



The Wooster Window

Newsletter of the Wooster Mennonite Church

Volume 8, Number 3

March/April 2007



“Surely he hath
**borne our grief
and carried our
sorrows.”**

Isaiah 53:4

My Sabbatical Journey

Pastor Ralph

Although my sabbatical started March 1, I wanted to take this opportunity to reiterate my plans and more importantly express my thanks and appreciation for what you as a congregation have done for me.

Continued on next page.

My Sabbatical Journey

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By the time you read this, Barb and I will be in Charleston, SC enjoying the historical city. We hope to enjoy our time celebrating our 30th wedding anniversary, which was last year. We plan to enjoy the carriage ride of the city's sights and sounds, along with the Slavery to Freedom Walking Tour. Of course we look forward to good food, including grits and seafood.

We plan to return to Ohio through Harrisonburg, VA and spend the weekend with Lindsey. (Maybe College of Wooster will be in Salem VA in the playoff.) The following weekend we plan to attend a Reinford gathering, for my niece's wedding, in Lancaster, PA.

On March 28, my brother Vernon and I, plan to leave for Pass Christian, Mississippi to help

Mennonite Disaster Service. There continues to be plenty of rebuilding following the Katrina disaster. The 30-foot storm surge destroyed or damaged 90 percent of the town's homes and only about 25 percent of the residents returned. It is said that the storm set the city back 150 years.

On April 25, I plan to leave for Israel. I will be traveling from Cleveland to Dulles, to Frankfurt and to Tel Aviv. It will be a twenty-five hour trip. Garry and Ruth, missionaries with Mennonite Mission Network, will meet us. Garry teaches at the Christian College in Jerusalem and a colleague of Glen Witmer who is organizing our study tour.

I will tell more about my Jerusalem tour and study when I return. I plan to return home May 15.

Thank you for praying for Barb and me during this time. We certainly will be thinking and praying for each of you. As a congregation you have been so gracious in giving me this time apart. Thank you for the prayer of blessing on Sunday Feb. 25 and all the words of encouragement, which I have not opened yet. Thank you for your generosity of financial help. You have given of your retirement, your hard earned salaries, and your abundance. For this I know you will be richly blessed. You have blessed me with frequent flier miles, a laptop computer, and this wonderful opportunity for which words cannot express. It is a dream come true for me and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you and may God richly bless each of you.

See you in June

Mongolian Mission Trip

Margaret Latta and Deby Welty will be traveling to Mongolia the end of June with a couple from the Mongolian Mission Project, who attends Martins Creek Mennonite. "Mongolian Support Group" or MSG is a group of individuals, businesses, and churches in Central Ohio who have come together to support a Mennonite presence in the interdenominational Christian mission of Joint Cooperative Services (or JCS) to the country of Mongolia. JCS is the umbrella organization in Mongolia...only one such non-governmental organization (NGO) is allowed in country, so all the mission organizations joined together to form Joint Christian Services (JCS).

Wooster Mennonite Church is not officially a member of MSG, however Margaret is an active participant in their meetings. This will be the first time representatives from WMC are joining members of the group on their annual trip. Marlow and Vicky Ramsay will be our hosts and travel guides while we are in MN. Marlow is the overseer of project development and will be an excellent resource. We will be traveling around rather than going to one place for a work project so the trip will be a bit more expensive. For instance, Marlow said it costs about the same to drive to Bayaanhongor as it does to fly...\$800 a piece...but takes considerably less time. Bayaanhongor is one of the newest project developments for Joint Christian Services, the umbrella organization that MMN works under. We are planning to spend 4-5 days there. We will be visiting and offering support and encouragement to all 5 of the missionary groups working in Mongolia. We will also be documenting work projects and making a DVD of the work. Then, when we return to the states we will pass the vision on and help educate others to the needs of the Mongolians and the missionaries.

WMC has set up a fund, "Mongolian Fund" for anyone wishing to contribute to Deby and Margaret's expenses for this trip. Deby and Margaret also plan to sponsor an "Art Sale" on Sunday afternoon May 20 in the fellowship center. All proceeds from their sales will go towards the trip expenses. You may contribute monetarily or with art donations as well.

Please contact either Margaret or Deby with your questions.

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Travelers:

- **Jerry and Beulah Steiner** to Florida.
- **Ray and Harriet Noblit** to Arizona.
- **Roy and Sue Weaver** to Florida.

