

Imagine the Love!

Pastor Pete Kontra

Jack Pantaleo tells this story about two monks walking back to their monastery in the freezing cold: As they cross a bridge, two monks hear a man calling for help in the ravine below. They want to stop, but know they must reach the monastery before sunset or they will freeze to death.

The first monk chooses to risk the danger of the cold in order to help another to safety. He climbs down into the ravine and gathers the wounded man into his arms, and slowly makes his way back to the monastery. The second monk has already gone on ahead, determined to get back safely before sunset.

Night comes, and with it, the bitter cold. As the first monk nears the monastery, he stumbles over something in the middle of the road. To his sorrow, it is the body of his brother who had gone on alone and had frozen to death. In seeking to save his life, he had lost it. But the compassionate monk, willing to lose his life, was kept warm by the heat exchanged from carrying the stranger in need.

Sharing God's love. Jesus says to His disciples in John 15:8, "*My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.*" As we live our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ, there should be tangible, visible, real-life effects experienced in the lives of others around you. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is in no way, shape, or form an exclusively personal, self-contained life experience. As the grape vine exists to bear its fruit, so too we exist as disciples of Jesus Christ to bear God's fruit, the fruit of love.

To love others we must have a close relationship with Jesus Christ. Yet, Jesus says to have a close relationship with Him we must love others. They are intertwined, inseparable. Why? Because that is Who God is. We are told in 1 John 4:16 that "*God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.*" God's love is a love which must be shared, expressed, given away. And in so doing, both the giver and receiver are given the gift of life.

How do you react to and treat the people around you? What kind of atmosphere do you create around yourself? Are others drawn to you because they see the love of Jesus Christ?

Imagine what it was like for those persons who had personal contact with Jesus when He walked this earth. Imagine the love that must have washed over the woman caught in adultery when Jesus protected her from being stoned and spoke to her as a human being instead of some dirty object which needed to be thrown away. Imagine how completely transformed the lives of the lepers were whom Jesus healed once they encountered a love which welcomed them back into the community instead of a disgust which branded them as outcasts. Imagine the love which, while Jesus was dying on a cross, saved the soul of the man hanging next to Him. And not only that, but also asked God to forgive those who nailed Him to the cross. Imagine the love! My friends, that love is a reality. That love is still alive and well. Live it so others will know this is true.

Paul Cain says, "When the prodigals [those who have gone astray] see the Father's love in the Father's house, they will come home." May it be so here at Hempfield. —Pastor Pete

In This Issue...

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| † Page 2—Grains of Rice | † Page 6—Praying Attention |
| † Page 3—Messages in February | † Page 7—HCOB Family News |
| † Page 4—February Ministry Schedules | † Page 8—2013 Outreach Giving |
| † Page 5—Adult Sunday School | † Page 9—HCOB Calendar |
| † Page 5—HCOB Kids News | † Back Cover—'Toon of the Month |

Grains of Rice

Pastor Kent Rice

Whose Church Is It?

"On this rock I will build My church." – Matthew 16:18

"And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He may have the preeminence." – Col 1:18

"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." -- Psalms 127:1

I had some great prayer time with Pastor Pete yesterday. This is not unusual—we pray together almost every day as we thank God for things, ask Him what His will is, and lift up the Body and certain members. The message that came to the forefront—again—was that Hempfield COB is not ours. It's doesn't belong to the members, the leadership, the staff, the district or the denomination. It belongs to Jesus Christ, who paid the ultimate price for it.

I think everyone here knows this and believes it. But that doesn't mean we always *act* like it. During our Leadership Team retreat, it was interesting when Pastor Geoff asked the question: "Who is our customer?" Some thought the congregation was, because of the structure under which we all operate. And while it's true that votes can bring in this person or remove that person, approve this program or end that program, the ultimate truth is that we all answer to Jesus Christ. Every day. In everything we do.

This simple reminder is so helpful when things come up that we don't agree upon, because as humans we have been taught to think of what's "mine" and what's "not mine." Is this church "mine" because I've been coming here for 22 years? Because I am a "member?" Of course not. Jesus tells us point-blank whose church this is when he tells Peter "upon this rock I will build MY church." Not "a" church or even "the church." *His* church. When we remember that, how far off can we really stray? When He is the well from which we drink, how far will we venture before returning to drink? I see children fighting over toys because they believe that a toy in a common bin is theirs—that's the perception that causes the problems to start. What if I wandered into my neighbor's house and decided it was mine because I was sitting in it? There could be some problems!

