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# The Chronicle

Chortitzer Mennonite Conference



## Celebrating the End of an Era

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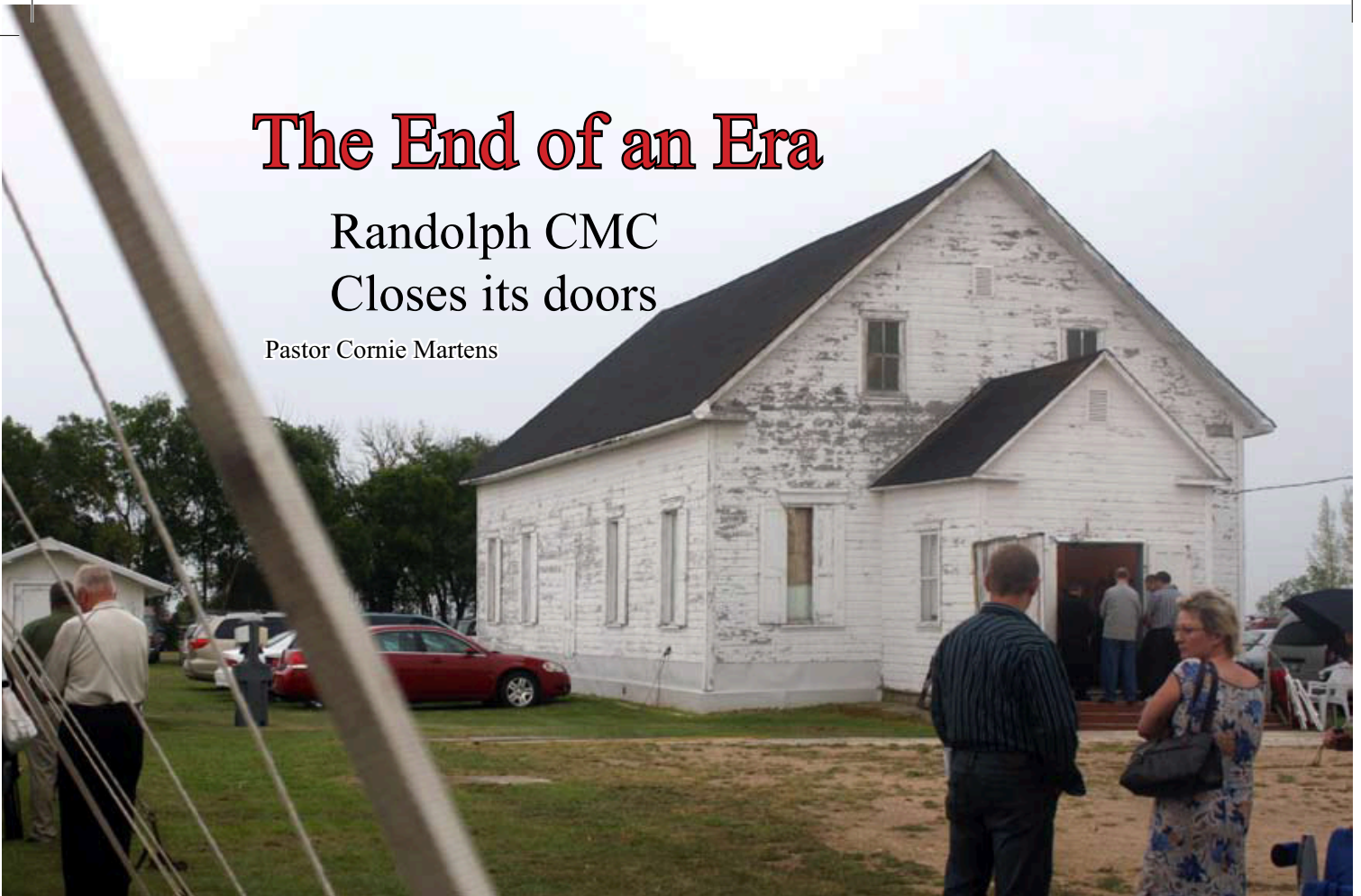


*Thus Far The  
Lord Hath  
Brought Us,  
The History  
of the  
Randolph  
Church.*  
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# The End of an Era

## Randolph CMC Closes its doors

Pastor Cornie Martens



Sunday, August 29, 2010, saw the closure of the Randolph Church after 134 years of service at that location. The last regular church service was held with Deacon Jacob Klassen doing the einleitung, and Bishop Frank Unrau doing the message.