Congratulations:

- To **Lori Straits and Glen Thomas** on their recent marriage.
- To **Jacob and Katie Dodson** on the birth of their daughter, **Aubrie Pamela**, born February 22.

- To **Jim and Kim Hartman** who are grandparents again due to the birth of grandson, **Silas**, born to their daughter, **Corrie** and husband **Phil Vander Ploeg**, also on February 22.
- To **Alisa Miller** for breaking the record of the most points scored in a single girl's basketball game at Central Christian. Her record-breaking score was 36 points! Way to go **Alisa!**

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Plan to attend a concert by internationally renowned baritone, Anthony Brown, on March 14 at 7:00 p.m. at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church. Selections from Brown's new CD *Each Other's Light: Songs of Peace, Hope, and Justice* will be featured, as well as a presentation on Brown's recent trip to northern Uganda. Walnut Creek Church and Hesston College, where Brown serves as artist-in-residence and faculty member sponsor the concert.

The Goshen College Music Center will have a weekend of church music events March 31-April 1. It begins Saturday afternoon with a workshop on the songs of *Sing the Journey* and *Sing the Story* hymn supplement books. The workshop will be led by Kenneth Nafziger, professor of music at EMU and member of the committee that produced these supplemental resources to *Hymnal: A Worship Book*. *Sing the Journey* was published in 2005. *Sing the Story* will be introduced this summer at the Mennonite Assembly in San Jose, CA.

After supper participants will attend a gospel choir concert by Goshen College's Voices-n-Harmony Choir and Notre Dame's Voices of Faith

Choir. Late night activities include viewing the new DVD on the music legacy of Mary K. Oyer.

Palm Sunday morning will be open for attending services in local congregations with a gathering in the afternoon for an extended organ prelude by professor Christine Thorgersen and a hymn sing led by Ken Nafziger. After a light supper the day will end with the final performance of Goshen College's traveling worship team *Parables*.



Registration forms are available in the foyer literature rack. Cost for Saturday events, including both sessions with Ken Nafziger, snack, supper and a ticket to the Gospel Choir Concert is \$30. There is no charge to attend Sunday events. If you have additional questions please contact the Goshen College Music Center office at 574-535-7361 or music@goshen.edu

Continued on next page.

Upcoming Events *continued from previous page.*

The Bethel College Concert Choir will be singing in our area on Tuesday March 20. At 9:45 a.m. they will be singing at Central Christian School. They will give another program that evening at 7:00 p.m. at Oak Grove Mennonite Church. The choir includes over 50 students and is directed by Dr. William Eash, professor of music. This is a great opportunity to not only worship and hear fine singing, but also to connect with Bethel students, staff, alumni and friends of the college.

Sonnenberg Maple Syrup Festival for Missions! Saturday, March 31, from 8:00-11:00 a.m. at Camp Luz. Come enjoy a breakfast of pancakes, sausage and homemade maple syrup. All proceeds benefit local missions.

Kingdom Seekers

Kingdom Seekers is an eight-member group from Bluffton University that seeks to challenge, enrich and nurture the faith of those they minister to through a 50-minute performance that includes skits, monologues, prayer and song. This year's performance is titled, *Renewed and Restored!*, which consists of three skits and the dramatization of the song, *Stained Glass Masquerade*. The skits reveal common issues believers deal with, including the struggle to be comfortable with oneself in church, dealing with deception, the challenge of whose voice to listen to, and experiencing God's voice and guidance in life.

The team is comprised of freshman and sophomore students. First-year students include Andrea Flack (Canton, OH), Jason Frey (Schuylkill Haven, PA), Kristen Shelly (Penfield, NY) and Abbi Stern (Chambersburg, PA). Sophomores are Nicole Bontrager (Goshen, IN), our own Teresa Hershberger (daughter of Leon & Esther Hershberger), Robyn Rowland (Defiance, OH) and Shannon Stauch (Westerville, OH). The group is advised by Sarah Straks, assistant campus pastor and spiritual life coordinator.

Kingdom Seekers will be with us on Sunday, March 18, for worship. Following the worship service we will have a carry-in meal. Please mark your calendars and plan to bring a dish or two to share.

You are invited to a free Spring Celebration on March 20 at 7:00 p.m. at Kidron Mennonite Church. The celebration will include a special worship service with local musicians Anna Dunn Knutson, LeAnna Dunn, Jeff Polen and John Schmid. Guest speaker Jerry Jenkins, co-author of the *Left Behind* series, will give a message titled *Lessons from Stellar Lives*. This will be the seventh year Kidron has hosted this event and last year the church was filled to capacity so please plan to arrive early. The doors open at 6:00 p.m.

