



JOY MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER  
DECEMBER 2001



## PASTOR'S CORNER

We are entering the holiday season. This season is intended to help us focus on giving thanks for the blessings we enjoy and the meaning of the divine presence of God in our world as

revealed in the birth of Jesus. We find ourselves, however, more focused on the faltering economy and the war against terrorism. Given the experience of Sept. 11, the concern about terrorism is to be expected.

I am reminded of a discussion on non-violence in the refugee camp in Honduras between Honduran church leaders and the pastoral team at the refugee camp. One could see how naive one can be when we speak from safe positions. The refugee people had experienced terrorism firsthand. Here is what they said. When the seeds of injustice and violence are sown, the time comes when you know that if you do not defend yourself, you will die.

That is what happened to America on Sept. 11. The seeds of injustice and violence had ripened. Our eyes were opened and we realized that we were no longer safe. Our eyes were opened to the possibility of weapons of mass destruction being used against us. As a nation, we were like a soldier, who meets an enemy face to face, the one who shoots first will live. The seeds have ripened, the reaping has begun. How can the teachings of our Lord about loving our enemy penetrate this kind of national consciousness that understands that we must now destroy the enemy or the enemy will destroy us? This consciousness penetrates into every corner of American life. It has penetrated our churches that pray for blessings on our guns and bombs and prays for our soldiers. It penetrates our homes where children miss their father greatly, but are made to see him as a hero on a mission to fight for their freedom. It penetrates our business world where everything sells better if you can stick a flag on it. We now believe we have no choice if we want to survive.

Jesus said this kind of world is to be expected. There will be wars and rumors of wars. Jesus also said, for faith and the faithful to survive in this world, you must watch and pray. In this context of a violent world, the question was asked, when the Son of God returns will He find faith on earth? Another way of saying it might be, when the Son of God returns will he find anyone proclaiming the word of God that brings reconciliation to the human family? Is there anyone who can see the world through the divine eyes of God?

In the wisdom of the world, our survival is the first concern. In contrast, our Lord taught us that one cannot be a part of God's kingdom on earth unless you are willing to die. The nations of the world see the terrorists that threaten us. There are

many innocent people between the terrorist and us. Divine eyes see the innocent children made orphans. Divine eyes see women made widows. Divine eyes see the land of the poor bombed and infested with land mines that will kill innocent people for years to come.

I cannot stop the war. My immediate concern is, how do I keep myself from being sucked into this spirit of hatred and concern for survival. It can appear so right if looked at from one perspective and so wrong if seen from another. This is why we must urge each other, as our Lord did, to watch and pray. I know I am not alone, but I also know there are only a few, a remnant of those who wish to be found faithful when the Son of God returns.

We wish for all of you the presence of God's spirit, the joy of the Lord this season and in these times of national crisis, a sense of a people called apart.

*Moses Mast*

### November Revisited

This has been a wonderful month of fellowship, making new friends, renewing old friendships and, okay a little stress. Nov. 2-3 was MCC Relief Sale in Enid. This was the first year I was able to attend and I will be sure to attend from now on. All the items for sale, from quilts to bread, fabric to food, were being sold to help support MCC and it's efforts in helping others. While watching the quilt auction, my daughter, Anna, fell and hit her head. Two minutes later, the fact of helping others was really brought home to me. So many people helped me and Anna, examining her wound, helping calm her (and me), and living out the motto of sharing God's love. To all of those who helped THANK YOU from Anna and me.

Joy Mennonite celebrated Thanksgiving this year on the 21st with a fellowship meal at the church. Thirteen of us gathered for food and fellowship that evening. My son says his favorite part was lighting the candles and eating pie. I think my favorite part was just visiting with everyone.

Nov. 25th, the young people of Joy presented our service. Scott Bliss brought the sermon that morning on praise and worship in church. Much discussion came about during our break after ward and during Sunday School concerning "old" & "new" music. The general feeling was that we should not abandon the tried and true hymns of our youth, but neither should we ignore the music being written today. Every song was brand- new at some point and most if not all offended someone in some way at some time. What's your favorite? Drop us a line and let us know.

## December Events

This is the beginning of Advent. Our Theme this year is Tears of judgment - Streams of Restoration. This year, the prophetic Advent

texts will come as a special gift to the church. In the midst of our fear and suffering, we will hear, in fresh ways, both the warning call of judgment and the abundant promises of restoration. As God weeps for our broken world and as we see injustice through God's eyes, the healing streams can begin to flow.

- Dec. 2nd - Farewell potluck for Bill & Thea Klassen. After much thought and I'm sure much discussion, Bill & Thea are moving to Hutchinson, KS. Circumstances have made it possible for them to obtain housing maybe a little sooner than they had originally planned, but as Bill says you have to strike while the iron is hot. They will be sorely missed. Please join us in showing our appreciation for all they have done for and with us over the years.
- Dec. 2nd - Restored to Peace  
Bill & Thea Klassen - worship leaders  
Moses Mast - sermon
- Dec. 3rd - Journey toward Forgiveness - This is an hour-long documentary dealing with anger and forgiveness. Some featured stories will be from Oklahomans Bud Welch and Lawrence Hart. KOCO, ABC Channel 5 will air this program at 3 am Monday morning. If you don't plan on being awake at that time please set your VCR's for this program. More information is available at 1-800-999-3534 or e-mail: [info@mennomedia.org](mailto:info@mennomedia.org) This program will be available on video in early 2002 and ordering info is available at [www.journeytowardforgiveness.com](http://www.journeytowardforgiveness.com)
- Dec. 9th - Restored to a Healed Creation  
Bliss family - worship leaders Karin Evans - sermon
- Dec. 16th - Restored to Joy Terry Hostetler, Sue Laws & Debbie O'Neal - worship leaders Terry Hostetler - sermon
- Dec. 23rd - Restored to Hope Karin Evans - worship leader Moses Mast - sermon

- Dec. 30th - Restored to Praise Cheryl Critchley - worship leader Karin Evans - sermon
- Jan. 6th - Epiphany - Restored to Glory Ralph Ediger worship leader Moses Mast -sermon

As you can see, this will be a full month. The holidays can be a little stressful any year, but this year even moreso. Many of us have not experienced a time such as this in our lives. Please know that all of us at Joy Mennonite are ready, willing and able to talk, pray, or just listen when an ear is needed.

## FINAL THOUGHTS Deborah O'Neal

I have been thinking a lot about music this week. I have certain songs that just make me happy, others that bring on a feeling of concern for others, and still more

that can make me sad (I don't listen to them very often). The Bible says to come before the Lord with singing, enter into His courts with praise. An old saying is that music has charms to sooth the savage beast. My children will be the first to tell you, Mom can be an animal, especially when I have a messy or boring job to do. So, I put on a tape, turn it up LOUD and just jump in. Most people on my street know when I clean house; Paul Simon's "Graceland" shakes the windows.

Music moves us, be it secular or parochial. Nowadays, you can find Christian music to suit ANY taste, from classical to heavy metal. I think that God likes praise with any beat. I am trying to find music more pleasing to God. I still have a lot of music from years past that might make some people cringe, but as I grow with God my tastes are changing somewhat. This is an interesting journey. Come walk with me.

## 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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Address Service  
Requested

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