In the afternoon, a huge crowd of 460 people came out to participate in the final celebration and decommissioning of the church. Most of the people had some connection with the church, either attending presently or having attended some time in the past. Many had been baptized here, others had exchanged their wedding vows, and still others attended Saturday and/or Sunday School in these facilities. The service evoked many memories of spiritual beginnings and growth, as well as times of fellowship.

To accommodate the anticipated crowd, a large tent was set up north of the church for the expected overflow, and a place to serve fasha after the service. A screen was set up in the tent so that the 260 people in the tent could see and hear the program taking place in the filled to capacity church.

The service was opened by the local deacon, Jake Klassen. He welcomed the people to the service, read scripture, and thanked God for the way he had led the Randolph congregation all these years. The congregation participated in the service by singing a German song from

the old Gesangbuch, and two English songs from the hymnal. Pastor Cornie Ginter, dressed in Bishop Henry Schellenberg's Prediger Rock (a preachers jacket), gave a



**Cornie Ginter put on the preacher's jacket often seen into the mid 1900's as he gave a short Low German meditation. The jacket was previously worn by late Bishop Henry Schellenberg.**

short meditation in Low German, and Bishop Frank Unrau gave the keynote address in English. Both emphasized the importance of the location as a church to the CMC and how the people who had attended here had branched out to serve in numerous other churches.

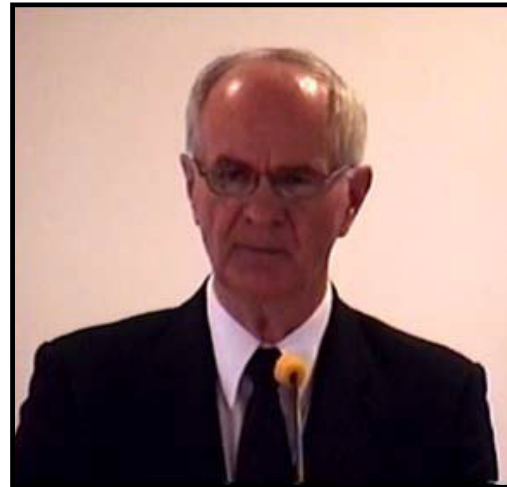
Jacob Doerksen gave a brief history of the Randolph Church outlining some of the reason, why the Bergthaler people had migrated from the Ukraine in 1874 and established new homes in the East Reserve.

After the service, lunch was served in the big tent. Before the congregation left the church sanctuary, the CMC ministerial, accompanied by John Neufeld on the violin and Peter B. Kehler on the guitar and under the direction of Pastor Richard Martens, sang a fitting song, *Groszer Gott Wir Loben Dich*.

Assistant Bishop Bill Thiessen led in table grace. Many stories of the past were shared over coffee and dainties. One more Gesangbuch song was sung in closing of a memorable afternoon of sharing memories and fellowship.

A number of people also spent time going through the cemetery across the road from the church, which has been named the *Chortitzer Heritage Cemetery*, which is in the process of being re-landscaped. In the near future a fence and cairn are to be erected in memory of the Mennonite

**Bishop Frank Unrau shared the message.**



people that lived in the area.

The afternoon proved to be a fitting closure to the many years of spiritual service in the oldest CMC church.

Cornie Martens



**Congregants  
leave the church  
after a service  
for the last time.  
Nearly 500  
people stayed for  
fellowship after  
the service.**