I was grateful for the reminder of whose church it is and ashamed that it felt like a revelation. It's not about Pete, or me, or any of us. It never was, because only one of us is "the same yesterday, today and forever." Jesus. That's whose church this is!

Messages in February

February 2



Dancing with the Stars—*Galatians 5:13-26*

Pastor Pete Kontra Preaching

Through Christ we are set free. No more heavy baggage to carry. No more clumsy stumbling over sin and over-sized egos. Now we're given the grace to enter the dance and keep in step with the Spirit, who leads us to those whom we must love.

February 9



Free to Speak—*Mark 1:40-44*

Pastor Doug Hinton Preaching

What keeps us from freely speaking about our relationship with Jesus? Do we fear other's reactions or arguments? Maybe we feel we need to have a great theological discourse or all the answers. We can over think and under estimate how God encountered our lives. As we look at our passage in Mark, we can learn that we can freely share how God showed up in our lives and what He has done.

February 16



By All Means—*1 Corinthians 9:19-23*

Pastor Pete Kontra Preaching

Christ has obliterated all limits to love. God has shown us through Him that He will go to any length to reach us and save us. So too, by all means, we must do the same.

February 23



You Are Free!—*Romans 8:1-17*

Pastor Geoff Davis Preaching

Congratulations! But what does it mean to live freely as a Christian? We often think that freedom is the ability to do whatever you want to do whenever you want to do it. But live that life and you'll quickly become a slave to your own passions and desires. No freedom there. So what is this freedom that Jesus promises us and that Paul continues to try and explain throughout so many of his letters? It might surprise you.

February Ministry Schedules

NURSERY—SS
February 2 Bob & Mary Ellen McEvoy
February 9 Lois Killian
February 16 Steph Moyer
February 23 Jody Kettering

NURSERY—WORSHIP
 Donna Schaidle, Betty Lull, Morgan Rice
 Marg Zurin, Sue Brubaker, Jen Baker
 Jill Stout, Courtney Barry, Laura Myer
 Betty Cox, Sarah Fisher, Morgan Rice



SOUND TECHNICIANS—8:00
February 2 Dick Caldwell
February 9 Rich & Jamie Bushong
February 16 Dave Schott
February 23 Matt Markey

SOUND TECHNICIANS—10:15
 Rich Bushong & Blaine Garber
 Matt Markey & Rich Bushong
 Mitchell Barnes & Rich Bushong
 Matt Markey & Rich Bushong

WORSHIP LEADERS—8:00
February 2 TBA
February 9 Ray O'Boyle
February 16 Pete Cope
February 23 Tom Fritz

WORSHIP LEADERS—10:15
 Shirley Bushong
 TBA
 Jim Eshleman
 TBA



CHOIRS/SPECIAL MUSIC
February 2 Sanctuary Choir
February 9 TBA
February 16 Sanctuary Choir
February 23 Vicki Smith

VIDEO TECHNICIANS—10:15
 Nate Polonchak
 Alex Troxell
 Doug Howard
 Dave Bendit

DEACON GREETERS
February 2 Betty Cox
February 9 Millie Hoffman
February 16 Wes Bowers
February 23 Tom Connelly

JNH GREETERS
 Earl & Betty Zimmerman
 Rick & Bonnie Bard
 Jim & Sue Mussser
 Carl & Lisa Polonchak



OFFERING TABULATORS
 Glenn Brubaker, Marcia Root & alternate

SUNDAY SCHOOL SEC.
 Doris Wright

HCOB Adult Sunday School

† **THE CHRISTIAN HOMEBUILDERS** classes will meet in the library. We study the International Lesson. We have three or four regular teachers who each teach about one Sunday a month. We have several socials a year with the majority of our class participating. Our offerings are used for special needs within our congregation or community. The contact people are Ruth Johnson and Millie Hoffman.

