



## Joy Mennonite Church Newsletter

### **PASTOR'S CORNER**

While on vacation this summer we visited a church where we attended thirty years ago. Needless to say the church was not the same. The Change we saw seems to be a trend in churches today. It is the concern to make worship appealing and exciting. There seems to be a special effort to keep youth from being bored. Youth are easily bored but there is also an easy solution, put religious words to modern music. There is nothing wrong with an effort to make worship appealing and interesting. When I was young I certainly wished someone had thought of it. Even now when we

are concerned about people being bored in church I wish they would not forget my generation. However if making worship appealing and exciting is the point of beginning and the concern we keep returning to as we plan worship we are at high risk of drifting in to idolatrous worship. To plan worship in this way places ourselves and the concern for our pleasure in worship at the center. Instead, we must place God in the center and our first concern should be to hear God speak to us.

In today's trend of making worship exciting and appealing it is assumed that if we attract people and they enjoy the worship experience then the spirit of God is present

and is leading us. This may or may not be true. People who enjoy worship usually improve their lives. They are likely to tell the truth, less likely to steal and probably pay their taxes. Youth who participate are less likely to fall into the pitfalls of their generation. Remember however, these are concerns about ourselves and those around us who affect our well being. The hard sayings of Jesus, the call to discipleship, the call to repent from the sins of our generation are not exciting or appealing themes.

When I contemplate my experience of an exciting experience in church it was the preacher, preaching in a voice of thunder about the sins we did not commit. We

were ecstatic. We do not speak of the sins we commit in loud voices of thunder. More likely we will recognize our sins by quiet contemplation. To call attention to our sins does not have a great appeal but is also a necessary part of worship.

How time does fly. We have had our vacation, our annual church camp out, the annual conference and now we speak of the beginning of school again. It has been a good summer. We wish all of you a good experience of what remains of the summer. For those of you who will return to school before the next newsletter, we wish you well. Go with God.

*Moses Mart*

### Editorial

The death penalty has been on the minds of American leaders, not because they wish to see it abolished but because they recognize the unjust way in which it is administered. While the death penalty is

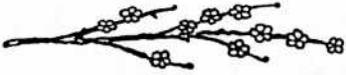
not an issue with our political candidates, it should be a concern of people of faith. We would like to share a few excerpts from an article in the Mennonite by Michael B. Ross, to stir our concern.

*When we abolished the punishment for treason that you*

*should be hanged and then cut down while still alive, then disemboweled while still alive, and then quartered, we did not abolish the punishment because we sympathized with traitors but because we took the view that this was a punishment no longer consistent*

*with our self-respect. — Lord Chancellor Gardiner*

These words, spoken during the 1965 death penalty abolition debates in the British Parliament, illustrate the feeling of most individuals opposed to capital punishment. It's not sympathy toward the murderer that we



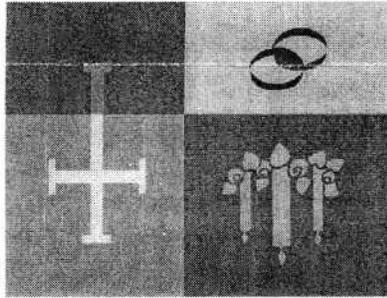
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**Joy Mennonite Church is located at 504 NE 16th. Services start at 10:00 am on Sunday.**



We would like to congratulate Chris Jennings and Teresa Kilpatrick who were married on Saturday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> at Hopefield. The reception was held at the Bliss' home and the couple honeymooned in Branson, Missouri.

**Congratulations!**

Pangburn, mayor of the town of Mulhall, was our guest speaker Sunday. Mr. Pangburn told of his experiences as mayor during the May 3, 1999, tornado and its aftermath. He spoke of the damage his town sustained - nearly every home affected in some way - and of the town working together to rebuild.

feel; indeed, most of us feel anger and revulsion toward murderers and their actions. Our objection to the death penalty is a renunciation of all that is embodied in our concept of humanity. Executions degrade us all. The faith community must add its voice to the many voices that are expressing their concerns.

**News**

The Bliss family is vacationing in Arizona and California. They plan to visit the Grand Canyon and Beverly's mother while on their trip. The Warkentine family is also on vacation in Colorado at this time. Both families should have some interesting stories to tell on their return.

The annual church campout, July 14-16, was attended by 40 persons. John

