



# The New Olympian

June 2009

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

## Losing my religion and finding my faith

by Ken Miller Rieman

Seems like every other Wednesday, my neighborhood smells kind of farmy—sort of like manure and pig slop. I hadn't noticed the pattern until the weather warmed up. It's the day our cul-de-sac sets yard waste out for pickup. It's the smell of decay.

Our lives are filled with cycles of growth and decay. We're supremely conscious of where our bodies stand in the cycle. Our cars and shoes and computer operating systems have lives of their own. Frankly, it's hard to think of things in my life that stand outside it.

Few living in Seattle, let alone North America, would deny the decay of organized religion. As a whole, our society is losing faith in church. We trust church less, participate less, give less, and believe less of the things which former generations took as the indications of faith. Church is in institutional decay.

Sometimes the growth cycles of different institutions intersect. Though markedly more volatile, the collapses in the global economy have forced many to question their faith in the marketplace.

This morning, NPR interviewed people who'd lost their jobs on Wall Street, and asked them what they were doing now.

Stephen Chen shared that at Bear Stearns, 'We were always known as the folks that worked twice as hard and put in twice as many hours as other investment banks. And so it was kind of sad to see a really great institution falter like that.'

Will Haughey lost his job at Goldman Sachs. "I'm a capitalist at heart, and I believe in the power of the market," he says. "And we sort of had to come to terms with accepting unemployment insurance. But the truth is that it's really serving its purpose. It's given us the breathing room to actually take a chance, to do the homework, to do the research and to prepare for something that we might not have otherwise been able to do."

I'm not sure I share Will's faith in the marketplace, an institution many think can regulate itself, but which time has shown to be dangerously susceptible to the greed of its most wealthy constituents.

But maybe it's a matter of degree. The marketplace undoubtedly motivates people to think creatively, and marketplace 'corrections' can certainly re-orient investment and production in important and much-needed ways.

Shortly after Stephen Chen lost his job, he met up with an old friend who had also lost her job and together they started a business. Now,

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Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren  
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*Green Soul Shoes* is recycling old tires into sandals and sales are up.

I believe in the power of imagination and the will by which the creative and courageous shepherd possibilities through the valleys of apathy, cynicism, short-sightedness, and despair which mark our society. But I think the religious institutions of the last century have left a legacy of narrow-mindedness, self-centeredness, and fear of failure which threatens our ability to re-orient the church of today. A good many thinking and caring people have gotten close enough to catch a whiff of our toxic brew and have turned away.

I recently heard the story of someone whose family, mostly atheists, lost their matriarch. Out of sensitivity to those who were Christian, they asked a pastor to officiate a memorial service, but asked him to be sensitive to those who didn't believe in God. During the service, they were ambushed by a hell-fire and brimstone message exhorting them all to repent or suffer the eternal fire.

The impulse of some to ensure their place in heaven is easy for pastors to leverage, but doing so comes at great cost. Taking advantage of people's fear creates a church of people afraid.

Jesus called common folk to drop everything, their livelihoods, their familial relations, their reputations, and follow him. Today's church needs members with entrepreneurial spirits to envision lives of wholeness and pursue them with all of the resources they can muster.

The church needs disciples who grow toward spiritual maturity, learning how to lead others toward wholeness. This means we need to name our toughest questions and pursue their answers, even when they're not simple answers. It means we need to identify our shortcomings and welcome relationships with those who help us to grow beyond them, not just with those who are like us, or believe like us.

The power which will make all of this possible will be compassion--the very heart of God, the heart which is broken by the hatred and fear of our world and makes healing its sole purpose.



Photo by Adrian Mueller

Olympic View is a changing church in a changing world, and God calls us to serve the needs of this time and place as we are able. Many of the people this church has loved have slipped away from us. Some of the things which have made us who we are have been lost. But the call to serve our world and bear witness to the Prince of Peace is not lost on us.

The Church of the Brethren, too, is changing. We prune and economize, and come up with new structures to help us work more purposefully and productively, but we've not regained the trust and unity of purpose which once made miracles possible. The every-other Wednesday whiffs of decline and decay remind me of our place in the cycle. I'm losing my religion.

