



The Mt. Anthems Newsletter

July 2008

July 6, 2008

Lucas Hollow Mennonite Church

Today is going to be a long day. We had a 5:30 a.m. start to get to Stanley, VA for our first program of the day. We have a smaller-than-normal group today. Some of our personnel felt called to teach VBS in Canada. They left on Thursday evening and will be gone for a week. Some of the chorus members also had responsibilities at our own VBS and had to stay home as well.

When we stopped at a rest stop, we met some folks from Ephrata, PA. They came and talked to Menno for awhile. When one of the gentlemen found out about our *Sing unto the Lord* project, he immediately wanted to buy one. We opened up the hatch, found him what he wanted, and then continued on our way. You never know who you're going to meet along the way.

Despite our small number (Mike compared us to Gideon's small army of 300); we had a good morning service. Mike must have really had Bible stories on his mind. He compared the service to sharing our five loaves and two fishes. He allowed the audience to give requests and then had them help us sing those songs during our first standing. They included: "Amazing Grace," "Just As I Am," "Where No One Stands Alone," "Surely Goodness and Mercy," and "Because He Lives." We sang a lot of songs about the working of God's Spirit.

Mike had Menno direct the second half. We had a request to do "Till the Storm Passes By." Menno ended the service with several songs about heaven. This is a very small country church, but what they lack in numbers they make up for with their enthusiasm.

We were served a huge carry-in lunch with homemade ice cream for dessert. While it may not be the best thing for the singing voice, it's great for the taste buds and tummy! ☺ We had barely finished eating when we had to rush off for our next appointment in Harrisonburg. We have three services today.

Mennonite Retirement Center

This afternoon's service was a bit more informal than sometimes. We sang some older hymns, and the audience sang with us. We had a request for "Gott Ist de Liebe." Solos were "Where No One Stands Alone," and "I'm Not Ashamed." The auditorium was quite full. There were even people sitting in the doorways. One lady told Lorraine that we looked pretty tired when we first got up to sing, but we woke up nicely. ☺

Because the church this morning was so small, we didn't need to set up sound. However, this afternoon we definitely needed our sound system. Our main sound technician (Loren) had to set up for VBS and wasn't able to come on this trip. Some of the fellows did their best to set up the mics and Marty did the EQ for us. They did a pretty decent job in my opinion.

Mt. Pleasant Church of the Brethren

We got to our evening destination about 15 minutes before it was time to eat. We had soup, sandwiches, and a wonderful dessert. The guys hurried to set up sound while the girls made haste to brush teeth, comb hair, and generally try to clean up enough so they felt like singing. It's hard to get into the mood when you're hot and sticky, just longing for a cool shower.

Our devotional time always helps to put us in a better frame of mind. Tonight was a time of sharing and prayer. We prayed for renewed energy. That's something we frequently ask God for, because the energy we had for one program isn't enough for the next program. You need to have something in your well before you can offer a drink to someone else.

Requests for this evening were "I Forgive You," and "Ten Thousand Angels." Solos were "Though Your Sins be as Scarlet" by Mike, "Ready to Go" by Menno, and "God on the Mountain" by Marty.

Mike admitted to the chorus during the second half that he was feeling a little "silly." His antics kept us smiling and helped to keep us alert, alive, and enthusiastic! When you're tired and you're on the third service of the day, it's hard to remember to keep a smile on your face!

It poured rain after the sound equipment was unloaded and stopped by the time we were ready to load things onto the bus again. It's always much more pleasant to load and unload when you can stay dry during the process.

We were very pleased when the church folks sent the left-over sandwiches home with us. If nothing else, it helps to pass the time on the long, four-hour drive home. By now the sandwiches are gone and most people have turned off their lights and are snuggling in for a nap, or in some cases, a chat. There are a few scattered islands of light where someone is still reading, but I think I'll turn off my light and opt for a nap.

One rest stop and four hours later we're home. Once more God has blessed us beyond compare! We've had miles of travel with no accidents or breakdowns, we had

three good services through which we were blessed, and we had the privilege of encouraging others to continue on in their walk with the Lord.

July 19, 2008

Epworth Hall

At nine-thirty Marty and Arlin finished packing all of our luggage into the bottom of the bus. We all had extra luggage for this trip to Perry, New York, because we were going to stay at a camp ground where we would need our own bedding and towels, as well as cereal for breakfast.

The trip was uneventful; people played Rook, slept, read, and chattered to each other. We had two rest stops for our six or seven hours on the road.

