



Joy Mennonite Church July 2004

Pastors Corner

The youth of America seem to understand that they face an uncertain future. I also believe our bubble of prosperity will burst one day but it does not grab me as it would if I thought most of my life was in front of me. We can no longer say to the next generation that life for them will be better than it was for our generation. What do we say to the next generation when their future is not only uncertain, but seems certain to bring some dreaded and difficult experience?

First, an uncertain future does not have to be hopeless. It was in a period of uncertainty in the Jewish experience before and during the exile of their people to Babylon that we have some of the most inspired writings of the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah and Hosea. They understood that the dreaded future before them was because they had sinned, just as we can understand that if we had practiced justice in the Middle East we would not have the same problem with terrorism as we now have. The hope of the prophets lay in the power and will of God to restore them after they suffered the consequences of their sins. The message of the prophets in this time of uncertainty now has special meaning for us as we face an uncertain future. I will try to highlight the main points as I see them.

First, from Isaiah, the proclamation of truth will not come from the lips of the powerful; neither will proclaiming the truth endear you to the powerful. This messenger from God comes in the role of a servant. This servant messenger will experience rejection and ridicule.

Second, all the prophets insisted that all religious practices must not be an end in itself, but must lead one to a life concerned for justice for the poor. Your fasting and the sacrifices you make while you oppress the poor leave a bad odor in God's nostrils.

Third, the prophets were keenly aware of the political powers and their schemes but warned against trusting them for your security. But the prophets also left us with a level of spirituality that rises above criticizing the powers; they grieved the suffering caused by the powers. The prophets also grieved for those who suffered as a consequence of their own sins. Jeremiah is

remembered as the weeping prophet. Remember how Jesus wept over Jerusalem. How different from the more common response, they got what they deserved.

Last, the prophets believed in the power of God to restore. The question we ask ourselves in this nuclear age will there be anything left to restore. Perhaps the best thing we can say to encourage one another is that God will not abandon us. We must prepare ourselves now while the times are good to face the hard times when they come.

I hope you are having a good summer. Maybe we will see you at the annual conference.

MOSES MAST

A friend recently asked me what I considered to be a miracle--- I had to stop and give some thought to my answer.

We read of many instances in the bible that are true miracles--- Feeding of the multitudes with a few loaves of bread and a few fish, the creation of the heavens and the earth, Abraham's wife Sarai giving birth at the age of 90, the list is endless.

Miracles are all around us every day from our first awakening in the morning and we see the sun coming up on the sky, to the stars in the sky at night. Flowers start with tiny seeds and when nurtured with care and love, blossom into beautiful blooms.

I think that the greatest miracle we can have in our lives is the fact that god loves us and cares enough about us to keep on giving us miracles everyday. It's when we share with our neighbors the gift of our love that true miracles occur.

Plant a word of love in someone's life. Care for it with a smile and much prayer and watch carefully to see what happens.

Never underestimate the power of a single seed. If all of us would plant just one tiny seed, think of the miracles that could be possible. Let's get busy! With Gods love, the possibilities are endless.

Sue Laws

June Revisited

Martha Shoemaker continues to teach crafts to the children at Urban Impact twice a week.

Karen Evans was asked by Urban Impact to attend a workshop in Washington D. C. on faith based initiative.

The first week end in June Ralph and Becky Ediger and Moses and Sadie Mast attended the wedding of Carol Rose and Duane Ediger in Dallas, Texas.

Coming Events

Preaching schedule for July:

- July 4th: Western District Conference, there will be no service at Joy Mennonite
- July 11th: Karin Evans
- July 18th: Moses Mast
- July 25th: Moses Mast

Parting words

Last weekend we had our annual Church campout. It was at Lake Thunderbird. We had a pretty good turnout although the weather wasn't real cooperative and a few didn't make it at least in part because of the rain.

Those of us who did make it had a pretty good time. Good company, good food what more could you ask for? I especially enjoyed seeing all the kids; they know how to have fun. It's good to be around kids so they can remind us to lighten up a bit and enjoy ourselves.

Stan Smucker was our guest speaker Sunday morning as well as Saturday evening telling us the history of The V.S. house. It was really quite interesting This week I had a chance to go over to see Jack O neal. His kids are visiting for the summer. It was great to see them. It's only been a few months since they left, but they seemed to have grown so much. Anna told me she sure misses everybody at church very much. I told her we all missed her very much too.

I hope to see you all in church. If you're not a part of our group but by some odd chance still had an opportunity to read this, consider yourself invited, we would love to meet you. Every one is welcome. Sunday service starts at 10 a.m. Or if you'd like to visit, but are a bit nervous about visiting a new church or have some kind of questions, please give us a call, that's why we have a phone, we've been waiting for your call.

Have a good summer,
Terry

JOY MENNONITE CHURCH
504 NE 16TH OKC OK 73104
Sunday Services 10:00 am Sunday School 11:30
All are welcome, please join us as you are able

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