



The Taftsville Chapel Current

God calls us as followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as a community of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to our world.

"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." John 3:8

Covenant Sunday

Coming up at the end of this month at Taftsville Chapel is our annual Covenant Sunday. I thought it would be good to talk a bit about this; what it is, why it is and how it is.

First though, a few thoughts on the ideas of commitment and/or covenant. We often hear that what is needed for anything to work, whether it's a job, a marriage, a good cause, or a church fellowship, is sufficient commitment. I'd like to suggest that there is more than enough *capacity* for commitment to go around in everyone. The question seems to be: "to what, and why?" rather than "how much?" When it comes to a commitment to a local expression of the Body of Christ, what matters more than how much commitment we bring is what kind of commitment we bring and why.

The best kind of commitment emerges naturally out of loving relationships. Loving relationships are supported and matured by the right kind of commitment. Commitment, by itself, does not seem to create redemptive direction in a fellowship. This is where the significance of a covenant comes in as the atmosphere in which good commitment is lived out. Our covenant-making at Taftsville not only suggests mutuality and relationship, it requires it. Commitment and covenant work best together. I'd like to suggest that, historically, our understanding is that we are making a commitment to be in covenant, rather than making a covenant to be committed.

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Photos in this issue taken by Abner Schlabach

So, how will it work on Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup>? We start with our Taftsville Confession of Faith (found at the end of this article, along with our Membership Covenant). This is the brief summation of the basic convictions we share about God's commitment to covenant with us. Remember, it is a statement of *faith*, and faith for all of us is a living, growing, dynamic reality. There are some items on our statement of faith that I would die for, and some that I am in "essential agreement" with. If, after reviewing the elements of the statement, you find that you are in peaceable agreement with what is said, then you will likely feel theologically at home at Taftsville, and share a common understanding of Who we worship and why. Also, the statement of faith is the core motivator for our Covenant with each other. It is the "why" behind the "what and how" of our covenant. We love, because He first loved us.

Next, after affirming our Statement of Faith, we read in unison the elements of our Covenant with each other. If you find that you can peaceably affirm the heart and soul beneath it, and the involvement it invites, then you will likely also feel at home at Taftsville in the way we try to love one another and reach out to our world.

Doing this together every year has a number of good benefits. First, for those who have done it before, it's just good to be reminded. It's a time to examine our hearts for any unhealthy commitments that may have

crept in unawares over the last year, and let them go. It keeps our covenant fresh and lively, and stimulates our alertness to God and each other. For those who are standing with us and affirming these things for the first time, it helps you to know what you are, and are not, getting into here. It affirms that everyone, regardless of his or her length of time as a believer or as a member at Taftsville, is on equal ground. The commitment to covenant is a fresh one for everyone each year. It affirms that our structure is not based on power, but on a shared faith and loving relationships. Our covenant is to walk out our shared faith and calling with each other as God gives us grace, leading and ability.

For those who are joining us in this covenant for the first time, there will be opportunity given for you to say a bit about what has led to your decision if you would like to, but there is no requirement that you should. We would like to acknowledge your decision with a word of welcome.

And, a word to those among us who, for what ever reason, are not comfortable or ready to stand in affirmation of the faith statement or membership covenant: You are so welcome here! We are all on a pilgrimage in a world that is not our home, but one that needs us all as Jesus' hands, feet, healing and hope.

