

## Pastors announce retirement

Yes, it's true. After 26 years, and having reached the 7<sup>th</sup> decade of life, we have decided it's time to retire from pastoral ministry.

As we wrote in our letter to the congregation on February 20, when we came to Elm Street as pastors we had no idea how long our season of service here would continue; we only knew that God had called us to a new mission field. And we have experienced the privilege of walking together with a congregation engaged in reaching out to others.

Over a year ago, an artist's portrayal of a curving path (*Primavera Pathway*) caught our attention. It served as a symbol of our future since we did not know what was beyond the

curve, but through prayer and discernment we began to recognize God's leading toward



the next milestone in our lives. We eventually purchased a copy of the picture from the artist and it has found its place on a wall in our living room.

On May 30, we plan to move to Goshen, Indiana, the city where we began our married life, received

some of our education, and made many friends. It is also the place where the families of our son and daughter travel once or twice a year for family reunions. Accordingly, our last day with the congregation will be Sunday, May 29.

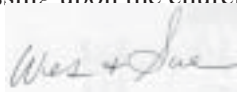
Last week we signed off on the purchase of a one-storey house in the area of Goshen where we wanted to settle. The circumstances of that transaction were clearly God's leading.

We know that our departure from Lima will not be easy because we've made many friends in this neighborhood,

in the congregation, and across the Northern Ohio District and they will always have a significant place in our hearts.

And, from what

we have experienced during our service here, we also believe that God will continue to lead this congregation forward and that he will raise up leaders to guide it in faithful ministry. Our prayers will continue for God's guidance and blessing upon the church.



## A City Built on a Table

Kay Workman's name has made an impression on the sands of time in many parts of the world even though she hasn't left Lima. When her friends travel to far-away places, all she asks is that they write her name in the sand on the beach.

She has also made an impression on the hearts of many children over the years in her Sunday school classes.

In recent months, she has been helping her elementary kids build a cardboard city on a table in her basement classroom. "It's a city of what God wants me to be," she says, "because God has a plan for each child."

A look at the table reveals what she means. Each little building has the name of an occupation written on it that represents a child's dream of the future. Kenny, for example, wants to be a fire fighter. Malika says she wants to be a lot of things: a singer, a veterinarian, ballet dancer, and cake designer. Selena wants to be a nurse and Dakota a football player. Armani aims to be a pediatrician. Monica

wants to be a vet or the wife of a policeman so that if someone breaks into her house all she has to do is wake her husband up. The city has an airport so people can travel and a helicopter to take people to the hospital. And, for some reason, it ended up with two churches.

Kay's passion is to help the children realize that Jesus loves them and has a purpose for them. Scattered throughout her teaching sessions are lessons of life. "You make wise choices, even as a young person," she tells them. And "Yes, some things are boring, but if you stick with them you will end up as a great vet or firefighter."

In her scripture lesson from Jesus' parable about building on the rock in Matthew 7:24 last Sunday, Kay told them, "We are those houses and when

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we build on Christ, we have his strength, so obey what Christ says to you because he will never lead you astray.” And the Sunday before, as Kay gathered up their prayer requests, she told her charges, “Prayer is talking to God like you talk to a friend.” One of their requests was to pray for

Justin Bieber, which she did, “that he can be someone kids can look up to.”

As kids' goals change and new students come, the cardboard city will continue to grow and, Kay hopes, young lives will be built on the solid rock.

## History – a thing of the past

Have you ever wondered how the Elm Street congregation began? Or when this worship center was built? Or how many pastors have served here? Or how that mission statement above the water fountain came into being?

The answers to these questions and others can be found in an updated 20-page summary of the history of the Elm Street church, (*Elm Street Church of the Brethren – a short history 1902 – 2011*) written recently by Pastor Wes. In the pages of this monograph you can trace God’s leading through the 109 years of this congregation’s history

Copies are available for a \$1.00 contribution that will defray printing costs.

## Invitation to Supper

Join us for physical and spiritual nourishment for five Wednesday evenings beginning March 16.

