

*As in water face reflects face,*

# Rockville Reflections

January 2011  
Volume 8 Issue 5

*So the heart of man reflects man.*  
Proverbs 27:19



*In the New Year,  
For a Quiet Mind, we pray.*

*O Lord,*

My mind is tossed about like the waves of the sea,  
and filled with doubt and trouble.

*Calm me*

and keep me calm in the midst of these distractions.  
I know that in Your protection all things are safe;

*Open my eyes* that I may see  
Your loving care surrounding me.  
Make me feel and truly realize it.

*Help me* to trust You as my Tender Father.

You have said that in quietness and in confidence is strength.  
Let me put away the doubts and fears that distract me.

*You have promised* to keep him in perfect peace  
whose mind is stayed on You.

*Fulfill the promise to me.*

For Jesus' sake.

*Amen*

*"The steadfast of mind  
You will keep in perfect peace,  
because he trusts in You.*

Isaiah 26:3 NASB





Vern and Rosie Stoltzfus



# Holly Trail 2010



Pastor Leon and Henrietta Shirk with daughter Valerie

The Fellowship Committee coordinated the Annual Holly Trail this year on December 5, 2010. The afternoon and evening were spent visiting and sharing a progressive supper with the church family and friends.

Let these simple thoughts remind you of the fun we all had together.  
Edna's dog got a lot of lovin'.  
The parking at Pastor Leon's was well worth negotiating.  
Where have you been so far? What do they have to eat there?  
The Horning's gym was bouncing constantly.  
Dress-up at Vern and Rosie's was a blast.  
Where are you going next?  
At the end of the day the youth returned for a second helping to Loretta's cookies.

Thank you to all hosts and those who worked to create this avenue of fellowship. It was thoroughly enjoyed!



Eugene and Loretta Smucker



Vern and Patsy Horning



Edna Stoltzfus



pictorial by Cindy Shoup

# WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN?



## It's the best time of the year!

The house is glowing in white lights and clusters of greens pose in every corner. Cinnamon and peppermint scented candles toss their flame from side to side, while everywhere folks are jolly and accommodating. It is Christmas, my favorite day out of all 365. Even though

we do the same traditions and events every year they do not become boring and old. In fact they grow more precious and meaningful each time. Christmas is truly a momentous day to commemorate, and it is meaningful to me because of the traditions, the gathering of family, and most of all the celebration of Christ's birth.

One of the traditions I love on this day is decorating the Christmas tree. After the fun of selecting a tree suitable for our house it is placed in the living room where my sister Jackie and I adorn it with lights and ornaments. Another great tradition is of course food. This is important to the Stoltzfus kids because it is one of then rare times of the year that we have seafood. Each year Mom cooks heaps of steaming seafood, to which Dad is always willing to offer his tasting expertise.

After the feast is devoured comes the first great tradition - gifts. Frankly, as much as I love to give gifts on this day, I humbly admit that I especially enjoy receiving them.

Secondly, there is no time like Christmas to discover the blessing of family. I can recall one Christmas celebration when the entire extended Stoltzfus family squeezed into our house. From Uncle George's latest stories, to the passionate conversations of the many children there was cheerful banter everywhere. Food was consumed in large amounts. Curious little boys gathered around the tree rummaging through the stacks of gifts to find the one that belonged to them. out of all 36 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren. The house was bursting at its seams. Whenever someone cracked a good joke, bellows of laughter would erupt from the circle of adults sitting around the table. It was truly a deafening experience, but I would not trade the cherished memories of family made on that day for anything.

Finally the true meaning of Christmas is the celebration of Christ's birth. Because of Christ's birth and ultimately His sacrifice on the cross, I am free to celebrate, knowing my sins are forever removed. No wonder the angels proclaimed that night 'Joy to the World the LORD has come.' Unfortunately the world has distorted the meaning of Christmas and there are many distractions of this holiday. However we as Christians understand what this day means to the entire world. Jesus said, 'I have come that you may have life, and have it more abundantly,'. And another time 'I have come that you may have the full measure of My joy within you'. We know that the Lord came to the earth with the greatest gift anyone could offer, eternal life.