*-Randy Good*

| <b>STATEMENT OF FAITH</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>MEMBERSHIP COVENANT</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We believe God is the Creator and Master of all things.</li> <li>• We believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and displayed all the fullness of God in human form.</li> <li>• We believe that Christ's coming announced the Kingdom of God; His death on the cross paid the penalty for our sin; and His resurrection makes sure both our present freedom and our future hope.</li> <li>• We believe each individual must personally accept the salvation offered by Christ, and show that decision by repentance and baptism.</li> <li>• We believe God's Holy Spirit gives life, direction and wholeness to everyone who receives salvation.</li> <li>• We believe the life of the Lord Jesus and the Word of God (the Bible) reveal the truth of God, and are our guides for daily living.</li> <li>• We believe that the Church is the Family of God with Christ as the head, where all members are called to share their love, time, possessions and spiritual gifts.</li> <li>• We believe Christ will come again to fulfill the Kingdom and bring his people into eternal joy in the world to come.</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>As members of<br/>Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Fellowship,<br/>We covenant to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live a life of simple obedience to the will of God.</li> <li>• Open ourselves to the guidance, direction, instruction and encouragement of the Holy Spirit to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ.</li> <li>• Be willing to be used for the strengthening of the Body of Christ, including the willingness to boldly tell others of salvation in Christ.</li> <li>• Labor together in understanding and meeting human needs in our local community and in our world.</li> <li>• Refrain from the use of violence, and be peacemakers in our time.</li> <li>• Regularly meet together for worship, study, prayer and encouragement.</li> <li>• Give systematically and generously of our financial resources, our time and our spiritual gifts.</li> <li>• Annually renew our commitment to Jesus Christ and affirm our covenant with one another.</li> </ul> |

## Advent and Christmas

During Advent the children learned the old English carol, "The Friendly Beasts" which they sang during our worship service on Dec. 28. Elinor Shattuck created a puppet story time using animals from the Christmas story, ending with the donkey excited about going to Egypt with Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Many thanks to Virginia Schlabach, Janet North, Elinor Shattuck, the children, and all those who made the animals of the crèche come alive, and impressing on us all the humble birth of God's son, Jesus, in a stable.

### Josiah's Christmas A B Cs

- A is for the **angel** shining up high.
- B is for the **baby** in the stable.
- C is for the **Christmas** dinner.
- D is for the **dove** in the manger corner.
- E is for the **exciting** Christmas day.
- F is for the **food** for Christmas breakfast.
- G is for the **goat** in the manger side.
- H is for the **hot** Christmas dinner.
- I is for the **ice cream** for Christmas desert.
- J is for **Jesus** in the manger stable.
- K is for the **kings** with presents for all.
- L is for Christmas **lunch**.
- M is for the **manger** with the star above.
- N is for the **nest** for the little white dove.
- O is for the **ornaments** that we put in our house.
- P is for the **pans** that we cook Christmas dinner in
- Q is for the **quiet** Jesus asleep in the stable.
- R is for the **rabbit** that hops by the stable.
- S is for the **star** shining above.
- T is for **trying** to get our star up.
- U is for the **star up** above.
- V is for the **very very very very** hungry Josiah.
- W is for the **water** running nearby.
- X is for **x-rays** for Jesus.
- Y is for **yawning** after Christmas day.
- Z is for the **zipper** on our Christmas pajamas.

by Josiah Esch



Josiah Esch



Micah Schlabach Seth & Gavin Eisenberg



Clara Swanson



Virginia Schlabach, Sunday School teacher, with children

When I decided to take the year off from UVM and live in DC I had no idea what I was getting myself into. One thing was clear, I was not as strong as I thought I was, and the life I was working so hard to control was spiraling down with every attempt I made to salvage it. Potomac Point is a community where girls out of high school (right now we have 18-year-olds to 25-year-olds) decide to come to take a break from the chaos of life and learn how to live out a *personal* relationship with Jesus. And like Mother Teresa said, “we pray together, we eat together, we work together, we fight together.” Yes, we do fight, yes we offend each other, but those are the times when I learn the most about forgiveness and God’s grace. We try to live out Jesus’ words, “Don’t let the sun go down on your anger” by getting together before bed every night to let each other know whether or not we are at peace with one another. This isn’t a way to make private disagreements public, it’s only a way to hold each other accountable; and it’s amazing to sense the Spirit of His peace when we are all in agreement!

The Spirit of our house is so important to us because of the work that we do at The Cedars – how can we expect world leaders to forgive and love each other when we hold grudges over dirty dishes! We walk to The Cedars every morning at 9 o’ clock and start with a meeting where one girl is put on “Point”, which is a way to give each person a chance to lead and to assign girls to different jobs each day. I hadn’t understood the importance of this until we had one House Meeting where we discussed how frustrating it is when girls choose to do things the way *they* think things should be done rather than listening to the girl on Point. The reality is, we are all going to be put on Point at one time or another, and we decided as a house to give up our own desires and instead unconditionally love and follow our leader. Because of this gift of support when she is put on Point at work and in her home she has the confidence that she can do it. There is such a difference when we choose to be *well* rather than to be *right*.

