

## Lititz Church of the Brethren Visit - September 19, 2006

I met with Pamela Reist, Associate Pastor of Christian Nurture at the Lititz Church of the Brethren on September 19, 2006. The Senior Pastor is Bob Kettering, and Steve Hess is another Associate Pastor. I do not know his functions, but I do know that he is responsible for Men's Ministries. Pamela is a graduate of Findlay college, OH and has a Master of Arts Degree from Lancaster Theological Seminary. She has four adult daughters.

As I drove into the church's parking lot there were many cars present, considering it was a Tuesday morning. It seemed curious to me. The Day Care was on the other side of the building, so the cars didn't belong to DC staff. The cars were there because Pastor Bob Kettering was leading a Bible Study for adults. Today was the first session in this fall season. There were dozens of persons attending.

The following review will be categorized into "*Nurturing*" and "*Community*".

### NURTURING:



Lititz uses the "gather ROUND" curriculum of the Church of the Brethren for the entire SS program. A purple brochure describes their Fall, 2006 Sunday School program. It includes information on all classes from Nursery through Adult. The brochure is readily available for anyone to pick up at any time.



**Electives:** Lititz has moved away from this approach. Attendance tends to drop because of a lack of commitment. Sunday School classes are the strengths for people-bonding. SS classes are age-related.

Six years ago there were virtually no young adults in the Lititz congregation. There is a huge difference between six years ago and today. It was about that time that Pam became a member of the ministry team. In the ensuing years, Lititz has moved to a strong young adult program. Some of ingredients include:

**CHILDREN:** Includes nursery through sixth grade. Seventh grade through twelfth grade are in the Youth Program.

1. **Nursery Coordination:** The Nursery is coordinated by a non-Brethren lady. She is Catholic and attends the Catholic mass on Saturday evenings. The Nursery Coordinator, along with two of the 80 volunteers staff the infant center during SS and church. They serve on one of three 1-1/4 hour morning shifts (the coordinator serves three shifts; the volunteers serve on one of the three shifts). Many volunteers are older, so young mothers are not strapped to the nursery and they can be a part of a SS class and attend worship service.

The children need a regular attendant to feel at home, hence the Nursery Coordinator.

2. **Child Protection Policy:** Lititz has adopted a Child Protection Policy. This is vital to a congregation to protect the child as well as the child caregiver.

3. **Child Identification:** Each child is assigned a numbered sticker that is in six parts. One part is attached to the child. The child will be released only to the bearer of the sticker having a matching number.

017 Welcome To Lititz Church of the Brethren  
Please fill out the label to the right and place it on your child's belongings. We will page you if your child needs you. Present this stub and pager when you pick-up your child. Children are released to parents or guardians only.  
© ChurchNursery.com 2006

Child's Name: 017

017 This Belongs To: Parent/Caregiver's Name:

017 This Belongs To: Pager #:

4. **Pagers** are also provided to all parents of children in the Nursery. Should there be a problem, the parent is paged and is expected to return to the nursery to immediately become involved in their child's welfare.

**Youth:** The youth meet one or two Sundays per month in the evening. Their program was beyond the scope of this review.

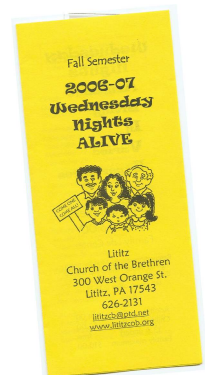
5. Lititz has a **coordinator of college students**. She is Elaine Gibbel. One Pastor also relates to the college kids. Communications with students include three newsletters per year, a letter from Elaine, letters from Pastor Pam, and the church's monthly newsletter. There are also emails sent. The church informs college students of COB's in the area local to the college or university. Included are announcements of upcoming activities when they return home, such as Christmas gatherings of college students, where they can get together to talk about what they are doing. Usually 12-15 college students attend and 3-4 talk about their experiences over the past few months.

6. Lititz also has a **coordinator of Young Adults** (over 24-25).

7. **Young Adults:** Is a strong core group of college kids and young married adults. They are a Sunday School class and also function as a group, studying an elective, "40 Days of Purpose". They will be going to a retreat soon and Paul Grout will be its leader.

