

ON Broadway

Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church Newsletter

April 2015

If you have heard of Henri Nouwen you must also get to know his friend and mentor Jean Vanier. Sometimes we call a person “a force of nature.” Well, Jean Vanier is a force for God’s kingdom. I’m grateful that he has won the Templeton Prize. His books are worthwhile. Here are a few titles: *Becoming Human*, and *From Brokenness to Community*, along with *Community and Growth*. May God raise up more like Jean Vanier.

Pastor John



Jean Vanier, Friend of Developmentally Disabled, Wins Templeton Prize

Chris Herlinger, March 11, 2015

<http://www.religionnews.com/2015/03/11/jean-vanier-friend-developmentally-disabled-wins-templeton-prize/>

(RNS) Jean Vanier, an advocate for people with developmental disabilities who helped create an international network of residential communities that champion the rights of their residents, has won the 2015 Templeton Prize.

A Roman Catholic layman and a lifelong student of philosophy and theology, Vanier is best known as the founder of L’Arche, French for the Ark, a global network of communities where those with and without disabilities live side by side as equals.

The network was begun in northern France in 1964 when Vanier invited two intellectually disabled men to live with him as friends. It has evolved into 147 L’Arche communities, in 35 countries. In addition, a support group for families of people with disabilities, known as Faith and Light, has spread to 82 countries.

“One can conceive of L’Arche and Faith and Light as living laboratories where Vanier essentially exposed his ideas to the most challenging test of all — real people, real problems and real life,” said John Swinton, a professor at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland Divinity School, in nominating Vanier for the award.

In a statement at a news conference in London, Vanier, 86, said those with intellectual disabilities offer spiritual lessons and gifts to a world too driven by success and power.

Loving God, Serving People

Building a community
loved and changed by
Jesus,

loving and changing the
world for him.

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“They are essentially people of the heart,” he said. “When they meet others they do not have a hidden agenda for power or for success. Their cry, their fundamental cry, is for a relationship, a meeting heart to heart. It is this meeting that awakens them, opens them up to life, and calls them forth to love in great simplicity, freedom and openness.

“When those ingrained in a culture of winning and of individual success really meet them, and enter into friendship with them, something amazing and wonderful happens. They too are opened up to love and even to God. They are changed at a very deep level. They are transformed and become more fundamentally human.”

Such exposure, he added, can make those in mainstream culture embrace their own weaknesses and vulnerability.

Born in Switzerland to a family of diplomats and humanitarians who fled France before the Nazi occupation, Vanier grew up in Canada and joined the British Royal Navy as a teen. He earned a doctorate in 1962 from the Institut Catholique in Paris.

He said his Catholic faith is essential to his work. That now includes being an advocate for interfaith dialogue and improved relations between those whose lives don’t often intersect, such as the wealthy and the poor.

Vanier recalled a visit to Santiago, Chile, where a driver pointed out a road separating a poor neighborhood from a wealthy, gated community. “Don’t cross the road, because everyone is frightened,” he recalled the driver telling him.

Such divisions must end if the human race is to advance, he said.

In this, Vanier called Pope Francis an ally. “I am very touched by him,” Vanier said of the pontiff, speaking in a telephone interview prior to the announcement Wednesday (March 11) of the Templeton honor. “He has given us a magnificent vision of who Jesus is. And he is not only saying it, he’s living it.”

During presentations, Vanier sometimes includes the Liturgy of the Washing of the Feet, where the able and disabled wash each other’s feet as Jesus washed the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper.

Often called the most prestigious award in the world of religion and spirituality, the Templeton Prize is valued at about \$1.7 million and is awarded by the John

Templeton Foundation, based in West Conshohocken, Pa. It is one of the largest annual prizes awarded to a single individual. It honors those who have made “exceptional contributions” to affirming the spiritual dimension of life.

Vanier said he will donate the money to his charities so they can expand their work internationally.

