

SERVANT LINK

Connecting Retired Christian Workers & Friends of the NAB Conference

Lord, I Didn't Plan It This Way!

BY RON STOLLER

Recently, we took our six grandchildren to the county fair in Hillsboro, Oregon. I had my plans to visit the animals, various vendors, 4-H club prize-winning displays, and rides. Well, when there were only four cows and a few horses and no 4-H displays, the kids' eyes were focused only on the lights, excitement, and fun at the carnival. After four hours of rides, waiting, and paying for "one more ticket," we came home with tired legs and sunburns, the grandkids happy for the fun they had and us happy we could spend time with them.

We have had a very complicated eighteen months that was not in our planning schedule! Many are saying the church is not the way it has been in the past, but do we evaluate what God is doing in the church by what we plan or do? God is working in the church and great things are happening. This past year we have witnessed (by Zoom) three people who were baptized in the Japanese church we helped plant years ago. In August, fifteen

people were baptized at Crystal Springs Camp in North Dakota. Six children trusted Christ at our home church VBS in Portland this month. We might be saying, "It's not the way I would have planned it," but God blesses the church in his way, not ours.

Isaiah 55:8 states, "My thoughts are not your thoughts." Our human minds only desire what we can see and think of, but God's plans, thoughts, and goals for us are much higher! Our plans of family events, freedom to leave our home, mask-free worship services, and the ultimate reunion with our NAB family at Triennial in July just weren't the same as we experienced in the past. Sometimes the difficulties in our lives seem to cause blemishes, but God's sacred plans should produce the character of Christ in us (Romans 8:29). Let's all remember that God has different and much better plans for us. Pray that we continue to be patient and allow him to use us. ■

CELEBRATION

Lee and Jennell Bertsch have retired from full-time ministry at Zion Baptist Community Church in Edmonton, Alberta. They will continue to live in their home in Edmonton. Contact them at leebertsch@outlook.com.

Elsie Lewandowski, NAB missionary to the Philippines, Nigeria, and Cameroon, is completing thirty years in Africa educating missionary kids. She is now transitioning to Romania to help with the Bergman children's education.

Dr. Paul Rainbow is retiring from teaching New Testament and Greek at Sioux Falls Seminary. Paul and Alison are enjoying a retirement trip to England before returning home to Sioux Falls.

On August 8, fifteen people from Century Baptist Church were baptized at Crystal Springs Camp in North Dakota. Praise the Lord for this large celebration!

More information is available for most of the items in this edition, so don't hesitate to ask the Stollers for more complete news.

Even if you weren't able to join in on the Triennial 2021 fun when it was happening, you still have a chance to hear the fantastic messages from Julie Canlis, Efreem Smith, James Choung, and Harry Kelm as they shared their wisdom and insights about who God is, who we are called to be as his children, and the kind of hospitality we are meant to live out on a daily basis. You can find all of the individual main session talks at nabconference.org/triennial.

HOME TO GLORY

Judith B. Friesen, 76, of Mounds View, Minnesota, entered heaven on March 2, 2021, after a long battle with cancer. She was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, to Vernon and Margaret Heckman as one of six siblings, one of whom is Joanne Kiemele. Judy graduated from Johnson High School and Bethel College, both in St. Paul. She met Larry Friesen during their college years, and they married on December 27, 1969. Over the years, Judy taught elementary school and worked as a church secretary. She enjoyed teaching Sunday school, mentoring young women, singing, and participating in Bible studies. She worked side by side with Larry as they ministered in NAB churches in Randolph, Minnesota, and Kansas City, Missouri, and later as caregivers for four young men with special needs. Judy was an excellent seamstress who sewed for her family and, in later years, White Cross. Judy and Larry had three daughters – Shari, Cristin (Rene), and Erin – and two grandsons – Emilio and Andres.

Larry R. Friesen, 74, entered heaven on May 2, 2021, in Mounds View, Minnesota, exactly two months after his wife, Judy. He was born in Portland, Oregon, to Leland and Margaret Friesen as one of four brothers. The family moved to Emery, South Dakota, and after graduating from Emery

High School, Larry went to the University of Minnesota. After meeting and marrying Judy Heckman, more education followed at Fuller and Bethel Seminaries before pastoring NAB churches in Minnesota and Missouri. Larry then ran his own courier business for many years until he and Judy returned to Minnesota in 2007 to be closer to family. Until retirement, Larry served as a chaplain at Northridge Care Center.