8. **"CAREGIVERS" SS Class** - a parent child SS class: Young people in their 20s have a nuclear group going. They meet in an infant room. The infants are placed in cribs and the toddlers play with each other in a play area while the adults gather in a circle located within the average sized room. Single people are also included in this group. They are called the "CAREGIVERS" class and have Bible studies. As the children age, the families move on. New families join as they become involved with the church if they have a desire to do so. It is an excellent model of a flexible SS class!

9. **Wednesday Nights Alive:** Another important element! (See yellow brochure).



There is a dinner from 5:15 to 6:00 p.m. Cost is \$4.00 per adult and lower costs for children, with the family maximum of \$10.00. The dinner is self funding. There is a paid Food Services Director on the staff. There are children, junior high, senior high and adult classes from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. There are also children's music classes that include Preschool Singing, Angel Choir, God's Messengers, and Junior Hand Chimes. Also included in a brochure is the list of study times and locations, and a calendar for each week during the winter semester which ends on March 28, 2007.

WNO ends promptly at 7:30 P.M. "That is late enough for young children," says Pam. Since they are already there, some committees and commissions elect to meet immediately at 7:30. Formally those meetings as well as choir rehearsal were held during the Wednesday Nights Alive. Both have moved away from Wednesday Nights Alive because the night was too complicated. The choir meets now meets on Thursday.

Lititz identifies the constraints affecting their program include the many school activities and outside sports, and families being away at their beach homes or mountain homes, and adults' busy schedules.

They recently went to a third service. There is some feeling of anxiety in the congregation since they are no longer one large worship group.

Lititz has **no formal "Hospitality Program"**. There are greeters at all services and ushers at the back of the church performing the usual usher activities. When a visitor attends for the first time a letter is sent out and a loaf of bread is given. There is a monitor in the church who follows up to determine if the visitors came back for a second or subsequent times. If so, a pastoral visit is then made.

### **COMMUNITY:**

1. **Toddler Gym:** Lititz started a "Toddler Gym" for the community during the fall, winter and spring. Memorial funds were used to buy gym equipment which meets in one of the classrooms. The program requires little pastoral support. The parents are tied to the operation. The pastors do have a bible study. The facility is flooded with people! She said there is a great need for something for parents and young children to do during the week. Currently they have 90 families on their database. Only four are from the Lititz Church of the Brethren.

2. A **"Faith in Fellowship Club"**: The **three Pastors together** go one time per week to be with their "Toddler Gym" children. There is singing, bible study and prayer. Twelve to 20 kids attend. One child is from the Lititz Church of the Brethren. Lititz's mission is to inform families in the Community Day Care as to what is happening at church. It is the only church contact some children receive. A few families now come as result on their Day Care program.

Other areas of local outreach which we did not discuss include:

**Parenting classes** for ages 3 through 18

**Scouting:** Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

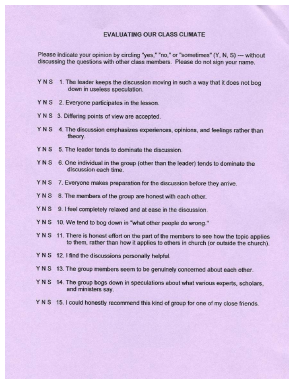
**Community Concert Events:** This is co-sponsored by Moravian Manor and Lititz Church of the Brethren

**Meals on Wheels** are prepared in the Lititz Church of the Brethren, Monday through Friday of each week.

**The Alpha Program:** A dynamic opportunity to explore the relevance of the Christian faith. ALPHA is a 10 week video based small group experience and includes a weekend retreat.

In summary, much can be done to enhance ministries to children and young adults. It requires that someone be the focal point to develop the concept, program, start up, follow-up, and to make adjustments when necessary.

I am optimistic that the tools shared with me today can be implemented at our church.



I also received a purple questionnaire entitled, “Evaluating our Class Climate” for Sunday school class members to evaluate the dynamics within their class. Another handout on a green sheet was entitled, “What We Can Do to Grow Adult Sunday School” which provides suggestions on how to invigorate a SS class and help us become more hospitable.

Larry Gibble  
C-YAM Team Member