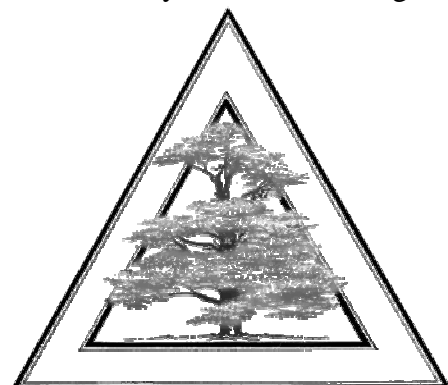
3-on-3 Basketball Benefit on April 14 at Central Christian School. Proceeds benefit Campership and Staff Scholarship Funds. Call 330-683-1246 for more information.

Connecting with Amigo...

Here are some great opportunities for you to connect with friends and creation at Amigo Centre...

- **Guys Weekend Away** – March 16-18. This is the perfect opportunity to relax with other guys as we play games, 3 on 3, hike, or watch NCAA basketball games! Grab a few friends and join us for a great weekend at West Shore Lodge! (\$65/person before Mar. 1)
- **Scrapbooking Retreat** – March 16-18. Enjoy an opportunity for fun, laughter, and creativity. Just bring your supplies, ideas and favorite snacks and the fun will be guaranteed to follow! (\$95/person)
- **Couples Weekend** - March 23-25. Come for a time of relaxation, devotion and reconnection as John and Naomi Lederach guide us in strengthening our relationship with each other through the 'Seasons of Marriage', and our daily walk with God. (\$199/couple before Mar. 14)

For registration information, contact Amigo Centre at (269) 651-2811 or by email info@amigocentre.org.



WHY GO TO FLORIDA??

by Carol Miller

This question was asked us by many friends at WMC as we announced plans to leave Wooster December 31 to spend a month in the sunny, warmer south. Since our winter here had been so mild with temperatures in the 50s and 60s until then, we could understand the reason for asking. But, we did go anyhow, spending New Year's with our daughter, Connie and family in Staunton, VA and arriving in Sarasota January 3.

January was a beautiful, warm month in Florida this year. Temperatures rose to near 80° quite often and hovered around 60° at times. There are always attractions and events that lure us to the Sunshine state. When we begin seeing palm trees and orange groves we know we have arrived, or nearly so. We always meet many friends who ask us if we are there to stay this time (and we wish we could say "yes".) Of course, nothing quite compares with Siesta Beach, fresh citrus

fruit from backyard trees, clear blue skies and almost every day sunshine.

We had the privilege of attending several Sunday evening concerts at the Bahia Vista church including one given by the "Children of the World" choir. This group consisted of 15 children from India, The Philippines, Uganda and Brazil, presenting sacred and ethnic music. The group, "Seasoned Grace," was composed of adults from Maryland, Pennsylvania and Ohio – all professional musicians who focused on traditional hymns and familiar praise and worship songs.

It was also a real treat for us to hear a series of sermons by Myron Augsburger. For those of you who do not know him, he is considered one of the most effective evangelists of the Mennonite church, currently living and serving as pastor of a church in Washington, D.C. (I have a tape of one message if anyone is

interested in borrowing it.) Mrs. Augsburger is an artist and sculptor who is presently planning to design a peace sculpture to be placed at the border of North and South Korea. She designed one in Washington entitled "Guns into Plowshears".

One event interesting to our women's group was the knotting of comforters for MCC at Bahia Vista, similar to the one held at our church. This was a two-day blitz and produced 128 comforters. A fun time for men, women, and families of all ages.

Our month in the south ended with a trip back to Ohio through the mountains of West Virginia, where we encountered a snowfall of 5" or 6". This sight greeted us in the morning after an overnight stay and we knew that even though the ground hog supposedly had not seen his shadow, winter was still here in the north.

Passion Sunday

Palm Sunday is also called Passion Sunday. The Passion of Christ refers to his severe suffering and the intensity of his emotions as he was tried, and then crucified on the cross. The cross was used as an implement of death, but has become the most important symbol of Christianity. Christians wear crosses, keep one or more in our homes and display them on and in our churches.

God used the horrible event of the Crucifixion for the saving benefit of anyone who would acknowledge Christ as living Lord and Savior. Christ died that we might all know true life as children of the loving God.

St. Paul put it this way: "Through him God [Christ] was pleased to reconcile to himself all things ... by making peace through the blood of his cross" (Colossians 1:20, NRSV).



