

REDEEMER REFLECTION



October Newsletter
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FALL HARVEST

Harvest Time

by Ron Rockwell

Harvest time always brings back fond memories as the summer temperatures give way to the cooler, more comfortable temperatures of fall. The greens of summer make way for the reds, oranges, and browns that signal the coming of my favorite season. The plantings of spring have now produced their fruit, and it is time to come together to bring it all in.

Harvest time for me is not complete without the telling of my favorite harvest adventure. The following story is true, and this is how I remember it: My father had moved us to a 40-acre paradise just a year or two before. Dad had acquired a tractor, plow, corn planter, and enough seed to plant six acres of corn. Fall had arrived. The tassels on the corn had turned brown, as if to say "pick me"; and still we had no corn picker, at least not the pull-behind, automatic kind. So we headed out to the field for some good old-fashioned fun and togetherness, all six of us: Dad, Mom, my three younger sisters, and me. We all had our own row (except my youngest sister who had broken her leg), and one ear at a time, we picked the corn and put the ears into a milk crate. When the crates were full, we carried them back to my sister, who, sitting there on the blanket, would husk each ear before putting it back into the crate. When that crate was ready, we carried it back to the wagon, dumped it, and went back to repeating the cycle. When the wagon was full or the day was over, Dad and I drove it up to the corn silo and unloaded it one shovel at a time, until the wagon was empty and ready for another round.

To make it easier to get the wagon down the rows, we cut down each corn stalk with a hand sickle and loaded it onto the wagon, and unloaded by hand at the other end, where we tossed it into the cows' pasture for them to eat. Six acres of corn, one ear and one step at a time! Oddly enough, at least by today's standards, the memories that stand out aren't how long the rows were, how heavy the crates were, how much work it was, or even that it took away "our time"; the memories are "our time *together*." There were the picnics, and the hot dog roast with hot chocolate later in the season; there were races to see who could process a crate first, there was helping others "catch their row up," so we could all be together when we quit for the day. There was no arguing between us, saying "I did more than you"; only "look how much WE got done as a team." There was plenty of fresh air and sunshine, along with a few days of less-than-ideal weather. Try as I might, I do not remember the last day or who picked what I imagine must have been the ceremonial last ear; the end didn't make a lasting impression, only the journey.

I see some connection, from those lessons learned in that corn field, to the mission field. For our venture to be successful, we had one leader; in the corn field, it was Dad; in the mission field, it must be God. Each of us had a job to do, and none was more important than another, for if you took any one of us out of the equation, then something wouldn't get done, jeopardizing the whole project. There was no place for petty bickering, only action by each of us helping the other and gladly picking up any slack or filling in a gap. Just as we didn't say "that is your row or your ear, you pick it"; we can't say, "that's not my job" or "let someone else greet them" in God's field. God gave each one of us a talent and a place in the "corn field" we call life. Talents may come and go, and develop and fall away based solely on what God needs at any given time. We should be as excited about any new talent as we are about reaching the end of a row. Let's be remembered for the way we conducted ourselves on the journey and not simply that we finished the journey.

I Can Do That; I Can Be Part of God's Harvest

by Jim Keat

There's a part of God's harvest that each of us can look at and say, "I can do that."

Growing up on a farm in Iowa, I never drove one of our big John Deere combines through the fields harvesting corn and beans. My dad always did that. But there was plenty I was able to do. Someone had to drive the tractor to bring in the wagons loaded with corn. If it weren't for my dad's part, the corn would still be in the field. And if it weren't for my part, the corn would also still be in the field.

God's harvest of reaching people for Christ is the same way. It involves different kinds of efforts. And as we develop and put together a plan to "*do evangelism*" at Redeemer, there will be something, and maybe many things, for which you will find yourself saying, "**I can do that.**"

Evangelism at Redeemer includes supporting World Missions. I wonder if there are more things we could do to support the Erbers in their mission work in Nigeria. "**I CAN DO THAT!**"

Evangelism at Redeemer includes doing things to be friendly to visitors and others on Sunday morning. (Contact Peggy Bennitt or the church office (750-3100) to join the Connect U ministry.) "**I CAN DO THAT!**"

