Tara Larson  
19 Tyler Hershberger  
20 Lilyana Yoder  
20 Rachel Larson  
21 John Seymour  
23 Doris Enns  
23 Rachael Neer  
24 Beth Lamb  
25 Jill Schlabach  
26 Hayden King  
27 Josh Kratz  
30 Hannah Hartsel

## September anniversaries:

10 Don & Sharon Kauffman  
16 Joe & Cheryl Smucker  
18 Myron & Joan Yoder

Every night I turn my troubles over to  
God, He's going to be up all night  
anyway.

**The deadline for the October  
issue of Oak Leaves is  
September 18.**

*Esther W., Lisa H. & Valerie K.*

# Haiti Medical Mission Progress

The time for our Oak Grove members to depart for Haiti is quickly approaching. We have been so blessed with members who felt God calling them to serve those in need. Oak Grove is also blessed with members who have graciously contributed both medications and financial aid to this medical mission trip.

Here is an update on what has been contributed for those traveling and contributions that will be earmarked for medications that will need to be purchased before departing. As of August 1st, \$4,152,29 has been contributed to the medical missions trip through individual contributions, July 31st luncheon fund-raiser, and the Outreach committee's budget.

\$1,400.00 - Outreach contributed \$200/member for traveling expenses

\$1,483.29 - Individual contributions through August 1st for purchase of medications

\$1,269.00 - July 31st luncheon fund-raiser for purchase of medications and to assist in the costs of those attending.

\$4,152,29

\*\* In addition to this, a portion of the Camp Cotubic auction proceeds will go towards the purchase of any medications still needed for the trip and/or to assist those who are attending.

The cost of the remaining non-prescription medications and the prescription medications which will be needed will be split between the four participating churches. If there is money remaining in Oak Grove's account earmarked for the trip, it will go to assist those who are attending, travel expenses are significantly higher than first expected due to increased airline costs. The total amount for each person attending is approx. \$1500.

There is still time to contribute financially and towards the medications needed for the trip. The next pill packaging event is scheduled mid September. Additional information will be provided once this inventory has been confirmed. Current status of medications still needed are...

Adult Vitamins	44,080 doses
Antacids(750mg)	26,800 doses
Zantac/Tagamet	4,500 doses
Topical Creme	308 doses
Antifungal Creme	977 tubes
Vaginal Creme	200 tubes
Skin Lotion	245 bottles



Again, thank you for your continued support of this mission. Keep those traveling to Haiti in your prayers as they prepare themselves and their families for their journey.

## Did you know . . .?

1. There are four churches participating in the medical mission to Haiti: First Church of God--Bellefontaine., 1<sup>st</sup> United Presbyterian Church—Bellefontaine, Oak Grove Mennonite Church and Gretna Brethren Church
2. The trip will take place Oct. 7-15, 2011.
3. The participants from Oak Grove are Dick Barrett, Chuck and Trish Kratz, Winfred and Willie Stoltzfus, Sharon Kauffman, and Evelyn Hostetler.
4. The group will visit some remote villages not usually visited by medical teams.
5. The trip is being coordinated by Pastor CJ Plogger of First Church of God who has been to Haiti multiple times on various mission trips .
6. The idea developed in a Logan County Pastors Alliance meeting; one purpose of the trip is to build unity in the churches of Logan County. The group looks forward to ministering together in Logan County as well.

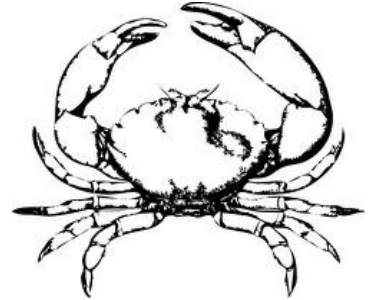
# WHO AM I?\*

I grew up in Indiana.

I remember as a child getting lost in time playing with my sister in the woods, and then getting in trouble for it because Mom didn't know where we were. It is the only time I remember receiving a lecture from Dad because we worried Mom so much.

My first job was babysitting. I also worked in a small ice cream shop.

Not many people know that I am a marketing and social media nut. It is a passion.



I would love a road trip to follow the northern East Coast beaches, Maine, New Hampshire, etc., stay in a bed & breakfast each night, and eat fresh seafood every day.

I enjoy bike riding, “geocaching”, and roller-blading. I also enjoy walking in the woods or enjoying nature at one of the state parks. If I had a day off with no responsibilities I would spend it doing one of these things.

A meaningful verse of the Bible to me is Matthew 6:25-32

<sup>25</sup> “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup> Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life<sup>[a]</sup>?”

<sup>28</sup> “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. <sup>29</sup> Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

I appreciate that the people at Oak Grove are my extended family, and I know if I ever have a need, they will be there for me & my family.

