

# Lakeville church expands

By KAREN CUBIE  
Gazette Staff Writer

"I'll be in touch!" shouted the woman as she drove away.

"Just don't forget to go to church," Rev. Earle W. Landers of the Lakeville Church of the Nazarene shouted back.

He had never seen this woman before, but when she was stranded on Route 18, he filled her car's tank with gas, gave her money to buy more, and, with the help of congregation members Randy Betts and Don Remedis, got the car back on the road again.

"The church is now heading up an active visitation program," he explained later. "We have defined the church as everyone is a minister. This is the first time in years this church has broken out of its four walls.

"We have a food program for needy people," he added. "The purpose is to reach people and have them come to know Jesus."

To Landers, God is personal — someone he can depend on for strength and spiritual nourishment. He is in the ministry not because he likes to preach, counsel, or socialize, but because

he felt God called him into the profession.

"I had always planned to teach school," he said. "The summer after I graduated from high school, I was enrolled in a teachers' college. I was only 17 or 18. But by the end of that summer I felt really strongly I was supposed to go into the ministry."

He feels he couldn't have survived in the ministry without the call.

"There are times I would have quit, gone," he said. "I would have left as fast as I could if it hadn't been for my call.

"If you don't know for sure that you're called to the ministry, never, never do it," he stressed. "I don't know how you can make it if you think of it only as a service profession."

Although there aren't many Nazarene churches in this area of the country, people in Lakeville know Landers' church is there.

"We recently sponsored a show, along with the Mullen Hill Baptist Church that was on cable television," he said. "It was called 'America is too Young to Die.' We held it at Apponequet High School one month ago, and it was on

cable.

"We emphasized the breakdown of religious emphasis in school," he continued. "It spoke out strongly against the drug culture."

The Nazarene church, headquartered in Kansas City, Mo., is called a "holiness" church. Nazarenes believe once a person has decided to believe in Christ, the holy spirit begins working changes in his or her life.

"There's a strong emphasis on the church doctrine here," Mr. Landers said. "The church emphasizes the simple teachings of Jesus. A person comes as he or she is by the faith in Jesus' promise.

"One should forsake his or her sin, and believe in (Jesus') sacrifice for those sins," he added. "Then we can personally become a knowledgeable part of his family.

"He (Jesus) said, with the Holy Spirit coming, He would be our teacher, and He would guide us through all truth."

After receiving his call, Mr. Landers attended a bible school near his home in Nova Scotia for one year until he was accepted as a student at Eastern Nazarene College in Quincy, a four-year liberal arts college.

"In 1949, I went to ENC," he said. "I spent four years there."

After receiving a bachelor's degree in theology, he attended the Nazarene Seminary in Kansas City. He graduated with a master's degree in theology.

In spite of his 20 years as the Lakeville church's pastor, Mr. Landers admits he doesn't understand why bad or destructive things happen.

"That's tough — when you have no answers," he said. "We look for tangible (solutions), but sometimes there aren't any. I have no answers to some things, but I believe God, the way He is, makes it right somewhere down the road.

"You have to have an outright faith in what God says," he explained. "You have to know there's a difference because God says so."

A husband and father of five children, his ministry has taken its toll on his family.

"(Being a pastor's child) is not the normal scene for a child," he said. "We can't have a normal relationship with other families. There's a lot of pressure on them to be extremely good. They're held up as an example and it's tough for them.

"The marvelous thing is they all have survived, and they all have supported us."

His wife, Shirley (Rose) Landers, has been very active in her husband's church.

## RELIGION TODAY

### Was New Testament in Hebrew first?

By WESLEY G. PIPPERT  
United Press International

A group of biblical scholars believe the New Testament was written originally in Hebrew, not Greek — which they say may explain why some of Jesus' sayings seem so strange.

Matthew 6:22-23, as commonly translated from Greek to English, refers to the "good eye" and the "bad eye" — confusing at best, according to David Bivin, director of the Jerusalem School for the Study of the Gospels.

Actually, Bivin said in an interview, the Hebrew word for "good eye" also means generosity, and "bad eye" miserly or stingy. If the gospels were written first in Hebrew that probably was the meaning intended.

In the context of what Jesus was talking about, this makes much more sense, Bivin said. For the previous verse says, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Traditionally, scholars have assumed that Jesus spoke in Aramaic and the Gospels were written first in Greek.

But Bivin's group of Jerusalem scholars believe:

— Jesus, like his contemporaries, most probably spoke in

were written in Hebrew in the first place.

The last of the Beatitudes in Matthew 5, as translated in the Revised Standard Version, says: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake."

But Bivin said the Hebrew word for "persecuted" also means to "pursue." He said it makes more sense for the verse to say that those who pursue righteousness will be blessed.

Luke 2's account of the 12-year-old Jesus in the Temple says both that the boy was listening and asking questions and that all who heard him were amazed at his answers — an apparent contradiction.

In fact, Bivin said, the Hebrew word for "question" may also be used for "answer." He pointed out the rabbinic method of dialogue to this day often is to answer a question with a question.

In Luke 10:9, Bivin said, Jesus says the kingdom of God has "come near." But he pointed out the Hebrew word "to come near" also means "already arrived," which in this case gives a different interpretation altogether.

"In my Bible study...

# to help others' needs



**HIGHWAY SAVIORS:** Lakeville Church of the Nazarene congregation members Don Remedis of Assonet and his daughter, Crystal, 4, and Randy Betts of Lakeville, gave their pastor Rev. Earle W. Landers (center) a hand when he came to the aid of a woman stranded on Route 18 with no gas. (Cubie Photo)

hanging over his office doorway.

His daughter, Donna, 23, is the church's music director.

His other children are Dwight, 31, Shirley, 28, Nancy, 17, and Lee, 11.

The church's congregation has grown substantially since it started holding services 21 years ago.

"There were about 15 or 20 regulars here when we started," Mr. Landers said. "One man, Myron DeMoranville, was the backbone of the church. He's the only charter member still here."

The congregation was made up mostly of young people.

"There were or two or three strong teens, and children in Sunday School," he said.

Today, between 85 and 100 people attend the Sunday morning services.

"We have a membership of 116," he said. "In summer, though, it drops a little."

Church member Ken Balch has acted as leader of the church's college and career group

tant, but he does a lot of the work," Mr. Landers said.

The church plans to eventually offer a soup kitchen as part of the visitation program.

"We've put in place a large stove (in the church)," he said. "We're thinking of a soup kitchen in connection with the ministry — but it's not fully organized yet."

The group makes visits regularly on Thursday nights.

"The visitation program is

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made up of four groups," he said. "One is a nurturing group. They follow up and disciple new Christians."

The visitation program isn't all the church offers.

"We have an active music program," he said, "and a musical team called the 'Straight Aheaders,' formed by Randy Betts, Donna Landers, Cathy Crouse, Elaine Mola, Dwight Landers, and Deanna Stonehouse."

The group has traveled as far as Nova Scotia to perform.

"But most of their ministry is in this church," he said.

The church also has a softball team.

"That's how my daughter's husband was saved," Mr. Landers said.

"We've had a lot of help from the community with that," he added, pointing out the window to the field the church has built.

His favorite verse reads, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (II Corinthians, 9:8).

"I enjoy my work very much," he said, "but there are some heavy things."

"The biggest disappointment is when people don't respond to privileges and opportunities offered through the church."

"But the most rewarding part," he said, "is to see the change and growth process in those whose life was changed by the gospel truth."

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