

Welcome 2015--Vol. 9, No. 2--January 9, 2015



2015 arrived with a bang. At midnight December 31 our PA neighbors celebrated with fireworks and shooting in the New Year. The former is a more recent development, but the latter traces back to pioneer days. Here's how it worked: A party of several shooters with a designated spokesman (often the *pfarrer* or pastor) started at midnight on New Year's Eve to visit homes in the community. At each house they asked

to grant the family a wish for the New Year. After permission was given, the speaker pronounced a blessing over the family and upon the farm where they lived. Then the group fired their guns to brighten the night and drive off the devil, thus insuring the family's good fortune in the New Year. Afterward the householder would invite the party inside to warm up, have a drink, and enjoy some refreshments such as mincemeat pies, cakes, or cookies. When they finished, the well wishers moved on and continued going door to door for several hours into New Year's Day.



Kids playing games at the Rosenberry New Year's celebration



Bringing in the New Year at the Rosenberrys'

Our celebration for the New Year carried on some of the old traditions, but with changes. As we've done for a number of years now, we invited a group of friends to our home for games and goodies on New Year's Eve. Everybody brings some food item to share, and we supply the drinks and necessities (plates, cups, napkins, etc.). We also bring out the remaining holiday treats and sweets for our friends to finish for us. They, of course, bring theirs too, so not everything gets eaten. The hope is to carry no extra calorie temptations into the New Year. I build a fire in the front room for those who just want to sit and talk, but the other rooms are set up for various board and card games. Thus we all while away the final hours of the old year and await the arrival of the new. The TV comes on at 11:55 and we all share in the countdown. At the stroke of midnight the pyrotechnics and gun shots begin outside. Everybody shares "Happy New Year!" wishes while kisses and hugs are exchanged all round.

2014 brought its portion of joys and sadness, but through it all God was faithful. The coming year holds who knows what, yet through it all God will be found faithful. On New Year's Day our family gathered for the traditional pork and sauerkraut dinner, a custom of long standing in our household. The first days of 2015 involved entertaining one very special houseguest, our granddaughter Penny. At nearly twenty months she can run grandma and grandpa ragged, but who's complaining? After she and her parents headed back to NYC I spent some time in my special chair in my special room ruminating on God's blessings in the past year and thinking about the coming changes, known and unknown, in 2015. It's a wonderful thing to know God's love and that he holds you in his hands.



Penny with Grandma Linda



Penny plays with Great-Grandma Kathryn Long

The First Sunday of the year Linda and I decided to visit our home church, Shippensburg First. We wanted to meet their new pastor, Jim Rogers, and see old friends as well. Ah, to sit in that sanctuary and sing with an organ accompaniment brought back many memories.



Pastor Jim Rogers at Shippensburg



The Shippensburg sanctuary



Shippensburg cross and creche

The choir anthem, "As the Deer Panteth for the Water" (Psalm 42:1), especially touched my spirit as it was the song sung on the occasion of my installation as Conference Minister over twenty years ago right in this very place. Pastor Jim brought an excellent message on prayer, based on Christ's example in Gethsemane. It seemed to me a good admonition to start a new year.



The Shippensburg Choir



Roaring Spring's Christmas tree

The next day, Monday, we traveled to Roaring Spring to meet with the CGGC ministerium in that area. The church facility was still decorated for Christmas so I took a few last shots of the season. Pastor Mark Halliday along with several ladies from the church provided us with some of the best donuts and a most excellent soup-and-sandwich luncheon.



After some preliminaries Chuck Riley turned the meeting over to me and we spent the next ninety minutes talking about CGGC ministries USA and worldwide. I invited myself into the various churches represented to talk about "Hear the Call" and how people can take their next step with Jesus.



A map of Roaring Spring showing the church's mission field



Clockwise from left: Steve Oberman, John Neeley, Lew Button, Andrew Griffith, and Mark Halliday

After lunch Linda and I drove off into the flying snow. Actually it was only a few flurries. As we traveled home to Findlay we reminisced over our 2014 Christmas Season and thanked the Lord for his many blessings. So welcome 2015, and let the Lord be glorified in all.

ONE Mission together,
Ed
Soli Deo Gloria!

Final Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Tally

Region	Church	# of Boxes	Volunteers
ERC:	Brunswick First	42	
	Camp Hill	100	
	Carlisle	121	
	Central Manor	133	
	Country Meadows Retirement Community	60	
	Doubling Gap	101	
	Eberly's Mill		X
	Elizabethtown First	156	X
	Germantown	98	X
	Hanover First	1009	
	Kennedy's Valley	110	
	Mechanicsburg	104	
	Mt. Holly	20	
	Mt. Pleasant	60	
	Newburg	228	
	Newville First	252	
	Shippensburg First	480	
	Shiremanstown First	77	
	Swatara	41	
GRC:	Catalyst	75	
	College First	253	X
	Mt. Carmel	100	
	Mt. Tabor		X
	Pathway Community	26	
	Shawnee	25	
	Union Chapel	12	
	Vanlue Community	8	
ARC:	Buchanan	300	
	Center Bethel	352	X
	Garman	550	
	Indian Head	146	
	Kennerdell	47	
	Orchard Ridge First	314	
MRC:	Berreman & Pleasant Valley	240	
	Oak Grove	125	
	The Crossover	924	X
	Mt. Pleasant	121	
	Zanesville		X
Total		6810	

Volunteer Opportunity

Dr. C. Gary Staats, Old Testament professor at Winebrenner Theological Seminary is looking for a volunteer ministry person to transcribe and edit his commentaries on the Bible from the digital audio recordings online that he is doing .These works will be published and made available at no cost from Google Books. Any interested person or persons may call Dr. Staats at 1-419-425-1706 or respond via e-mail at: gstaats@winebrenner.edu (mailto:gstaats@winebrenner.edu)