**(Answer can be found in this issue of the Oak Leaves marked with an \*)**

# Country Cuisine

**Simply in Season** ~ *Recipes that celebrate fresh, local foods in the spirit of More-with-Less...* (by Mary Beth Lind & Cathleen Hockman-Wert, published by Herald Press) Kim Leichty introduced this cookbook me to it and she soon convinced me I needed my own copy. It has quickly become one of my favorite cookbooks to look through when I need some variety in our meals.

In an effort to inspire cooking “local” with what you have on hand or easily accessible in the garden or grocery store, **Simply in Season** is divided into chapters based on “seasons” of food. For example, the “Spring” section focuses on recipes made with asparagus, green onions, new potatoes, peas, strawberries ect. The “Summer” section focuses on recipes made with in-season herbs, corn, cucumbers, green beans, melon, okra, peaches, peppers, tomatoes and summer squashes ect. The “Fall” section includes recipes made with broccoli, cauliflower, cranberries, kale, pears, pumpkin and winter squash ect. The “Winter” section has recipes made with apples, beets, cabbage, carrots, citrus, potatoes, sweet potatoes ect. I like being able to look at the surplus of vegetables in my garden or in-season produce from Thoman’s IGA and look up new recipes that use those ingredients.

There is a wide variety of recipes – from Dandelion Bacon Salad (which I have not been brave enough to try!) to Asian Grilled Salmon (delicious!), to Favorite Canned Salsa (which Kim, LeAnn and I all love), to Whole Grain Tabouleh (one of our favorites) to Butternut Sage Orzo (another favorite) and many others. **Simply in Season** can be purchased at Global Crafts.

We tried this recipe for the first time this week and loved it...

## Super Stuffed Tortillas

1-2 cloves garlic, minced

1 large onion

1 green pepper

*Saute garlic in 2tsp oil for 1 minute. Add onion and pepper and sauté until crisp-tender*

2 cups corn (I use 1 ear sweet corn cut off cob)

1 small zucchini (or any other veggie you have on hand)

1 ½ TBSP ground cumin

*Add and continue to sauté until all vegetables are tender but not browned.*

2 cups cooked black beans (1 can)

Water or broth to desired consistency (I used ¼ cup water)

6 TBSP salsa

*Add and cook until there is no excess moisture. Remove from heat and add:*

Salt, pepper, sliced green onions or chives and fresh cilantro to taste

Flour or corn tortillas

Cheese of choice – co-jack, cheddar, feta ect

*Preheat a frypan with a bit of oil and place a tortilla in pan. Add cheese in center of tortilla and add ¼- ½ cup filling. When tortilla is crispy, remove from pan, fold in half and serve.*

**Variations – add or sub spinach, roasted poblano peppers, or other veggies for corn and zucchini.**

**Can add leftover grilled, chopped chicken**

-Lisa Hershberger

# HIGHS AND LOWS!!!

*June 4 – 9 sixteen youth and 5 sponsors attended the Mennonite Youth Convention in Pittsburgh, PA. We had a time of many Highs and a few Lows!*

## **Josh Kratz**

High: Sharing a room with Matt K., Sam P., and Chuck(Dad)!

Low: Not enough sleep!

## **Matt Kauffman**

High: Fun/ Interesting/ Strange conversations!

Low: 5 hours of sleep in a 3 x 7 foot space of bed!

## **Luke Stoltzfus**

High: Worship/ Seminars

Low: Lack of sleep and meals!

## **Andy Alspaugh**

High: Being up until 2:30 a.m. playing with the remote successfully annoying my roommates! Scary preacher yelling and setting everybody straight!

Low: Lack of sleep, needing to consume obscene amounts of caffeine due to lack of sleep. It was worth it though!

## **Josh Childs**

High: Worship

Low: Little sleep

## **DJ Patterson**

High: Worship was awesome! It touched me in different ways than like church because of all the people there! It felt like full body of Christ worshiping and praising God!

## **Katie Scott**

High: Worship services! Incredible speakers! Insightful seminars! Being with Amazing People! Learning about God!

Low: So-so food. Freezing hotel rooms. Sam ☺ just kidding! Getting up early!

## **Alyssa Kauffman**

High: Worship times! Spending time with youth group!

Low: Really big crowds of people! Some seminars are boring/uninteresting!

## **Becca Hager**

High: Worship! Good seminars! Getting closer to God!

Low: Soul-searching and growing.

## **Bekah Kratz**

High: The singing was amazing!

Low: Too much walking!

## **Abbey Siegenthaler**

High: Powerful speakers! Sharing a room with Katie O, Rose Y. and Trish K.!

Low: Lack of sleep from all the late nights in our room!

**Rose Yoder**

High: Worship is amazing!

Low: Trish Kratz wouldn't let me, Katie O. and Abbey S. stay up all night!!!

**Katie Overholt**

High: Having our parties till 1:00 a.m.!