When we arrived at the campground, we could smell chicken barbecue. We had a good supper, then we climbed back into the bus, and Marty drove us through the woods on a narrow trail to the motel-style rooms where we would be staying. They told us we were the second or third group to be using those rooms. It was hot, so some of us made use of the showers before the service--a rare luxury.

We sang in an old building without air conditioning. There were big spotlights glaring on us all evening. During the service Mike made an amusing comment; he was talking about lying in bed wishing Jesus would return before morning, then he said, "But that doesn't happen very often."

The audience was made up of mostly older people. Some families from Silver Lake were also there, including Ernie and Sharon Stoltzfus.

The men's quartet--Marty, Mike, Lyndon, and Kenton--were all along, so they sang two songs during our break. They sounded really good.

By Melissa Sommers

Requests for this evening were "He Giveth More Grace" (Marty's solo), "Had It Not Been" (done by Mike), and "Where No One Stands Alone." The person requesting the last song also requested that Menno be the one to sing it.

During our brief introductions, Menno wanted the "Yoders" to raise their hands. "The Yoder's are like weeds. They're taking over!" During the service it had rained quite a bit, but it had slowed to a gentle, intermittent sprinkle by the time we were through.

After the service, we gathered our things together and walked back to our "motel." The lower floor had a large dining room, a large kitchen, and a very nice seating area. Since it's rare that we all get to stay at the same

place, we decided we needed to do something special. We played a game called "Battle of the Sexes" where the gentlemen are asked questions about things ladies would be more knowledgeable about (cooking, sewing, etc.), and ladies are asked questions about things the gentlemen would be more likely to know about (sports, mechanics, fishing, etc.). The girls won the game by a narrow margin, and a wonderful time was had by all.

July 20, 2008

Silver Lake Mennonite Church

This morning everyone was sort of on their own for breakfast. We had brought boxes of cereal along and the people there had provided doughnuts, milk, and Orange Juice. After breakfast we had to clean up our rooms, gather the trash and put it out, and sweep the entry and the bathroom floors. The bus came by to pick us up at 8:30 a.m., and believe it or not, we were all ready and waiting when it arrived.

Today we have two services in the same church. This church is small, but the people are big on hospitality. We always enjoy singing here. Mike had a list of requests, so we did about four of those this morning: "God on the Mountain" by Marty, "Resurrection Ground" by the men's quartet, "You Are My All in All," and "Living Water."

We sang for about 45 minutes, and then we sat down with the congregation while Crist Diener preached. His main text was *Hebrews 10*, the "three lettuces". "**Let us draw near..., Let us hold fast..., Let us consider....**" If you want to know more you have to read it for yourself. ☺

Following the service we enjoyed a fellowship dinner. We had several hours to fellowship with friends and acquaintances before our next service. It also allowed time for some naps, reading, listening to music, and just generally relaxing. That's one of the advantages of having two services back-to-back in the same place. ☺

Silver Lake #2

We sang at Silver Lake again in the afternoon. Since we had lots of time after the huge lunch, we took walks, caught up with friends, and took quick naps before lining up.

One funny thing happened to a few of the ladies who were napping. Someone swapped their coverings and then on waking, in their grogginess, they weren't sure why the coverings felt weird. ☺

Menno directed the first half and had a request to sing three solos, which he did. He also dedicated "Put a Smile on Your Face" and "Why Complain" to the children in the audience. At break time we charged outside for fresh and, hopefully, cooler air.

Mike started the second half of the service with the ladies singing "Lean on Me." He then opened it up for requests, which pretty much took care of the rest of the service. A few of the requests were "I'm not Ashamed," "Father's House," "Amazing Grace," and "Resurrection Ground."

We did something in this service that we hadn't done before - "Bind Us Together" with hand clapping and motions. That was fun, and I think the audience enjoyed it too.

By Lorraine Yoder

We changed clothes, packed up, and left for home around 4:15 p.m. We were tired, but not enough to sleep, so we played games on the way home. Rage, Rook, and Uno were the games of choice. We also had packed lunches to help pass the time and "keep body and soul together" as Menno would say.

The bus drivers and directors got their heads together and decided it had been too long since we had a fire-drill. Marty made an abrupt stop on an on-ramp and yelled fire drill. We emptied the bus as fast as we could. There's nothing like trying to gather up all the game pieces and game boards to get them out of the "thundering herd's" way! There's also nothing quite like the feeling of wet, muddy socks because the ground hadn't yet dried from all the rain (You know in a true emergency you would never take time to put on your shoes first!)

We finally got home around 11:30 p.m. That's earlier than sometimes, but a long drive on the bus is tiring no matter what time you get home. I could even nap, so use your imagination to decide how tired the drivers were.