



# The Mt. Anthems Newsletter

## June 2006

(This June report, temporarily lost among the e-mail, got to me after the newsletter was out.)

### St. John's Lutheran Church Red House, MD

**THURS. EVE. JUNE 1, 2006**

Normally, the Mt. Anthems reserve every Thursday evening during "touring season" for rehearsals, and as many chorus members as possible try to attend. However, on this night we took a break from the usual and traveled to Red House to give a rare Thursday night program.

On this sunny, summer evening we unloaded the sound equipment, risers, and display of recordings.

St. John's auditorium is an unusual one. Rather than being rectangular and long, like most churches, this one is semi-circular and spreads out to the sides, while being rather short from front to back. This creates a challenge for the sound guys and the ones responsible to arrange the singers so the audience has both a good view and good sound. As usual, the guys did an excellent job setting up.

Since this church is close to Oakland,, we were privileged to have many Mt. View members, and Amish from the area attend the concert.

Although it was a warm evening, we enjoyed giving this program. I like to sing to audiences with a wide variety of people. Mike directed the chorus and let Menno sit back with Grace. Later, Mike asked Menno to come up and sing his new solo, "*Stand By Me*," which gave him the opportunity to speak to the audience and especially to some old friends.

During the second half, a thunderstorm brewed. You could hear thunder rumble in the distance as the wind picked up. Later, the tape display table had to be moved from the doorway so the rain couldn't reach it.

After a delicious snack in the basement, we loaded equipment and headed home. I pray that we left behind a blessing and encouragement from the Lord God.

- Kenton Yoder

### Lucas Hollow Church Stanley, VA

**SUN., JULY 9, 2006**

We left at 5:30 from the building, just as dawn was pushing up the shades of night. Gerald led in prayer in Menno's absence. Arlen and LaVon planned to meet us at the church. Rebecca Petersheim, from Aroda, would join also. Along as a visitor, was Kristina Kask.

Because the church had only outhouses, we left a half hour earlier than usual and took advantage of a rest area near the church that had running water.

Lucas Hollow Church is a tiny white building in the hills of rural Virginia. I notice last week's attendance numbered only 15. Today, counting us along with the visitors, we were probably 100 in all. There was no need to set up sound.

With fans whirling, moving Mike's music about, we sang. Requested this morning was "*Surely Goodness and Mercy*." This was the first time Mike did Menno's solo, "*Where No One Stands Alone*." It sounded good. Also requested were, "*I Found the Lily in My Valley*," and "*Stranger of Galilee*," by Loretta. Mike asked Marty to sing and he chose, "*God on the Mountain*."

There were only 3 altos until Rose arrived, with friends, near break time.

"There's ice water in the basement," we were told during intermission. "You all come and help yourselves!"

"*Peace Speaker*," also a request, went well. Near closing, a lady asked if we wouldn't do "*Because He Lives*."

We sang "*Happy Birthday*" for Betty Sue and Virginia from the congregation. Afterward, Betty Sue came to our lunch table and thanked us again.

"It was such an honor. I never expected the Mt. Anthems to sing for me," she said.

A delicious Taco Salad lunch waited for us downstairs. What a treat! And so many toppings. For dessert we could chose from a variety of cakes. Then, besides all this, they brought homemade ice cream out to the pavilion. (We think this home-made ice cream was a first for the Mt. Anthems.)

"Ya all sang so well!"

"We really enjoyed it!" were comments repeated over again.

On the way out, Gerald complimented us on our singing. "You did well," he said. He also praised Loren for how well he had adjusted the sound. We cheered for him. (Remember, the sound system never even left the bus this morning :-)

## **VA Mennonite Retirement Community Harrisonburg, VA**

### **AFTERNOON**

The Homes are a large complex of buildings, set in a half-circle, up to 6 stories high, with yellow siding and red brick. We drove up to the Detweiler Auditorium to unload. In the shrub beds, black-eyed susans bloomed in profusion. Red geraniums graced huge clay pots. Purple pansies and tiny phlox added to the landscaping. It looked like it would rain soon; the breeze was flipping tree leaves to expose their undersides.

