

THE OLYMPIC NEWS

The Monthly Newsletter of the Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren
tel. 206-525-8900 • www.olympicchurch.org e-mail: info@olympicchurch.org

April 2008

Living the Word

by Ken Miller Rieman

...they have made offerings to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hand.

Jeremiah 1.16.

I still have fond childhood memories of the sermon my father preached about Jeremiah. For the occasion, he crafted new words to the popular song "Jeremiah was a bullfrog," by Three Dog Night. He taught the youth of the church the words and we all stood up one Sunday and belted out "Jeremiah was a prophet..." It's funny. I can't remember any of the other words to that song just now, but I never forgot what Jeremiah was called by God to become; namely, one who tells people things they don't really want to hear.

In recent weeks, another Jeremiah has been taking heat in the public square, mostly because he happens to have been the preacher of someone who seeks to become our next president. There are times when preachers are called upon as pastors to comfort the afflicted and times when they are called as prophets to afflict the comfortable. From my vantage point, The Reverend Jeremiah Wright Jr. has done his share of both. But I'm not here to cast judgment upon him. I'm

more concerned about the way I've been hearing people speak about the proper relationship between preachers and politicians, or between faith and politics.

As one who makes his living treading the line between the pastoral and the prophetic, I become uneasy when I hear people speak as though they have it all figured out. Those who stand up in public and lift their voice to a matter of common concern do so at great risk. Not least among these risks is the probability that those who dislike their approach will try to demonize them.

The prophet Jeremiah was just a youth, but God touched his mouth, and gave him the words by which God might warn the people to change their course. In his own day, Jesus himself was called upon to pronounce God's judgment upon those who wrapped themselves up in the appearance and rhetoric of the Torah/scripture and used it to shield themselves from examination while pointing at others as the cause of God's anger and the people's suffering. Jesus, like the prophets, even went so far as to curse the religious leaders and politicians of his day.

So where does this leave us today? Unfortunately, we have failed to learn the lessons of

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history. Like the people of Israel in Jeremiah's day, we resist the more difficult task of examining our own faithfulness to God's teaching, and prefer to impugn the loyalty of those who dare to speak critically of our government rather than deal with the substance of their critique.

We see preachers who try to sidestep this risk by preaching things that people like to hear. We see churches that try to avoid these dangers by focusing on what makes people comfortable and confident about the way they live.

I think a more faithful response is to resist the temptation to lionize or demonize personalities. In our faith, we are called to be faithful above all else to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Preacher Jim Wallis said it well. In our public life, the Christian is called, neither to be the master of the state, nor to be its servant, but rather to be its conscience.

In good conscience, then, I hope we can extend a spirit of grace, listening, and learning toward those who seek to honestly engage the most difficult of issues, even when they come down in places different than we. And I hope we can recommit ourselves to being the kind of church which patiently sits down to sort through our disagreements until we find the common ground upon which this world's change must be built.

It is said that in crisis, we find both danger and opportunity. As we observe the reticence of many to bring their ears or voices to the public conversation table because they can't stomach the ugly spirit which leads people to attack others, we can also understand why churches have come to be viewed by so many as places where they might be judged or even attacked.

These people are hungry to find communities where they can ask hard questions, and not have to have 'all the right answers' and still be on a journey of discovery, healing, and growth with people who will love them anyway.

Danger and opportunity. Prophets call it both ways.

Gift of the Heart Kit Challenge!

...*Because little things mean a lot.*

Church World Service kits provide essential supplies to disaster survivors around the world. School Kits are most needed at this time.

Let's see if we can surpass our goal of collecting 5,000 kits this year at Annual Conference! Don't forget to drop off your kits at the Brethren Disaster Ministries booth.

