

# COUNTY-WIDE CHAPLAINCY

"There to Help  
When it Hurts"

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## May/June 2009

Dear Friends of Chaplaincy,

As you may know, Evelyn and I made a 4400 mile trip this last month to visit friends and supporters of County-Wide Chaplaincy. This trip took us through Washington, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, South and North Dakota, and then up into Manitoba, Canada, where my 88-year old mother lives. We were able to spend a few days with her, and while there attended the funeral of a friend with whom I used to share a love for horses. He was carried to his "final resting place" in a horse drawn hearse with a beautiful team of draft horses pulling it.



Since I was born on Mother's Day, it was a real joy to be able to spend that day with my mother. We had a lovely dinner that my wife prepared, and a heart shaped dessert that was really not on my diet, but I did it for Mom!! The right thing to do of course!!

We were able to meet many friends and supporters of the Chaplaincy, and I was able to speak in three different church settings. One of the reasons that we took the trip at this time was to co-ordinate with the 100th anniversary of the first church I pastored in Powell, Wyoming. We still have so many good memories and friends there, and it was good to renew those relationships.



It even snowed while we were there to remind us that winter was not quite over.

While I was visiting my mom, I got a call from my son Brian saying that my neighbor Eddie had called and that there was a dead cow in my pasture. It was "Pickles" who had just had a calf in March, and so now we have a orphan that needs special care. I have to say that I mourned the loss of this animal that always greeted me before sticking her head into the manger for her hay.



Grandson Tucker bottle-feeding "Joey"

Well, even with pets and animals there is a great sense of grief and loss. So much more when it is a family member that we have to say goodbye to. As I printed the mailing list this month I was reminded of that as I took off 3 more names of people that had died.

One of my joys during our trip was to read a book that was the journal of a man who had a long struggle with leukemia. This man's name was Roger Bennett, and he instructed his wife, Debbie, to put his journal into book form after his death. She did that, and it is such an inspiring book about the struggles and triumphs he went through with his dread disease. At the end of the book, Debbie shares her struggles in some journaling of her own, and I want to share one that really touched me. (I copied it on the back side.) You'll get the point better after you read her story, but I guess we as chaplains are the representatives of Jesus "with skin on".

I hope you forgive me for doing a two-month letter this time, but things got just a bit too hectic for me. Thanks again for helping us as we serve hurting people as the hands and feet of Jesus - with skin on!

Joyfully serving together with you,  
*Chaplain Landis Epp*

# Midnight Meditations

*A Journey through Cancer,  
And the Lessons Learned Along the Way.*

by Roger and Debbie Bennett

Yesterday was a rainy, gloomy day, and I spent a lot of it in thought. I was not having a great day, so some thoughts were as dark as the weather, but they also led me to some more positive ones. I am so blessed that God reminds me of the good things in my life, even when Satan wants me to dwell only on the "bad" things. It is wonderful to have those blessings come to mind when you really need them!

But I was thinking about a little story we have told in our family over the years, and it seemed appropriate to share it with you. When Jordan was about three years old, we were living in our home, then in Stow, Ohio. Chelsea was at school this particular day, and Roger was not at home, so it was just Jordan and me. I was in the kitchen doing whatever I was doing, and Jordan remembered a toy that he wanted, but which happened to be in the basement.

Now, we had set up a playroom down there, and when we bought the house, this room had been an in-law suit of sorts, so it wasn't a dark, cold place, but to a 3 year old, it was still a bit intimidating to approach alone. So, he asked me to go down with him to get this toy, but I was up to my elbows in whatever I was doing, and I told him it was okay to just go down and get it, and come right back. He was not convinced, and told me that he was scared to go down there. So, I took the opportunity to talk to him about Jesus, and how He is always with us, wherever we go, watching over us, and keeping us safe. He thought about it for a minute, and turned to me, his little lip trembling, and said, **"But, who will go with me and Jesus? I want someone with some skin on!"** Needless to say, I laughed, hugged him, and dried off my hands and went to the basement with him.

Bit, this story reminded me yesterday of the fact that even as adults, sometimes we all need "someone with some skin on." There are a lot of lonely people around and the only way they will recognize Jesus at times, is through flesh and blood. I confess to wanting a "touchable" person when I am feeling sad, alone, or afraid. I am aware of Jesus' presence, even at these times, but I am also glad to know He provides us with other people to be His hands and feet. And even though I am human and desire visible hands and feet, **it also feels good to BE those hands and feet to others.**

**Let's try to remember to be "someone with some skin on" to those who need it today!**

In His Grip, Debbie

(She wrote this some time after Roger's death.)

Roger Bennett wrote a wonderful song in the midst of his cancer treatments called "[Home Free](#)" For you computer savy folk - go to [Google](#) and type in <**Roger Bennett Home Free**> The words are so good. Roger was the pianist for Legacy Five - a gospel quartet.