



The Mt. Anthems Newsletter

April 2007

Mountain Top Church

Rocky Gap, MD

Sunday, April 1, 2007

This was a wet, overcast Sunday. We can praise the Lord no matter what the weather. So we boarded the bus again, glad to be able to carry out our responsibilities.

Upon arrival at the church, the sound guys immediately began unloading and setting up. They are to be commended for the efficient way they carry out their assignments.

Only a handful of people were in attendance. Yet we were warmly greeted and made to feel at home.

Menno led the first half. We did "*Blessed Jesus Hold My Hand*" and "*Jesus Will Outshine Them All*." Then Menno introduced Aaron saying this is the first time he has sung with us in a very long time. He mentioned that Irene, Aaron's wife, and one of our lead alto singers, recently passed away from cancer. But Menno said no matter what happens, God's grace is sufficient for us. We did "*Stand By Me*," just before the break.

Mike led "*Prisoner of Love*," a song I always enjoy singing. It's certain we won't shine with the stars here on this earth because of how we did "*We Shall Shine as the Stars*." But we trust the song was a blessing anyway. Our challenge is to rehearse it until we can do it better.

St. Patrick Catholic Church

Cumberland, MD

Afternoon

I love to sing at St. Patrick's Church. The design must have been taken from a cathedral in Europe when it was built back in the 1800s.

The Rev. Bevan said it cost \$19,000. to build and today it is insured for \$9 million. And that doesn't

count the furnishings.

When you enter the foyer and walk into the dark sanctuary you are impressed with the echo from the vast interior. Massive marble pillars soar to a vaulted painted ceiling. Huge, ornate stained glass windows display various Bible characters. Ancient framed paintings line the walls; different stages of Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. Jade plants stand beside several marble alters on the green carpeted stage. To the right and left are dozens of flickering candles.

(After the service, a man from the church always plays the grand pipe organ for us. From the stage you can see, on the balcony, the massive pipes.)

Menno led the first 5 songs. One was "*He Came A Long Way from Heaven*." He invited the congregation to help with "*Burdens are Lifted at Calvary*."

We were impressed with the responsive audience. One middle-aged man especially seemed to be sitting on the edge of the bench, beside his smiling, white-haired wife, all through the service. He was so taken up with the music. After the service he told me he is a deacon at this church. The last time we were here he hadn't been able to attend because he was doing homework for his studies. He was so delighted they were able to take in the concert this time.

Mike led songs about the life of Jesus. "*He Takes a Beggar*," "*I Forgive You*," and "*So Many Reasons*." Always we had an echo. And they applauded after each song.

At the last, Mike asked Menno up to do, "*Ready to Go*," and "*Where Will You Be?*" Menno noticed a sign beside us with John 3:16 on it so he expounded on that verse before going into the songs.

As the service ended, the congregation rose in a standing ovation. I was so thrilled that we were able to share our testimony in song with these people. What a joy it is to know for sure we are saved. And we know where we will be in a million years. There's no need to



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guess. If we have a relationship with Jesus Christ he assures us of heaven when we die.

Rev. Bevan came onto the bus to tell us good-bye. He thanked us again for coming.

This parish, he said, has a thousand people over the age of 65. They do about 50 funerals a year. He says gradually they are sweeping Cumberland in. He said he guesses when the last one comes, he'll go with him.

It's a bit odd how we approach the church coming in the back way. And when we leave, there's a sign, **Right Turn Only**. We had this discussion last time.

Menno asked Rev. Bevan if it's okay again to make a Left turn at that sign. It's a lot easier to get out on the main road that way.

Menno asked, "What if a cop would stop us? Would we be arrested?"

Rev. Bevan said no cop is going to arrest a bus load of Mennonites on Palm Sunday. And if one would, he'd talk to the mayor (who is a parishioner) and the mayor would have him arrested. :-)

Someone asked Mike Yoder if he can cook. He said he can fry eggs and peel a banana.