Close to 100 smiling residents gathered in the warm chapel for the meeting. We did "*For Those Tears I Died*," and "*Grace Enough*." Loretta sang, "*Sheltered in the Arms of God*."

Mike bragged on how well Marty takes care of the bus. It was shined and ready for us to travel again this morning. He asked, "Does it matter if we come in a clean or a dirty bus?"

"Yes," the residents admitted, "it does."

Mike used this to draw a parallel with how we present Christ. Each of us who are Christians are like a box. And it does matter how we present Christ. An unattractive gift is not well received.

Only 9 young men sang in the concert this afternoon. Rodney had brought Lorraine from Faith Mission (a Voluntary Service Unit) and arrived after we were on stage. Gerald didn't sing because of lower back pain.

The old folks asked for introductions of all siblings in the chorus this day, and also of the married couples.

Mahlon Horst had tears. He was so thankful for his heritage. 400 years ago a people moved to stand for God until persecution scattered them. There are still people here today because of those believers.

## **Bank Mennonite Harrisonburg, VA**

### **EVENING**

A balmy, beautiful evening. Junior led us in a meditation in the basement before the service. We

came upstairs to a packed house. The side aisles were full all the way to the prayer rooms and till the service was over the entrance was filled also.

Requested was "*Yes, I Know*," "*Stand Still*" and "*I Found the Lily in my Valley*," by Loretta. Mike was impressed that we should sing, "*If I Have Wounded any Soul*." He shared about something he and Lynnette are practicing in their marriage (which is only 2 weeks old) to communicate better.

Toward the end of the service Mike asked the congregation if they know "*Our God, He is Alive*." They did, so he asked them to help sing. Wow! What a powerful song with that crowd! Did I see the roof raise just a little? We finished with, "*I Bowed On my Knees and Cried Holy*," which was icing on the cake.

Immediately when the service ended, a lady came up. "That was such a good service!" she exclaimed.

It was wonderful to reconnect with old VA friends. What an encouragement we can be to each other.

## **Harmony Christian Fellowship Church Millington, MD**

**SAT. JULY 22, 2006**

We boarded the bus at noon under overcast skies. Flood warnings have been issued for this area. Menno and Grace won't be traveling again this weekend. Grace is still dressing Menno's foot wound so they thought it best to stay behind. Gerald read a letter to us from Menno.

We sang "*Our God is an Awesome God*" and Gerald led us in prayer. Angie Frantz is along as a visitor.

We had our first rest stop at 2 p.m. It is hot and humid summer outside. We got into heavy rain near the Glen Burke exit.

*Road Signs*

*White Hall Road*

*E-Z Pass No Vehicles over GVW*

*Sandy Point State Park*

*Welcome to Wm. Lane Jr. Memorial Bridge*

*Toll Plaza 1/2 mile*

We got into a traffic jam at this point. Nine lanes of traffic were creeping toward the toll plaza.

After we paid the fare we were still at a crawl. Was there an accident up ahead? A siren sounded. As we watched, two policemen on motorcycles, cruised in

among the traffic, and zipped up onto the bridge. We started moving then. The bridge was as magnificent as ever. Strong and elegant. Below us white caps laced the choppy brown water in the bay.

We ran into another traffic jam at 4:30. A car lay flipped over in the ditch.

At 4:45 p.m. we arrived at the church. Outside, dark storm clouds hung low. Strong winds tossed treetops, and bushes bent with the gale. The guys hurried off the bus to carry in the sound equipment before the storm struck. The girls didn't quite get all the luggage in till the rain came.

For devotions, Lyndon shared experiences from his recent trip to Canada, teaching Bible School. A question he was challenged with was, "Does your Christian life demand an explanation?"

The church received us warmly. We did "*In the Valley He Restoreth My Soul*," "*He's the One*," and "*Lean on Me*." Mike asked Loretta to do "*There Is a Haven*."

Mike told the congregation as he listens to the news of the war Israel has declared on Lebanon, he gets more eager for the end of the world to come. "Bring it on!" He wants to see the action. Mike had us do "*Jesus is Coming Soon*."

