

# The New Olympian

February 2009

The Monthly Newsletter of the Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren

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## Living the Word

by Pastor Ken Miller Rieman

As I write, I'm sitting on my parents' bed, surrounding myself with memories of them, with the things that they kept closest to them each day.

As most of you know by now, this Christmas was a very hard one for our family. Early Christmas morning, Kate and I left Seattle's three inches of freshly fallen snow with the help of Carmen & Aaron's 4WD. Losing three hours, our flights brought us to Indianapolis where Daddy and sister Tina picked us up around 11 pm. We all had a few hours together with Mama before they left to pick up sister Cheri at the train station.

The morning of the 26<sup>th</sup> was too short. We were headed up to the Baldwin gathering two hours North in Manchester. Mama and Daddy left before us kids so that they could help prepare lunch for the whole clan. We said goodbye to them while we ate our breakfast and looked at the weather reports calling for freezing rain. The call from the Sherriff's deputy reached us on the road, just 20 miles out from Manchester. Their VW Rabbit had slipped on the ice and into an oncoming truck. Neither of them suffered at all.

Kate and Tina and Cheri and I crawled the last few miles to the family reunion. Our much too short morning had turned into the longest day of our lives. The pain that began to work its way through our shock found consolation in the sim-



Pastors Louise and Philip Baldwin Rieman, loved and missed by many.

ple things. We were with the rest of our family. The phone calls and prayers coming our way shared our pain. Our grief was not complicated by regret or brokenness in relationship with our parents.

It is almost a month since that horrible day. As I look back upon it, I perceive a collection of sharply focused images and encounters, a blur of hugs and cards and phone calls, but underneath and running through them is a klaxon alarm sounding, the kind that will not let you forget that you are in a profound crisis.

I have caught my breath. My stomach is mostly calm. Intellectually, I understand that my life has changed course—that every single aspect of my life right now is changed by this new reality. But that alarm, that inner demon of my fear has become an uncomfortable companion, the kind

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that gets loud if it is ignored, but that doesn't make such great company no matter how nice you are to it.

I have spent most of my life with this demon. It's not that I've had any more to fear than most people, but until recently, my chief strategies in dealing with fear have been to orient myself toward adventures and challenges which stimulate other parts of my psyche, and which place me in the role of conquering my fears. And while that may seem like a basically healthy response, too much of it remains a response. Too much of it leaves me unaware of the lessons which my fear has to offer.

I find myself looking now, more than ever, to my parents for guidance. I know what my mother would want me to do. She would want me to make peace with my fears. She would suggest that naming them would bring them into the open, that sharing them with those I love would allow love itself to transform them into guiding lights.

On the wall opposite my parents bed hangs an image of a lighthouse needle-pointed by their friend Reba Fry. White, puffy clouds mark a bright blue sky. A few gulls hover above the caretaker's house at the lighthouse base. Until now, I've always thought it a little kitschy. Sorry Reba.

All of a sudden, I'm noticing the rocks. This picture downplays them a bit, but my life brings them to the fore. Lighthouses aren't really built for postcards or wall hangings. They are built to warn the mariner of mortal danger. Maybe that's what my fear is for. Maybe my fear is there to shape my course toward life, toward living in a way that allows love to find fullness in me and my relationships with family, friends, and strangers.

If mariners stayed forever upon the deeps, they'd not need lighthouses. But approaching the land is both necessary and dangerous. We need the love of others, but loss of this love is the greatest kind of loss.

Our church is quite literally placed in a land of mariners, of people who are wary of the rocks, and who have often found churches to be rocky places. Maybe it's time for us to make sure our

church is like a lighthouse among rocks, a guiding light that transforms fear into understanding, a beacon which points the mariner toward the safe harbor of Christ's compassion for all people.

A sign on the same wall of my parents' bedroom reads:

*Our creator gives us the gift of life,  
and the way we say 'Thank You, God, for life'  
is by enjoying our lives,  
by living our lives intensely,  
by being who we really are.*

I guess that means I'll be learning to live with the fears that losing my parents has awakened, to understand how they have shaped the person I've become, and to honor their love for this world in the person I am still becoming.