Curtis Campbell, 78, passed away of cancer in Leduc, Alberta, on May 11, 2021. He was the father of NAB missionary Lyndell Campbell-Réquia in Brazil.

Helen Paschke, 80, passed away on June 3, 2021. She spent the last ten months of her life in care homes with Alzheimer's. Helen was born near Beechy, Saskatchewan. She attended Bible college in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where she met Grayson Paschke; they were married in 1968. They moved to the US to continue their education and pastored a church there. They returned to Saskatchewan in 1975 and later to Alberta for ministry, where they ministered in Edmonton. They also served a small mission church in northwestern British Columbia. They returned to Wetaskiwin, Alberta, in 2008. She is survived by her husband and their three sons, five grandchildren, and many friends.

Daniel Arthur Kolke, 91, passed on June 24, 2021. In his final moments, he said,

“I’m finally going home to be with Jesus, my Lord and Savior.” Born in Poland on March 13, 1930, he immigrated to Canada in 1951. A body burn started his journey to find Christ. Daniel and Selma married on May 28, 1960. They had three sons and enjoyed life and ministry all across America. He earned his bachelor of Divinity degree at North American Baptist Seminary in 1961. He served thirteen churches, taught in two colleges and three seminaries, and wrote over 1,500 books/articles for publications, as well as poems to his wife. You can reach his wife at selmadan@kolke.com.

Julie (Pepple) Koenig, 52, went to be with the Lord on July 3, 2021, in Valley City, North Dakota, three days shy of her birthday. A service was held at First Baptist Church, where she and her husband, Les, served since 2017. Julie was born in Carrington, North Dakota, where she was educated; she also attended Sioux Falls College. On January 1, 1990, she married Les at Calvary Baptist Church in Carrington. They were called by God to minister together, so they moved to Dallas, Texas, to further their education. In addition to First Baptist in Valley City, Les and Julie served churches in Aberdeen, South Dakota, and Cando, North Dakota. She was faithful to the Lord in various ministries alongside her husband’s ministry. They had three children: Katie, Hannah, and Jon. You can reach Les at leskoenig1987@gmail.com.

Rubin Herrmann, 94, passed away on July 9, 2021, in Edmonton, Alberta. Rubin and Jeanne, his wife, served in NAB churches in the US and Canada for over fifty years. In retirement, he ministered with the seniors of the West Meadows Baptist Church in Edmonton. He is survived by Jeanne; their sons Blaine, Tim, and Bruce; two grandsons; two

great-grandchildren; and his sisters Caroline Zeitner, Freda (Wally) Kanwischer, and Helen Griscowsky.

Keith Froese, 47, ended his two-year cancer journey on July 16, 2021, in Leduc, Alberta. At the time of his passing, his father was a patient in the same hospital and his brother was caring for patients at the hospital, so they all saw each other. In his childhood, Keith was active with his parents’ churches in Camrose and Devon. His active youth followed him through North American Baptist College from 1991 and his master of Divinity studies at Taylor, where he met Rachel, his wife. They married on October 7, 2000. God blessed them with four children and nine years of serving at Calmar Community Baptist Church. He will be missed by Rachel, who is battling cancer; their four small children, Angelisse, Justus, Raine, and Connelly; his parents, Larry and Phyllis Froese; and many church friends at Calmar Baptist. Keith’s father’s email is larry@followingtogether.com.

LaVerna L. Mehlhaff, 99, passed into God’s presence on July 20, 2021. She retired in the greater Chicago, Illinois, area after many years of serving her Lord in the NAB in many countries and in the NAB headquarters. Born and raised in Parkston, Iowa, she became a Christian at 8, and she was baptized at 13. After seven years working in Cleveland, Ohio, she felt called to Cameroon to teach in the Teachers Training Center. She taught English and Bible in Japan for two years. LaVerna was the Director of Women’s Work for the NAB for fourteen years and was a big part of Forest Park Baptist Church. For more information, contact Cindy at cindy.waldron56@gmail.com.

Charles F. Tangwa, pastor and former field director for the Cameroon Baptist Convention, passed away this summer.

IN NEED OF PRAYER:

Pray for **Art and Sena Brust** in their senior years in their new facility in Elk Grove, California. Art will turn 90 in December, and both of them are in challenging chapters of their lives.

Myrna Goodman has severe, chronic heart issues and has recently moved to hospice assisted care. You can reach her at 2494 International Circle, Colorado Springs, CO 80910 or at (830) 275-3450.

