

October 2024

# THE HERALD

Newsletter of the Orrville Grace Brethren Church

## Who's Who at OGBC?

Jodi Robinson



Atlee Hersherberger (92) has attended Orrville Grace Brethren Church for the last 1 ½ - 2 years. He and his wife Janet had previously attended the Threefold Communion

services from time to time. But it was after a very nice visit from Lois Smucker, to their home in Orrvilla, that they decided to start attending more regularly. They enjoyed the testimony of Lois and others from the church and felt everyone was very friendly. Atlee is also very thankful for the device the church provided to make it easier for him to hear the sermons.

Atlee was born at home in the Orrville area on June 4, 1932, the youngest child of an Amish family. He had 4 brothers and 1 sister. As the youngest and smallest in the family, he "took the brunt of all things." He had a little Terrier dog named Tippy, who "listened to all my troubles." They moved quite a bit when he was a child and in 1949, he was living on a farm near Sugarcreek, Ohio with his family.

Atlee shares: "I loved to read at a young age,

and between my tenth and thirteenth year, I was reading 'Light from Heaven' and the 'Egermeir's Bible Story Book.' I talked to my father about going to Heaven and he said, "Don't worry about it. You are still quite young." Later on my brother Ben gave me a Christian Worker's New Testament. So, at 17 years old, I became desperate to know what church was the right one. I prayed, "Lord, I don't know what to do, but it is up to you; if you don't help me, I'll just go to Hell." God answered me with a scripture: '*He who comes to me, I will in no wise cast out*' John 6:37 KJV. I responded, "Do you mean that if I come to you, you will not cast me out?" The answer was John 17:17: "Thy word is truth." So I said: "Jesus, Lord, since your Word is true, I will just come to you". And I was filled with peace. I didn't know what to call what had happened to me. I started reading the Bible more. One day I told a businessman (a Pentecostal) what had happened to me. He jumped 10 feet high and told me that I had gotten saved. Well, nobody could jump that high, but that man was really excited."

After Atlee was saved, he started attending Mennonite churches. One day he saw a sign along the road that said: Revival at the Brethren Christ Mission. Even with a lot of opposition at home, he rode his bicycle to the revival every night for two weeks. At that church he saw a lot of love, and after a while

he joined that church. His family was not happy about this, and so he decided to move out. In those early years, he had "A lot of zeal but not much knowledge." In the end, his family begged him to stay; but he moved in with a pastor's family in Massillon.

The following year, he started attending the Jabbok Bible School near Thomas, Oklahoma. Because he was attending school, Atlee was exempted from the Draft. The FBI actually sent someone to the school to check on him to be sure that he was attending and that he was behaving appropriately. The Principal shared that Atlee was active in the school ministry and was a prayer warrior, and he was able to stay. After Bible School Atlee returned to Ohio and appealed his Draft classification at a hearing in Cleveland and he was reclassified 1W Conscientious Objector due to his religious beliefs. He served 2 years as an Attendant at the Hawthornden State Hospital for the Mentally Ill in Macedonia, Ohio. While he was in Macedonia, he met a couple from Pennsylvania who took a liking to him. The man's wife, Viola, had a sister named Janet Musser who wasn't married. Viola told her sister that Atlee would make a good husband for her. At that time Janet was living in Buffalo, New York, working at a mission during her school break, so Atlee didn't meet her right away. As God so often works things out, a friend took Atlee to a church camp meeting in Fort Erie in Ontario, Canada. When they pulled into the parking lot in Fort Erie, the car that pulled in beside them, had Janet in it. His friend knew Janet. Atlee asked her to go on a date with him to see Niagara Falls in the evening. She needed to go back to the mission where she was working, so he drove to Buffalo after their date that night and she invited him in and made him a banana split and then he drove back to Fort Erie. He

went back to Macedonia and she went back to Messiah College in Pennsylvania. They began a courtship of letters for the next 1½ years. He learned that Janet was called to the Brethren In Christ (BIC) Missions in Africa.

A little while later Atlee went to Pennsylvania to see Janet and to meet her family. While eating Sunday dinner, he accidentally kept the extra fork on the meat platter when it was passed. He thought he had really messed up, but nobody said anything about the fork. So, when the meat platter came around again and had another fork on it, he kept that one to. At the end of the meal, he had 4 forks on his plate.

Once when visiting, Janet asked Atlee if he would like to go for a walk around their fish pond. So they did. He pretended to push her into the pond. She grabbed him and they both fell in the pond. They had to go back to the house soaking wet. He was afraid that he had really blown it, but Janet and her family all laughed. He realized that he now had a fun-loving family.

The day came when Atlee finally and nervously asked Janet to marry him. She said she couldn't answer that until she had settled her calling by God to go to Africa. After a while, and much prayer, Atlee decided that he needed to release her to God. On Saturday, he bought a dozen roses and went to see her to tell her that he loved her, but would release her to God so she could fulfill her commitment to go to BIC missions in Africa.

