



Joy Mennonite Church Newsletter

April 1996

Pastor's Corner

This winter Governor Keating issued a call to Oklahomans to pray for rain. In the March 14 issue of the Mennonite Weekly Review we read that the Christians of Zambia are also praying for rain. Anyone connected to farming knows the pain and anxiety when a year's work is drying up or blowing away from lack of rain. We believe prayer is a natural response to a person of faith in such circumstances. We encourage prayer for our farmers by those not so directly affected. However we must beware how we pray. Maybe we can learn something from our Zambian brothers and sisters who are also praying for rain.

I was a teen-ager in the dry years of the fifties. I am sure many farmers prayed in their hearts for rain but I do not remember any public prayers for rain. I remember a story that made people chuckle. It was said a special prayer meeting was called to pray for rain. One old farmer said he would not go. When pressed for his reasons he said, "There is no use to pray for rain as long as the dry winds blow from the west." People chuckled because they saw some truth in this man's reasoning.

When we pray we must

pray in faith. Faith has been interpreted as believing when there is no reason to believe, like praying for rain when the wind is in the west. This may be true, but this way of thinking may also define faith as getting God to do what we desire. I believe faith is better understood as accepting God's way as good. God has created a world that depends on rain to make our crops grow. God has created a world in which somewhere the rains fail and God called it good. God has created a world in which somewhere too much rain falls, floods rise and the crops are destroyed. This is a world in which humans cannot survive alone and independent from each other. This is a world in which love can grow and humans are drawn to care for each other. The world I am prone to pray for is one in which I am self-sufficient and independent. The rains come when I need them and no natural disaster wipes out my possessions. I have a feeling that the prayers for rain in Zambia are different. You can read the testimony of the Zambian church in the Mennonite Weekly Review. If it rains we will give thanks. If it does not rain we must look for the blessings in the hardships.

Moses Mast

Meditation

Dear Friends,

For the last number of months we have been studying and discussing the "Confession of Faith" document that was adopted at "Wichita 95" by the Mennonite conferences that are working towards their merger.

We wished to understand it thoroughly and feel that we, here at Joy Mennonite Church, are in sync with it (or it with us) in our beliefs and expressions.

During this period we have dealt with many facets of our individual and "corporate" Christian walks in life. Discussions on the topics of God, creation, Holy Spirit, Jesus, being followers, commitment, and faith reveals varied levels of understanding and comprehension, or at least differences in personal opinions as to definition and how they relate to the individual.

Some can quickly express publicly what this all means to them, and be very comfortable in their Christian commitment. It is not clear to me that it was ever intended that I should understand "all things" -- that at the point of things "not seen" is where my faith becomes a struggle, and I win some and lose

some.

Very appropriately some of our discussions get wound into the web of the Lenten season. This is certainly not unexpected or unusual; our awareness to our sins and human failures and our need for forgiveness are always heightened as we enter Advent and Lenten seasons, or approach Thanksgiving Day. And charitable giving always increases during these periods, and frequently equations are made to our stewardship; using our money wisely, or just showing our love and compassion in our generous sharing with those less fortunate.

Our discussion topics and the various seasons can generate new life in us, and help us with our priorities -- give us that periodic tune-up. Would it be marvelous if we didn't constantly need seasonal or other reminders to renew our commitments -- if being a follower came natural? Maybe not! How many experiences of God's love and forgiveness might we miss or not become special moments for us?

As we contemplate how good God really is, let's pray for love and peace this Easter season.

Best wishes to all,

Bice Klassen

Fellowship News:

Cheryl Crichley is recuperating from her broken leg. She has a much shorter cast and can now drive again.

Leland Clegg Methodist Church invited youth from several smaller churches including Joy Mennonite, for an ice cream social and games on Sunday evening, March 10. Sadie took five of the neighborhood girls and they really enjoyed it! The next get-together will be April 14.

Bill Klassen and Moses and Sadie Mast attended the MDS meeting at the Zion Amish Mennonite Church at Thomas, OK on Sunday afternoon, March 17.

Spring break took Ralph Ediger to Oregon to visit his brother; the Brueckner's to Mississippi to visit their daughter's family and take grandson, Nathan, home; and Cristina Kaufman to Ft. Collins, Colorado.

We enjoyed having a group of Bethel College students stay at our church March 23-24. They were returning from a spring break week of service in south Texas. Randy Smith, Campus Minister, preached the Lent message Sunday morning.

Our quarterly business meeting, originally scheduled for April, was moved up to

Saturday, March 30. We adopted a budget for this year, among other items discussed.

Worship News:

We have been invited to join the Leland Clegg Methodist Church for a Maundy Thursday service on April 4. Please bring items for the soup at 6:30pm, with the service starting at 7pm. The church is located on Hefner Road just east of Broadway Extension.

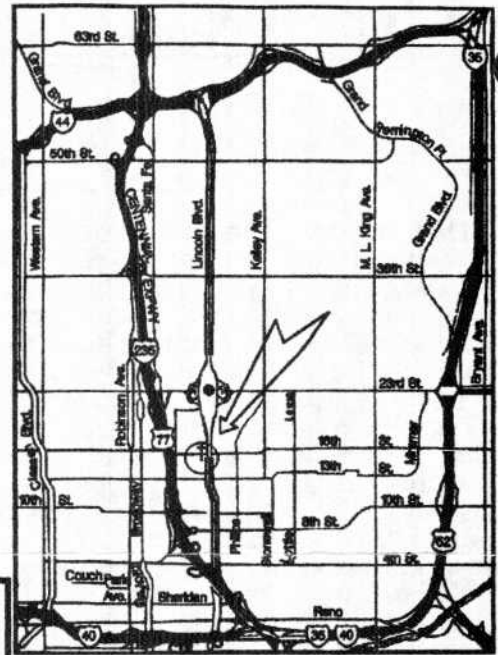
On April 14, Moses Mast has been invited to speak at Inman Mennonite Church, Inman, KS. This is a pulpit exchange with our sister church -- Jerry Kaiser spoke here in February.

Coming Events:

- April 6 Church outing to Wichita Wildlife Refuge, followed by Easter Pageant
- April 7 Easter
- April 20 Workday at the church and in the neighborhood
- April 27 Church & Neighborhood noon picnic at Harn Homestead
- April 27-28 WDC Men & Boys Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
- May 11 Cristina Kaufman's graduation from OU
- May 12 Church Dinner to celebrate with Cristina
- July 5-7 WDC annual sessions, Dallas, TX

Worship Service:

Every Sunday at 10 O'clock A.M.



Church Address: 504 NE 16th St.
(just west of the oil derrick on Lincoln Blvd.)

Reminder: May newsletter items are due by April 24. Give to Mike or Darlene Powers.

Newsletter Contributors: Moses Mast, Pastor's Corner; Bill Klassen, Writer & Mailing; Darlene Powers & Sadie Mast, News Items; Mike Powers, Publisher.



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