Calvin Hohn was rushed home from Cameroon in July with a severe heart issue. He still remains under doctors’ watch in Kelowna, British Columbia. His wife, Suzanne, returned from Cameroon after their younger daughter started school there. Pray for doctors’ approval for Calvin and Suzanne to return to the mission field early this fall.

Ted and Lorena Keck in Texas are dealing with many family issues with their granddaughter (30) and chemo, her husband and dialysis, a granddaughter with a cleft palate, and Lorena’s pain management.

Reinhold Kerstan is in a senior care center in Florida. Call him to encourage him and talk about NAB history, as he really misses talking with NAB people. His number is (941) 932-6642.

Joanne Kiemele has been dealing with open wounds on her legs. Please continue to pray for the wounds to completely heal. Thankfully, they are improving, albeit slowly. She has not had chemo for her multiple myeloma since last January but planned to resume the chemo September 1. Pray there will not be side

effects. Praise God for the excellent doctors she has. **LeRoy Kiemele** is appreciating his power wheelchair for the times his legs do not want to work. Please pray the side effects of his medications will lessen. They are now appreciating having an apartment with two bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Elsie Lewandowski had surgery on her right eye in Alberta this summer. The surgeons removed her eye to get to a mass they found, the nature of which is yet to be determined. Even after a good biopsy, the doctor wanted to do more pathology tests because her case “is complicated.” Pray for Elsie as she waits and then prepares to go to Romania when possible.

Audrey Littman in Wetaskiwin, Alberta, continues to see her leg laceration improve. Continue to pray for her recovery.

Sharon Mayforth is dealing with arthritis issues in her care center in Penticton, British Columbia. Call her at (250) 300-3233.

Don Miller wrote in April, “I have written my twentieth book. It is probably my last book as I’ve experienced some new and challenging medical issues that seem to affect my cognitive abilities as well.” Don has been on kidney dialysis for several years now and recently has had other issues.

Nancy Palmer returned from Cameroon with an irritation in her eye, which doctors had to remove due to a cancerous tumor. Additionally, **Dennis Palmer** had emergency gallbladder surgery just days after Nancy left for America. Both of them are in Kansas in recovery mode until the fall, when they return to the field.

Esther and Ken Schmuland in Post Falls, Idaho, have good reports from both of the cancer doctors. Ken had his pacemaker battery replaced in August. They want to thank the NAB family for praying for them. Esther turned 85 on August 23, and Ken turned 91 on September 4. Call and encourage them at (208) 777-3039.

Milton and Alice Zeeb are managing well as they wait for the Lord to call them Home! They are in a care center in Tucson, Arizona. The care center office phone number is (480) 306-5969.

ON THE MOVE:

Allan and Leona Gerber moved to Brooklyn Center, Minnesota, on July 1 after twenty-five years in Valley City, North Dakota. You can reach them at allanegerber@gmail.com or 6201 Lilac Dr. N, Apt 306 Brooklyn Center, MN 55430. Their phone numbers remain the same: Allan is (701) 840-1344 and Leona is (701) 840-8117.

Nancy Grove, former missionary to Cameroon, has recovered from a small fracture in her right femur she received from a fall at her church on Palm Sunday. She moved to assisted living at 10801 NE Weidler St., Apt. 301, Portland, OR 97220. She celebrated her ninetieth birthday on August 3 with some of her students of fifty years ago. Call her at (503) 771-3898 or send her a belated card!

Manetta Hohn has moved from Kelowna, British Columbia, to Winnipeg, Manitoba, as of June 1. You can reach her at 308-1125 Molson Street, Winnipeg, MB R2K 0A7 or (204) 691-4553.

LeRoy and Joanne Kiemele have moved to a larger apartment in their same retirement complex. You can reach them at 5250 Bridgeport Way W., Apt. 202, University Place, WA 98467 or call them at (253) 691-3398 (Joanne) and (253) 651-7526 (LeRoy). Their email address is ljkiemele@earthlink.net.

Alan and Judy Steier are in the process of transitioning from Bismarck, North Dakota, to southern Delaware to be closer to some of their family while they continue their ministry of equipping and encouraging missionaries through Barnabas International. You may contact them at alan.steier56@gmail.com.

Notice: Due to the large number of items in this delayed scheduled printing of the Servant Link, we have had to abbreviate information on many items.

For more information on these items or new information for the next edition of Servant Link, please contact Ron and Joan Stoller at Stoller@Japan.email.ne.jp or by phone, either (503) 629-5053 or (503) 709-4041.