

## Ashland Christian Fellowship News

Greetings from the people of Ashland Christian Fellowship as we celebrate Thanksgiving and look forward to the Christmas season! Even in his lamentations for his people, Jeremiah could still look to God, and proclaim, "great is thy faithfulness." Thank God for the comfort and strength we can draw from His word. Once again, God has been faithful to Lori and I, our children, their families and our church family throughout another year.

In February Lori's mother passed on to be with the Lord after a long battle with cancer. This has been a very hard time for my wife. She has been suffering from associated health problems due to her grieving. But God has shown his faithfulness many times through the prayers of the local church and the people of the Central Plains Mennonite Conference. Thank you. I am also very thankful for the faithfulness of our church while Lori and I needed to be away in February and in July due to Lori's health issues and the need for a spiritual retreat for both of us. David's statement in Psalm 36 rings ever true. "Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds."

In June Leader Treks hosted Vacation Bible School at our church. We enjoyed having up to forty-plus children in attendance. The kids enjoyed music, drama, Bible lessons, awesome crafts, games and one on one time with the leaders. The children in our community really look forward to VBS each year. Along with VBS Leader Treks also does community work projects. This year they built a deck for an elderly couple and poured concrete sidewalk for the Missionary Alliance church. Our church has partnered with Leader Treks for the last seven years. In short, Leader Treks' mission is to encourage and develop leadership and spiritual growth in teens through service to church and community. Leader Treks is greatly appreciated by our church and our community.

Also in June we hosted an MDS fence crew at our church. They traveled all the way from Pennsylvania to Big Sky country! They repaired and rebuilt boundary fences for ranchers and for the Northern Cheyenne tribe. The group included three young ladies who cooked for the crew of about nine or ten young men. The crew also repaired and rebuilt fence around the house and ranch yard of an elderly Cheyenne woman in our community. They even managed to rebuild the fence around our church hayfield! But what amazed me was that they still had energy to play several hard games of volleyball at the end of a twelve hour-plus day of fencing. I made the "mistake" of trying to join in on a couple of those games. I found myself, on a few occasions, ducking to avoid eating the volleyball! Lori wisely sat on the sideline cheering for me.....well maybe she was laughing part of the time. While here, these amazing young people also helped us lay sod around our new church building and seed a large area for new grass. The evening we finished sod and seed it started raining and continued for about four days! This was also the last day for the group to be with us. God's timing is always perfect! This group was truly a great joy to have around.

Next came the hosting of the Central Plains Mennonite Conference in Ashland. We certainly enjoyed the great speakers, music, worship, meals, and visiting, but two very special things stick out in my memory. The first being David Boshart leading a group in a beautiful song of blessing for our new church building. The other good memory is all the kind and encouraging comments I received. Thank you for your kindness.

In July Lori and I took off for a much needed spiritual retreat. The church did a great job of stepping up to the plate while we were gone. During our annual Northern Cheyenne Mennonite Family and Junior camps our church helped with meals and some of our teens helped as counselors at junior camp. The junior camp had about eighty campers in attendance. Our adults and young people enjoyed helping.

At the end of July we hosted another MDS fence crew. Like the previous crew they came from the Lancaster, PA area. This group worked alongside the crews that were staying at the Busby church. As was the group before them, they were a joy to get to know and to learn about their culture. The only thing I struggled with was trying to pronounce Lancaster the correct way! I guess I'm just not enough Mennonite yet!

In August a group of Leader Treks staff stayed at our church while finishing up a few community work projects. We look forward to partnering with Leader Treks again next year. We also are excited to host the Bethesda church youth group next spring.

For two weeks in August I worked with Tim Leapoldt to replace siding and windows in the parsonage. Tim is the man I have mentioned in a previous newsletter. One year ago Tim graduated from a drug treatment/discipleship program. Tim has become a powerful witness to others with drug/alcohol addictions. Tim just got married on November 16<sup>th</sup>. Tim and his new wife both volunteer at the facility they graduated from. God is AWESOME!!! Lori and I worked until early fall painting the parsonage and staining the rough lumber carport. We are very happy with the way it looks.

On October 6<sup>th</sup> we baptized a young Cheyenne couple and two other men in the Tongue river. We also shared a church fellowship meal. Even though the water was "very" cold, our hearts were rejoicing, full of the love and warmth of God. It's always refreshing to see new faces in the church. It's such a blessing to see people in the church reaching out to others in the community and caring for new believers. I'm currently leading a "new believer's" Bible study for men. It's been a great encouragement to me as well as the other men. It's wonderful to see men hungry to learn God's word and sharing and edifying one another. Lori and a few other ladies from the church and community have been doing a home Bible study. We continue to have our regular mid-week Bible study as well. It has definitely been a refreshing season in our church. We combined our monthly fellowship meal with our annual Thanksgiving meal. Everyone thought that was better than having three turkey meals in one month! I enjoyed my pie and coffee first, "just in case." We continue to enjoy the blessings of Sunday morning worship and Sunday afternoon prayer. The church is currently collecting the items for relief kits to be sent off to MCC. We are so very thankful for the prayers and support of our conference and conference ministers. We also are very grateful for the partnership of Bethesda Mennonite Church which remains so faithful in helping us continue to minister to the Northern Cheyenne people and Ashland community.

Prayer requests: 1) My wife's health , our family 2) Wisdom and strength to lead God's church 3)

Sunday school teachers and worship leaders

In His service,

Pastor Doug and Lori Bishop