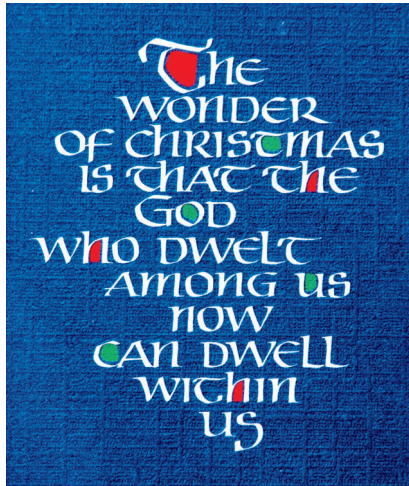


Living the Word

by Pastor Ken Miller Rieman

Conventional wisdom says the right time to celebrate the new year is January. To be sure, that's when our Gregorian calendar changes and our attentions turn toward the year ahead. But that's backward from the way we mark the passing of our personal time passages. This March, I'll celebrate my 40th year of living, but in truth, I'm already living in it. Am I only to celebrate upon its completion?



Advent time is screwy. It's liminal time, in-between time, not-quite-but-just-about-time. For Christians, it is the beginning of the new year. The season of Pentecost ends with a celebration of Christ's reign as a different kind of sovereign. Advent takes us all the way back to the beginning of the Jesus story as his world and ours prepare for his coming.

My friend J.D. Glick, pastor of the Sunrise Church of the Brethren in Harrisonburg, Virginia contributed the devotions on the back of this year's Advent

bulletins. I really like his thoughts on preparation. He observes the ways athletic teams prepare for games, students prepare for exams, and travelers prepare for a journey. In each case, preparation is essential for success. He goes on to recall biblical times of preparation: Israelites in the wilderness, John the Baptist calling people to repent, Jesus fasting and praying in the desert before beginning his public ministry. In every case, the energy and environment of preparation builds the capacity for what is to come.

Christmas is the celebration of the Divine becoming flesh and blood. We can view that as a historical event, but as followers of Jesus, we're each challenged each Christmas to invite the Divine to dwell within each of us. J.D. asks, "Why do we deceive ourselves into believing that we don't have to get ready?"

So how do we get ready for that? How do we prepare for God to dwell within us in a new way?

This last summer, I spent a week sleeping under the stars in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Honestly, I didn't get a lot of sleep. The uncanny brilliance of the heavenly bodies were just too exciting. Often, I'd not really drift off until a little

The **New Olympian**

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after 3am, when the light of the coming dawn would begin to 'pollute' the night sky.

Advent is the pre-dawn time. It's still night, but barely. The dawn is coming, but not quite yet. Advent people live into one certainty, the dawn will come. Our reality will change.



**Christ didn't
come just so
that you
could be
all you can be.**

**He never
intended
to be an army
of one.**

**He came that
the WHOLE
world might
be all it could
be.**

Advent isn't a party, it's more like a wake, a time to lick our wounds, grieve our losses, confess our needs, and nurse our hopes for a better year ahead. But it's also more than these. It's a time to name these in each other and in the world all around us.

In January, most of us will resolve to better ourselves in some way. It may be one of our culture's more spiritual forms of ritual. But it doesn't rise far enough to honor the true significance of Christmas. Christ didn't come just so that you could 'be all you can be.' He never intended to be an army of one. He came that the *whole* world might be all it could be. Advent preparation time means aligning our personal awareness with all of creation. Consider the Jesus story as told in Luke. From Herod to Zechariah, from Elizabeth to Mary, from Joseph to the angels, shepherds, and magi, all dread or proclaim that the one who is to come will change the whole world.

Conventional wisdom might not expect that Jesus would be able to accomplish much change in the flawed and faltering lot of followers living 2000 years after his death. But that needn't concern us. Advent people are already making plans...