To assemble a School Kit you need:

- One pair of blunt scissors (rounded tip)
- Three 70-count spiral or tape-bound pads of 8" x 10-1/2" ruled paper or pads with 200-210 sheets of ruled paper. (Please do not provide loose-leaf or filler paper.)
- One 30-centimeter ruler (12")
- One hand-held pencil sharpener
- One large eraser
- Six new pencils with erasers
- One box of 24 crayons (only 24)
- One 12" x 14" to 14" x 16" finished size cotton cloth bag with cloth handles

Pack all items inside the cloth bag.

Please include \$2 per Kit for processing/shipping cost.

For more information, log on to: www.churchworldservice.org/kits



A young Angolan is happy with his School Kit.



Living Peace Church News & Notes

*Focusing on the
peace & reconciliation
ministries of the church.
Greetings from On Earth Peace!*

**Junior High Workcamp —
Thinking... Working... Faith-building...
June 22 - 26, 2008 — New Windsor, MD**

*They were all trying to
frighten us, thinking,
"Their hands will get
too weak for the work,
and it will not be
completed." But I
prayed, "Now
strengthen my hands."
~ Nehemiah 6:9 (NIV)*

Junior High Youth have the opportunity to engage in a week of service and integrated learning around the concept of "global injustice" this summer. Using the 2008 National Workcamps theme from Nehemiah 6:9, this workcamp will challenge thinking that limits action, and will encourage youth to overcome obstacles in our world.

Our home for the week will be the Brethren Service Center at New Windsor, Maryland. Initiated by Brethren visionaries like M.R. Zigler, the Service Center has been and continues to be at the center of many peacemaking and international outreach efforts. As the body of Christ, we will join our hands in service projects that have local, national, and global impacts: A Greater Gift (SERRV) and Brethren Disaster Ministries' distribution center. Come work your minds as well as your bodies in this "thinking/working/faith-building" workcamp!

The cost is \$225 plus transportation to and from the Brethren Service Center. Financial assistance is available through On Earth Peace by contacting Marie Rhoades at 717-917-9392 or marie.oepa@gmail.com. Register for the workcamp online at www.brethrenworkcamps.org through April 1, 2008.

*Co-sponsored by On Earth Peace and
the Youth/Young Adult Ministry Office.*

**On Earth Peace: An agency of the
Church of the Brethren helping people discern
the things that make for peace**

P. O. Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776
410-635-8704 • www.onearthpeace.org
oepa_oepa@brethren.org 3/08

Generous Heart

Devotional selected by Jimmy Barnes
from, *The Upper Room* March-April 2008



Read Romans 12:3-8

*Like good stewards of the manifold grace of
God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has
received. - 1 Peter 4:10 (NRSV)*

An older man from our church recently died. A retired, successful businessman, Jack was well known in his church and community for his friendly, sweet spirit and kindhearted generosity. But only after his death did others become more aware of his good deeds. Behind the scenes, Jack had arranged to help support various ministries so that they could continue their work after he died.

As I learned more about some of the projects Jack had supported, I found myself thinking, *If I had more financial resources, I would really like to do some things like that.* But as I reflected further, I realized that Jack's benevolence did not originate in his checkbook but in his heart. He had generously shared the resources God had given him.

While there are some things I can't do, God reminded me that there are other things I can do. The key is cultivating a generous heart. If I sincerely want to share the gifts I have been given, God will bless the fruit.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us not to be envious of others' gifts, but to be good stewards in using the ones you have given us. Thank you for those whose lives teach us more about you. Amen.

Thought for the Day: How am I helping others with what I have been given?

by Darrell Boone (Indiana)



“Keeping the Balance”

Fresh from the Word

Readings: 2 Chronicles 34:29-33; Luke 22:17-20

The king made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD (2 Chron. 34:31).

Meditation: A covenant is a relationship marked by mutual commitment, responsibility, and benefit. Each party to the covenant commits him/herself to the other, assumes certain responsibilities to the relationship, and gains benefit from the relationship. Marriage constitutes the most clearly defined covenant in our culture. In marriage the commitment and responsibility are generally spelled out. The benefits of marriage are less clearly expressed. For the most part, previous generations expected companionship and security from the marriage covenant. Today many married couples identify happiness as a primary benefit of marriage.