February 2	Hear and Do the Word	Teacher: Del Kautz
February 9	Treat Everyone Equally	Teacher: Jim Kettering
February 16	Show Your Faith by Your Works	Teacher: Butch Nachbar
February 23	Control Your Speech	Teacher: Dennis Bushong

† **THE SEEKERS**—Seekers Class will begin study in the book of Revelation in January. Please feel free to join us in this study of this prophetic book of the Bible. Rich Bushong is the contact person.

February 2	Revelation 4	Teacher: Ryan McQuitty
February 9	Revelation 5	Teacher: TBD
February 16	Revelation 6	Teacher: TBD
February 23	Revelation 7	Teacher: Kent Rice

† **CONVERSATIONS**—Conversations Class will be exploring the Discipleship Team’s vision for HCOB: *Learn His Way – Live His Way – Grow His Way – and Go His Way*. We’ll be examining some of the basic commands that Jesus gave to his disciples – commands that apply to us all – and how we could put these into action, grow in our love and knowledge of God, and go into all the world and make disciples. Geoff Davis is the facilitator.

HCOB Kids News



Can it already be February?! Time is sure flying for us in HCOB Kids! We have enjoyed getting the winter rolling. We have been talking about God’s love for us and how he helps us to make wise decisions. We have decided to start

our Sunday morning worship by staying with the congregation for the beginning of church and then heading up to our classes when dismissed. This will give us a chance to worship with our families as well as our church family.

We are always excited to have new helpers upstairs. All are welcome! You can get your feet wet by being a substitute. If you would like to get to see what we do, feel free to come up and visit us.

We are continuing to save our offering to be used to buy a sheep for a family through Heifer Project. There is no age limit on being the hands and feet of God!

Praying Attention



(Some) Hindrances to Prayer

Prayer is an amazing privilege and resource the Lord has given to us to enable us to get to know him better and to engage with Him in what He is doing in our world. While it is a wonderful resource, we need to understand that there are some factors which can cut off our communication with God and actually hinder the effectiveness of our prayers. Here are some of them.

- ◆ **Cherishing sin in the heart - Psalm 66:18**
- ◆ **Having unresolved conflict with someone – Matthew 5:21-26**
- ◆ **Praying just to put on a show – Matthew 6:5-6**
- ◆ **Babbling with many meaningless words – Matthew 6:7-8**
- ◆ **Having an unforgiving attitude – Matthew 6:12, 14-15**
- ◆ **Not asking in faith – James 1:5-8**
- ◆ **Being anxious – Philippians 4:6-7**
- ◆ **Not Asking – James 4:2**
- ◆ **Asking with wrong motives - James 4:3**
- ◆ **Not living in an understanding way with one's spouse – 1 Peter 3:7**
- ◆ **Not being clear-minded or self-controlled – 1 Peter 4:7**
- ◆ **Not asking in the will of God - 1 John 5:13-15**

Let's do our best to avoid these hindrances to prayer and keep the communication lines open so we can converse freely with our amazing Creator and Savior.

HCOB Family News



Thank-you from Milagro House

Dear Friends,

Words can't express my gratitude for your extraordinary donation to Milagro House! It truly is an incredible gift to be able to give, and there is nothing more rewarding than being able to "give" people the chance to change their lives! By putting the needed systems in place so that the women in our program can go to school, we are giving them the ability to move from dependency to independency and self-sufficiency. This "hand-up" versus a "hand-out" is the model that drives the

components of the Milagro House program. When we walk beside the women showing them and helping them to learn the skills to be independent, they grow and blossom realizing that they CAN move out of the poverty and dependency cycles that they have known. Watching this transformation is inspirational!

Milagro House accepts no government funds and instead raises the needed operational donations from the support of the Lancaster community. Donations such as yours make a powerful impact on helping us to do this life changing work!

So on behalf of the wonderful women and children we serve, I say THANK YOU! Your support is a blessing to us!

Gail Rittenhouse
Executive Director

DO YOU MAKE AWESOME CHILI? Do you want to prove it?!? **The youth will host a chili cook-off on Sunday February 23rd, and we need YOU to whip up a batch of your best chili!** We will have categories for traditional chili, white chili and most unique ingredient. All you need to do is bring a crock-pot of your chili, and the youth will take it from there! Everyone will get to taste the different batches and vote with their dollars for their favorite. We will also have a chili and cornbread luncheon. If you are willing to make a batch of chili in support of our youth, please contact Linda Rannels (569-5919 or linda.rannels@gmail.com).