Pinto Mennonite Church

Pinto, MD

Evening

Interim pastor, Ezra Tice, Aaron's brother, was among the folks there to greet us. Later another brother, Reuben Tice and his wife Carol, also came.

Loud laughter came from several tables during supper time. A merry heart is good like medicine.

After supper Aaron received a call that Lydia Yoder, his mother-in-law, was not doing well. We had special prayer for her during devotions. Then Aaron and Gloria left to go home in Lyndon's vehicle. Later Aaron shared with us that Lydia's breathing improved probably right

around the time we had prayed for her.

Mike was in charge of the whole service. We sang, "*Because He Loves Me*." Loretta did, "*You Can Have a Song*," which brought tears to the eyes of one lady.

Gerald introduced Loretta and the twins when they did "*Into My Heart*." Marty did another of my favorites, "*He Giveth More Grace*."

It was a pleasure to sing. Menno said in all we had done 55 songs today. He ended with the classic, "*Where No One Stands Alone*," a request by Phil Dayton.

-Lena

Bittinger Mennonite Church

Accident, MD

Good Friday, April 6, 2007

We have a long-standing tradition of singing at this church every Good Friday evening. As always the chorus was concerned that this service would be alive and fresh and meaningful to those who attend, not just the performance of a dead tradition. This can only be achieved by a fresh anointing of God's Spirit on the chorus and the director.

Mike directed the chorus tonight as Menno sat back with Grace and enjoyed the evening. The audience was fairly large with lots of visitors from the Grantsville and Oakland communities.

The theme for the first part of the evening was set with our opening song "*How Marvelous*", as we focused on Christ's love for us and His power in our lives. The second song, "*Nailed to the Cross*", was one that we had recorded on the alumni recording, "*Sing Unto The Lord*", but it was hard for some of us to remember the words. Fortunately, Mike gave us good lip reading to remind us of the words, and we survived, although a bit shakily at times.

Another song during the first segment of the



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service was a personal favorite of mine, "*And Can It Be*". The words to this old hymn can be difficult to remember and the thoughts harder to follow, but the message of the song always thrills me. Can it be—is it possible—for me to share in the benefits of Jesus' shed blood? Did He die for me, even though it was my sins that pursued Him to the cross? Amazing, absolutely amazing, that GOD would die for me! Who could be worthy of such a thing? Mike then sang the solo "*Had It Not Been (for a man called Jesus)*" reminding us that we would be lost forever without Jesus' willing sacrifice.

Just before the break, the message shifted a bit as we sang about the change in our lives because of Christ. "*Since the Love of God Has Shed*" and "*Things Will Look so Different in the Morning*" were done just before the break. After the break, the Men's Quartet sang "*In my Father's House are Many Mansions...*" and Brock and Brooke came along up with the rest of the chorus to sing "*Into My Heart*", a new song that they've be working on with the chorus doing backup for them.

During the second half of the service, we sang several songs about Heaven, and Menno sang "*Ready To Go*" at Mike's request. Marty also sang a solo, "*Sin Will Take You Farther*" and by a standing request from Sanford, Loretta sang "*I Found the Lily in my Valley*". The song left several people in tears, and we pray that God will minister to each one.

We ended the evening with a new song for us, "*The Marriage Supper of the Lamb*". We look for the day when Jesus spreads the Welcome Table with a heavenly feast for His bride. May God find us all ready.

The chorus enjoyed refreshments afterward served by the church's Youth Group, and enjoyed visiting and fellowshiping with friends and neighbors. Many of the people who attended took a moment to stop at the recording table and pick up some music or the "*Sing Unto The Lord*" project. We trust that God

will add a blessing to each one.

-Kenton

Hickory Presbyterian Church

Hickory, PA

Sunday, April 15, 2007

We had a pretty quiet bus, through rain and fog, as we traveled two hours to this huge church. Huge, because of the recent new addition of a gym and several offices, built on since we last were here.