Every day I serve as your pastor, I see people who do amazing things with the gifts they've been given. I study with people who bring their big questions to the stories in our scripture, and the insights of their friends. I join my energy and resources with others who want to do more than they would accomplish on their own. I hold, in your trust, the charge to speak Love's word that it might teach us a new language, understood by all, and lead us toward unity.

I'm losing my religion, and finding my faith.

*To view this article online, or to post a comment on our blog, please visit:*

<http://olympicchurch.org/blog/>

## General Assembly / Spring

Summarized from JoAnn Shoemaker's Minutes

*Olympic View held its Spring General Assembly on April 19, 2009. The Assembly was called to order by Roger Edmark, who offered greetings, a statement of consensus guidelines, and devotions.*

**Financial Reports** were presented by Treasurer **Rob Miller** and Jubilee Fund Trustee **Jana Helmuth**. In presenting the budget status for the first quarter of 2009, we saw that church spending is on track (24.9%) and plans for the new carpet continue. Offering through March is at 19.9%; if it continues at its current, healthy pace, church expenses will be met. Please keep your giving going strong.

In reviewing the Jubilee Fund shows, of \$85,000 as the original investment, \$10,000 in withdrawal, fund fees of \$7,000 and \$10,000 currently in unspent earnings. In October, 2009, the fund trustees will advise the board to spend interest earnings or not; trustees will also define the intent of the Jubilee Fund.

In reviewing **Old Business**, revised Jubilee Fund Governing Rules were approved. (Copies available for your perusal in church office.) **Stephanie Herkelrath** resigned her position as Jubilee Fund trustee and the position will be filled at the November 2009 General Assembly.

**Worship and Sunday School times** were discussed with members speaking up for and against the 10:00 am worship hour. Concerns in the debate include: greater young adult participation, needs of the children's program, and the dramatic drop one Sunday School class has seen. Consensus is to observe situation with input and discussion; regular summer hours begin in June with no Sunday School classes. No change in worship schedule with the summer schedule; evaluation will resume in September.

Elections for 2009 took place; Christine Wilkinson became District Conference Delegate.

**Reports and Discussions** were held, with **Pastor Ken Miller Rieman** discussing "growing the church," shop club, and the updated church Web site.

In his **Worship/Nurture/Outreach report**, Ken urged all church members, friends, and attendees to complete **2009 Time and Talent Interest** forms as well as **In Case of Emergency** forms. Both forms are available in the church office, or please request one or both be mailed to your home. Pastor Ken thanks everyone for these last four years he's been in service to OV.

**Children's Sunday School** has a need for a half-time person during church or children must remain in the sanctuary during worship service. Recommend dismissing children to Sunday School following blessing and not having Children's Story on the Steps to assist with time management issues. **Kathy Edmark** and **Patti Berg** are currently serving as Sunday School teachers for OV Children and Preschoolers.

Olympic View needs **additional Deacons**. Please Volunteer, says **Jimmy Barnes**.

From **District Board**: seven people helped **flooded residents in Centralia** who face long-term recovery projects.

From **Disaster Relief**: Great **need in Lewis County for disaster relief volunteers**. See **Nancy Louise Wilkinson** for date and sign-up sheets to help out.

**Donations** are also needed **for the District Conference auction to be held at Camp Koinonia, September 25-27, 2009**.

Other **Camp Koinonia** Information: Camp will be held August 9-15, 2009; Brethren Art Gathering to be held in August.

**Patti Berg** will attend **COB Annual Conference** in San Diego June 26 - 30, 2009.

Thanks very much to **JoAnn Shomaker** for keeping minutes. These minutes have been edited and paraphrased by the secretary. For a copy of the minutes, or for further information on any specific item, please call or email the OV Church office.

**Info@olympicchurch.org**  
**(206) 525-8900**

## Hear Our Prayers

### In Our Community:

- For **Pauline Danzer's** son-in-law, **Eric Emmer**, undergoing chemotherapy for a reoccurrence of his Leukemia.
- For **Jerry Vierthaler**, recovering from a recent hospitalization to control gastro-intestinal bleeding.
- For **Edmarks'** granddaughter, **Amber**, facing surgery to remove a brain lesion.
- For **Stephanie Herkelrath** healing from her car accident.
- Thanks for the recovery of Haile and Nancy **Bedada's** 16-year old nephew, **Casey**, whose surgery for a bowel obstruction was successful; he will be able to avoid further surgery.
- For healing for **Tim Bisterfeldt's** Aunt **Diane Peters** (Spokane), severely ill with Lyme's Disease.