In conclusion, I encourage you to not only celebrate Christ's birth, but also to live according to the gift He has given to us. Romans 12:1-2 gives a similar challenge. 'Therefore I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy to offer to Him your bodies as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds. Then you will know what God's good and pleasing and perfect will is.' Christian comedian Ken Davis sums it up nicely when he says, 'Our most spiritual act of worship is when we take what He has given to us and give it back to Him'.

Christmas is meaningful to me because of the traditions, the gathering of family, and above all the celebration of our Savior's birth. I am eternally grateful for this day because I am free to worship the Lord, and live life to the fullest potential that He intended. Second Corinthians 4:18 says 'So we fix our eyes not on what tis seen but on what is unseen, for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal'.

Join me this Christmas season and beyond as I endeavor to celebrate His birth as the most precious gift of all.

reprinted from a reading given by Jennica Stoltzfus December 12, 2010 in the Christmas Program



## Christmas Bundles

We sent 40 Christmas Bundles to the Spanish Mennonite Council and Haitian Community Center in New York for needy children. Included was: outfit, tooth paste, tooth brush, soap, wash cloth, towel, and a toy.

The bundles were presented by the children at the Thanksgiving Eve Service. We appreciated so very much the response from our caring congregation.

Submitted by Henrietta Shirk  
Photo by Edna Stoltzfus



Rockville Reflections is a publication of  
Rockville Mennonite Church  
210 Cupola Road, Honey Brook, PA 19344  
610.273.9577 rmchurch@ptd.net  
Editor: Twila Ranck  
submissions received at  
twila@familiescatalog.com



**What does Christmas mean to you?** To me, it means a fun and enjoyable time that I get to spend with my family.

Christmas is a happy time of year for me. In fact, I would probably say it's my favorite holiday. But it's not my favorite holiday just because I get presents, candy, and money.

It's because it's the birth of Jesus Christ. The birth of our Savior is such an awesome thing because God has given us a chance to be saved!

Christmas is a fun time for me because it is one of the few times throughout the year that I get to see my grandpa and grandma who live in Iowa. Every other year, we make the thousand-mile drive to Iowa in our car as a family. There are many countless times that the phrases are asked, "Are we there yet?" and "How long is it until we get to Grandpa and Grandma's?" by me and my younger siblings. When we get there, we can't wait until Christmas Day. Then, in due time, we all gather around and pass out the presents, taking turns opening them according to age.

Christmas is an exciting time for me because I get to get away from the hustle and bustle of school and my grouchy teachers, my piles of homework, and more homework. During my vacation, I can put that aside and think about more reasonable things.

What do you do before Christmas? There are a lot of things I look forward to at Christmas or the days that lead up to Christmas Day. One of them is baking and decorating many dozens of cookies and then eating them, of course. I also enjoy helping to decorate the house for Christmas and choosing a tree. My Grandma Stoltzfus always invites us to bake donuts sometime around Christmas.

After all of those family-related Christmas traditions, the most important thing to me about Christmas is that Jesus was born in a stable and was laid in a manger. He was given as a gift of love from heaven to all the sinners on earth. Jesus paid the price for you and me so that we can have an eternal life with Him!

I want to read from Matthew 1:18-25 NASB.

'Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.

But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.'

Thank you, Jesus, for Christmas!

reprinted from a reading given by Jared Stoltzfus on December 12, 2010 in the Christmas Program



## **Junior Youth December Activity**

submitted by Nolan D. Weaver

On Friday, December 10, 2010, the Junior Youth met at church to prepare fruit baskets for a few of the elderly members of Rockville. We divided into four groups and took the baskets to their homes. We went to Edna Stoltzfus, Sara Stoltzfus, Dave Mast, and Ray Beiler.

I got the privilege of going to the house of Edna Stoltzfus. She told us stories about Christmas, Rockville history, her life, and the prison ministry. She showed us pictures, a drawing from one of the inmates in the prison ministry, and a memory quilt that was given to one of the first elders at Rockville. It was a lot of fun.

Then we came back to the church and swapped Christmas presents. All in all, it was a great evening where I learned a lot and had fun with friends.



## **The Way**

submitted by Hosea Wimer

The Lord points the way to heavens gay,  
Where pain and sorrow are no more there;

And when you fall down He picks you up  
And points you to the way,  
And that is the good way.

He provides a path from Satan's wrath  
And restores the souls who love the Lord;  
For all who love the Lord  
And follow Him for all eternity,

Surely, He will show the way.