Vanier joins a distinguished group of Templeton laureates. They include author Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Rev. Billy Graham and Mother Teresa, who was the first laureate, in 1973. Among the most recent recipients were two Nobel laureates — the Dalai Lama, in 2012, and Desmond Tutu, in 2013. Last year’s Templeton winner was Tomas Halik, a Czech Roman Catholic priest, philosopher and political activist.

Vanier, who continues to live on the grounds of the original L’Arche community in Trosly-Breuil, north of Paris, will be formally awarded the Templeton Prize at a public ceremony at the church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London on May 18.

Demolition!

As pictured below, demolition of the rest rooms and janitor closet off of the Fellowship Hall has begun.



AACRC Faith & Food Garden 2015

by Cathy Green



Five years ago AACRC joined a community-wide Faith and Food Ministry that grows produce for distribution through Food Gatherers.

To date, we have grown and donated 1,439 pounds of food this ministry. It is a practical, hands on way for our congregation to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our neighbors: the poor, the needy, the unemployed, and those on the margins of society.

Working in the garden is a great way to have some fun and fellowship, and enjoy the outdoors, with the added bonus of knowing you are helping others. The Faith and Food Garden needs people to plant, weed and water, harvest and deliver produce to Food Gatherers and do minor repair work on an as needed basis.

Come join the fun! In May you can sign up for a week or more on the sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall or you can contact Cathy Green at greenm@comcast.net for further scheduling information.

This year's schedule:

- 1st Group Workday: Planting: May 30, 2015 at 9:30 am
- Growing Season needs: weekly tending of the garden
- 2nd Group Workday: Fall Garden Clean-up: October 17, 2015 at 9:30 am

If you are new to the church and/or interested in participating with the Faith and Food Garden, but would like more information about the garden, please contact Barb Okonkwo at bjokonkwo@hotmail.com, Cathy Green at greenm@comcast.net or Deanna Stevenson at deg.stephenson@yahoo.com.

April News from the Parish Nurse

Barbara Okonkwo, RN



Last year Jim Carlson shared with the an adult education class his "Plan for Finishing Well—a comprehensive plan for vital and responsible aging." It was a great tool for beginning to think and plan and then take action to live fully and responsibly

in the "third season" of life.

The health ministry team is planning to piggy-back on what Jim began with a three-week series of adult education sessions. These sessions will focus on the tasks and transitions that occur in the years following one's 60th birthday and what can be done to ensure optimal living.

Major life changing events involve an ongoing process of emotional adjustment. Retirement is no exception. So, on April 19th we will hear from a number of our members who have faced this adjustment from different perspectives: planned retirement, unplanned or forced retirement, and difficulty retiring.

On April 26th we will look at several areas that impact one's ability to age gracefully. Included will be the interplay of independence, dependence, and interdependence and the role that family and faith community play in each. We will also look at what might be involved in the assessment, discussion and planning for alternative living arrangements, the costs involved and who pays.

Many difficult decisions as well as conversations may need to be had at some time during this stage of life. On May 2nd we will discuss ways we may begin those conversations and what might impact those decisions. This will include a discussion on advanced care planning.

Many of us have parents who are going to be entering or have entered this season of life or we ourselves are approaching or already in it. So there should be something for everyone and we invite you to join in the discussion.

A Waiting World . . . A Willing Church



International Students, Inc. Ginny Champoux

Excerpts from letter received from Ginny



Ginny and her Bible study group of Japanese ladies.

Did you know squirrels love pizza? I found this in my most professional research and firsthand experience... catching the culprit peering out from under the blanket covering the frozen pizza (see #2 below).

For English discussion we (my gals) learned the meaning of "when it rains it pours". With vivid descriptions, my sharing included:

1. My rear-ended car accident resulting in several weeks without a car (needed new bumper and light) and an x-ray for bruised knee (no breaks, PTL).
2. My refrigerator died with a mess to clean up just a few hours before my Korean gals came to meet at my home. I quickly put all the frozen goods in boxes and set them outside in the snow covered with a blanket (PTL for below freezing temperatures). Also, PTL for a generous dear friend who bought me the new refrigerator.
3. Then all the phone calls and paperwork regarding the above.
4. Trigger thumb, the pain and inconvenience. I have an appointment with hand surgeon.