Hands for Jesus

by Joann Hershberger

In January we prepared for our health kit project. We are blessed to have a speed knitter in our congregation and 4 more beautiful prayer shawls were finished. We are so thankful for those useful hands. In February our meeting was postponed for 1 week along with many other events because of our snowstorm. We received 52 health kits. Thank you for your help. Other finished projects were pillowcases, pillows, a

mantel cloth and comforters.

In our worship time, we studied "Time to Trust" by Carol Yoder and "Time to Let Go" by Mary Hershberger.

We can be crushed by obligations or be released from anxious worrying by being yoked to Jesus. Our January hostess was Joann Hershberger and in February, Mary Hershberger.

Becoming a Welcoming Church

by Joyce Sigler for Worship Committee

Who are you...

Are you a Martha, Mary, Paul, or Moses?

Throughout the bible we can find stories of different personalities and different gifts that God has given. Do you shudder when it is your turn to be greeter at church? How do you choose what you want to be involved in? How do you choose what church events you are going to take part in? How is God leading you? Remember Mary and Martha and the conflict that arose because of their different wants and needs. Martha was a worker and Mary drew her strength from basking in the presence of the almighty. What about Moses? Sure he could never be a leader. Did not he tell God that he wasn't a public speaker?

Recently the Worship committee held a hospitality meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and gather feelings, opinions and direction from members of the congregation to assess how are we doing. Worship Committee along with the Elders and other groups and individuals within the congregation regularly take a mental quality control of how we are using our gifts ... God, he has allowed us, empowered us to be his messengers and witnesses to others. It is always important that you as a member and we as groups of members continually discern Gods will and direction for the family of believers at Wooster Mennonite Church. This is a summary of the thoughts that were discussed and ideas you will continue to see and hear about as we do continually discern what and how God is calling us to proclaim his good works and deeds to us.

What is Hospitality...

Hospitality as Fred Bernard outlines is the attitude and practice of providing the atmosphere and opportunities, however risky, in which strangers are free to become friends, thereby feeling accepted, included and loved. How hospitable are we here at Wooster Mennonite Church?

Where is our Hospitality...

Our hospitality starts as soon as people (even our own members) pull into the parking lot. Visitors and members alike assess if we have adequate parking. Is it close by? Is the handicap parking area clear and safe looking? When entering the building, we again look around with wonder, are there enough people to mingle with me and not make me feel like I'm in the spotlight? How would you feel coming to church if the lights weren't on and the house of our Lord isn't visually attractive and clean?

Once in the building the greeters and ushers are perhaps the single most important contact that an individual can have. Just like in office buildings, the receptionist is the usually the face of the business. Greeters and ushers share that same first face. Greeters are the first official representatives of the church to meet, without thinking they play a vital role in evangelism, front line hospitality. Many visitors make decisions about a church in the first thirty seconds. Many churched and un-churched travelers experience thoughts about whether someone likes them, their conclusions are made from the reception that they may have in those first moments...

Becoming a Welcoming Church *continued from previous page.*

Greeters: Sometimes in the bustle of Sunday School and worship we may tend to overlook this very important roll. Visitors to church may knowingly or unknowingly have questions like; did we make eye contact, was someone kind to their children, did they realize that I was there? Sometimes un-knowingly we can be caught up in a conversation with a group of people and without reason give the impression that we are very “group” oriented. How would we feel if we were visiting heaven and no one greeted us, did not express any warmth to us, or you felt invisible? We should make sure everyone is greeted warmly both old friends and new friends. True hospitality means putting visitors first. If there is a choice to be made between side conversations and making someone feel welcome, you will never err on making someone feel welcome in the house of God.

Ushers: Who ME an usher? We should all assume the role of welcoming one another. We all have this calling if you see a visitor sitting alone, take the initiative and invite them to sit with you. Introduce yourself; make sure that the visitor has a bulletin. Always put yourself in some else’s shoes. Make sure they know (if they have small children) the direction and location of the nursery as well as the restrooms. Smile, be glad to be there.

We do realize that moving people into the sanctuary continues to be a challenge. The chimes are sounded as a reminder and the back sanctuary doors are closed at 10:35... these are all good hints. We can help by getting ourselves into the sanctuary promptly, in quiet expectation.

In addition to seating those in attendance the ushers also need to be prepared for the offering and be attentive to late comers, advising them when they can go into the sanctuary showing the respect of prayers, times of confession etc.