CONNECTIONS



- ★ Spring Connections will begin on Wednesday, February 26th. We have dinner from 5:30pm to 6pm and then break up into our groups from 6 to 7 pm.
- ★ Anyone interested in making a meal for the group? There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex.
- ★ Interested in leading a group? Please see Karen if you have any talents or abilities you would like to share with others.
- ★ Planning to have a service project group, continuing the women's and men's book studies that began in the fall. Working on the book *Resolutions*.
- ★ Planning to have a board game group and possibly a group to work on long forgotten craft projects you've been meaning to get to. (Please see Karen if you are interested in leading one of them.)
- ★ We are planning a health group that will address various health and fitness topics.
- ★ Sign-up sheets are available in the Narthex!

2013 Outreach Giving

Prepared people, united in Christ, serving God's purpose

Praise God for His faithfulness and the faithfulness of God's people at the HCOB. Below is a list of 50 Outreach ministries that we supported during 2013; this includes our planned budgeted giving, as well as special offerings. Total giving to Outreach was \$184,729 which was \$54,000 above the budget!

"You will be glorifying God through your generous gifts. For your generosity to them will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ." 2 Cor 9:13



Outreach Ministry	Donations	Outreach Ministry	Donations
2 Cent a Meal (Global Food Crisis)	\$ 3,433	Field of Food Growing Project	\$ 9,040
Alpha & Omega	\$ 6,750	Friendship Community	\$ 1,500
Arbor Place	\$ 500	Good Life Ministries (VBS)	\$ 675
Atlantic NE District	\$ 23,500	Habitat for Humanity	\$ 1,500
Beth Shalom	\$ 360	Helper International	\$ 529
Bethany Seminary	\$ 1,500	Hiinga-Microfinance East Africa	\$ 2,075
Boxes of Blessings (cash)	\$ 275	Hope International (Dom Repub)	\$ 2,500
Brethren Village Campaign	\$ 3,000	Immerse International	\$ 1,000
Brethren Village	\$ 6,300	Lan. County Council of Churches	\$ 1,000
Brethren World Missions	\$ 1,500	Milagro House	\$ 6,340
Bridge of Hope	\$ 1,000	On Earth Peace	\$ 1,366
Camp Swatara	\$ 5,500	One Great Hour of Sharing	\$ 990
Center for Comm. Peacemaking	\$ 450	PA Council on Alcohol & Drugs	\$ 1,000
Christian Service Support Prog.	\$ 820	Roblealto (Costa Rica)	\$ 500
COB Dominican Rep. Pastors	\$ 4,500	Samaritan Counseling Center	\$ 566
COB General Board Ministries	\$ 23,500	Susquehanna Valley Ministry Cntr	\$ 2,200
COB Haiti Medical	\$ 2,784	Scott Hollinger Fund	\$ 4,205
COBYS	\$ 5,200	Serving in Missions (SIM)	\$ 14,000
Deacon Benevolence Fund	\$ 10,420	Sewing Circle	\$ 171
Disaster Relief Okla. Tornadoes	\$ 2,139	Special Friends Ministries	\$ 1,396
Disaster Relief Philippines	\$ 5,350	Tabor	\$ 1,800
Disaster Relief Helper Sale	\$ 2,000	Transitional Living Center	\$ 200
East Petersburg Faith Outreach	\$ 7,483	Veterans at Victory House	\$ 540
Veritas	\$ 5,000	Water Street Ministries	\$ 3,500
E-Town College (Young Center)	\$ 2,000	Water Street Turkey Drive (cash)	\$ 873

On behalf of our church, each Ministry, and all those they serve: THANK YOU!!

Let's continue to purposefully serve God in 2014!

"Much is required from those to whom much is given, and much more is required from those to whom much more is given." Luke 12:48

HCOB Calendar

Keep up with what's happening at Hempfield COB by checking out our online calendar.

Please go to

<http://www.hempfieldcob.org/whatsup.html>

for a full calendar of events.

**Toon of
The Month**



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The Month**

Hempfield Church of the Brethren
P.O. Box 246
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RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

FEBRUARY