

# THE OLYMPIC NEWS

The Monthly Newsletter of the Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren  
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June 2008

## Living the Word

By Pastor Ken Miller Rieman

### Common Ground - Solid Ground

Election years are filled with people looking for ideas that have 'traction' with the voting public. I think by 'traction' they mean ideas that name the way voters are thinking or feeling about their lives and their world. But the lengthening of the election season brings the danger of voter fatigue. Like those who have had to sit through too many graduation ceremonies where the speakers suggest that commencement is not an ending but rather a beginning, voters grow weary of the way candidates adopt language meant to make them feel good, without committing themselves to anything that will actually make a whit of difference to anyone.

Is it too late in this campaign cycle to be talking about 'common ground?' Are we so cynical by now about the possibility of this election actually changing anything that a discussion of what common ground really means is a waste of time?

I have a growing sense that we, as individuals and as a nation, have become conflicted within ourselves about what it really means to find common ground.

The daily news is filled with stories of destruction wrought by extremists. We are disgusted with those who are so sure of their radical beliefs that they are willing to kill those who oppose them, or even kill the innocent who haven't yet learned to fear them sufficiently.

In politics, the extremists may be less violent, but they still manage to make life difficult for far too many. In our churches and on our school boards the conversations seem dominated by those with the most bones to pick. And so we disengage. We stop voting, or going to the meetings. We decline the invitation to lead because we don't want the headaches that come from groups that can never agree on anything.

It's no wonder the fastest growing religious orientation in our region is 'non-religious.' And not far behind are those who follow belief systems which don't tend to welcome dissenting voices to the table of conversation. It is all so much more straightforward to have the answers nailed down.

Now, more than ever, I think we need to find different ways of practicing religion. While most people see religion as something that divides people, we need to practice religion

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which brings them together.

And how do we do that? How do we find common ground? By coming together and seeking to understand each other. Understanding is what makes compassion possible. It's what helps us to discover the common interests which underlie our different perspectives. And it doesn't happen when we don't get together.

But what if folks in our community don't come to church to gain that mutual understanding? That's when we who are 'the church' are called out of our sanctuaries, out of our classrooms, out of our parking lots, into the community, to go where those who have different ways of looking at the world already are.

There was a day when enough folks were glad to just get an invitation to come to church that they would show up because they wanted to belong to a community. But these days are different. Growing the church means leaving the building. It requires that we who can articulate the common ground which underlies our ever-increasing diversity must spend our time with people who share our desire, even if they (and we) don't yet know how to make it a reality.

Jesus modeled that pretty well. He started his ministry not with a group that had all the right answers, or religious practices, or lifestyle choices, but with those who were really hungry for a different kind of world. He built caring relationships upon that common ground. And that was some solid ground—solid enough for us to build upon 2,000 years later.



### Graduation Announcement!

Please join Anden Hormann and his family as they celebrate Anden's High School graduation with a party on Sunday, June 15, 2008 from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm in the Olympic View Community Church Social Hall. Say congratulations to Anden when you see him!

## Shared Prayer Requests

### In Our Community:

For the family and friends of **Marie McKimens**, mourning her death Tuesday, May 13.

For the family of **Ernie Ricketts**, mourning his death April 26.

For **Alice Dalrymple** who is facing heart bypass surgery June 4 at Virginia Mason.

### Ongoing prayer requests:

**Geraldine Campbell; Jeanesse Miller; Chris Pride;**

**Gene Harnden; Charles Walker; Roger Edmark;**

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

Lew Fortin's nephew, **Michael Rogers;**

**Richard Shoemaker**, Bill Shoemaker's brother;

**Kenn Boulton; Eileen Birky's mother;**

Sharon Haley's brothers, **Mark and Paul Andrews;**

the **Smith-Derksens; Lowell Geiver;**

the Edmarks' daughter, **Melissa Hinton,**

and birth granddaughter, **Amber Compton**

### Our Nation, State, and World:

- For aid to reach the survivors of the cyclones in Myanmar and comfort to alleviate the grief of the victims' families.
- For the victims of the recent earthquake in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, China, and their families.
- 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, Zimbabwe, and Tibet.
- For wide and thoughtful participation in the United States' 2008 elections.

The Outreach Focus for

June 2008

is Camp Koinonia!