Each evening begins at 6:30 with a light meal. Hosts have been appointed to take responsibility for the meal each week. You need not bring anything.

Following supper, we will focus on a segment of *Flywheel*, a DVD about living with integrity as we prepare ourselves spiritually for Easter.

These Wednesdays provide an opportunity for fellowship and spiritual growth no matter your age. Why not make these Wednesdays a priority during Lent? Set aside the time from 6:30 - 8:00 to restore your physical and spiritual strength.

### Attendance & Offerings

January			February		
Sunday	Worship	Offering	Sunday	Worship	Offering
School			School		
2	40	57	6	12	37
		\$1,248.50			\$ 883.00
9	29	53	13	38	78
		725.25			1,876.90
16	31	51	20	35	44
		1,259.00			1,065.05
23	39	47	27	33	48
		839.50			869.62
30	33	47			
		802.11			
<b>2010 Average SS Attendance: 31</b>			<b>2010 Average Worship Attendance: 53</b>		
<b>2011 Average SS Attendance: 32</b>			<b>2011 Average Worship Attendance: 51</b>		

### TREASURER'S REPORT

As of the end of February:

Budget Amount Needed: \$9,409.32

Budget Amount Received: \$8,988.68

Budget Amount needed each week: \$1,045.48

Average Weekly Budget Amount Received: \$ 998.74

Designated giving (Special projects) in 2011: \$580.25

Total 2011 Budget: \$54,355.00



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physician, the Johnsons and we hosted a vegetarian meal for family members and friends at the church, which they gratefully received. After returning to India, the father wrote in an email, "Some people meet for a while and leave a lasting effect. I wish to convey that you are one of them. Thanks for the photographs and the support during our stay there."

The path that led to the appointment of new deacons at Elm Street included several steps. Earlier in the year, the Leadership Team had recognized the need to call new deacons when it became clear that three of the four active deacons would no longer continue. The team also realized that the congregation needed an opportunity to learn about the process of calling deacons.

In November, the congregation invited Donna Kline, director of deacon training for the denomination, to provide a Sunday afternoon workshop about the role of deacon ministry. Nearly

30 deacons and potential deacons from Sugar Creek, Pleasant View, and Elm Street showed up for the event, where they considered biblical teaching and denominational understanding of deacon ministry, learned about deacon ministries in each of the congregations, prayed together, and shared a meal together.

Later that month, I preached a message on the importance of deacon ministry. Two weeks later, during the congregational forum, Sue introduced the deacon nomination process. Each church member was asked to submit up to five names for consideration. That list was used to help determine whom God was calling to deacon ministry. As pastors, we conferred with those who had received the highest mention. In the end, Darrell, Vikki, and Randy confirmed their call and joined Marie on the deacon team. The pastors meet with the deacons occasionally to discuss issues of ministry.

-Wes Richard



## Other Opportunities

### Sale items needed

Check your attic, closets and basement for items to help with the spring sale that supports sending kids to camp. Bring household items, furniture, appliances, clothes, etc., anytime before May 14. Call for free pick-up service.

### Spiritual Renewal

Use these days before Easter to reset your spiritual compass. During Lent devotional Bible passages and questions for meditation will be available each Sunday, courtesy of the renewal team. Allow your commitment to Christ grow during this season. Get ready to celebrate the resurrection!

### Ottawa River Clean-up

Volunteers will meet at the Red Cross building on S. Collett St. to get their assignments before heading to the river.

Date: Saturday, April 30th

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon

Receive a t-shirt, certificate and free lunch.

Call 419-221-5177 for information.

### One Great Hour of Sharing

Help meet world needs through special contributions during March.

For over 60 years, through these offerings, the Church of the Brethren has shared material resources with a hurting world. Offerings help to provide:

*Comfort and hope* when Brethren workers implement long-term relief in areas ravaged by natural disaster or civil unrest and war;

*Companionship and support* by providing education, supply kits, and other aid to those whose lives are disrupted or displaced;

*Blessings and joy* for those who receive the basic needs of body, soul and spirit, as well as for those who release their grasp on the false security of material abundance. Mark your envelope OGHs.