And, of course, **evangelism at Redeemer includes telling others about Jesus.** There are people we know who need to hear about God's forgiveness and who need to see Jesus in our lives as we love them to Christ. "**I WANT TO DO THAT.**"

Plan on this. In the near future, you will be invited to gather with others to discuss what we can do at Redeemer to **SUPPORT WORLD MISSIONS, BE A FRIENDLY PEOPLE ON SUNDAYS, and HELP OTHERS KNOW JESUS.**

Thoughts of Autumn Harvest

by John Highlen

It's autumn harvest time, my absolute favorite time of year. Whenever someone mentions, "autumn harvest," one of the first things that usually comes to my mind is wheat. I have no idea why, because, first of all, I've never grown wheat and secondly, wheat isn't even harvested in the fall. Anyway, once I get that thought out of the way, then I can focus my mental energy on thoughts of true autumn harvests.

This is the time of year to savor the last few rewards from the summer vegetable garden. It's the season for pumpkins, winter squash, and gourds of every imaginable shape and color. Orchards are bustling with activity as everyone wants to enjoy their favorite apples and a glass of sweet, fragrant cider. And, of course, what's cider without a good old-fashioned donut or two to need washing down?

Warm colors and cool breezes mark the culmination of another growing season as the old sugar maples in our front yard announce their preparation for winter with a brilliant golden display, just as they have for 100 years or more. The autumn harvest is when I really feel connected to the earth and God's creation – more than any other time of year. There's a feeling of simpler times and a sense of getting back to some of the basic principles of life. My attention turns to more important things than how fast I can run from one task to another or how many "projects" I can juggle while running around in circles.

Taking the time to slow down a bit, like I try to do in the fall, I tend to do a little pondering. When I look around at all of the different sizes and shapes and colors of leaves, I think of the lives of all the different people around me. Just like the leaves, no matter where we grew up or what shape our life took or how colorful it has been, eventually everything returns to the earth ...even us.

The good news is, unlike leaves that glow in shades of scarlet and amber only to eventually crumble to dust, that's not our final fate. Our bodies may crumble to dust, but not our

souls. Our time to glow is yet to come. God promises His people an eternity surpassing even the most perfect autumn day. It's hard for me to believe sometimes, but as great as autumn is, there's still something better; and great things are meant to be shared. So while you're sharing the joys of autumn with family and friends and savoring the delights of the season, be sure to share something else, too. Along with the sweet cider and fun times, look for opportunities to share the gift of something even sweeter ...eternity.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT REDEEMER

Call Committee Update

by Steve Hall

In the last issue of the newsletter, we provided the names of the ten pastors on our Call List. Since that time, a few of the pastors on our list have been removed. The District agreed to provide us with an additional list of approximately three to five pastors. We received that list on September 23. The names of the pastors on that list are:

1. Lance M. Hoelscher—Weston, WI
2. Eric R. Wenger—Oregon, WI
3. John P. Gierke—Conway, AR
4. Chad S. Foster—Murray, KY

We met on August 25 to go over the information on all of the pastors on our first list. We also decided which pastors to interview. We decided on interviewing Pastor Barry Akers, Pastor Michael Geml, and Pastor Joel Hoyer. On September 8, we met to discuss how to conduct the interviews and what questions to ask. On September 22, we conducted phone interviews with those three pastors.

Please continue to keep this process in your prayers. Never underestimate the power of prayer. The Call Committee would also like to thank the prayer action team. They have faithfully met at the church and prayed for this process prior to every one of our meetings.

Please continue to pray for each member of the Call Committee as they move forward with this challenging and important role.

Harvest Hayride

Join us for a Fall Harvest Hayride on Saturday, October 17, at the home of A.J. and Linda Hunter. The festivities will begin at 1:00 p.m. and continue through the afternoon. The Hunters will provide the hayride, hot dogs, and bonfire. Please bring a passing dish and the whole family for this wonderful fall afternoon of fresh air, fabulous food, and fellowship with family and friends!

