



The Mt. Anthems Newsletter

April 2008

April 13, 2008

Sunnyside Mennonite Church

Today we're heading for the Cochranton, PA area for three concerts. It's 36°, cold and rainy, with a few flakes of snow floating through the air. Not the kind of day that makes you eager to leave your warm home and hit the road. Despite our 6 AM meeting time and the cold weather, most of the chorus members were smiling cheerfully. The bus quieted down pretty quickly as people curled up for a quick snooze. After a rest stop, folks got more lively and talkative. By the time we arrived at the church, the rain had settled into a light drizzle. God bless the fellows who had to unload in the rain.

With Mike directing, we did everything in one 75 minute standing. We had a request for "Hallelujah Square." That lady's daughter remembered hearing it when she was a young girl. She thought it was written for the wheelchair-bound man in their church. Mike also had Menno come up and do "The Cross in the Middle." We did several songs from our *Sing unto the Lord* project. About halfway through the service, Mike told us we needed to wake up. We were acting sleepy! I think just that reminder perked us up a bit.

After the service they provided a huge meal for us. We almost didn't have time to enjoy it. We needed to rush off to our next concert.

Mount Hope United Methodist Church

This church was small enough that the fellows didn't need to set up sound. One man commented that we "really made it ring!" If you remember the story of a dog visiting during one of our services two years ago, this was the church we were singing in at the time. Mike asked the audience if they remembered what had happened. Those who attended back then had to smile and chuckle as they recalled the incident.

We had several requests for this service. Once again Menno was asked to sing "The Cross in the

Middle." "Soon and Very Soon," "Marriage Supper of the Lamb," and "Where Will You Be" were the other requests. Mike has been doing something different today. He's reading excerpts from our *Sing unto the Lord* book to the audience. This afternoon's excerpt was about Menno and Grace's courtship. Menno, of course, had some additional commentary on the matter which caused a lot of laughter among both the audience and the chorus.

There was an older gentleman at our service, sitting on the back bench. He became very excited when we sang songs about heaven. He boldly joined us in the first verse of "When We All Get to Heaven" and gave a hearty "AMEN!" at the end of the song. Someone else was trying to calm him down! I spoke to him later, and he said he greatly appreciated our service and our music. He saw an announcement about our service in the paper. The man certainly was an inspiration and encouragement to me.

--LaVon Yoder

After a small snack we scrambled back onto the bus for a bouncy, curvy trip to our next stop.

Pleasant View Conservative Church

The first thing we did on our arrival was eat! I wasn't all that hungry but knew if I didn't eat I'd be "starving" on the way home. As I remember, they had some really good food that evening which included grilled chicken wraps. We only had about a half hour to clean up—comb hair, brush teeth, etc. before devotions.

We were pretty tired, and I guess it was showing. Rodney encouraged us to do our best and reminded us that God would take our efforts and expand on them. We made it a special point to pray that God would wake us up and give us energy. When you pray, God always answers, although occasionally in unexpected ways! While we were walking up onto the stage, one of the ladies stepped on the back of the shoe belonging to the lady in front of her. The shoe promptly came off and was lying in front of the stage. The owner of the shoe

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Midway Reception Center

was already up on the riser, so the young lady who caused the accident kicked the shoe forward within the owner's reach. She calmly bent down, picked it up and put it back on while the last few people finished walking in. Most of the people in the audience didn't even realize what happened! Not so for the chorus. We were either grinning broadly or shaking with silent laughter! We were definitely wide awake! We had several requests for this evening: "Tears Are a Language," "I'm the Lamb" (Marty's solo), "Resurrection Ground" (men's quartet), and two of Menno's solos: "Where No One Stands Alone" and "The Cross in the Middle."

Menno's weren't sure if they should go along for this trip, so Menno "put out a fleece." The answer was GO. "The Cross in the Middle" was requested at all three services, and many people were touched by it. God knows what He's doing!