## Northaven

By Roger Edmark, Moderator, Olympic View Board of Administration

For January, our ministry focus at Olympic View has been Northaven, our retirement and assisted living facility. I say "our," focus because that's what it is. We are not outsiders looking in at how others are helping to provide quality low cost senior housing! We are the ones doing it. And what we do makes an incredible difference. You make an incredible difference!

For the past 40 years, Olympic View Community Church, the Northaven Corporate members, the Northaven Board, and the staff and friends of Northaven have continually strived to find ways

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*Keep your faith in all things beautiful: in the sun when it is hidden, in the Spring when it is gone. Roy G. Gilson*

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to meet the needs of low income seniors without sacrificing quality. It is a challenge that has been met in many creative and amazing ways.

- We wanted to provide more services for our retirement home residents, but HUD rules did not allow rolling those services into the budget. We have been able to provide those services by contracting with cell phone companies for use of our roof for their communications equipment.
- We did not want residents to leave the Northaven Community because they needed a little assistance. The church donated the proceeds from the sale of a house to pay for property to build Northaven Assisted Living.
- Many more people need financial assistance to live in our Assisted Living facility than we originally expected. Those people get government assistance, but the government does not pay enough to meet expenses. Northaven Foundation was founded to provide assistance so that your gifts are compounded with the gifts of others to provide extra income to subsidize those needs.

People need a place to live like Northaven, but we keep hearing that the government needs to cut costs, and those cuts will affect people who need a place like Northaven. Our mission is to find a way to continue to provide quality low cost housing in spite of changing times. One step to do that is to increase the support to Northaven Foundation. Starting in January, we hired Maribeth Martin to help us in that effort. If you are around Northaven, come and meet Maribeth. Her office is on the third floor of the Assisted Living building. Together, we can all make a big difference!

### You're Invited: Save the Date!

Hosts: *The Young Adult Group*

What: *An 80's Theme Night with snacks, music and more...*

Where: *Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren*

When: *Saturday, February 21, 2009*

Time: *6:30 PM*

Who: *Everyone is invited!!*

Why: *To provide a use for our old 80's paraphernalia and to have fun together!*

*Please come sporting your best 80's attire, and bring a can of food to support the **Lake City Food Bank**.*

## Shared Prayer Requests

### In Our Community:

- For the Lamont and Taylor families, mourning the loss of **Audrey Taylor** on January 22, 2009.  
*No memorial is planned. Remembrances may be sent to Olympic View Church. Keep the family in your prayers.*
- For the **Rieman and Miller Rieman families**, mourning the deaths of Pastor Ken Miller Rieman's parents, **Louie and Phil Baldwin Rieman**.
- For **Elsie Clayton**, who has had surgery for a shattered wrist and is recuperating at home.
- For the Edmarks' nephew, **Thomas Tsoukalas**, who is at home now and doing better.
- For **Peggy Cochran**, recovering from a debilitating flu.
- For **Jean Ulery and Evelyn Merritt**, recovering from knee replacement surgeries.

### Ongoing prayer requests:

- Jimmy Barnes; Geraldine Campbell; Chris Pride; Gene & Donna Harnden; Bill Case's daughter, Carol Kamada; Lew Fortin's nephew, Michael Rogers; Richard Shoemaker**, Bill Shoemaker's brother; Sharon Haley's brothers, **Mark and Paul Andrews; Lowell Geiver; Lois Thomsen; Patti Berg; Eileen Birky's mother; Vera Gastfield;**

### Our Nation, State, and World:

- For all who have been affected by rising unemployment and economic challenges.
- For all who have been displaced or hurt by the recent, local floods in Oregon and Washington.
- For peace in Iraq, Afghanistan, and all countries.
- For people throughout the world coping with the death or imminent loss of a loved one.
- For a lasting cease-fire in Gaza.
- For democratic reform and the protection of civil rights in Pakistan, Kenya, Sudan, Chad, Burma, Zimbabwe, and Tibet.
- For protection from violence and banditry in Moundou, Chad, where Smith-Derksens work.

