



# Joy Mennonite Church Newsletter

December 1995

## Meditation

During the coming Christmas season, it would be good to find time to pause and reflect on just what kind of a person this Jesus was, whose birth we will soon celebrate once again with so much joy. Ever since Bob Koehn shared his message with us several weeks ago, from Matthew 14:22-33, a verse from that passage has stuck with me. Even though it was not central to his message, verse 28 caught my attention, and has refused to let go.

In the story, the disciples were terrified to see Jesus walking on the water to meet them far out on the lake. When Jesus calls to greet them, Peter, in verse 28, replies, "Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water." In context, this seems like a truly amazing thing for Peter to say, for if the disciples were so terrified to see someone walking on the water, why should such a request help them to believe that this person was Jesus?

Perhaps, though, this can help us to just begin to glimpse what it must have been like for Jesus' disciples. Whatever else they did or didn't understand, Jesus was their Teacher and "Discipler." Imitation is an important tool for

learning, and many times the New Testament records Jesus' teaching that we are to follow his example. This story shows us that, indeed, this admonition to "do what you see me do" was so fundamental to Jesus' relationship with his disciples, that in such an incredible situation they could only recognize Jesus with certainty if he followed the incredible with the audacious: "You see me doing the impossible -- now you try it, too." Somehow, this helped them believe it was really him -- it "fit" how they expected him to behave!

The disciples did not build this relationship with Jesus overnight, and we won't either. But as we reflect on the baby Jesus this Christmas season, let us also reflect on our journey with him as our Teacher, and on our growth as one of his new disciples. Jesus did not come so that we would be in awe or terrified -- he came to show us the Way, and to tell us to follow his example. Of all teachers, Jesus is the only one truly qualified to say "Do as I say, and do as I do."

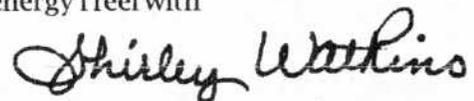
May your Christmas celebration this year be special and full of meaning.



## The Confession of Faith

Sunday School has become very exciting for me these days and I really regret whenever I have to miss being there. The reason for my excitement is the fact that we are studying the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. I began reading a copy of the draft brought back from the conference in Wichita this year and couldn't stop until I had read it in its entirety. Each Sunday we focus on an Article, discussing the Biblical references and examining its relevance to our lives today. Our open minded acceptance of each other's view points has been a highlight of our endeavor to gain an understanding of the beliefs. It has been very enlightening learning so much about each other's thoughts. I am illuminated with the spiritual energy I feel with

the discussions. Even though my religious background is Baptist with subsequent conversion to Catholicism in my early twenties, I have been associated with the Mennonite Church since the late 1940's. Our Baptist Church and Camp Landon's Church members in Gulfport, Mississippi had a close relationship. We had Bible School and camping together. It has always been my desire to become more knowledgeable about the Anabaptist faith and with the Confession of Faith I will have the opportunity. The General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church produced an excellent collection of statements and I am very happy to say that my beliefs are in accord with them.



**Writer Profile:** Shirley Watkins grew up in Gulfport, Mississippi, in the Mt. Bethel Baptist Church. She had an early acquaintance with Mennonites through Bible Schools and mission efforts of the Mennonite Church in Mississippi. Now living in Oklahoma City, Shirley is a nurse, with a master's degree in Mental Health Management, and works at Community Home Health Care, Inc. She recently was promoted to Director of Nursing. Shirley has been attending Joy Mennonite Church for several years. Her passion is "total commitment as a vessel of God's way, learning and growing in being used by the Father in any manner He sees fit."

## Fellowship News:

We look forward to Moses and Sadie Mast's return from Central America, on Dec. 5th.

This past month has brought several visitors to our worship services every Sunday. We would love for this trend to continue!

## Worship News:

During Moses' absence, several people brought the message during our worship services. On Nov. 12, Cristina Kaufman spoke to us about worship and praise, using John 4:1-24 and Rev. 4:1-11. Bob (and Nancy and Sam) Koehn from Cordell, OK, came on Nov. 19. Bob used Matt. 14:22-33 as the basis for his message to us. Nov. 26 Shirley Watkins shared with us many scripture passages about the Holy Spirit.

Cheryl Crichley will be speaking to us on Dec. 3, the first Sunday of Advent.



## Advent Themes and Scriptures:

- Dec. 3 **"Preparation"** Is. 40:3-5 and Luke 1:5-17, 26-45, 57-80
- Dec. 10 **"Good News"** Luke 2:8-18
- Dec. 17 **"Praise"** Luke 1:26-38, 46-55; 2:21-24, 36-38 and Matt. 1:18-25
- Dec. 24 **"Star"** Matt. 2:1-12  
(Date to be determined) **"Sunrise"**  
Is. 9:2; 60:2; Malachi 3:1 and I John 1:5

Bill and Thea Klassen will be lighting the first Advent candle. Others will be asked to participate on the following Sundays of Advent.

## Coming Events:

The tenth annual Fall Peace Festival will be held on Saturday, Dec. 2, 10am - 5pm, at St. Luke's United Methodist Church, 222 NW 15th, OK. More than 40 social justice and environmental groups will display 1,001 Holiday Gift Ideas, along with live entertainment, healthy food from the EARTH deli and Grateful Bean, a Children's Activity Area, and side workshops and videos.

We will be decorating the church for Christmas after Sunday School on Dec. 3.

Our annual Christmas Party and Caroling in the neighborhood has been tentatively scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 10, at 6pm. Final plans will be announced in church.

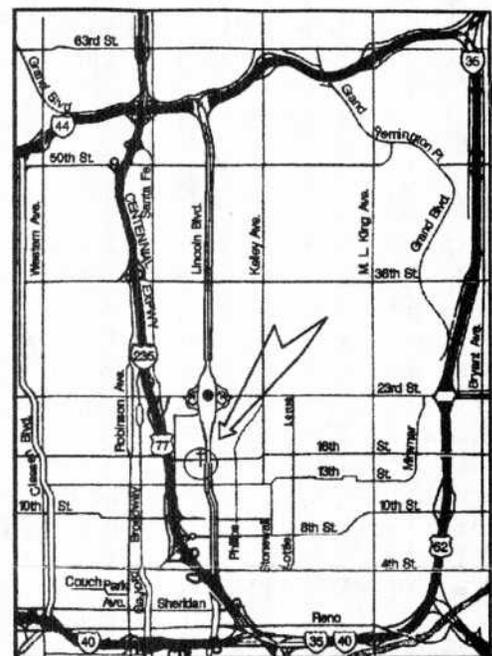
**Reminder:** January Newsletter items are to be given to Mike or Darlene Powers by Dec. 27.

**Churches:** Feel free to post this newsletter for your members to read. Thanks.



## 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.)

## Dates To Remember:

- Dec. 2 Peace Festival  
Dec. 3 First Sunday of Advent  
Dec. 3 Church Decorating after S.S.  
Dec. 7 Worship Comm. Meeting, 6:15pm  
Dec. 10 Christmas Party & Caroling, 6pm (tentative)  
Dec. 25 Christmas  
Jan. 1 New Year's Day  
Jan. 13 Annual Church Business Meeting, 9:30am  
Jan. 15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

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