The Mt. Anthems Newsletter

April 2010

April 2, 2010

Bittinger Mennonite Church

Bittinger, MD

It is a long-standing tradition for us to have a Good Friday evening service at this local church. I thought for awhile that we were going to have a very small audience, but by the time devotions were over the audience had nearly filled the place.

Mike opened the service with "What a Savior," and "Gentle, Holy Spirit." Solo's were done by both Mike and Marty: "I'm Not Ashamed," and "Prodigal Son" respectively. The men's quartet sang two songs: "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," and "Resurrection Ground." A song we hadn't done for awhile was "I'll Have a New Life." It was so much fun to sing that one again. As we were finishing our service we got a request for "Jesus Will Outshine Them All." We ended the service by singing "Our God He Is Alive" with the audience. They sang with gusto and made the rafters ring.☺ I love having audiences sing with us when they do it so enthusiastically!

After the service there were several boys and girls checking out the recordings. I started handing out pencils and one young lady said, "This is what I like. You always give us pencils." Joyce and I had to laugh because she hadn't laid them out. She thought we had been here often enough we probably didn't need to give out any. Even these small things can leave a big impression it seems.

Eventually we all headed off to our homes to rest up for Easter Sunday. May you rejoice in the resurrection power of our Lord and Savior. To Him be all the glory and honor.

April 11,2010

Covenant Baptist Church

Romney, WV

What a beautiful day to travel. As we came down off the mountain on the way to Romney, WV we saw lots of Redbuds blooming on the side of the road. We also saw Lilacs blooming. God's world is so amazing. We had several visitors traveling with us today.

The people at this morning's service were very receptive of the songs we sang. Some of the songs were "Never-ending Joy," "It is Well with My Soul," and "What a Meeting in the Air." Marty also sang "God on the Mountain." That song really hit me in a new way about how God is the same no matter what.

A man that attends this church owns an orchard, and after lunch he invited us to come and see the apple and peach blossoms. Usually they bloom two weeks apart, but this year they are blooming together. What a beautiful sight. We even got to walk through part of the orchard and just smell the blossoms.

By Wanda Swartzentruber

Amity United Church of Christ

Meyersdale, PA

We had about one and a half hours of R&R at home prior to this evening's service. One of the young ladies forgot to change her shoes, and didn't realize it until we were in the middle of devotions. There was no time to remedy the situation so her black and white tennis shoes had to suffice. She seemed a bit embarrassed about it, but in truth, you barely noticed it. ☺

This is a local service for us – less than ten miles from our home base. Our audience here is generally fewer in number and consists mostly of older folks. There were just a few of our home church members sprinkled throughout the audience.

Mike opened the service with a rousing rendition of "I Sing the Mighty Power of God." Marty's solo this evening was "God on the Mountain," and Mike sang "Where No One Stands Alone." We finished out the service with songs about heaven: "Love Will Bring us All Together," "I'm too Near Home," and "Marriage Supper of the Lamb." Our final song (a request from the audience) was "Amazing Grace" which we sang with them.

After people had looked their fill at our recordings, we packed everything back onto the bus and headed home. Hopefully some of God's blessings that we received this evening, will continue to resonate in our lives throughout the coming week.

April 25,2010

Cabin Run Wesleyan Methodist Church

Keyser, WV

This morning's drive to WV was so beautiful despite the gray clouds hovering overhead. The dogwood and redbud trees were still blooming, and the daffodils, tulips, and hyacinths put on a colorful show as well. A few people

took naps this morning but most of us spent time visiting with our "bus neighbors."

When we arrived at the church, they asked if we would park across the street. Arlin stopped in the middle of the road so we could unload our equipment prior to him parking over there. The fellows hurriedly unloaded everything and carted it all into the church. Imagine our surprise when we saw them all streaming back out again a minute later with most of the equipment in tow. They automatically unloaded everything and forgot to check if it was actually needed. We don't set up sound in this church because of its small size, and they did all that work for nothing.

The service this morning felt Spirit-led. A song that seemed to be a tremendous blessing to them was Marty's solo "He Giveth More Grace." In fact the pastor asked for an encore of that song to close the service. Other songs that come to mind from this service are "I'm Not Ashamed" (Mike's solo), "Standing on the Solid Rock," and "What a Meeting in the Air." We took some time out for children's meeting and Byron once again shared his expressive reading of Daniel chapter three. I wish you could hear it sometime.

When it was time for the children to go back to their parents (They were sitting on stage with us.), one young Miss stood up, turned around, and with sweet sincerity said, "I really enjoy your singing." It made all our hard work seem worthwhile.

We were packing up the recordings when a man standing in the church doorway shouted, "Hallelujah" very loudly. I thought *"What a strange way to show how blessed he was by the service."* No sooner did that thought go through my mind, when I heard a small voice say, "Here I am, Daddy." My mistake caused me to chuckle at myself and how arrogant of me to assume he was that blessed by our singing. ☺

We left the church and drove approximately one mile to the Ruritan Hall where they served us a very bountiful feast. It was difficult to decide which goodies to pile onto my plate. There's a two and a half hour drive to our next concert, so after singing our "Thank You" song we piled back into the bus and settled in for a restful afternoon.

Fairview Church of God

Mount Pleasant, PA

We had the privilege of eating at the Laurelville Mennonite Church Center. It is a beautiful facility. The folks from Fairview Church of God put out another huge meal for us. It was not easy doing it justice. You try eating two large meals only two and a half hours apart. That does not mean we didn't appreciate their efforts! It always amazes me what lengths people go to in order to ensure our needs are met.

We had our devotions on the bus this evening. Suddenly there was a bright flash of light followed shortly by a very loud crack of thunder. I'm sure it shook the bus, although I admit it may have just been me jumping in my seat. ☺ For devotions we shared thoughts about our favorite songs or phrases of song, telling why they were meaningful to us.

The Pastor here, Keith Solomon, is also pastor of another church. We have sung there several times in the past, however, we have never been to this church before. During the service this evening, Mike asked whether or not "old" people have imaginations? One gray-haired gentleman quickly responded, "It's all we have left." We all enjoyed a hearty laugh.

Some of the songs we shared this evening were "Standing on the Solid Rock," "Gone," and "Lord Jesus, Come." Marty sang "The Prodigal Son." We ended the service by singing "We'll All Be There."

Since I sit in the middle of the bus, you'll often hear about the happenings there. Tonight's conversation was a "stream of consciousness" one. You know the type. You start out on one subject and end up with something totally different, while hitting on several topics in between. One thing just led to another. You look back and wonder, *"How did we get on that subject when we started out on this one?"* We started talking about music, hit the pitfalls of higher education, and eventually ended up talking about death and deathbed experiences. By the time the conversation ended, half the occupants of the bus were standing in the aisle listening in. Well, I do have to admit they were originally there because of one couple's wedding pics and music. However, I may point out that when they couldn't see/hear those anymore, they remained right where they were. We didn't disperse until we pulled into the parking lot and had to gather our belongings. That is an indication of a good conversation! May you enjoy many of your own.