*Peacefully. Simply. Together.*

## Flight of Fancy

by David R. Radcliff

*For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens; they neither sow nor reap...yet God feeds them...Strive for God's kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well (Luke 12:23-24, 31).*

Meditation: Sure seems like a bird-brained idea - especially if we take it to mean any one of us can expect to have all our material needs met by just seeking God's kingdom. Koinonia Farms founder, Clarence Jordan, saw this passage in a different light. Jordan was ahead of his time as a proponent of racial equality in the South and was a biblical scholar who wrote the Cotton Patch New Testament - putting the gospel into the vernacular of the rural South. Regarding this text, Jordan noted that birds trying to live under water won't last long, nor will lilies that take up residence on the pavement. Both need to be within their context - the skies and the fields - to prosper. Same with us, according to Jordan. When we begin to live within the kingdom - sharing, caring, focused on relationships rather than resources - then (and only then) will the people of the world have a chance to have their needs supplied by their Maker. It reminds me of an outing with our Gwich'in friend Danny up in Arctic Village, Alaska. Our Sunday walk along a mountain ridge turned into a caribou hunt when several animals were spotted. He eventually bagged five - just the number a family like his would need for the winter. But the next day in the village, along with bringing him congratulations, his neighbors all took home a piece of meat. What a contrast to a society where the mantra of me/more/now seems to reign, short-changing our neighbors and God's earth as well, as we take much more than our fair share. What a blessing to all when we together begin to live within our intended context - the sharing, justice-seeking community of God's people. On that day all God's children will soar.

## This Month's Outreach Ministry: Christian Peacemaker Teams

By Pastor Ken Miller Rieman

What would happen if Christians devoted the same discipline and self-sacrifice to non-violent peacemaking that armies devote to war?



Olympic View's February outreach ministry is Christian Peacemaker Teams, an organization started by Mennonites, Brethren, Quakers, and other Christians who share our commitment to non-violent resistance to injustice and war.

In 1984, Ron Sider challenged the Mennonite World Conference in Strasbourg, France with these words:

"Over the past 450 years of martyrdom, immigration and missionary proclamation, the God of shalom has been preparing us Anabaptists for a late twentieth-century rendezvous with history. The next twenty years will be the most dangerous—and perhaps the most vicious and violent—in human history. If we are ready to embrace the cross, God's reconciling people will profoundly impact the course of world history . . . This could be our finest hour. Never has the world needed our message more. Never has it been more open. Now is the time to risk everything for our belief that Jesus is the way to peace. If we still believe it, now is the time to live what we have spoken."

Today CPT places violence-reduction teams in crisis situations and militarized areas around the world at the invitation of local peace and human rights workers. CPT embraces the vision of unarmed intervention waged by committed peacemakers ready to risk injury and death in bold attempts to transform lethal conflict through the

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nonviolent power of God's truth and love.

CPT's ministry of Biblically-based and spiritually-centered peacemaking emphasizes creative public witness, nonviolent direct action and protection of human rights. Years of experience have clarified the following strategic principles:

- trained, skilled, international teams can work effectively to support local efforts toward non-violent peacemaking;
- "getting in the way" of injustice through direct nonviolent intervention, public witness and reporting to the larger world community can make a difference;
- peace team work engages congregations, meetings and support groups at home to play a key advocacy role with policy makers.

CPT maintains long-term delegations in some of our globe's most conflicted areas, including Palestine, Iraq, and Columbia. Short-term delegations visit these and other places where an international, non-violent presence has been shown to reduce the level of violence to local populations. Members return from these delegations to share their stories, and empower others to find their own ways of making a difference. Recently, their efforts have inspired the formation of a Muslim Peacemaker Team currently active in Iraq.

Without a doubt, investing in the work of CPT enables our gifts to go places that most of us will never go, and do things few of us have the courage to undertake on our own. If social and political movements are to be judged by what they can build, rather than what they can destroy, CPT will go down in the history books as a model of Christian Peacemaking. Dollar for dollar, I doubt there's a more effective way for us to build trust and good-will where it is needed most.