Everyone who comes to church should not leave without having human contact. Remember for some it may be the only contact outside of the environment that they must live in. The first impression should be our best impression because it may be our only impression.

How are we doing? Worship committee wants to genuinely express their gratitude to those that attended the meeting and openly discussed the current views and observations. There was a great turn out and great conversation.

From our meeting the following commonly asked questions were listed and here are the answers:

Question: If I am a greeter when am I to be present at the foyer doors, do I need to miss Sunday School?

Greeters are asked to be present at the main entrance 15 minutes before Sunday School (which is 9:15am) and worship time (10:15 am) to welcome everyone who comes through the doors and give directions as needed.

I don’t remember my date nor can I find my schedule.

The worship committee is sending reminders of your dates for greeter assignments as well as time reminders.

Where is “tea time” and “when”?

Does everyone that currently comes know where tea/coffee time is and when? If current members don’t know we all need to make sure visitors are aware. Presently, tea/coffee is available prior to Sunday School and between Sunday School and worship.

Would “host families” help to make visitors feel welcome?

The concept of host families was discussed. We have a couple families interested offering lunch for visitors making those new people feel welcome.

Are “welcome packets” available? Where are they?

Wooster Mennonite Church does have welcome packets in the literature racks available in the foyer for those visiting. Greeters should be sure they receive them.

What other information is available for visitors?

Information on Sunday School classes and calendar of activities are available on the bulletin board.



Letter from Carlos Romero, Executive Director of Mennonite Education Agency

March 6, 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

As a community of believers, we were saddened by the news of the Bluffton University baseball team bus accident in Atlanta, Ga., March 2. The bus was on its way to Florida for the team's first games of the 2007 season. Four student-athletes, Scott Harmon and Tyler Williams of Lima, Ohio; David Betts of Bryan, Ohio, and Cody Holp of Arcanum, Ohio; and the bus driver and his wife, Jerome and Jean Niemeyer of Columbus Grove, Ohio; were killed. The university will hold a memorial service the evening of Monday, March 12. Six others remain hospitalized in Atlanta.

Last week, our agency sent a call for prayer. We have been deeply moved by the church's outpouring of support for Bluffton University. At a press conference this morning, President Jim Harder said: "We are a small university with a large and caring heart. We have been overwhelmed with support from the large hearts of others."

In times like this, the Psalmist's words in Psalms 121:1-2 may bring comfort: I lift up my eyes to the hills - where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

We invite you to continue praying for those injured, and for the university community. Pray for:

- Families and friends who have lost loved ones. Pray for parents who have lost a son; siblings who have lost a brother; grandparents who have lost a grandson; extended families and friends. Pray for the family and friends of the Niemeyers, torn by grief.
- Leadership. Pray for strength as university leaders continue to respond to this tragedy; for wisdom as they answer many calls and needs; for perseverance as they help the institution move on, realizing that an event like this will never be forgotten.
- Faculty and staff. Pray for wisdom as they receive students back on campus after spring break. When classes resume Monday, faculty will have opportunities to teach in ways that far exceed subject matter, and to grow together as they engage students in conversation and prayer.
- Students. Those who return will face the inescapable reality that some never will. There is much healing of body and spirit ahead.

Pray too for our churches and our community of faith. May God continue to give us the ability to respond in ways that express God's everlasting love and caring to all those who are hurting. Our help comes from the Lord. May we continue to feel God's presence.

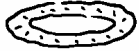
Carlos Romero, Executive Director

P.S. A fund has been established for student-athletes involved in the accident and their families. Contributions can be made by check payable to Bluffton University (please note "Baseball Team" in the memo line) and mailed to Citizens National Bank, 102 S. Main Street, Bluffton, OH 45817. Credit card contributions can be made by calling 419-358-3324 during the university's business hours.






KIDS PAGE

Easter Crosses

Make this craft to remember what Jesus did for us. Hang it in your room to look at all year long.



What you need:

- Two 8" paper plates (white)
- Scissors 
- Pencil 
- Crayons, paints or felt markers 
- Stapler, glue stick or glue
- Paper punch 
- Yarn, string or ribbon (about 10" or 12") 

What you do:

1. With your pencil draw a slight curved line all the way across the center of one plate. This will be a hill.



2. Draw three crosses on the hill. Make the center one a little bigger than the others.

3. Color the hill green and the crosses brown. Or color the hill and crosses black to look like a silhouette.



4. Cut out the hill and crosses as one piece.



5. Color the top half of the other plate with red, orange and yellow to look like an evening sky.

6. Staple or glue the hill-and-crosses plate onto the sky plate. Make sure you line up the bottom edges of the plates, and staple or glue just along the curved edges where the plates meet.