He had practiced his speech but he never got to deliver it, because Janet had also been praying. On the Wednesday before that Saturday, God released her from her commitment to BIC Missions and told her that He would provide a replacement for her. So she accepted his proposal and they got engaged.

Atlee had already been called to preach. He started his first Pastorate before they got married on September 10, 1955. After they were married, Janet saw in a church newsletter that a lady was going to be a missionary at the BIC Mission in Zimbabwe, Africa. Amazingly, the lady's name was Janet Musser, the same as hers (although she didn't know the woman). God does indeed work in miraculous ways.

Atlee relates, "Janet was the love of my life, a great help to me in the ministry". She was also a catalyst in healing for his family. She sent flowers from the wedding to his parents. His parents were overwhelmed to receive them. Janet became very close to his mother and his mother was saved through the love and witnessing of Janet and the other family members who were already saved. Atlee's whole family was eventually saved as they came to the Lord one by one over time. So, Janet did her missionary work, not in Africa but at a local level, like most of us.

Over the years, Atlee continued to pursue education at the Messiah College and Ashland Theological Seminary and through pastoral studies. He also worked at regular jobs including a shoe factory, as an attendant or orderly in hospitals, sometimes working two full time jobs to support his family while attending school.

Atlee and Janet served at many churches over the years. Some of the churches were in real trouble when they first went there. Their goal was always the same, to leave the church better than they found it. God blessed their efforts over and over. They served in churches where they felt they made a positive difference in Kentucky, Tennessee, Massillon, Ohio, and Springfield, Ohio.

After their time at the church in Tennessee, in 1987, they had an opportunity to visit Zambia, Africa where their son Tim and his

wife Lynette were serving as Auditor and Hostess for the Zambia BIC Mission. Janet's God-given dream was fulfilled as she was able to provide teaching for the children of the missionaries there. While there, Janet got malaria and was really ill. Atlee wanted to bring her home, but she didn't think that would be a good example; to leave when times got tough. Atlee prayerfully opened his bible and his eyes fell on Isaiah 52:12. *For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your reward.* With God before them and behind them, he knew they were to stay. So they stayed and eventually Janet improved.

Atlee and Janet retired in 1996, but continued to serve as pastor at the Sippo Valley BIC Church near Massillon until 2002. Then they began attending the Amherst BIC Community Church and participated in leadership there. Atlee became the Minister of Visitation there in 2010 and served until 2018.

Atlee and Janet were blessed with 4 children, Tim, Lorraine, Bonnie and David. A sad part of their lives was in 2021 when they lost their oldest son Tim who passed away with Covid at 65 years old. A major broken heart for both of them.

In February of this year, Janet, Atlee's wife, ministry partner and best friend, went home to be with the Lord. Another broken heart. But Jesus remains close.

When asked "When you meet God in Heaven someday, what do you want to say to Him?" Atlee said, "Thank you Lord for saving my soul."

When asked if there was anything else he would like to share, Atlee said, "Whatever you do, if God leads you, you will be more mature afterwards."

# FUNNIES

## WIT AND WISDOM

- ◆ Here I am, Waiting on hold . . . Waiting to speak to a human being . . . Waiting for the Lord to return . . . I wonder which will happen first?
- ◆ Sorry. Yesterday was the deadline for all complaints.
- ◆ A little boy's prayer: Dear God, please take care of my family, take care of the whole world, and please God, take care of Yourself, or we're all sunk.
- ◆ I'd love to leave my troubles behind me . . . but every time I try to get away from it all . . . I take myself along.
- ◆ Heaven is a great big hug that lasts forever.
- ◆ Looking at the night sky: If Heaven is that pretty on the bottom, think how it must look on TOP!
- ◆ Friends are people you like . . . who like you right back!!
- ◆ This is a strange journey we walk, full of peaks and valleys. But since God is in both places, we walk unafraid.
- ◆ Love makes the lonelies go away.
- ◆ Oh, no! Not another learning experience.
- ◆ Diet Rule #1: Watch what you eat, otherwise you might spill it.
- ◆ Diet Rule #2: Try not to think of chocolate as a vegetable.

- ◆ Life can be a grindstone. But whether it grinds us down or polishes us up, depends on us.
- ◆ Sometimes when we're feeling like we can't endure one more setback, a single word can give us the strength to go on. And that word is . . . Heaven.
- ◆ We interrupt this program for a special bulletin from the Food and Drug Administration . . . . . DON'T EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!
- ◆ My memory's not as sharp as it used to be. Also, my memory's not as sharp as it used to be.
- ◆ "I'm sorry if my hair is a mess. Since I turned 70, every time I look in the mirror to comb my gorgeous auburn tresses, this chubby, grey haired old lady jumps in front of me and fills the whole mirror. I've tried to look around her but she is spry for her age and blocks my every move."

-----

The farmer's wife sold her surplus butter to a grocer. On one occasion, the grocer told her, "your butter was underweight last week."

She replied, "That's interesting. My scale was broken so I used the pound of sugar you sold me to measure my butter."

-----

A patient said to the doctor, raising his left arm, "It hurts when I do that."

"Okay," the doctor said, "don't do that."