When I first arrived at the house I had this idea that knowing Jesus was like a video game, complete with levels, obstacles, and bad guys. I thought that getting my life back on track meant facing all of my brokenness and ugliness and only after successfully completing a level could I receive my prize, God’s

love and forgiveness. I had actually taught myself to prefer being broken and dirty because then it made sense and it was something I could control. Well, I guess I’m lucky that God is bigger than the box I’ve put Him in because He’s shown me that His forgiveness is not something I need to earn. Speaking of boxes, during my first week I was shown an example of how we live. Our friend, Doug asked us to draw two boxes, one labeled “Performance” and the other “Relationships.” We talked about how the world tells us to find worth in our accomplishments, when the truth is that we were created to be in a relationship. This isn’t just any relationship, either, the One who put the stars in the sky desires to be in a relationship with *me!*

My plan, as of right now, is to stay in DC until May; although God might have other plans, and I just hope I have the courage to listen to Him. It’s nice to know that I’m not going back to play the next level, and even better, that Jesus has already won the game! Thank you so much for all of your prayers and support, and thank you for showing me what it means to live in a relationship with Jesus!



***To my family at Taftsville Chapel,***

*I can’t tell you how much your support this year has meant to me. From the day I announced I would be taking the year off an was received with a swarm of prayer and encouragement, I have felt and known the unconditional love you all have – and that in itself has been the greatest blessing. Your letters, financial support, and prayers are with me as I serve others at the Cedars with God’s love, showing that your support has touched more than just me. Thanks you for being a part of my journey and for living out God’s grace in every way.*

*With all of His love, Haylie Cox*

### Chronological Bible

I have made it a practice to read the Bible thru every other year for my daily devotions alternating with the Daily Bread on the years when I don't read the Bible. I have been reading different versions and translations. This past year I have read THE DAILY BIBLE in Chronological Order (365 Daily Readings). This Bible is in the New International Version. It has devotional insights to guide you thru God's Word. I have thoroughly enjoyed this Bible as it leads you smoothly through Scripture, painting the scene for what is about to be read with historical and spiritual insights. The paragraphs are labeled which adds to the ease of reading. I highly recommend that if you want a fresh perspective on the Bible that you read the Daily Bible in Chronological Order. It is published by Harvest House Publishers of Eugene Oregon. [www.harvesthousepublishers.com](http://www.harvesthousepublishers.com)

- Richard Glick

### Health in Harmony News: go to

[www.healthinharmony.org/reports.html](http://www.healthinharmony.org/reports.html). There are two articles about Health In Harmony and Clinic ASRI's work - published in the Yale Medicine Magazine and on New America Media - posted on their website at [www.healthinharmony.org/media.html](http://www.healthinharmony.org/media.html).

"As we near the end of the year, we feel so blessed by and excited about the medical and conservation successes that your donations have made possible over the last 12 months. Also as we near the end of the year, we're thinking to the year ahead. "Thank you for helping us help thousands of people! Your (continued) support will enable us to help thousands more people in the future." *Kinari Webb*

### Financial future:

Face your fears and take action to solve a financial problem with help from budget and debt counseling sponsored by Mennonite Mutual Aid, MMA. Four free confidential sessions with a credit counselor can give you the information and confidence you need to help you get back on track or make the right choices about a mortgage or credit issue. Call toll-free (877) 809-0039, between 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. to get started.

For more information on this contact Allen Guntz, our MMA advocate or pick up a brochure on the table in the Millen Room.



Allison has always joked that she wanted a piano instead of a ring when she got engaged, being that a piano is harder to remove. A piano came to symbolize a commitment to building a home and the reality and permanence of marriage. As it turns out, Tim's parents wanted to give him the piano from their house. Tim had taken lessons when he was younger and his parents always thought of the piano as "Tim's piano". In Tim's house there was an empty wall in the music room where the piano would perfectly fit.