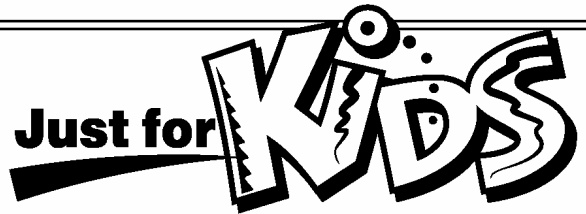
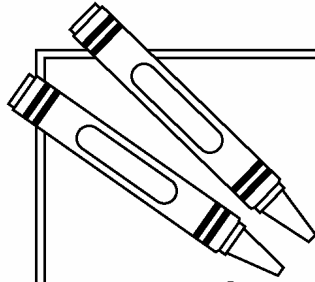
7. Punch a hole near the top of the sky plate.



8. Tie a loop of yarn, string or ribbon through the hole.



9. Hang your scene on your doorknob or on something else in your room.



Something Important to Remember Always

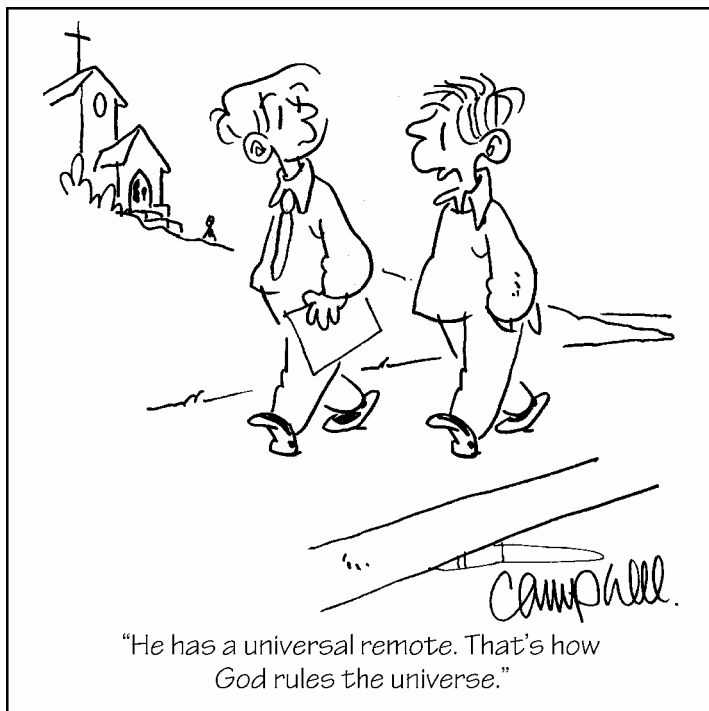
Romans 5:8, NIV, tells us how great God's love is for us. Use the grid to complete this verse.

	a	b	c			
1	F	U	N			
2	♥	B	♥			
3	M	V	H			
4	♥	♥	A	W	O	♥
5	♥	♥	♥	G	♥	♥
6	E	T	C			
7	L	♥	R			
8	♥	D	♥			
9	I	♥	S			

“
 2b 1b 6b 5b 4c 8b 8b 6a 3a 4c 1c 9c 6b 7c 4a 6b 6a 9c
 3c 9a 9c 4c 4b 1c 7a 4c 3b 6a 1a 4c 7c 1b 9c 9a 1c
 6b 3c 9a 9c 4b 3c 9a 7a 6a 4b 6a 4b 6a 7c 6a
 9c 6b 9a 7a 7a 9c 9a 1c 1c 6a 7c 9c 6c 3c 7c 9a 9c 6b
 8b 9a 6a 8b 1a 4c 7c 1b 9c”

“BUT GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE FOR US IN THIS: WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US.”

Answer:



The Wooster Window

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1563 Beall Avenue
Wooster, OH 44691
Phone: 330-262-3631
Fax Number: 330-263-0422
E-Mail: WoosterMC@sssnet.com
Sunday School: 9:30 am
Worship: 10:30 am
Pastor: Ralph Reinford 330-262-3631
Assistant Pastor: Jacob Dodson
Newsletter Committee and Editors: Miles
Russell, Carol Miller
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Address Correction Requested

Wooster Mennonite Church
1563 Beall Avenue
Wooster, OH 44691