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Giving of Our First-Fruits

by Pastor Roper

The principle of first-fruits giving, established by God in the Old Testament, continues to be strongly advised, although not expressly commanded, throughout the New Testament. God directed His people to give Him the firstborn of their sons, as well as of their cattle and sheep (Exodus 22:29-30). The first-fruits of the grain, new wine, and oil, as well as the first wool from the shearing of their sheep, were to be shared with the priests who ministered to them in the Lord's name (Deuteronomy 18:4). God commanded, "Bring the best of the first-fruits of your soil to the house of the Lord your God" (Exodus 23:19).

The fact God is the Giver of our gifts and deserves our first and best is still true today. When we give of our first-fruits, we recognize God as our Creator and ourselves as His possessions. Therefore, He has a claim on us and all that we have. While we honor God with

our first and best, we are to consecrate the portion we keep for ourselves to His glory as well. The Apostle Paul reminded the Romans, "If the part of the dough offered as first-fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches" (Romans 11:16).

Giving is our response to God's love and grace. We give willingly and cheerfully out of thanksgiving to God. We give our first-fruits, because we want to honor God with our best, not just with what is left over after we satisfy our own needs and wants. Giving our first-fruits is being obedient to God's word. Proverbs 3:9 commands, "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first-fruits of all your crops." First-fruits giving of all we have we give to God in recognition that He is the Giver and that all we have is to serve Him.

May God bless us as a congregation during our Ten for Ten (ten percent for ten weeks) program as we honor the Lord with our first-fruits giving.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Fall Harvest Festival at Ella Sharp

On Sunday, October 4, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Ella Sharp Museum will host a Fall Harvest Festival. This free community event will feature an antique car show, vintage tractor parade, and cloggers. Cider, donuts, and other fall treats will be available on Farm Lane. Period demonstrations, pumpkin painting, and children's make-and-take projects will be available for small fees. The event will also include live music. What a fun, fall, family day!

Family Night Hike at the Dahlem Center

Looking for something to do for your next family night? How about "taking a hike"? On Saturday, October 17, at 7:00 p.m., take a guided hike in the dark that will include a bundle of exciting activities the whole family will enjoy. After the hike, enjoy hot chocolate and s'mores by the campfire. Space is limited; please reserve early. Contact the Dahlem Center at 517-782-3453 for more information.

Going Batty?!

On Sunday, October 18, at 2:00 p.m., the Dahlem Center is offering a multimedia presentation on bats from the Organization for Bat Conservation. Come and meet live bats from around the world, including some with four-foot wingspans! There is much to learn about bats ... before Halloween! Contact the Dahlem Center at 517-782-3453 for more information.

Goblin Walks at the Dahlem Center

Lighted pumpkins guide the trail walk at the Dahlem Center on October 23 and 24. During the walk, hikers will meet forest creatures sharing stories of their lives in the forest. Dressing up in your Halloween costume a few days early adds to the fun! The journey ends with hot cider and donuts. Call the Dahlem Center at 517-782-3453 for more information.

Trunk or Treat!

If you are looking for an alternative to trick-or-treating around the neighborhood on Halloween (October 31), come join the Trunk or Treat at Spring Arbor Free Methodist Church from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Car trunks will be decorated, and each car will have a host passing out candy. There will also be doughnuts, cider, popcorn, and more! This is a safe and fun Halloween experience!

Scary, Scary (Halloween) Night at Ella Sharp

Come join the fun at Ella Sharp Museum on Saturday, October 31 (Halloween!), from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for "Scary, Scary Night." Admission is \$3 per person. Come dressed in costume and enjoy bewitching hayrides, make and takes, enchanted photos, and spooky snacks (for a nominal fee).

IN REVIEW

Book Review

by Dave McFarland

Rebecca grudgingly goes with her husband, Reed, on a hiking trip in the Northwestern wilderness, and he reassures her she'll love it. When they arrive at the cabin, they find it ransacked by not *someone*, but more like *something*. The police officer side of Reed convinces his wife to stay the night and wait for their guide to arrive. But during the night, a bone-chilling scream, not human, echoes through the valley. As the noise draws nearer and nearer to them, they both realize this trip was a bad idea.

Frank Peretti's *Monster* is a thrilling tale that does not let up until the end. Filled with tense moments, shocking twists, and elements of mystery, this book is a great choice for this time of year. Peretti also weaves several moral lessons in the story, which all Christians can appreciate. So check out *Monster* now from the Redeemer library and dare yourself to read at night!