### Coming Up

**May 7.** Mother-Daughter Banquet with guest Charlotte Wallace - naturalist and musician.

**May 14.** Spring Sale

**May 21.** District Board meets here

### Do you just belong?

*Are you an active member the kind who would be missed?*

*Or are you just contented that your name is on the list?*

*Do you attend the meetings and mingle with the flock?*

*Or do you stay at home to criticize and knock?*

*Do you take an active part to help the work along?*

*Or are you satisfied to only just belong?*

*Do you work with your committee and get right in and mix?*

*Or leave the work to just a few and talk about the "cliques"?*

*Think this over, member - you know right from wrong!*

*Are you an active member or do you just belong?*

**(Lima City Neighnotes March 2011)**

## Countdown to Easter



### Ash Wednesday

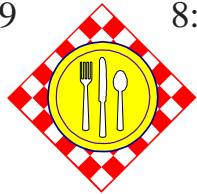
Guest: Fred Brinkman  
(Retired postal worker)  
7:00 p.m.

### Lenten suppers:

Wednesdays at  
6:30 p.m.  
followed by  
program. Begins  
March 16



Men & Boys Breakfast  
March 19 8:30 a.m.



### Combined Lenten Services

April 3 Pleasant View 6:00 p.m.  
April 10 Elm Street 6:00 p.m.  
April 17 Philippian Missionary  
Baptist 6:00 p.m.



### Love Feast

7:00 p.m.  
April 21

### Easter Breakfast



Sunday  
April 4  
9:45



### Easter Worship

April 24  
10:30 a.m.

## New deacons called at Elm Street

Darrell and Vikki Johnson could not have imagined their first assignment as deacons when they were commissioned a week earlier.

The Johnsons, along with Randy Pugin, knelt at the front of the congregation on January 2, 2011, to be consecrated. For each of them, the congregation's call had confirmed an inner spiritual call to this new ministry role.

The following Saturday, the Johnsons found themselves in a hospital emergency room, praying for an accident victim. "I heard the ambulance go by our house," Darrell told the congregation the next day, "and it stopped pretty close." Minutes later, a police officer pulled up across the street to knock on the neighbor's door.

"He went to work," Vikki told her.

But the officer said, "No. He didn't make it." His car slid into a tree on the icy street, less than a half-mile from home. "It's pretty serious," the officer told them. "We are trying to find the next of kin."

"His parents live in India," the Johnsons told the officer. Since the young man had no family members nearby, the Johnsons decided to go to the hospital. On their way, they called the pastors to ask, "What shall we say when we get there, that we are neighbors and deacons from the church?"

"That sounds like a good way to say it," I replied. (Their question prompted us to create a laminated, wallet-size ID card for each deacon with their name and the name of the church on it.)

Once in the emergency room, the Johnsons learned that the victim had suffered a serious head injury and his survival was in doubt. "We did something we have never done before," Darrell said Sunday morning. "We stood there and laid hands on him and held his hand and prayed. His bloody clothes were all around."

When the Johnsons looked up after their prayers, the nurses were crying. They said, "It is awful nice for you all to come by."

By Sunday morning, the young man was on a ventilator in the intensive care unit. Darrell spoke with the young man's brother-in-law, who had arrived from Arkansas. "Keep praying," he told them. "It will be God's will whether he makes it or not."

This was not the first time the Johnsons have experienced tragedy close up. Several years ago, they lost a seven-year-old granddaughter in a church van accident and, three years ago, their 34-year-old daughter died suddenly after a freak accident at home.

On Thursday, the young man died. His father had arrived from India and his mother was on the way. By the time of the funeral on Saturday, other relatives and friends had arrived from Boston, Harrisburg, Detroit, California and Arkansas.

After a Hindu ceremony at a local funeral home, conducted by a local Indian

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