

TRUE VINE TIMES

Connecting with our church family

I had a delightful conversation with Joe and Kathy Sikora last night. Like many of us, they have been hunkered down in their home trying to make the best of this situation. They recently received their first Covid 19 vaccine, and are in good health. They make necessary trips to various stores as needed, but generally stay close to home. They are in regular contact with Vi Cote and the Bosharts, but really miss seeing folks in our church family. Kathy said it has been more than a year since they have been with their son and daughter who live out of state.

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I spoke briefly to Kathy Ernest, who reports she is feeling generally well and is active with the folks who live in her complex. Kathy has been busy making some yummy homemade soup, which she shares with people around her. I really appreciated the discussion we had about the current circumstances and how the good Lord continues to pour out his love for us.

## *Encouraging Words from Arlene Snyder*

When I received my Rejoice Devotional for the first quarter of the year, I wondered why they had chosen such a picture of a young teenager behind bars on the cover. Then I read the theme “Community in Crisis”. It was very timely, with all the uncertainty of this pandemic and the political unrest. We are all going through this crisis together. It is amazing that this theme was chosen before COVID-19 and other events that have taken place.

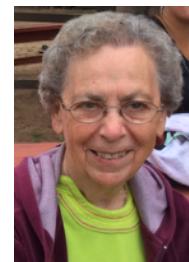
We may be in a crisis yet we still have hope in the Lord! He knows what is going on and He is walking with us through this storm of events. There is always good that comes from hard times. We learn to share, care more for others, and live closer to the Lord.

Another devotional book I enjoy so much is one Lorna, our oldest daughter, gave us a few years ago. It is titled “Jesus Calling”. When I read it, Jesus is speaking directly to me. This morning the quote I read was, “I am with you always”. What a beautiful promise. I am never alone. I have the Lord with me at all times. When Leighton was hospitalized in Florida, I carried my book with me everyday to read it to him. So many times it was just what we needed. Without the Lord we couldn't have made it day after day. He is always near and takes care of His children generation after generation.

I do encourage each one to take time to read the “Rejoice” or any devotional book. Luanne brought me the next issue of “Rejoice” (March-May), and the theme is “God - Sourced Joy”. I am very much looking forward to the message the writers will be giving to us on that topic.

We will get through this crisis and we are all looking forward to the time we can all worship together again.

There is always sunshine after a storm, even a beautiful rainbow, another of God's wonders for us to enjoy. God is so good!





## Jeremiah 9:23-24

<sup>23</sup> This is what the Lord says:

"Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches,

<sup>24</sup> but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight, declares the Lord.

Pastor's Challenge - Watch this video on Justice ...

<https://bibleproject.com/church-at-home/week7-justice/>

## Mennonite Service

Paul Lehman, age 73, served a 3-year term of voluntary service with Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) Teachers Abroad Program (TAP) in Northeastern State, Nigeria from 1968 through 1971, following college graduation. Nigeria, like many countries had no Mennonite Church presence and so volunteers were placed with mission group schools ranging from Baptist to Lutheran, as well as in universities for those with advanced degrees. Paul was placed in a Danish Branch of the Lutheran Church school being built with local labor and keeping ahead of intake with dorm space and classrooms. The school had 2 forms (classes) totaling 72 students in 1968. Today the school has over 1000 students with many graduates entering professions and government. Paul taught biology and developed a curriculum in agriculture science along with a school farm. He once gave a talk (sermon?) at the village church, which was first translated to Hausa and then Kilba. He rotated responsibility for morning devotions with the student body and counseled students who came to his home to talk.

