



CROSS WALK



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REFLECTIONS – PATRICK PREHEIM

Strategic Planning, Advent Hopes

Way back in May of this year I read a little article about Mario Morino who helps non-profit businesses (Christian Science Monitor Weekly (May 14, 2012), pp 44-45). Mr. Morino has observed that philosophically solid organizations often fail to attract a following or funding because they have not been clear about their mission or intentional about evaluating their work. The article sparked several questions for me which I jotted in my journal: what do we say we will do?; why is this important?; are we doing what we say we will do? Nutana Park Mennonite Church is currently on solid footing, but I was not sure how well we could answer the questions I had drafted in response to the story on Mr. Morino. And with that I closed my journal and got back to the assignments before me.

Memories of that short article came back to me after our September Deacon Board meeting. This was our first gathering solely as a new board and it soon became evident that this Board desired deeper clarity. They sought a clearer understanding of Deacon job descriptions. They craved clarity on the way in which goals shape expenditures and budget. They wanted discussion

on the balance of “caretaking” and “visioning” within their various roles. The upshot of these conversations is that the Deacon Board has allocated a portion of a monetary gift given in memory of Dr. Mohammad Shokier to the task of strategic planning. At the end of this process I am hopeful we will have clarified our identity, embraced the importance of it, and have a set of goals which will guide the budget, program, and evaluation of our church life.

To underscore the importance of this endeavour I share with you a paragraph from an article Anita and I will be circulating among the Board in preparation for the retreat day.

“What is our purpose? Would we be able to tell if we were fulfilling our purpose or not? I do not think that the purpose of the church is all that mysterious or elusive. It can be adequately suggested, in my view, by responses such as, ‘Churches exist to change lives,’ or ‘Churches are here to be and make disciples of Jesus,’ or ‘The church teaches and embodies love of God and love of neighbor.’ What is mysterious is the way churches manage *continued on page 2...*



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MCC Report

- LORENE NICKEL



Cross Walk

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*Photographs, articles,
funeral tributes, and recipes
are welcome for submission
to Cross Walk. Please give
Lori suggestions of other
items to be included in
Cross Walk.*

**Articles for the next
Cross Walk are due on
February 5th**

The congregation at First Mennonite hosted the annual meeting for MCC on November 3rd, 2012.

Many of us are familiar with the work that Mennonite Central Committee does and feel a certain pride in our involvement with an organization that takes such an active and vigorous role in working towards a better and just world.

The focus at the meeting this year was on the Global Family program which is dedicated to supporting community-based education around the world. MCC is asking that donors give \$25 / month to assist with educational needs in the community. Programs are created to help children reach their full potential and cover a variety of needs. With some, breakfast or lunch programs are

a priority. At times money for uniforms or school supplies is needed. In all cases, the end result is that children and teachers are given assistance to go to school. This will have an impact for generations to come. As little as \$300 per year can be life changing for many a child.

As we hear about the poverty in so many places on this planet, and the turmoil in so many countries we are confounded with how to respond. Possibly, the approach MCC is taking in educating children, has implications that reach out far beyond what simple hand-outs can do. To begin your gift giving this Christmas, log onto mccglobalfamily.ca and choose your preference of support.



REFLECTIONS - continued from page 1

... to forget or misplace their purpose. Without much thinking about it, many congregations and their members have come to think that the purpose of the church is the comfort and satisfaction of its members. But this seriously distorts the whole venture. The ongoing conversation about purpose and staying 'on purpose' is crucial for [congregations]." (Anthony B. Robinson, *Changing the Conversation: Nurturing a*

Third Way for Congregations).

This strategic planning is truly Advent and Christmas stuff. We are waiting. Once more we are waiting for the birth of Christ. We are intent on working with the Spirit as Christ is made incarnate in this time and place. Christ is eternally being born again among us. May God be merciful and give us directions to the delivery room.

Joys

Our Grade 7 students Maria Dahl, Deanna Stockdale Winder, Thomas Blumrich, Ben Linsley, Kellen Rodda and Jake Neufeld

The dedication of Henri with parents Karen Leis & Joel Driedger

Brendan Kroeger's graduation with a B. Sc in Kinesiology

Sadnesses

Joanne & Ted Ewert, Stan Bartel & Debra Heinrichs, and Sara Bartel on the death of Nellie Bartel

Ernie & Elva Epp and Family on the death of Hardy Epp

Brenda and the extended family of Howard Willems

CHURCH Family News

CHEP Kitchen Report

The CHEP (Child Hunger and Education Program) kitchen at Station 20 West is fully functioning and outfitted with commercial equipment. This kitchen was a project that Nutana Park took on and donated funds of a significant amount over the course of a year or so. Along with other donors NPMC was recognized at the CHEP Annual Meeting on November 29. The meeting and dinner were hosted in the new Station 20 West multi-purpose room and the food was superb! A plaque beside the entrance to the kitchen was unveiled and Nutana Park's name was on it.

The kitchen now makes it possible for CHEP to teach cooking classes on site, operate a café and host many other activities and commercial ventures. "The potential for even more social enterprise is enhanced by the community/commercial kitchen and co-locating with a food store, The

Good Food Junction, and with other groups delivering innovative services to the community. We are pleased with the new opportunities for synergy with our co-locators. Shared spaces in the building encourage chats and chance meetings.... We celebrate our food centre facility – a new commercial kitchen, cold storage, program space and café.... Food is central to family, community and culture, and justice." (from a report by the Chair of the Board of Directors, Val Veillard)

The challenge for NPMC is to continue our involvement with CHEP. We have a unique opportunity to volunteer as partners and friends in a community that cares for each other. We are grateful to Marcel St. Onge who is serving on the CHEP board for another term. Don't hesitate to check in with Marcel if you wish to contribute to CHEP in any way.