It was really nice to see the smiling faces of Dan and Ann Tice in the audience. They are in the states to renew visas and to arrange so they can continue mission work in Spain uninterrupted.

## Central Mennonite Church Dover, DE

**SUN. JULY 23, 2006**

The sky is heavy overcast. Probably effects from the tropical storm heading up the east coast.

The moderator prayed God's blessing on Menno, at home, before the chorus went up on stage.

What a quiet, powerful service! "He Takes a Beggar" gives me goose bumps.

*From rags unto riches, from silver to gold,  
from tinsel to diamonds, of value untold;  
From the slums to a palace, forever to  
reign,  
He takes a beggar and makes him a King.*

*He lifted the poor from the dust to the throne,  
He shelters the orphans and calls them  
his own;  
He healeth the blind, and he makes the dumb  
sing,  
He takes a beggar and makes him a King.*

We had just gone from this song into "*Gentle Holy Spirit, bring refreshing breezes on these people gathered here today . . .*" when I felt a presence come down right around Mike and the director's stand in the area between the front row of girls and the front church pews. It called for a "*Praise the Lord or Hallelujah!*" but being a chorus member I stayed with the song. In the audience tears flowed. It was very evident the Spirit of the Lord was here.

Marty's voice broke during ". . . *His love has no limit, his grace has no measure, His power, no boundary known unto man . . .*"

The Beachy trio's *Peace Speaker* just added to the inspiration.

It's not often in our travels that the chorus gets in on a sermon but usually at Central we do. The sermon today was taken from Eph. 6:1-8

During the offering, Pastor Jessie asked for testimonies. Three people shared, who had been touched by the songs. One man said right now he is probably in the biggest valley he has ever encountered in his life. He mentioned getting a post card from his son at Las Vegas, Nevada, sin city. Jessie asked several men from the church to surround this brother. They laid hands on him and prayed.

Later a chorus member said he had wished Mike would move on from the valley songs and comments. But here was a man who had so much needed them.

Over a large spread of lunch, we enjoyed rich fellowship with friends from the congregation. Barbara Barnhart, native of Garret Co., and sister to Paul Maust, said, "Your director is terrific!" Sixty years ago she had come to this community to teach school and ended up staying.

## Greenwood Mennonite Church Greenwood, DE

**EVENING**

This proved to be one of the most relaxing afternoons for me in recent memory. The dark balcony was a quiet place for a few of us to stretch out on the benches to rest. From the sanctuary below came gentle, soothing music. I thought it was a CD playing over our sound system. Later I was told Doug Yoder had played the piano and Angie Frantz did the Canon in D.

Fresh fruit, and cheese ball with crackers were offered before the service. They packed lunches for us to take along home.

Mike extended greetings to the church from Menno. Even though he isn't here physically, Mike

said, we can be sure he is with us in spirit.

Requested tonight was "*Hallelujah, What a Savior,*" by the Men's Quartet. We did, "*Is that the Lights of Home?*" Loretta sang, "*I Thirst.*" Frequently enthusiastic responses came from the listeners who were being blest. A man seated halfway back in the audience started waving his hand, keeping time with the music when we started in on "*Though Your Sins Be as Scarlet.*" On the last notes of "*Triumphantly the Church Will Rise,*" it felt as if we should all rise with the song.

The sun was just touching the tree line as we prepared to leave Greenwood. Laughter and light banter filled the bus. Water bottles were passed assembly line style. Brock and Brooke passed out lunches. Umee! Huge ham and lettuce sandwiches,

cookies, and fruit. It's always fun to raid the lunches to see what's there.

*Bay Bridge at Night*

*Light paths across dark water*

*Residual pink in an otherwise dark sky*

*A red stream of tail lights preceding the bus*

*Gray supports from the bridge flashing by*

*Huge orange street lamps*

*Thank You God, for another wonderful week-end of sharing your love and your message with so many people. We are your children. You've given us so much. Thanks for giving us this opportunity to pass it on.*

-Lena Eicher