### Ongoing Prayer Requests:

**Jerry Bowers; Rieman Family; Jimmy Barnes  
Geraldine Campbell; Chris Pride; Peggy Cochran  
Jean Ulery; Bill Case's daughter, Carol Kamada  
Lew Fortin's nephew, Michael Rogers  
Richard Shoemaker, Bill Shoemaker's brother  
Sharon Haley's siblings, Mark, Paul Andrews, and  
Ruth; Gene & Donna Harnden; Lowell Geiver;  
Eunice Jarboe; Ed Enzi; Patti Berg  
Eileen Birky's mother; Vera Gastfield Wolfe  
Evelyn Merritt; Elsie Clayton**

### Our Nation, State, and World:

- For all who have been affected by rising unemployment and economic challenges, including all of our locally situated family and friends impacted by layoffs.
- For the families of the victims of the Chegdu earthquake, remembering during the first anniversary, and continuing to recover.
- For graduating students, entering an uncertain workforce.
- For peace in Iraq and all countries.
- For successful diplomacy between Israel and Palestine.
- For people throughout the world coping with the death or imminent loss of a loved one.
- For democratic reform and the protection of civil rights in Pakistan, Kenya, Sudan, Chad, Burma, Zimbabwe, and Tibet.
- For health and safety for the Smith-Derksens serving MCC in Moundou, Chad.

## Prayer for Peace:

### An *On Earth Peace Resource*

*On Earth Peace* was May's Outreach Focus. Here is a prayer sent in by **Christine Wilkinson**, our ongoing Worship Leader during May

God of all grace and mercy, whose love knows no limits or boundaries, thank you for welcoming us into your presence...

Fill our hearts, merciful God, with the graces of your Holy Spirit, with love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control.

Teach us to love those who hate us; to pray for those who spitefully use us; that we might be the children of your love.

When adversities strike give us the grace to be patient, and in our prosperity keep us humble so that we might always be a witness for you.

Give us courage, O Lord, to stand up and be counted, to stand up for others who cannot stand up for themselves, and to stand up for ourselves when we feel we must.



## 2009 May Away A Success

Olympic View has several fellowship groups, but one of the most robust and fun must be the Friends Group. This group plans and takes outings around town to see plays, hold potlucks, squeeze cider (when the weather's right), and generally enjoy one another's company.

Every Spring, members of the Friends Group choose a getaway spot in an attractive nature setting and book rooms situated for communal cooking, eating, game-playing, and socializing. It sounds like this year's excursion to Pacific Beach Resort went especially well. Look for pictures on our Web site as these become available.

Carol Landis reports, "There were 25 of us at Pacific Beach resort in Pacific Beach, Washington. The weather was sunny and warm with no wind, which is very unusual on the ocean. Lots of good food. We had fun playing the usual pinochle games and a wild and crazy episode of chickenfoot. Geraldine Campbell was a first time player and declared it "a very stressful game." We told her she was taking it all too seriously. All in all we think it was a total success."

Thanks to Bob and Carol Landis for this report!

Note: Perhaps "Chickenfoot" is widely familiar to one and all, but I have no idea what it is. Still waiting to hear back from Carol Landis, intrepid reporter, for further details on this mysterious activity.

## 2009 Deacon Training Meetings

Wednesdays, May 27 & September 30  
Meetings begin at 6:30 PM.