On Allison's birthday she was gone all day at work. They went out to eat and came back to Tim's house. Tim asked Allison to sit in the dining room while he went and got her birthday present. Suddenly, Allison heard a piano being played from the music room. With these first notes, Allison knew what Tim was asking. She came running into the music room, and after Tim finally got Allison to breathe again, he got down on one knee, took out a beautiful ring, and asked her to marry him. Allison, of course, said "Absolutely!!!" Tim and Allison plan to get married on April 18th in Harrisonburg, Virginia, Allison's childhood home.

We have really enjoyed how the church has been so supportive and excited for us. We feel that Taftsville is becoming our church family, not only as individuals, but as a couple. Thank you all! *Tim&Allison*

## Schedule for January

**Each Sunday morning:** 9:30 am – Worship Service  
 10:45 am – Coffee and Fellowship  
 11:00 am – Sunday School

### January

- 3 7:00 pm – Men’s Breakfast / Eaton’s Sugar House
- 10 7:30 am – Women’s Breakfast / Farmer’s Diner
- 14 7:00 pm – Church Council Meeting
- 16 Pastoral Care Team Meeting
- 25 9:30 am – Covenant Sunday
- 27 Deadline for February issue of *The Taftsville Chapel Current*

| Taftsville Tally |                 |                          |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
|                  | Attendance      | Offering                 |
| November         | 30 ---- ?-----  | \$735.00                 |
| December         | 7 ---- 62-----  | \$1,565.00               |
|                  | 14 ---- 56----- | 1,585.00                 |
|                  | 21              | <i>Snow cancellation</i> |
|                  | 28 ---- 74----- | \$3,021.00               |

*Please note that these totals do not always reflect the final tally.*

### January Birthdays

- 3 Ruth Ann Glick
- 7 Amena Reess
- 10 Carmeleta Beidler
- 12 Kristen Aloisio
- 15 Hannah Cox
- 21 Omar Zook
- 22 Josiah Esch
- 23 Carl Andreas

### January Childcare

- 4 Carmeleta Beidler
- 11 Mary Guntz
- 18 Nancy Pejouhy
- 25 Janet North

### January Cleaning

- 4 Zook
- 11 Zook
- 18 Aloisio
- 25 Chalker

### January Coffee

- 4 R&R Glick
- 11 Ken Glick
- 18 Nancy Pejouhy
- 25 Janet North

### January Anniversaries

- 22 Nancy & Russell Pejouhy

## Taftsville Tidbit Trivia

*Do you remember when...*

### 40 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*January 6, 1969*

Perhaps you have noticed the Church Directory in the Saturday edition of the Valley News and wondered why our church was not listed. We did too.

### 30 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*January 18, 1979*

The council discussed the importance of educating our youth, and church family as a whole, concerning CO status and peacemaking.

### 25 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*January 12, 1984*

Several persons have stated they wish we would use the Afterglow songbooks more at church. This suggestion will be passed on to Ellen.

### 15 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*January 13, 1994*

It was suggested that we consider setting up a format for conflict resolution. This subject will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

### 10 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*January 16, 1999*

There was discussion on the need for fresh interior paint for the building, especially downstairs. We chose Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> as a tentative workday for painting. Bring your brushes.

### 5 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

*January 14, 2004*

We decided to make the switch to Equal Exchange coffee. We will purchase the existing coffee maker from Allen’s Vending for \$75.00, and possibly order our coffee through the MCC Coffee Project. Randy and Carie volunteered for the job of testing coffee samples, and may be seeking additional volunteers for the taste testing.

## Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Fellowship



*Located in the village of Taftsville,  
 one block south of Rte. 4 on  
 Happy Valley Rd.*

**Randy Good, Pastor**

(802) 457-1516

<http://www.taftsvillechapel.org/>

Send your contributions for

**“The Taftsville Chapel Current” to:**

[rdjgcollins@mac.com](mailto:rdjgcollins@mac.com)

OR slip a note in my church mailbox

OR contact a Newsletter Staff Member:

Carie Good, Janet North, and Virginia Schlabach