We were back on the road by 8:30 PM. Joyce announced that the afternoon church had sent the extra cookies along with us. That brought a loud cheer from the back of the bus. The rest of us were pleased as well, we just weren't as vocal about it. ☺ It's now been an hour since we left the church. The front of the bus is dark, and Menno has just finished his walk up and down the aisle. He stops and chats with people here and there, connecting with his "kids." Arlin, who's driving this evening, estimates we'll be home around midnight. As we get closer to home, more and more people will quiet down until nearly everyone is asleep and the bus is totally dark (Except for the "eternal blue light" [Loren's term] at the back next to the restroom door).

In the back of the bus, you could hear bursts of laughter from people indulging their love of children's books. When they ran out of books, Brent shared jokes and riddles from a book he brought along. I'll share two of them with you.

1. What kept the performing pony from singing?
2. What lies on the bottom of the ocean and twitches?

1. He was a little horse. 2. A nervous wreck.

Today we leave for Lancaster County, PA. We left early because we are having a special service at 3:30 p.m. We were honored to have some of the Mt. Anthems' board members and their wives join us for the weekend. The Gerald Tice family and Millard and Diane Schrock rode on the bus while Philip and Ruth Beachy drove in their own vehicle; they weren't able to join us for the entire weekend. The bus is once again nearly full and you can hear lots of animated chatter.

Our special service was for David Weaver, our contact person for Lancaster and surrounding counties. He's been our contact person there for about 35 years. I suppose in a way this was a retirement party. David is now 89 years old. We invited David's family to join us in recognizing David's vital contribution to the work of the Mt. Anthems. And let's not forget the sacrifices that his family had to make while their husband and father was guiding us around the countryside or spending time on the phone making contacts and setting up concerts. David passed along a nugget of wisdom that he was given by a pastor he knew and I'd like to pass it on to you. ***"You ought to be ready to pray, preach, or die at any time."*** During open mic time, several people shared thoughts that I felt were important enough to share with you.

- *"You don't have ministry lasting for many years without faithful men making it a priority. David has been one of those men."*
- *"David took time and pressure off of us by leading us to our destination and making sure we got there on time."*
- *"David always rejoiced in Godly success and expressed concern for people's needs."*
- *"David would get us to our destination and then need to go take care of his responsibilities while we gave our concert. He had to be back in time to lead us to our next destination. It took a lot of time and effort!"*

Time has taken its toll, and David's body has become frail and stooped, but his spirit and love for God remain strong and unshaken.

After our private service, we had a wonderful meal served family style. It was very different from our usual meal. ☺ We sang our new "Thank You" song.

At 7:00 p.m. we had a service for the public. We opened with two of David's most requested numbers: "I Need the Prayers of Those I Love" and "What Did He Do?" The first was in memory of his first wife, Katie. We sat down, and Menno shared his tribute to David Weaver. I'll share part of it with you.

It all began in 1972, 36 years ago, when we met David in Corning NY in M.D.S. service. He asked me, "Bish du un jitney driver?" ["Are you a driver for the Amish"—ed.] I said, "No...we are a singing group called the Mountain Anthems from Somerset Co. doing M.D.S. service." He picked up on the words "singing group" and began scheduling us for Lancaster Co. Since that time we have sung hundreds of times in Lancaster Co., all because we met in New York. No one in this world could have had the wisdom to bring us together at that point. It took the all-knowing, almighty God to plan this. No problem for Him. God knew eons ago that the Mt. Anthems needed to connect with Lancaster County for His glory.

For 36 years David has scheduled us in Lancaster Co. I know of no man who has labored more for the Mt. Anthems: Hundreds of phone calls, advertisements, lodging, scheduling, mileage, correcting misunderstandings—we hardly know the half. He sacrificed a lot for our sake. And I believe he did it with joy. He considered it a ministry, a privilege, and a calling. May the Lord reward him for his faithfulness....

--Menno Beachy

Afterward Kenton had a slideshow presentation using pictures we had of David, Katie, and his second wife, Martha, down through the years.

