

Joy Mennonite Church Newsletter

December 1996

Pastor's Corner

As I said last month, the church can and must have words to say when things go wrong in a society. Our society and the church are being divided on two issues, abortion and homosexuality. As I said, I do not believe that we are dealing with these issues in the way our Lord taught us to. It is easy enough to say the Bible condemns these practices, but it takes prayer and thoughtful contemplation to give a Christological interpretation to these scriptures.

We have the story of Jesus befriending the woman caught in adultery (John 8:4-8). The

Jews told Jesus that according to their law such a person should be stoned. After some reflection, Jesus said, "He that is without sin should cast the first stone." The message was clear, not only to the accusers but also to the woman who was accused. Jesus did not accept the standard that one should be condemned for certain designated sins and all others ignored. Jesus did not accept this narrow way of fixing blame for what was wrong.

America has a history of violence. We have not cultivated a sense of life as precious and sacred.

We have now focused very narrowly in fixing blame for what has gone wrong. We blame abortion as the act that violates the sacredness of life and we blame the gay and lesbian people for the sexual misconduct of our society. Just like the Biblical story, we tend to fix the blame on those who cannot hide from their sin.

Jesus also said that it is not only those who commit the act of adultery that sin, but also those who contemplate the act in their heart (Matt. 5:28). We are all affected by the values or lack of values we have cultivated. The negative and inconsistent messages and the narrow way in which we

fix blame are not relevant messages to the next generation. What if our children would grow up hearing a positive message that life is sacred and the process that creates life is sacred? We should not be as silent about sex as we have been. The sexual union between a man and a woman can create life, as close to being like God as we can be. What if our children could grow up understanding that we regard the marriage relationship as precious and sacred, and the sexual union that creates life as precious and sacred? As Jesus said, it is a matter of the heart.

Moses Mast

Mother to Mother

by Sadie Mast

I've been working with the Mother to Mother program for three years or more. I've experienced some very exciting and encouraging moments, but also moments of discouragement.

Mother to Mother is an interfaith, voluntary ministry working to increase understanding across economic and racial lines and to help break the cycle of poverty. The partner mothers are those who are facing special challenges. Many of them grew up in dysfunctional families, but now desire a better home of their own. Resource mothers are women of all ages who are willing to share their

wisdom and experience as mothers. The coordinator (which is a paid position) works with us, trains and supervises us. She sets up the teams: one partner mother and usually two resource mothers. As a team we learn and grow together through the sharing of our experiences and ideas. We work at setting up goals so the partner mother will be able to gain the necessary skills to better support herself and her children, and to become better equipped to deal with life's daily challenges. We are not expected to give financial or material help, but to offer guidance and, more than anything else,

to give her the moral and emotional support she needs—let her know that she is not alone.

All resource mothers look forward to seeing the partner mothers take steps to improve their lives. Some of them become resource mothers to others. That's really a great reward!

The encouraging thing for me at this time is to see my partner mother doing such a great job in parenting her children, knowing it's something that she didn't experience in her childhood. She is also going to school and hopefully will get her G.E.D. diploma next spring. Another thing is to see how she opened up her home

to another partner mother who was evicted from her house. Many of these young mothers have experienced many of the same things and therefore can feel for one another and are willing to share the little they have.

The Mother to Mother program has also been a real learning experience for me in helping me understand what it's like for people to grow up in an environment without the opportunities to learn the basic things of life that we so often take for granted.

The Mother to Mother motto is: Caring means involvement, involvement means action, action means caring.

Fellowship News:

Sadie Mast, Judie Menadue, Debbie O'Neal, Darlene Powers, and Karen and Shelby Rulon met at Mast's to bake peppernuts on Nov. 9, for the MCC Sale. They had a good time together.

Several of our members went to see Stephany Bonner in her school play on Nov. 14. The next week, she was crowned "Drama Queen" at her school. We are so proud of her!

Bill & Thea Klassen and Moses & Sadie Mast helped at the Self-Help Crafts booth at the Peace Festival on Nov. 23. They report brisk sales of

items that benefit artisans around the world. Klassen's and Mast's also helped at the Oklahoma MCC Sale in Fairview on Nov. 30.

We are thankful to see Martha Shoemaker well again after being ill with pneumonia.

Several of our church families visited their extended family during Thanksgiving week, among them: Brueckner's in Mississippi, Mast's in Iowa, Ethel Posar in Hydro, and Powers' in Kansas.

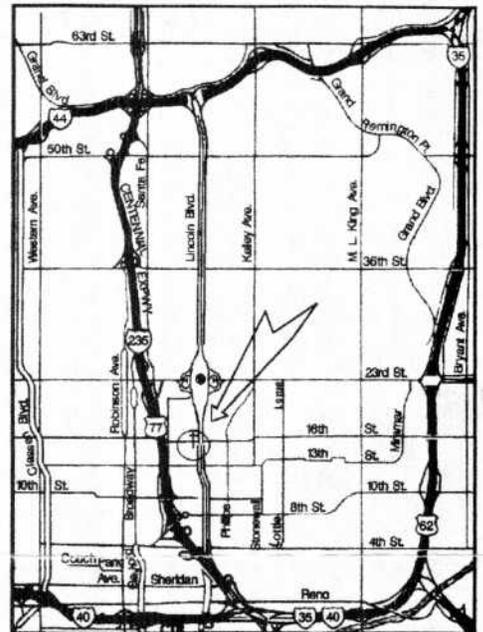
Worship News:

Darlene Powers served as Worship Leader for November.

Bill Klassen shared his faith story during our worship service on Nov. 10.

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.)

Calendar

- Dec 1 First Sunday of Advent
- Dec 1 Church Decorating
- Dec 2 OK Pastors & Spouses Meeting at Joy
- Dec 21 Church Caroling Party, 6pm
- Dec 23 Neighborhood Christmas Party at Joy
- Dec 25 Christmas
- Jan 1 New Year's Day
- Jan 18 Church Annual Business Meeting, 10am



On the evening of Nov. 24, we met for a Thanksgiving Feast of fruits and nuts, sharing stories and singing thankful songs. Tim Duncan, youth pastor at the Free Methodist Church in Midwest City, gave the meditation.

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

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Joy Mennonite Church
4708 Outpost Dr
Spencer, OK 73084-2722
(405) 236-4938
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