CHEP Kitchen Project Complete!

- ANITA RETZLAFF



WHAT NEXT?

- ERIKA NIESSEN-TOEWS



These are 2 links to YOU TUBE videos to show to your kids and teach them about being different. The first one is perfect for smaller kids.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEB2bk29AMQ&feature=plcp>
[http://](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXW77of9Di0&feature=plcp)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXW77of9Di0&feature=plcp

This was a big question on my mind the day Lauren was born. I will never ever forget the words my obstetrician said, (like she had promised me she would): “She does show signs of DOWN SYNDROME”. The beautiful picture perfect life, OUR LIFE, seemed to crash to the ground just like a house made of cards crashes.

Was that what I had asked for? NO. Was I scared? YES. I was scared everything would never be the same again.

But let me tell you, life goes on and all that ever changed in the last 17 months is that we had to get used to handling two kids instead of one and have lots more appointments with doctors, specialists, therapists, cardiologists, etc.

Today I am also a whole lot smarter because I think I have researched the web bit by bit about Down Syndrome. Today I am grateful for our good health. Being on Lauren’s side after she went through major heart surgery and experiencing how hard a 7 month old can fight to hang on to life is just mind blowing. Today I know a lot more great people that I would never have met if Lauren wasn’t born with Down Syndrome.

And the most important one I learned for me in person is that it’s not all about being PERFECT. What does it mean to be the mother of a child with DS?

For me it means loving our Lauren, regardless of how many chromosomes she has. I see her ABILITIES not her disabilities. How much I worry about her future, when is she going to start

walking, when or if she will talk – it’s just what a mom does without even thinking.

There have been challenges and there will be more challenges but with support from YOU and support from our LOVING GOD we will be able to face them and learn from them.

Following is a part out of Kelle Hampton’s blog: “Enjoying the small things” and I just ask you to please think about it:

“Please, if you do anything this week – make efforts to stop the use of the word ‘retard’ and ‘retarded’ in your family’s vocabulary.

It’s incredibly hurtful to the families who love someone with special needs. I hear it every time it’s said-- in conversation, on television, when people don’t even know I’m listening. I know you’re not talking about my child, and I know that you are kind and accepting of others’ differences. I understand it takes a while to dispose of a word that has for so long been accepted in our society. But know that it stings to hear that word. It stings to have that painful part inside you that’s on alert to defend your child flare up and remind you that there’s a bad word that people use to make fun of your beautiful, wonderful, capable child. Please think about that. Talk to your children about this word and ask them to confidently stand up to their friends who use it.”

The reason I copied this in here is simply because she couldn’t have said it better and that word has made a big impact in our last year and half of life already.

CANADIAN DOWN SYNDROME AWARENESS WEEK

~ NOVEMBER 1 - 7 ~

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry by Rachel Joyce is a delightful first novel. One falls in love with the elderly Harold by the end of his journey.

Turn Here, Sweet Corn by Atina Diffley is the memoir of a Minnesota farmer who tries to go organic.

The End of Suffering by Scott Cairns is the most accessible and articulate discussion of the great theological question of our time. Why does a good God allow suffering?

The Round House by Louise Erdrich is the only American writing on the modern reservation that I've found. She doesn't disappoint.

Call the Midwife by Jennifer Worth is a fascinating memoir of a mid-wife in post-war London. Seeing their work as God's calling, the midwives worked with Catholic sisters in the poorest neighbourhoods and found grace in the most unexpected places.

Patty's PICKS

- PATTY FRIESSEN

Seniors' Exercise Class

Three mornings a week, a group of enthusiastic senior citizens gather at NPMC with the common goal of healthy aging.

Under the trained leadership of either Arnie Nickel or Walter Wall we march, stretch, balance and laugh. Most of us have noticed an improvement in our endurance, flexibility, strength and balance. We have also benefitted from the brain exercises and health teaching.

Each session closes with a cup

of coffee and a chance to meet new friends.

After a brief break over the holidays, we will resume the schedule in the new year. Approximately 30 participants have enrolled, but new participants continue to get involved and are warmly welcomed.

More information is available by contacting Kimberly Willison (306) 655-0829 or Janet Barnes (306) 655-7874 from the Saskatoon Health Region.

FOREVER in Motion!

- JUNE & HOWARD GILES



by Elan
Morgan

(Daughter of Joanne
& Ted Ewert)

WE ALL STRADDLE THE LINE

(Written the morning Grandma Bartel passed away)

When our old people die,
they take whole pockets of time with them.
Entire chapters
are folded up neatly into their last sheets.
They comb out her hair while she is still warm,
the way she would want to be seen,
and whoever is blessed enough to be present
holds her cooling hand.

Our own deaths are grieved in every death.
Parts of me folded into her this morning,
and her closets I hid in,
her tin full of buttons,
her funny 1970s housedresses with the zippers up the front
have all become locked away, irretrievable now,
as though, before eight o'clock this morning,
I could have gone back into her kitchen of 30 years ago
and heard the shoosh of her slippers
as she busied herself back and forth along the counter.

Grief is strange.
Time is stranger.

We are strangers to this space that time has us inhabit,
and when our old people die,
they take us back with them in small increments,
as they birthed us over the years before,
and we all straddle the line.