Paul and Twila Ranck and Mary Howe hosted a Blue Christmas Banquet for the GriefShare Fall Session on December 15, 2010.



The close knit group of 10 -12 weekly participants invited friends and family to join them for the banquet swelling the number attending to 63! After the meal we viewed

the final session entitled 'Heaven'. The participants were given the opportunity to give a written testimony of how GriefShare has ministered to them. I've compiled them here as a first hand report of the simple yet profound way God uses the body of Christ to bear one another's burdens through GriefShare.

*I learned that I am not alone. That there are others who have similar losses that I have. God is always ready to give comfort and peace, to carry the load if I would let Him. The family of God is a wonderful place for solace. It's OK to be angry. It's OK to cry. And when you can't pray for yourself, the Holy Spirit interceded for me.* Ruth Anne - grieving the loss of a brother-in-law and sister.

*GriefShare has been my beacon- guiding me inward toward God, onward through the grief process and back to living again. I have found strength, support and friendships that I could not have found anywhere else. The combination of Christian videos, group sharing, independent workbook exercises and fellowship have helped me to discover that I have more in common with others who are grieving than not.* Wendy - grieving the suicidal loss of her father.

*GriefShare is a place that let me focus on the changes in my life since the passing of my husband. The sessions gave me an idea of what to expect and what is normal and 'acceptable'. It has given me a reassurance that God is indeed the same God that loved me before and will be with me now and in the future.* Sheri - grieving the loss of her husband and father to their 10 children, most of whom are still at home, after a year long illness.

*I have learned the importance of finding strength in fellowship and sharing one another's burdens. As we each reach out to others, there are many others reaching out to us. Above all we need to keep God on His throne and keep him Lord of our life.* Gary - grieving the loss of a brother-in-law and sister-in-law

*I have appreciated the fellowship. The input in my needs, sympathy, stories and testimonies. It has been helpful when I have decisions and it is company for me so I do not need to be alone all evening. Thank you for opening your home and giving us this opportunity.* - Edna grieving the loss of her husband of 50+ years after a long illness.

*I felt comforting to be with caring individuals in my place of pain and loss.* Linda - grieving the loss of a brother and sister-in-law in an cycle accident

*I was blessed in attending GriefShare. It was good to hear from other people who are hurting from losing loved ones. We understand and can feel for each other in a way that many do not understand. I enjoyed the videos and the time of sharing each evening. Hurting people need hurting people as friends. Most of all we need to have Jesus as our best friend. He has been very real and precious to me. I need Him every day and every hour.* Ruth - grieving the loss of her husband in a scooter accident.

*In a sense we at GriefShare are 'rope holders' for each other. We meet each week for 13 sessions each on our separate grief journeys, yet comrades because of our heart's brokenness and loss. We encourage each other to 'hold on' while preserving in the agonizing work of grief towards healing.* Connie - grieving the suicidal loss of her adult son.

*GriefShare was/is a support to me. Being with others who are going through the path of grief helped to ease the load. I most especially got a lot out of the other people sharing their struggles. I felt like the reactions were similar.* Elaine - grieving the suicidal loss of a brother and stepfather.

*Having come and went for almost 2 years now I have found GriefShare a great place to retreat, to be with those who knew what it was and is to hurt. A place to get away from the noise and stress of the houseful of children that I leave behind. There is a freedom to share my heart and laugh when it is OK. Also a place to let the tears roll. The workbook is an excellent way to see how one is coping with the loss and helps you see where you really are. Very good questions that make one really think. It was a safe haven in the midst of a dark and lonely time.* Sandra - grieving the sudden loss of her husband and father to their 9 children, still at home.

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You are welcome to begin attending the GriefShare group at any session.  
Each of the thirteen week sessions are 'self-contained', so that you do not have to attend in sequence.  
You will find encouragement and help whenever you begin.



The Winter/Spring Session of GriefShare will meet each Wednesday evening between 7 - 9 pm from January 26 - April 20, 2011 at the Ranck's (5001 W. Lincoln Hwy., Parkesburg, PA 19365)



Come find out for yourself. No Registration needed.

GriefShare is a place where you can FIND HELP.....DISCOVER HOPE.....EXPERIENCE HEALING