The Mt. Anthems took the back benches in the auditorium in preparation for the 11 AM service. But the crowd swelled so much Gerald asked us to step back out into the foyer again to make room for the late comers. By the time we went up on stage we had a full house.

Beginning the service, they had a baptism for one infant.

We were on for one hour. Menno led the service. He was pretty surprised, to learn about then, that we had only 6 sopranos and 4 altos. In spite of the small female representation, he said later, we did well.

We sang songs of victory in the Christian life; "*The Lord is my Light*", "*The Lily in My Valley*," by Loretta, and Marty sang, "*I Claim the Blood*," his testimony. We did some stumbling on "*A Hill Called Mt. Calvary*." I trust the message of that powerful song still came through clearly.

A number of members attending the nearby Mennonite Church, where Raymond King is pastor, were in attendance.

In the foyer, many people thanked us for coming and expressed their appreciation for the service.

Two guides, after lunch, gave us tours of the new facility. The attractive gym and balcony draw kids from all around the community since this is the only church in town. The church would rather have them here than



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out there getting into trouble.

In the open balcony are sofas and chairs at one end for Bible Studies. At the other end they can watch the game below in progress or play table tennis or other games of their choice.

Walnut Grove Church of the Brethren Johnstown, PA

Evening

Mike led the service with an estimated 40 people in attendance. Somehow the advertising of this service had been overlooked, so no posters had been put out or announcements made over the radio.

Sometimes we are in the mountains, and sometimes we have valley experiences in our lives, Mike said. We had a funeral in our church yesterday, that's why some people are missing. Some people said good-bye to a mother, grandmother, aunt, etc. Mike then requested Marty sing, "*God on the Mountain.*"

The audience again was receptive, drinking in the message of the songs.

On a Sign outside the Church: "Jesus turned death from a dead-end to a doorway."

Visit to Savilla Keim Aroda, VA

Sat. April 21, 2007

This day was a special out-of-the ordinary event. Special in the way of a balmy, spring day. Redbuds adorned the mountainsides, forsythias bloomed in profusion, tulips brightened greening lawns, barren trees were just pushing yellow sprouting leaves.

We immediately felt royally welcomed by the large

Keim family.

In an almost stately, small, white bedroom, in a brick ranch house, 10 Mt. Anthems lined up to sing for Savilla Keim.

Savilla, in a red house dress with white polka dots, sat in her bed in a cloud of pink and red covers, drinking it in.

We sang her favorites, "*Blessed Assurance, Je-sus is mine, oh what a foretaste of glory divine. . .*" "*Amazing Grace,*" and "*Joyful, Joyful we adore Thee,*" as warm spring breezes wafted in through the open windows.

This day was Savilla and twin brother Simon's 65th birthday. Sixty-five years ago, Savilla came into this life, handicapped. In her younger years, she had been able to attend church services with her gentle parents, the late Noah and Sarah Keim. Today Savilla is confined to her bed. Still, I was impressed that her handicap does not confine her joyful spirit.

Seven of Savilla's siblings and their spouses had come to take part in this special birthday celebration. One of her brothers opened a black, plastic case which held cassettes of all the Mt. Anthems recordings. He said she plays them all the time. Savilla is probably one of your biggest fans.

We sang for 30 minutes with Menno directing us. We also did "*Till the Storm Passes By,*" and "*Hallelujah Square.*" Savilla joined us at times in a song. Beside her, a sister taped our singing while brothers and sisters stood in the doorway and the smell of coffee hung in the air.

After the music, we were invited to get our food and sit down at tables set for us. A lunch of chicken noodle casserole, green beans, Bavarian salad, and potato salad was served with various delicious breads. Chocolate cake and homemade ice cream finished it off.

Mike and Lynn needed to be home by 4:30 so our



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time here was limited.