Low: Trish shushing me at 1:00 a.m.!

**Hannah Clasen**

High: Crowd surfing in worships!

Low: Getting sick twice.

**Addy Hartsel**

High: Erin Barrett and I running to get seats in worship! Some seminars & walking around Pittsburgh!

Low: Food, Crowds, Lots of walking!

**Erin Barrett**

High: Addy Hartsel and I running to get good seats in worship! Card games! Some speakers and seminars!

Low: Food, lots of people, hot weather, waking up early!

**Erica Alspaugh**

High: Worship time was amazing! The speakers were powerful! The time with the kids was great and I enjoyed getting to know them better!

Low: Lack of sleep!

**Trish Kratz**

High: Spending a week focused on God! Spending time with and learning to know the youth better! 4-square games! Sleepovers 5 nights in a row with Abbey S., Katie O., and Rose Y.! WOW!

Low: Missing my 3 kids that were at home. Lack of sleep! Alarms going off in the middle of the night!

**Chuck Kratz**

High: Worship! Youth! Speakers! Seeing friends!

Low: Being away from Anna, Peter, and Si!

**Sam Park**

High: Seeing the kids experience God and being with them for that!

Low: Lack of sleep and realization that I'm not a young man anymore!

**Erin Dye**

High: Moments when we are together and laughing!

Low: Getting over the exhaustion of midweek!

**How are the following Bible characters related?**

- Cain and Abel (Genesis 4, especially v.8)
- Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 21, especially v.3)
- Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38,39)
- Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2)
- Moses and Aaron (Exodus 4:14)
- Eunice and Lois (2 Timothy 1:5)
- Peter and Andrew (Matthew 4:18)
- Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)
- Joseph and Benjamin (Genesis 42:3,4)
- David and Absalom (2 Samuel 18:33)

**Can you figure out these Bible names by rearranging the letters?**

- Jaileh \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- Henteps \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- Ulpa \_ \_ \_ \_
- Bamhara \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- Lisas \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- Anho \_ \_ \_ \_
- Raash \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- Nana \_ \_ \_ \_
- Ossem \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- Utist \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

## “Well, how did you like Sunday School?”

Marilla wanted to know when Anne came home. Her wreath having faded, Anne had discarded it in the lane, so Marilla was spared the knowledge of that for a time.

"I didn't like it a bit. It was horrid."

"Anne Shirley!" said Marilla rebukingly.

Anne sat down on the rocker with a long sigh, kissed one of Bonny's leaves, and waved her hand to a blossoming fuchsia.

"They might have been lonesome while I was away," she explained. "And now about the Sunday school. I behaved well, just as you told me. Mrs. Lynde was gone, but I went right on myself. I went into the church, with a lot of other little girls, and I sat in the corner of a pew by the window while the opening exercises went on. Mr. Bell made an awfully long prayer. I would have been dreadfully tired before he got through if I hadn't been sitting by that window. But it looked right out on the Lake of Shining Waters, so I just gazed at that and imagined all sorts of splendid things."

"You shouldn't have done anything of the sort. You should have listened to Mr. Bell."

"But he wasn't talking to me," protested Anne. "He was talking to God and he didn't seem to be very much interested in it, either. I think he thought God was too far off though. There was a long row of white birches hanging over the lake and the sunshine fell down through them, 'way, 'way down, deep into the water. Oh, Marilla, it was like a beautiful dream! It gave me a thrill and I just said, 'Thank you for it, God,' two or three times."

"Not out loud, I hope," said Marilla anxiously.

"Oh, no, just under my breath. Well, Mr. Bell did get through at last and they told me to go into the classroom with Miss Rogerson's class. There were nine other girls in it. They all had puffed sleeves. I tried to imagine mine were puffed, too, but I couldn't. Why couldn't I? It was as easy as could be to imagine they were puffed when I was alone in the east gable, but it was awfully hard there among the others who had really truly puffs."

"You shouldn't have been thinking about your sleeves in Sunday school. You should have been attending to the lesson. I hope you knew it."

"Oh, yes; and I answered a lot of questions. Miss Rogerson asked ever so many. I don't think it was fair for her to do all the asking. There were lots I wanted to ask her, but I didn't like to because I didn't think she was a kindred spirit. Then all the other little girls recited a paraphrase. She asked me if I knew any. I told her I didn't, but I could recite, 'The Dog at His Master's Grave' if she liked. That's in the Third Royal Reader. It isn't a really truly religious piece of poetry, but it's so sad and melancholy that it might as well be. She said it wouldn't do and she told me to learn the nineteenth paraphrase for next Sunday. I read it over in church afterwards and it's splendid. There are two lines in particular that just thrill me.

"'Quick as the slaughtered squadrons fell

In Midian's evil day.'