For adults in the church, in baptism we entered a life-defining covenant. In that act we made a public commitment of faith in Jesus Christ. In that moment we received God’s commitment to us through Jesus Christ: *I am with you always, to the end of the age* (Matt. 28:20).

In our life journey, some of us become preoccupied with one aspect of Christian covenant and lose the balance of commitment, responsibility, and benefit. Over-emphasizing responsibility can leave us exhausted as we constantly strive to be more faithful. On the other hand, settling comfortably into baptism’s benefit lulls us into cheap grace, grace without accountability. While it is easy to see the imbalance in the lives of others, we too often ignore the fact that our own covenant with God lacks balance in commitment, responsibility, and benefit.

For the day: Think about the covenants you are part of. How well do you balance commitment, responsibility, and benefit?

Prayer: Most gracious God, thank you for the covenant you granted through Christ Jesus. When we take that covenant for granted, remind us of our responsibility to act justly, to extend compassion, and to walk humbly with you. When we strive to secure our covenant with you, help us relax and receive the peace, joy, and rest granted by a life lived in your presence through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. - Eugene F. Roop

Prayer Concerns

In Our Community:

For **Roger Edmark**, recovering at home from heart valve replacement surgery.

For **Mabel Snider**, Kate Miller Rieman’s great-grandma, recovering from a stroke.

For **Gloria Sherwood’s** twin sister, being treated for cancer.

For **Marie McKimens**, receiving chemotherapy for cancer on her liver.

For **Mark Belcher**, Dorothy Bollinger’s son, recovering from surgery to remove a tumor.

For the Edmarks’ daughter, **Melissa Hinton**: recent tests show no new cancer.

For the **Smith-Derksens** in Chad, who are recovering from Dengue fever.

Ongoing prayer requests:

Ken Miller Rieman’s father, **Phil Rieman**;

Dan Ramirez; **Geraldine Campbell**;

Jeanesse Miller; **Chris Pride**;

Gene Harnden; **Charles Walker**;

Bill Case’s daughter, **Carol Kamada**;

Lew Fortin’s nephew, **Michael Rogers**

Evelyn Woodbury; **Amber Compton**;

Richard Shoemaker, Bill Shoemaker’s brother;

Eileen Birky’s mother; **Lowell Geiver**;

Sharon Haley’s brothers, **Mark and Paul Andrews**

Our Nation, State, and World:

- For wide and thoughtful participation in the United States’ 2008 elections.
- For peace in Iraq.
- For an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement and an end to the occupation of the West Bank.
- For democratic reform and the protection of civil rights in Pakistan, Kenya, Sudan, Chad, Burma, and Tibet.

OVCCoB Board of Administration Meeting Minutes

The OVCCB Board of Administration met on **March 11, 2008**, with 8 members present. We shared information and prayed for those within our church family.

New business included discussion of a proposal to replace carpet in the sanctuary and possibly in other areas of the church. A committee will pursue the bid and report back to the Board at the April meeting. If approved by the Board, the proposal will be brought to the General Assembly.

Another new business item was the Board's consensus to host the OR/WA District Conference **September 26-28, 2008**. We will coordinate meal preparation and housing (hotels and home-stays with our members). Please consider hosting an attendee and/or volunteering to help out sometime during that weekend as "many hands make light work."

Pastor Ken shared highlights from his recent trip to Guatemala. He feels strongly that the most effective evangelism tool is a mission trip, and he encourages our church to have an ongoing relationship with the community he visited in Guatemala.

We rejoiced to hear that our financial condition is stable. We continue to watch expenditures closely.