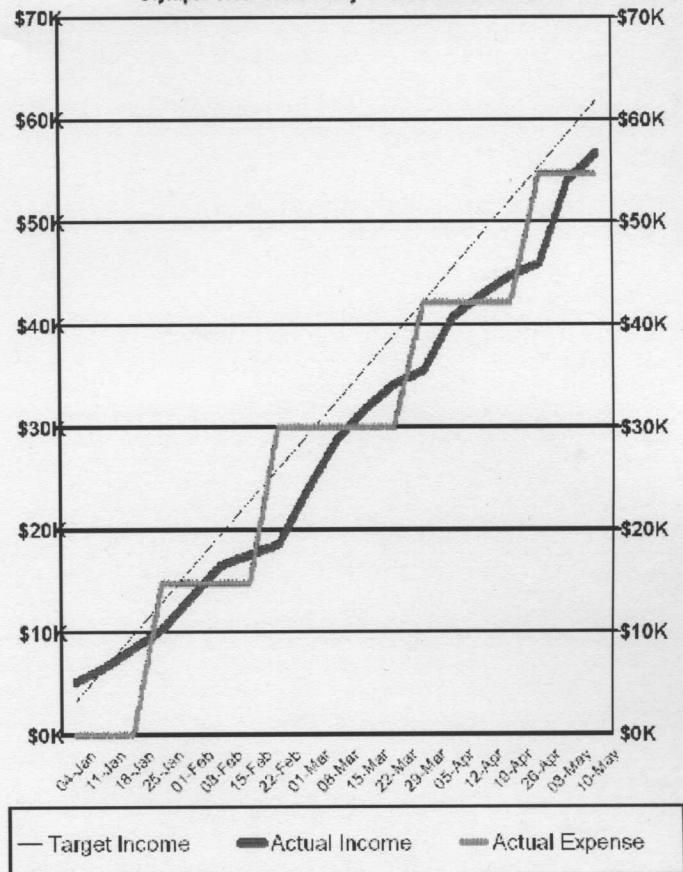
## Olympic View Graduate Breakfast

If you or a family member will be graduating from High School, College, or another stage of your education, please call the church office or Goldie Barnes so that we can honor you at our June 2009 Olympic View Graduation Breakfast.

### Contact Info:

Goldie Barnes 360.659.4703  
Olympic View Office 206.525.8900

2008 YTD Financial Support for Ministries  
Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren



## Financial Forecast

While our actual income is still shy of our target income, our expenses have been falling just below our actual income. We are keeping pace with our expenses, and will hopefully continue to do so with your continued generosity. While the economy has been losing steam and dropping off, Olympic View's congregation has demonstrated remarkably consistent giving. Please keep in mind how essential such giving is for the life of the church and its continued work in Outreach, Fellowship, and all of the ministries for which you tithe.



## Greetings From Camp!

**NWBAG (N.W. Brethren Arts & Gifts) will be held here at camp from 8/7-8/9/09.** NWBAG is in its third year now and is building into a fun opportunity for Brethren of all ages to gather and share their gifts, be they music or crafts.

**The Brethren Camps will run from 8/9-8/15.** Brochures should be in the Olympic View office by the time you receive this newsletter. Our camps have been a source of inspiration and development for Brethren campers since this camp was founded over fifty years ago. They remain the core of what Koinonia is all about.

We are excited to be hosting **District Conference here at camp once again this year. The dates for District Conference will be 9/25-9/27.**

We look forward to seeing all of you at one or all of these events. Peace, Mike O'Cain

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## Outreach Focus for June 2009

### *Camp Koinonia*

Join us as we direct our Outreach Giving to this special place where youth and adults alike foster outstanding spiritual and personal relationships.

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## Annual Conference Info Resources

Greetings from the Annual Conference Office, The Annual Conference schedule for San Diego is online at :

<http://www.cobannualconference.org/sandiego/schedule.html>

To find out about meal events, insight sessions, worship and more... Just visit the link above. Please do not hesitate to call if there is any way we may be of service to you.

800-688-5186

410-635-8740

Hope to see you in San Diego!

<http://www.cobannualconference.org/ac/>

<http://www.cobannualconference.org/>

## Reminders:

Please remember to complete the two forms currently in the church office:

- 1) 2009 Time and Talent Interest Finder
- 2) I.C.E. (in case of emergency)

Each form is available on the counter in the church office and may be left in Kim's in-box after you have filled it out.

Thanks for taking the time to do this for your church and yourself.



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## Attention:

Please let Cathy Oberg know which Saturday in July would be most convenient for you to attend as she is planning a Saturday get-together on Whidbey Island for this July. Feel free to call or email the church office with your preference!

(206) 525-8900

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**We welcome you to our services.**