

The New Olympian

January 2016

The Newsletter of the Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren
tel. 206.525.8900 • olympicchurch.org • email: ovsecretary@gmail.com

Arise and Shine!

The light has come...

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

A new year has dawned and we just completed the past year with a flurry of ministry and worship events in our parish.

In late November we completed our annual Thanksgiving Food Basket Drive. Over 70 baskets were given out to community members and the families of Broadview Women's Shelter. Once again the kids from Olympic View Elementary School donated \$300 to help buy turkeys from their "Quarters for Turkeys" outreach.

In December we hosted a well attended Holiday Bazaar, and approximately \$500 was raised from food and craft sales for the benefit of the church. As we moved closer to Christmas, we focused on our Salvation Army "Toy n' Joy" giving tree outreach. On December 15, a volunteer came to pick up the toys and gifts we gathered.

During Advent, we also took part in the Church of the Brethren special Advent Offering. On Christmas Eve we hosted a well attended candlelight service with 50-60 gathered. We concluded the service by forming a circle of people in the sanctuary. We then doused the lights, lit individual little candles, and sang Silent Night.



As the song and service concluded, I asked folks to remain in place for a few moments. I wanted us all to simply savor the moment and flavor of the light and love present in the sanctuary. O, the peace, love and joy evident in the church that blessed night!

In our current world, it is so easy to give in to the feeling of hopelessness, fear, darkness and cynicism so prevalent and posted on TV and social media. In times like these, believers are called and challenged to awake, arise and let our Christian lights shine! We are ever called to remember that the light and love of Christ came down on Christmas Eve to bring God's light and love into the world and the hearts of believers all over the world.

Interim Pastor Jeff Barker leads the lighting of the Christ candle at our Christmas Eve service.

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The New Olympian
Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren
425 NE 95th Street
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As we go forth into a new year, let us remember the love and light of Christ. A light and force of love that cuts through the darkness of our world, and the problems and divisions which keep us from experiencing Christ's loving presence.

Please consider reading and meditating on the first Gospel lectionary reading of 2016. It is from St. John's Gospel, Chapter 1, verses 1-5. In particular, in times of fear and doubt, remember verse 5: "The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it!"

People of God, in this newly dawning year 2016, awake, arise, the light has come, Christ is born!

Happy New Year, and peace be with you all,

Pastor Jeff

International Potluck

Sunday, January 10th, 2016

Our annual potluck in January is always a delicious display of the traditions and cultures we hold dear, shared in the form of tasty recipes from around the world!

Join us on Sunday, January 10th for the OV International Potluck. Bring a dish to share that highlights the cuisine from wherever you hail in this wide world, or from a place you've visited where the food still calls you back! Come dressed in your finest cultural attire if you wish, and enjoy a festive time of food and fellowship!

All are welcome...bring your family and friends!

Spring Event registration forms are available in the church office!

Early registration is helpful to conference planners, and fees will increase after February 1st, so pick up your forms soon.

For more information you may contact:

Ben Green • 509.662.2239 • bengreen@nwi.net

or visit the PNW District website at:

<http://www.cobpacificnorthwest.org>

Inquirers / New Member Class to Begin in February

After conversations with a few interested people, Pastor Jeff would like to start an Inquirers / New Member Class. Given the events already on the calendar for January, the class will start in February. The class will meet after church on February 7th and 21st, with a third meeting on the 28th if needed.

In this "New Member" class we will study the history, theology and polity (style of governance) of the Church of the Brethren. If you are interested in joining the congregation or simply want to deepen your knowledge of the congregation and wider church, please let Pastor Jeff know. Each session will run approximately 90 minutes.

Contact the church office with any additional questions and to sign up for the class.

*An event of the
Pacific Northwest
District
Church of the Brethren*

*Celebrate the good work
accomplished in our
churches*

*Share ideas about facing
today's challenges*

*Sing and fellowship with
good friends*

for

*the enrichment,
inspiration and support
of congregations*

March 4-6, 2016
*Gwinwood Conference Ctr.
Lacey, Washington*

Looking Forward in 2016

A Message from OV's Executive Team...

As we bid adieu to 2015, we turn our focus to what 2016 will have in store for Olympic View Community Church.

We have so much to be thankful for! And let us start by praising God for your faithfulness over the last 3 months. Your support of our ministries by way of your tithing has been especially strong since October. May God continue to multiply what we bring Him.

We also want to thank you for your outpouring of "love" by contributing to the Christmas cards for our staff. Your generosity has touched them with deep gratitude and appreciation.

On another note, the first two Focus Group question and answer sessions were held in December. They were very enjoyable and informative meetings, and we are looking forward to having many more in January. Though we will have sign-up sheets available on Sunday mornings for specific dates in January, you can also let us know you are interested by sending an email to the church office (ovsecretary@gmail.com) titled "Focus Groups" and we will get back to you to set a date and time. In preparation, focus group questions for you to consider can be found on the following page.