I have challenged my Korean gals each week to share

with anyone something from our Bible reading. So far good sharing.

One of my Chinese gals is returning home this June. PRAY for her salvation. She said she took communion at church; she thought that would make her feel good. We had good discussion after reading Jesus Last Supper account and purpose of communion.

Thank you all for praying, supporting, and helping me to continue serving the internationals this year without my Paul. I do miss him.

Philippians 1: 9, 10: *"..and this is my prayer (for YOU) that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ-to the glory and praise of God."*

As we serve together,

Ginny



Ginny and her Bible study group of Korean ladies.

Retired Workers with Wycliffe Ellis and Martha Deibler

We moved here to Oklahoma, in Go Ye Village, arriving on Feb. 24th, after a four-day drive from Waxhaw (we stopped along the way for a couple nights to see a couple friends). God opened the way for us: there was snow and sleet along the way the day before and the day after we went through, but roads were clear for us. God is good!

Several JAARS colleagues helped us in packing for three days, and then others helped load the truck on the 20th. There is no way we would have made it otherwise. The truck arrived here at 8 AM the day after we did, and maintenance men here unloaded it. My daughter Anne with several family members arrived around noon that day, and helped put things away in cupboards. Since then we have been unloading boxes and putting things away.

Martha was emotionally exhausted a few days later, so she has said 'no translation work until April 1st.' We do need to get back to finishing the translation of the Old Testament for the Translator's Translation; we are both up to 1 Kings. Keep praying for that. In the meantime, I have spent most of my time putting on computer the scientific names for all my seashells, and attaching the printed names to the shells by scotch tape, and putting them into our tall shell cabinet in the living room. They look nice! About 150 fabulous examples of God's creative handiwork.

We have a large two-bedroom apartment, larger than we wanted, but the manager offered us a special deal if we paid a bit more to stay in this apartment permanently, so we said "Yes!" We love it. The second bedroom is our study, with our two desks and a table in it.

Everyone here is extremely friendly. A great number are former missionaries – France, Germany, Panama, Mexico, Philippines, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, India, Africa. But it is tough learning so many names.

We have found a new, very competent Christian chiropractor, and a Christian dentist who attends the church we have started attending. We opened a bank account, changed our car insurance to Oklahoma, got a new telephone number. I bought Martha a walker, which she uses with pleasure. We haven't started playing ping-pong yet....

I had a very delightful 85th birthday (!) on Friday. Anne and her family drove down from Kansas and spent three hours with us, featured by two of her daughters sharing their pictures on computer of their recent trips to Israel, India, and Singapore. Late in the afternoon I got a phone call from a dear couple in Australia—I first

met him in 1959. In the evening four other residents of Go Ye Village came to help me celebrate – friends I have known for many years.

I have signed up to get a gardening plot, so we'll see how that goes. I forgot to bring along my gardening tools from North Carolina... So far the ground is too wet.

I received word that pastor Saki had sent by mail his revision of the last 6 chapters of Proverbs in Alekano, but several weeks have gone by and it has not shown up. PLEASE PRAY that it will. That is one of four things that are still 'hanging fire' from Alekano in Papua New Guinea, things that I would like to see published even in limited quantities for trial purposes; so please pray about those. Colleague John Tuggy gave me some material on the Semantic Analysis of Revelation for me to look over and offer suggestions. When he finishes that, he will start giving a final look at my Semantic Analysis of Hebrews.

In closing let me say how grateful we are for following us all over the world with your support for so many years. Fifteen overseas trips just since our marriage ten years ago! Sustaining us in all our labors on the Translation for Translators and the Translator's Translation for the last 15 years. Now we enter a new phase of our life, in a new location. We will continue translation work, but I suspect at a slower pace. After 60 years in the Lord's work, I am tired.