We got back up on stage to finish out the evening with music. Phil Beachy shared two solos: "Wasted Years" and "Where Will You Be." We al-

so had requests for "I Found the Lily in My Valley," "God on the Mountain," and "The Cross in the Middle." The Twins sang "I Am Redeemed." The audience seems to enjoy it when they sing. The children especially seem to perk up a bit. Tonight I noticed that the young men from Teen Challenge sang along with them. That blessed me!

One of the highlights for a lot of the chorus members was the presence of several folks from Teen Challenge. Jamie Santiago was in a Lancaster Co. prison. Someone came in to visit them and sang "For Those Tears I Died." This song was instrumental in bringing him to Christ. Today he's a director at Teen Challenge. At the end of the service, he requested the above song, and we were glad to sing it for him.

April 27, 2008

Hammer Creek Mennonite Church

When we gathered on the bus Sunday morning, we discovered (from others who stayed at the same place) that the people hosting Menno and Grace had a helicopter, and that Menno had been given a personal tour of the local area via helicopter before joining us for the morning!

We had another very welcome surprise this morning as well; most of us had arrived and were sitting on the bus, chattering about Menno's helicopter ride and our various experiences with hosts of the previous night, when someone said "Hey, I see Terry!" So we all crowded to the windows and, sure enough, here came Terry, Linda, and Braden. It's always encouraging and energizing to see people from Mt. View at our "away" concerts, so we knocked on the windows and waved at them as they walked the length of the bus on their way toward the church.

This seemed to be the morning for new things; we sang for the first time "Great and Awesome God," a new song we've been working on in practice for some time. We had a few unfortunate "hiccups" with it, but we survived... Also, the chorus men wore their new grey shirts for the first time in

this service (we chose last fall to have grey shirts for the men to wear when the ladies wear their burgundy dresses).

When the pastor came up to dismiss everyone and close the service, he told us that he was led to worship through both the songs we sang and our facial expressions. He said our faces showed that we experienced what we sang about, that it was important to us, and that we were thinking about what we were singing.

-- Michael (Pete) Petersheim

Martindale Mennonite Fellowship Center

While we were sitting on the bus before the service started, people were talking about different songs. Joye said that "Hallelujah, 'Tis Done" makes her homesick for jail. ☺

The place was full with over 450 people. Sierra said she was so nervous she felt she might puke. There was no moderator, and we were in charge of the whole service. The quartet sang two songs, and Menno directed the first half. There was an older lady in the congregation who blessed Mike with her smile. He gave her a free piece of music. You'll be glad to know Sierra didn't puke and made it through the service without mishap.

Menno thought we weren't going to have supper at this place, but then they gave us supper after all. We had to hurry to the next place, so we didn't brush teeth and get ready until the next place.

-- Heidi Yoder

Strasburg Mennonite Church

Once again we had the whole service. Mike directed the first half, and then had Kenton direct the second half. Kenton told us he felt rusty, but I thought he did a great job in spite of his rust! Tonight we had requests for "I Found the Lily in My Valley" and "The Cross in the Middle." The twins sang "Into My Heart" and did a very good job considering how long it's been since they last sang it with us. I don't know how the rest of the chorus members felt, but I was blessed to have Gerald's and the twins with us again! Loretta got a workout with her most requested solo. ☺

On the way home this evening, we honored several birthdays with back-of-the-bus singing: Gerald, Loretta, Angela, and Wanda. We had packed lunches on the way home. We always enjoy those when we have long drives home. The bus was noisy for quite awhile tonight. Melissa and Brooke treated us to a rendition of "Do Not Lie." (Brock helped from his seat.) Melissa is teaching her students some "Ten Commandment" songs. This one had quite a catchy little tune, and by the time they were finished, some of us were singing along. That got us started, and we did quite a bit of singing just for fun. I don't know what triggered it, but one of the girls suddenly decided we should see how many girls would fit into the tiny restroom at the back of the bus. When all was said and done, they had managed to get 11 girls in, shut the door, and then reopen it again! It's amazing what a little determination can accomplish. Eventually we settled down and read or slept. We arrived at the building at 1:30 AM, and the poor people from Oakland still had another 45 minutes driving from there.