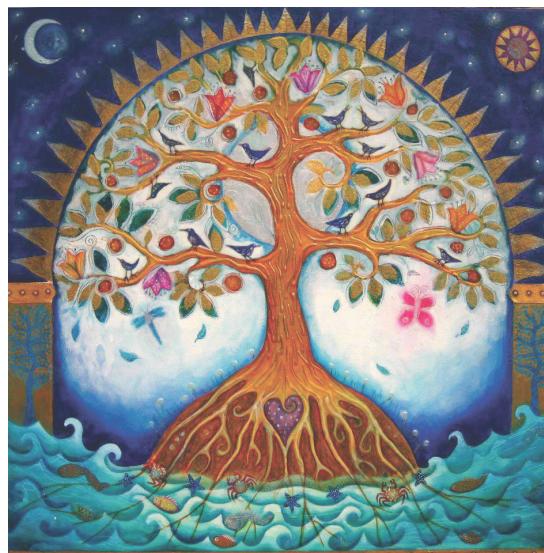
While focus groups are going on, we are also in the process of putting together an ad hoc "Futures Committee" to take all of the Focus groups input, review and research them and then make a recommendation to the Congregation of a plan for the future.

In the interim, Jeff Barker is covering all of the pastoral responsibilities for the congregation. Do not hesitate to call on Jeff if you have a pastoral need. He is willing and able to help and is interested in getting to know you all.

Thanks for the great input we have received!

-Roger, Bill, Kristi and Sylvia

If you have questions or concerns please feel free to contact Roger Edmark 425.422.3137, kedmark@msn.com or Bill & Sylvia Hershberger 206.250.0737, bilnsyl@frontier.com



Church of the Brethren general secretary speaks out against anti-Muslim rhetoric

From Church of the Brethren Newsline, December 11, 2015

Church of the Brethren general secretary Stanley J. Noffsinger has issued a statement against the current escalation of rhetoric that seeks to demonize Muslims. Citing Jesus' commands to love God, and love neighbor as self, and the parable of the Good Samaritan, the statement also calls church members to revisit portions of the 1991 Annual Conference statement "Peacemaking: The Call of God's Peace in History" that direct the church to "explore avenues of interfaith dialogue leading toward a visible expression of God's plan for human unity."

General secretary statement against anti-Muslim rhetoric

Our nation is struggling to respond to violence and terrorism in Paris, Lebanon, Syria, Nigeria, and elsewhere. However, I am troubled by the hateful rhetoric that seeks to demonize Muslim neighbors and friends. More profoundly troubling is that the words of hate and demonization are surfacing among Christians.

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Focus Group Questions

If you plan to join one of our Focus Group Q&A sessions, following are the questions that will lead the discussion. Please consider the following prior to signing up for a session. Thank you!

Ministry:

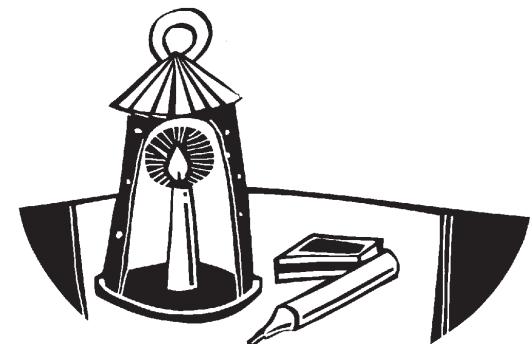
Ministry is how we are called to serve others as a church body.

1. What has participation in the OV congregation meant to you?
2. What ministry do you currently see/participate in at OV that you feel is effective?
3. What would be an effective ministry for the future at OV?
4. Can OV be effective in these ministries with its current program and membership?

Pastoral Leadership:

The leadership style of a pastor needs to connect with the church body for the church's ministry to be effective.

1. Which of these traits are most important to you in a pastor?
 - A "take charge" leader or one that waits for direction from the lay leaders.
 - A pastor that tries new things or works to maintain and strengthen established programs.
 - A formal or informal style of preaching.
 - One who likes to preach on prescribed texts (e.g. a lectionary) or likes to develop topical series.
 - One who delivers challenging sermons or presents comforting sermons.
 - A pastor who offers a literal Biblical interpretation or one that interprets the Bible in cultural context.
2. What is most important to you concerning the pastoral care of the congregation?
3. What is most important to you with regard to the mission outreach provided by a pastor?



Program/Mission:

How we accomplish the ministry of the church body.

1. Are the physical facilities of OV church effectively utilized in its ministry?
2. What more do you think could be done for OV to have a greater impact in:
 - The neighborhood (Maple Leaf)?
 - The community (North Seattle)?
 - The world?
3. What ministry/outreach area(s) excite you for the future?