In the lawn, before we left, we lined up in front of the blooming white dogwood, to have our picture taken. The Keim family, over and over, expressed their appreciation for our coming. It meant a tremendous lot to them that we had taken the time. For us it was time well spent. We all received a blessing. I did not consider it a sacrifice.

- Lena

Big Valley Brethren in Christ

Bellville, PA

Sunday, April 29, 2007

We left shortly after 6:45 for a 3 1/2 hour ride to Belleville. An absolutely beautiful morning with clear blue skies after a rainy, overcast, chilly week. Naturally most people slept all the way there.

When we arrived at the church, we found that the adult Sunday School class is currently meeting in the auditorium. That meant that the sound and riser crews had to set up in front of all those people while trying not to be noisy and distracting—not easy to do. Furthermore, immediately after the class was dismissed, all the people started visiting with each other and then the organist and pianist started playing. There was no time for Loren to try to set the EQ to avoid feedback and make sure that the sound was accurately adjusted. He did what he could, but done properly it requires time and quietness in the auditorium. When we started singing, it was obvious that the sound wasn't set right. However, while Mike was directing, he made some quick adjustments, and soon it sounded much better. Too often we take for granted the hard work that the sound crew does for our benefit and for the benefit of the audience.

In the beginning of the service we focused on the wonder of God's love toward us. Then we sang of

Christ's death and our forgiveness and restoration as we sang "*He Paid a Debt He Did not Owe*," "*I Forgive You*," "*I'm the Lamb*," and "*The Cross in the Middle*." [Marty's and Menno's solos] "*So in need when Jesus found me, He put His arms around me, now I won't be alone anymore*." There were many tears in the eyes of the audience as they entered into the spirit of worship with us.

Mike challenged us with a reminder that when we are disobedient or rebel against the work of the Holy Spirit in our life, that probably hurts God as much as did the nails in His hands and feet. Mike then handed the spike that Menno uses during his solo to the audience and asked them to pass it around and ask God to remind them if there is someone whom they have "crucified" this past week as we sang "*If I Have Wounded Any Soul Today (Dear Lord, Forgive)*."

Brock and Brooke sang "*Into My Heart*," and the service shifted somewhat as we ended with some songs of encouragement and our hope of Heaven. Loretta sang the final song, "*Wish You Were Here*." When the pastor came to close the service, he emphasized, "I think we've been in church this morning. We've worshipped!" Praise God!

After being fed a delicious lunch, we loaded up on the bus at 2:00 to head to the evening's scheduled concert.

-Kenton

Community Alliance Church

Karthus, PA

Evening

The time of this evening's service was changed from 7:00 to 6:00. We'll get home sooner this way. JOY! Supper was scheduled for 4:00. And that found many of us chatting in the auditorium while waiting to be told supper was ready!



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Tonight the newest Mt. Anthems members, Brent, Byron, Wesley, Alissa, and Krista sang for the first time. They did a fine job. We are delighted to have them join us!

The audience was a pleasure to sing for. They had smiles on their faces and seemed to drink everything in as we sang. “*I Found the Lily in my Valley*” was a request. Marty sang “*God on the Mountain*.” The guys sang “*Wonderful Story of Love*.” (We really didn’t do to well. None of the tenor could remember the second tenor part, which is the melody line, so Mike was

“*Resurrection Ground*,” a song that they had never done in concert before.

8:15 found us all on the bus and ready to pull out. We enjoyed eating the leftovers from supper on the way home. They had served a variety of sandwiches for supper—Egg salad, ham salad, cheese spread, PB&J. They sent along several ice cream bucketfuls of sandwiches as well as cookies, chocolate brownies (bars), and raw veggies from the vegetable trays. They were thoughtful to include plates and napkins. Almost all of it was demolished.

-Michelle

-Lena Eicher

singing lead by himself, and all the tenor were singing first tenor. Definitely need to rehearse this song.) And the Men’s Quartet ended the evening with