

## Sister-Care



**Patricia  
Burdette**

Cover: (l to r) Marilyn Miller, (Elizabethtown Mennonite Church), Janet Gingrich (Hammer Creek Mennonite Church), Jan Heindel (Stony Brook Mennonite Church), all of Pennsylvania at the Atlantic Coast and Lancaster Sister-Care seminar, October 2–3, 2009.

Photo by Ruth Harnish

I never had a sister, and my only brother died suddenly when I was 19, so for me, my friends within and outside of the church have become my sisters and brothers. When I first heard the idea of the Sister-Care program from Mennonite Women USA, I was quite excited because it seemed to fill a need that so many women had, including me—the need for support through the difficult times as well as the joyful times we experience in our lives. I am at the age in life when I have experienced my share of both the difficult and the joyful times, and with age, I have learned some of the important ways to share the joys and listen carefully to those who are suffering. As sisters in Christ, we need to be able to share our difficult times and allow others to share our burdens as well as the joys in our lives. The Bible clearly indicates that this is part of our responsibility as Christians, as Ivorie Lowe points out in her article.

Yet, if this is so for us as Christian Mennonite women, why do we need a Sister-Care program? Sarah Krabill, a family practice physician, responds to this question in her article on the importance of Sister-Care. Carolyn Holderread Heggen also discusses why Sister-Care is vital to us as women.

Part of the reason we need Sister-Care is that we have lost the ability to listen without judgment and to set boundaries for ourselves as we reach out to care for others. Sister-Care emphasizes the ways we see sisters caring for one another in scripture and how we, today, as sisters in the church, can learn the tools we need to care for others without being judgmental or losing the ability to care for our own needs at the same time.

This issue of *timbrel* tells stories of women who have attended Sister-Care Seminars and have benefited from them. It also tells stories of women who have reached out to others who are suffering and those supported when they have been going through difficulties. These difficult times are a part of each woman's life, and being able to allow others to support us is essential to our own mental health. Sister-Care Seminars can help us have the courage and the skill to reach out to our sisters in need and to accept the support our sisters can give to us when we need it. ☑

### Sister Question for Jan.–Feb.

In preparation for the next issue of *timbrel*, which will focus on Women as a Prophetic Voice in the Church consider: **What needs do you think the church should be addressing today?** Send your response to <PattyB@MennoniteWomenUSA.org>.

## contents

<b>The Circle of Sisters</b> by Ivorie Lowe	4
<b>The Importance of Sister-Care</b> by Sarah Krabill, MD	7
<b>Bible Study</b> by Vickie Shurelds	10
<b>Three Windows, Three Women</b>	12
<b>Grapevine</b>	15
<b>Across the Border, Across the Ocean</b> by Sylvia Shirk	16
<b>Home, Hearth &amp; Health</b> by Kirsten Klassen	18
<b>Culture, Clips &amp; Kudos</b> by Kate Good	20
<b>Response to Sister Question and Cup of Water</b>	22
<b>On the Road with Rhoda</b>	23

**Kate Good**, Lancaster City, Pennsylvania, says that writing about culture for *timbrel* is enjoyable. "Reading, discovering new music, watching movies, going to art shows and plays are some of my favorite things to do," she says. Good also loves to travel, cook and write. She is employed by Good Books and lives with her dog, Sam.



**Kirsten L. Klassen**, Elkhart, Indiana, is still learning how to listen, and considers her friends, family, and co-workers her best teachers. As she was recently journaling to sort out her thoughts about a difficult situation, her daughter looked over and commented, "How can you write that much? I could never write that much in one entry!"



**Sarah Krabill, MD**, Elkhart, Indiana, is a family practice physician in Goshen, IN. She is married with 3 children, ages 11, 8, 6, two cats, and two dogs. Her household is joyful but chaotic! She attends Belmont Mennonite Church.



**Ivorie Lowe**, Markham, Illinois, is a retired school administrator, CEO, and former Peace Corps volunteer. She is a widow with one adult son, and is one of nine siblings, two of whom are deceased. She has many years of service in the General Conference and Mennonite Church USA as well as her service to the Goshen College Board and her local congregation, Community Mennonite Church.



**Sylvia Shirk**, New York, New York, is pastor of Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship. This article is part of her research project for a degree in international feminist theology at San Francisco Theological Seminary. She is the mother of three adult children and grandmother of one precious little New Yorker.



**Vickie Shurelds**, Lima, Ohio, holds a Master of Education degree from Bluffton University. She is a news reporter, broadcaster, and anchor, as well as host of "Soul of the City," a radio talk show. She has two adult children.