Congregational Traits:

How we function as a congregation can impact our effectiveness.

1. Based on your experience with the OV Church congregation, what traits would you identify that helped you to feel comfortable about participating in the program and which traits made it difficult for you to participate?
2. Do you feel that the leadership of OV Church is drawn from a adequately broad sampling of the congregation?
3. What do you feel could be done to make this more effective?

We appreciate your prayerful consideration of these questions, and look forward to hearing from you at one of our upcoming focus group sessions!

2016 Snow Weekend Retreat at Camp Koinonia

January 29th–31st

Family Time & Spiritual Renewal

Plan to come with the whole family to Camp Koinonia for a great weekend of fun in the snow!

We will have miles of groomed trails for skiing, the sled run will be calling all the young at heart, and we will have a great leadership team to guide us through worship. Join us!

To register, contact the office of the Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren. Please include your full contact information so we can send you confirmation.

ovsecretary@gmail.com or **206.525.8900**

Registration fees are due upon arrival at the retreat.

Some scholarships are available. Check with your church office.



Adults: (13+)

Full event: **\$70.50**
 Soup & snacks \$5.00
 Breakfast \$6.75
 Lunch \$6.75
 Dinner \$7.75
 Lodging @ \$18.75

Juniors: (9-12)

Full event: **\$46.00**
 Soup & snacks \$3.00
 Breakfast \$4.25
 Lunch \$4.25
 Dinner \$5.00
 Lodging @ \$13.00

Children: (3-8)

Full event: **\$38.00**
 Soup & snacks \$2.00
 Breakfast \$3.25
 Lunch \$3.50
 Dinner \$4.00
 Lodging @ \$11.00

Itemized Registration Costs

Customize your cost according to your schedule.

Want a sack lunch on Sunday? Just add another lunch to your fee.

(General secretary's message, continued from page 3)

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus implores us to "love the Lord your God" and to "love your neighbor as yourself." In Luke, however, a scholar of the law presses Jesus further, asking, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29). Jesus' response is the parable of the Good Samaritan. A priest and a Levite ignore a dying man on the road to Jericho, but a Samaritan – a cultural and religious outcast – stops, bandages the dying man's wounds, and finds him shelter for the night.

Equating radical Islamic ideology with the faith Muslims misrepresents and muddies Christ's message with fear. We must resist the temptations fear elicits, holding strong to faith in the redemptive power of Christ. Suffering knows no religion.

As the conflict in Syria escalates, our mercy and compassion cannot be selective. Refusing to aid those fleeing violence and injustice, especially on the basis of religion, likens us to the priest and the Levite who ignored the dying man on the road to Jericho. Giving in to words that demean Muslims betrays our belief that everyone is a child of God.

In 1991, the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference reissued a call for peace among people of all religions in the "Peacemaking: The Call of God's People in History." It states in part:

"Therefore, the Church shall:

- a. initiate and participate in efforts to overcome strife and differences within the Christian family;*
- b. work with those of other denominations, nations, and religions in the interests of peace, while maintaining our Christian witness and proclaiming God's love for all humanity;*
- c. engage in the creation and support of ecumenical, cooperative, and coalitional efforts in peacemaking;*
- d. provide informational and educational materials to assist in a better understanding and love of people of other religions and faith traditions;*
- e. explore avenues of interfaith dialogue leading toward a visible expression of God's plan for human unity."*

Sharing Together in Prayer

In Our Community:

- For Jeanesse Miller's family, mourning the recent death of her grandfather.
- For Floyd Gosset and family, mourning the death of his wife Julia on December 22.
- Thanks for all of the help and assistance in planning and preparation of our beautiful Christmas Eve service!
- For our members and dear ones unable to attend church for health reasons, prayers that our love and the spirit of our ministries and of God's grace is with them always!
- Thanks for all of the visitors we welcomed in our homes and at church over Advent and Christmas!
- For all those struggling with colds and flus this season, prayers for their healing and comfort.

In Our State, Nation, and World:

- For the Smith Derksen family, traveling mercies and prayers for their mission work in South Africa beginning this month.
- For John Braun and his work with THARS International in Burundi, prayers for the group's safety amid increasing violence in the region, and thanks for their witness of peace and reconciliation.

What If?

What if our religion was each other?
If our practice was our life?
If prayer was our words?
What if the Temple was the Earth?
If forests were our church?
If holy water—the rivers, lakes and oceans?
What if meditation was our relationships?
If the Teacher was life?
If wisdom was self-knowledge?
If love was the center of our being



A poem by Ganga White

Finally, there is a word of hope. "God still wills wholeness and unity for God's people."

Jeremiah writes, "I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare (shalom) and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:10-11).