



## Joy Mennonite Church Newsletter

### PASTORS' CORNER

Recently I heard a Rabbi speak about living as a Jew in a Christian society. One thing he noted was that many Christians are thoughtless in what they profess to believe. It seems to me that we heard some thoughtless expressions of belief in the days after the tornado ripped through Oklahoma City. The question of divine control over the destructive forces of nature was discussed publicly. A child was asked on public T.V. if he thought God controlled the tornado. In the wisdom of

innocence the child answered, "no, this thing was crazy, it was out of control." The child was expressing what was obvious to him, this destruction was not under the control of a loving god. To believe that God controls the destructive forces of nature is not in harmony with Jesus' teaching about God. Jesus completely rejected the use of force to make people do good. Only love can be a constructive force. God does not use force to manipulate. God sends rain on the just and the unjust. Some people believed

they were spared because they prayed. Some who prayed were spared. So were some who cursed God. Others who prayed were not spared. It may seem thoughtless but harmless to believe that God guided the tornado around me but into the path of another family. This is not a harmless faith. The world suffers from religious people who believe they are favored by God, instead of understanding that God is grieved for all those who suffer tragedies. This kind of belief is the seed for religious nationalism and racism. This kind of

faith can grow to invoke the name of God to destroy my enemies. The world today desperately needs more persons who understand that all humanity is equal. If I am fortunate enough to escape the tragedy I do feel grateful, but God help me not to feel favored or more worthy. Instead may God help me to share the grief and pain that God must have for those who suffered such great losses. God bless all of you who seek to show the loving face of God in the aftermath of the tornado.

*Moses Mart*

### And You Visited Me

**Foreword** - With this writing, I will wish to express needs, goals to meet those needs, and reactions or responses to efforts in those directions. The challenge will be to illicit compassion and understanding of the value of those efforts, without seeming to boast or be self-

laudatory. Those who have "been there, done that" relate immediately, others.....? Are you ready for.

#### PRISON(ER) VISITATION?

These are suggested causes - too numerous to mention all, for a human life to end up in prison, behind bars of cold steel. Among those are poverty, broken homes, neglect, abuse, drugs, alcohol, social injustice, bad role models, etc.

Accompanying all this, too frequently, is the loss of self-esteem, giving up on one's self, fearing rejection, despair, and rebellion against society and authority.

After all that, few of us are surprised to see masses of humanity "doing time", and often in dehumanizing conditions, and under the care and keep of some of the same types who helped generate

that downward spiral. Disturbing is that percentage of our population being incarcerated is growing, along with local, state, federal budgets to build more prisons. Freedom lost, far from family, and alone, what is left? Re-establish self-esteem with assurance that they are not forgotten, and that they are not unlovable. In correspondence from them we have

frequently read:  
 "...know that I truly love you both and count you among my many blessings...", or "I'll always love and cherish them (visits) in my heart", or "I appreciate the prayers you are keeping me in", or "I'll always love you as my new family", or "God may bless you all and your house."  
 We begin to understand what Jesus taught - "I was in prison and you visited me", then "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." (Matt 25:40). It is a great joy and blessing to be able to share that kind of love behind prison walls. God bless, guide and sustain our may friends as they wait for love.

*Bee Klassen*

## NEWS

There where some close calls, but no one from joy was hit by the tornadoes.

Several people from Joy went to Guthrie, Oklahoma to help prepare a building for the national M.D.S headquarters to house people who come to help in rebuilding.

The Bliss and Warkentine families and Chris Jennings Sr. and Jr. have relocated. The new place is called Hopefield. The evening of May 22, members of Joy had a barbeque at Hopefield, especially as a farewell for the exchange students from Germany and Brazil.

Del Shoemaker was accepted as a member of Joy Mennonite in his

home on April 25.

## Prayer Requests

Chester Roley is seriously ill and is at the Veterans Hospital. His wife Grace is a member of Joy.

Del Shoemaker remains much the same, but does not expect to get well.

Willie C. Berry is some better since her surgery, and still hopes to someday come to church.

## Coming Events

Remember the historical tour and Native American Fellowship announced in last months newsletter for June 5 and 6.

There will be services at Joy on Sunday June 6. Peter Bruekner will bring the message.

The Annual Church campout for Joy will be June 18 - 20. Place to be decided. No church services at Joy on the 20.



**Joy Mennonite is located at 504 NE 16<sup>th</sup>. We meet at 10 AM on Sundays.**

MOSES & SADIE MAST  
 4708 OUTPOST DR  
 SPENCER OK 73084

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

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