Pastor Ken Miller Rieman



## Upcoming Choir Dates

### Practices

Wednesday, February 4

Wednesday, February 18

### Singing Dates

Sunday, February 8

Sunday, February 22

## PRESS RELEASE:

submitted by **Lacey Community Church**

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"Another Way... Fair Trade Gifts and Foods" is a new retail shop and community outreach project of the Lacey Community Church. Located at **4501 19th Ave SE in Lacey, the shop is open to the public on Saturdays from 10 am till 3 pm.**

"Another Way" offers a wide variety of foods and handcrafts from fair trade and farmer-owned cooperatives. Handcrafted gifts include unique children's toys and puppets, musical instruments, jewelry and accessories, baskets, soaps, craft kits, and aprons.

Divine Chocolates make a meaningful and delicious gift for Valentine's Day. Divine Chocolates are made from cocoa beans grown by Kuapa Kookoo Cooperative in Ghana, the first farmer owned cooperative in the world. Fair trade and shade grown coffees from Ethiopia, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Peru and organic teas from India and South Africa are also offered for sale.

Education is an important aspect of this outreach project. Shoppers can learn about cooperatives around the world and enjoy a cup of tea while they browse. Proceeds pay living wages to craftspeople and farmers and provide loans and grants to artisans through SERRV, a nonprofit organization dedicated to eradicating poverty wherever it resides. A portion of each sale is returned to our local community through support for hunger relief programs. "Another Way" offers another choice for the shopper who wants to put their money where their heart is.

*Peacefully. Simply. Together.*

## The Freedom of God

By Cabe Matthews, Student Pastor

The other day in his sermon, pastor Ken mentioned God's freedom to change. I imagine this may have made some of you a bit nervous, as this idea has made people nervous for thousands of years. You might remember from Ken's sermon how much Jonah disliked the idea that God can change, and he's not alone. Throughout history a great many people, while trying to make sense of their world, have felt the need to argue that God is unable to change. But I want to argue that God's ability to change, while it might cause us some anxiety, is not only true but also a remarkable and genuinely *good* thing.

Here's the rub: if God cannot change, God is not free. And if God is not free, we've made God into an idol. An idol is something that we create, and so idols are never free. We humans generally love idols because idols are a very easy way for us to justify our own actions and maintain the status quo. Idols never tell us when we've done wrong, and, if ever things aren't going our way, we know exactly what we are supposed to sacrifice to appease an idol; when we've done that the idol is 'happy' again.

When we don't leave room in our thinking about God for God to change, for God to be more than just a construction of our mind, God (or whatever concept of god we are thinking about) is no longer free to dynamically critique our actions. This can be very appealing, because I can construct God in such a way that God becomes a kind of 'rubber stamp' that justifies my own actions or opinions. This has been a very popular way to treat God for thousands of years. I can make God out to be the God of American nationalism, the God that is for the rich and not the poor, or the God who loves and cares for me unconditionally, but thinks none too highly of my enemies. God can be the one who keeps kings in power, because, after all, it must be God who gave such power; or God can be the one who justifies the power of popes to sanction crusades or torture.

God's unchangeable-ness becomes little more than my (or our, or the kings', or the pope's) own

desire, projected up into heaven, to stay the same as I already am, or to keep society the way it is. God being unchangeable means I never have to change, and neither does anything else. We assume falsely that the way things are is the way things were intended, and so we fight for things to remain the same. Change, after all, can be scary; especially when you're used to being in control.

But, if God is free, then we can't slap God's name on our own opinions and biases, and we might actually have to seek God's own opinions and biases, then try to change ours to more closely approximate God's. If God is free, it makes discipleship a lot more complicated than we might want it to be sometimes, because, like in the story of Jonah, God might want to forgive or show mercy on the enemy that we most hate, and God might actually want us to see the log in our eye that is clouding our own vision. It is far easier to point out our enemies' flaws and remind those around us how right we are. But if God is free, we might be forced to see that things are rarely so clean cut.

God's freedom means that we follow a God who is not hemmed in by my personal definitions of justice, mercy, love, or righteousness, and neither is God hemmed in by our society's definitions of those things. Instead, it is God's definitions that will ultimately be ultimate, and it is these definitions that we seek to discern and enact, always with great humility, because the dynamic, personal God is almost certainly different in some ways than what we assume. And this is good news.

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**We welcome you to our services.**