I don't know what 'squadrons' means nor 'Midian,' either, but it sounds SO tragical. I can hardly wait until next Sunday to recite it. I'll practice it all the week. After Sunday school I asked Miss Rogerson--because Mrs. Lynde was too far away--to show me your pew. I sat just as still as I could and the text was Revelations, third chapter, second and third verses. It was a very long text. If I was a minister I'd pick the short, snappy ones. The sermon was awfully long, too. I suppose the minister had to match it to the text. I didn't think he was a bit interesting. The trouble with him seems to be that he hasn't enough imagination. I didn't listen to him very much. I just let my thoughts run and I thought of the most surprising things."

Marilla felt helplessly that all this should be sternly reproofed, but she was hampered by the undeniable fact that some of the things Anne had said, especially about the minister's sermons and Mr. Bell's prayers, were what she herself had really thought deep down in her heart for years, but had never given expression to. It almost seemed to her that those secret, unuttered, critical thoughts had suddenly taken visible and accusing shape and form in the person of this outspoken morsel of neglected humanity.

# Take a Chance

*Whoever watching the wind will not plant; Whoever looks at the cloud will not reap. . . Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well. Ecclesiastes 11:4,6*

As a person who grew up and still lives in a farming community, and has done his share of planting, cultivation, and harvesting, I find these images from Ecclesiastes particularly intriguing. And because of the provocative, even paradoxical nature of their message, more than one interpretation is possible. Let me share some of my thoughts about these curious, fascinating verses.

In a way, it would be easier to understand the author if he had written, in verse 4, “Whoever does not look at the clouds will not reap.” That would just be a basic piece of farming wisdom. Any farmer in South Georgia knows that our crops will suffer if we don’t pay attention to the weather. If we plant our peanuts when the ground is too cold or too wet, the seed will rot; if we get a long dry spell, they won’t sprout. So, the smart farmer does pay attention to clouds, winds, rain, sun and all the other weather signs. What, then, does the writer mean by seeming to say just the opposite?

I think he is warning us about the dangers of seeking perfection in our lives. The farmer has to watch the weather signs, sure. But if we watch and ponder the weather and the other conditions too closely—if we measure and remeasure the humidity, the temperature, and the soil conditions—if we seek out and pay attention to all kinds of advice from every farmer, seed salesman, or extension service expert in the county—we may end up in a quandry, wondering, “Is this the right day to plant? Will tomorrow be better, or the day after that, or the day after that?” Before we know it, the time for sowing will be gone.

So, if we wait for perfection in our lives, for exactly the right moment, then we may never act! This message applies to all of us.

If we’ve made a commitment to faith in Christ, we’ve promised to serve God according to the pattern Jesus set. Yet how many of us are really living that way? Instead we wait for a better time. It’s not deliberate; it just happens, year after year. And then there’s retirement—we’ve got to be sure we have enough set aside for that, too, don’t we? Before we know it, our lives have slipped away, with the commitment to serve God in Christ permanently on hold while the worldly things take precedence.

Ecclesiastes is warning us not to let that happen. Don’t wait until everything is perfect before we act; in an imperfect, uncertain world, be bold! Go ahead!

Verse 6 gives another perspective on the same theme. It’s often difficult to take risks in life. How do we know which seeds will grow best if we plant them? Will we succeed or fail at what we try? Maybe it’s better not to take a chance rather than accept the possibility of failure.

Of course, that attitude leads to a timid, diminished life. Failure is a reality; we all fail at times, and it’s painful when we do. But it’s better to fail while striving for something wonderful, challenging adventurous, and uncertain than to say, “I don’t want to try because I may not succeed completely.”

In September 1994, when Sen. Sam Nunn, Gen. Colin Powell, and I returned from Haiti, having helped to resolve the crisis caused by a military coup and avoided the need for a planned U.S. invasion, President Clinton admitted that he’d never believed our mission could succeed. And frankly, there were times we’d felt the same way. During the thirty hours we spent in Haiti desperately trying to negotiate a settlement, there were at least four occasions when it seemed that the discussions had broken down and war was inevitable. But people in Port-au-Prince and Washington refused to give in to despair, and a settlement was reached that gave victory—and peace—to everyone concerned. It was not a miracle, just the result of human beings persisting in the face of uncertainty and risk, and being willing to take a chance.

Every life offers similar opportunities. “Should I reach out to that man who hurt me deeply with an ugly comment or a cruel deed several years ago? Perhaps I could call him on the phone or knock on his front door, offering reconciliation and a chance at a renewed friendship. But that would be a risky thing to do. What if he slams the door in my face, or shouts “Go to hell!” and hangs up the phone? Maybe it would be better not to try!”

The book of Ecclesiastes offers an antidote to that attitude. We’ll never know whether something new and wonderful is possible unless we try. Let’s stretch our hearts, stretch our minds, be adventurous! Serve God with boldness, and who knows what wonders the Lord may work?