Important dates to remember: General Assembly (and potluck) will be held on **April 20th**. There will be a District-wide Deacon Training on Saturday, **May 10th** at the Lacey Church. Deacons, please consider attending; transportation can be arranged. Roger Edmark reported that there will be work-weekends at Camp Koinonia throughout May, primarily for construction cleanup and siding installation. Everyone is welcome to help prepare the camp for the summer season. Also, there is a Western Region Youth Camp at Camp Peaceful Pines in California, **June 29th through July 4th**. Pastor Ken will be attending with our youth.

We are thankful for those within our church family and ask everyone to hold those who have special needs in their prayers. We rejoice for healing, friendship, love and care for all those within our church family.

Respectfully submitted by
Stephanie Herkelrath, Church Clerk

Invitation To Benefit North Helpline Emergency Services

WHAT

"Fill the Need" Spaghetti Feed
and Gypsy Jazz Concert

WHEN

Saturday, April 26th, 2008
from 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

WHERE

Lake City Community Center
12531 28TH NE, Seattle, WA

WHY

To benefit North Helpline Emergency
Services and Food Bank

HOW

For tickets, call (206) 367-3477

Deacon Update

Next Training Scheduled for:
7:00 p.m. on May 27, 2008

*Please let your deacon or the church
office know if you would like
to receive the weekly bulletin by mail.
206 525 8900*

G.U.I.L.D. Women's Breakfast
April 16, 2008 7:30am—8:30am

Welcome, ladies!

Olympic View Book Club

April 25, 2008 10:30 am
Meets in OV Friendship Room.

Thank You Letter from Christian Peacemaker Teams

Dear Friends,

When a form asks for my occupation, I fill in "peacemaker." Once the woman behind the desk looked up and asked, "Unemployed?" I smiled and said, "No. I work full time with Christian Peacemaker Teams." What a gift to be one of the nearly 300 (that's both full time and reservists) trained active duty CPTers who serve as peacemakers from Algonquin territory, Ontario to Kurdish Iraq, from Barrancabermeja Colombia to the west side of Chicago! What a treasure to know that, doing this full time, I can count on the support of thousands of peacemakers like you, people who may not be able or ready to go into war zones yet, but are fully and faithfully part of this movement.

Each year starts with a training of new CPTers. More people willing to put their lives on the line nonviolently to end war. More people available and ready for this challenging work.

Each year is full of invitations from people struggling in situations of violence that threaten their lives. There is no shortage of important work to do.

Each day we spend what we need to in carrying out this work. We pinch the pennies, the dollars, the dinars, shekels and pesos. And day by day we gratefully receive contributions, and thank God for you... By holding up the financial end, you make this peacemaking possible.

CPT has full teams in Iraq, Palestine and Colombia. We want to continue to deepen the work of those teams. We have intermittent work in the borderlands of the US and Mexico and in two areas in Ontario. We would like to shift to full time work in those areas. We have been exploring relationships with groups in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. We would like to be able to respond enthusiastically to their heartfelt invitation.

We need enough of the right people. We need the money to support those courageous workers who God has called. Your contribution weighs in for deepening. Your support encourages us to grow. Thank you! Thank you!

Carol Rose, CPT Co-Director

Annual Conference 2008 Registration Around the Corner

Registration for Annual Conference begins on March 7th, 2008. Conference schedule information is now available for viewing at:

www.brethren.org/ac/

"Important Registration and Housing Information" on the Annual Conference home page can be found by going to Brethren.org, and clicking on "Annual Conference." The Annual Conference Housing page notes that Housing Registration, as well as many other Annual Conference resources, will be available for viewing on Brethren.org beginning March 7th.

Never fear! Olympic View will also make available hard copies of all Web materials for interested members of the congregation and our community. Stay tuned for additional information, and feel free to contact Olympic View for assistance accessing Annual Conference or other information. 206 525 8900.

Annual Conference will be held
July 12—July 16, 2008, Richmond, Virginia

This year's Annual Conference celebrates the 300th Anniversary of the Brethren.

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We welcome you to our services.