Incidentally, the Translator's Translation for the whole Bible is now available on a website:

<https://door43.org/en/library/t4t/home>

Check it out! You can print out any book you want! May God bless you abundantly through the rest of the year.

Ellis, for both of us

1203 W. Fourth St.
Tahlequah OK 74464

NEW PHONE: 918-457-8177

Rotating Shelter 2015

Todd Redder & Scott Stephenson, Coordinators

As it has for many winters now, our church hosted a group of approximately 25 men during the week of March 9-16 as part of the Rotating Shelter program run by the Robert J. Delonis Center (<http://www.annarborshelter.org/>). The Rotating Shelter program partners with roughly 20 local congregations to provide a warm, quiet place to sleep for men who do not have access to a permanent bed at the Center.

A heartfelt thanks goes out to everyone at AACRC who supported Rotating Shelter this year. This annual hosting event could not have been a success again this year without a large team of willing and enthusiastic drivers, overnights, food providers, and mitten providers. This year more than 80 individuals served in these roles over the course of the week. Special thanks go out to the group of women who knit mittens for the men, and all of those who cooked, served food, and provided music during the weekend, including two separate Fellowship Groups and members of our High School Youth Group and their leaders. Many of the men we hosted repeatedly expressed their gratitude for the hospitality they received during their stay with us, and we praise God that we were able to be His hands and minister to them in those ways.

If you have not participated in Rotating Shelter before, please consider volunteering next year. In addition to filling a much needed role on the AACRC team, the experience of interacting with the men we host is likely to be just as much a blessing to you as it is to them.

Humanity for Prisoners

by Sharon Reimink for the Service Deacons

The Service Deacons are sharing the following letter received after our recent special offering for Humanity for Prisoners. We thank you for your support for this special cause.

“Dear Brothers and Sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ:
How blessed we are to have friends like you!

Our Board and our Staff have experienced their share of financial struggles as we began the new year. So much to do, and so little to support the effort. And yet God continues to use HFP in mighty ways! Record breaking numbers for 2014, and amazing results and response!

When dark clouds seem to invade all of my thoughts, God sends prisoners with a message of hope! Board

Chairman Dan Rooks and I spoke to a group of 150 inmates at Muskegon recently. The encouragement, support and especially the expressions of gratitude, were not only generous ... they were overwhelming!

The second message came from a woman serving a life sentence because she chose to end an abusive relationship before she lost her own life. She demonstrated her thanks for our love and support by sending a check for \$175.00. Just imagine the sacrifice, from a prisoner who earns just pennies a day!

Please extend our thanks to your congregation for this wonderful gift. This will acknowledge receipt of your check in the amount of \$743.00.

We covet your continued prayers and support for this ministry.

In His service,
Douglas J. Tjapkes
President”

April 19 Special Offering—Cadets

by Paul DeKraker

The Calvinist Cadet Corps is a wonderful ministry for boys. The Cadet program at AACRC focuses on 2nd through 5th grade, and both the counselors and cadets have a lot of fun learning valuable skills and God’s word. This year has been full of great badge work from learning about computers, including some fun disassembling them, to knots and lashing and a study on the creeds of the CRC. The Hawks (4th and 5th graders) have been working towards their citizenship badge, a year long project focused on the main Cadet theme of service to God, parents, church and community, including helping build some new shelves for the closet in our new Cadet room downstairs. We have also had a full slate of activities, from bonfires to laser tag, the pinewood derby and an overnight at the Toledo zoo, with more to come.

The theme for Cadets nationwide this year is *Branded in Christ*, and the accompanying verse is Deuteronomy 6:5, “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*” We try to weave this theme into our meetings and devotions. Teaching the boys what it means to be followers of Christ, and how we as Christians should demonstrate Christ’s love in all aspects of our lives.

If you know a boy that would like to join us, we meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month 6:30 to 8:30 pm in the Cadet room. For more information please contact Paul DeKraker (pdekraker@gmail.com).