The Creation Groans

by Fletcher Farrar

Reading: Romans 8:18-25

*For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God.
Rom. 8:19*

Meditation: When Paul wrote to the Romans, he presented an inconvenient truth: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves." The suffering of God's creation has taken on a new urgency in the twenty-first century, as the world recognizes that human activity has accelerated the pace of global warming, and environmental degradation continues unchecked. Paul recognized that when the earth suffers, we all suffer. In a 1965 speech at the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson would make the same point in a different way: "We travel together, passengers on a little space ship, dependent on its vulnerable reserves of air and soil; all committed for our safety to its security and peace; preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work, and, I will say, the love we give our fragile craft."



In his 2006 documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, Al Gore shows just how the earth is groaning. The ten warmest years in history were in the previous fourteen years. Glaciers are melting. Weather is changing. Japan and the Pacific are setting records for typhoons. rising level of the oceans has grave implications for coastal areas.



The message about damage done through poor stewardship of the earth is disturbing. But the larger message is hopeful. It is not too late. If people take action, the earth can be saved. Science knows what to do; until now the will has been lacking to do it. But, as Al Gore tells us, human will is a renewable resource. We must act to save God's earth.

As believers we share Paul's great hope that "creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God."

For the day: Strive to live as a better steward of God's creation by learning more, by praying for the earth, and by making lifestyle changes.

Prayer: The creation waits with eager longing to regain a vibrant ecosystem, to host a healthier human family, to provide a clean and peaceful home for our children. We pray for the earth to experience God's glory in these ways.



Love Is

A reflection on the life of Christine Pride

by her daughter, Marilyn Dillard

Christine's life was symbolized by her mended heart. Mom was blessed in this life with 4 children. When her first child passed away at the age of 5 years; her heart was broken, but she permitted God to mend her heart and raised 3 more children.

She was a devoted and fiercely protective mother. She was generous with time, talent and possessions. She encouraged us to pursue our gifts and supported us with unconditional love.

She loved to entertain on the organ and keyboard, and to collaborate with other musicians. She loved being a member of the "frustrated maestros". Her special music was enjoyed by many at Olympic View. She continued to grow in her musical skills her entire life. She composed the song "Love Is" in response to her husband's tender care after she had surgery.

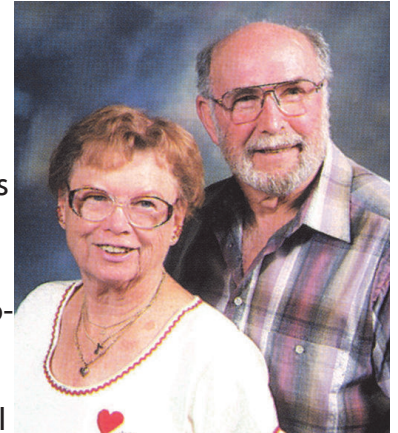
She survived many trials in this life, but maintained her ability to remain close to her family and friends. For the last 2 years, she lived at Evergreen Adult Family Home where she received compassionate and tender care.

Some of her last words to me; "I am just fine, I really am, and I love you."

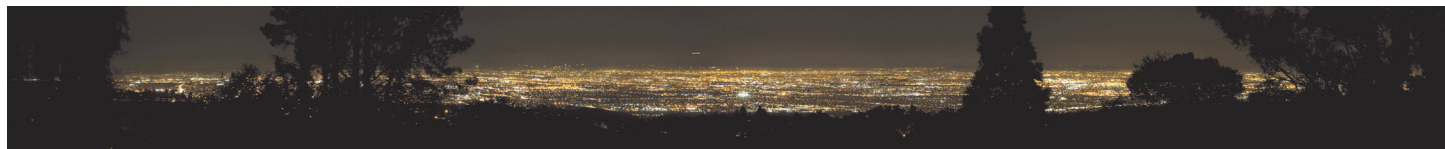
Mom lived to be 84. We will greatly miss our mom and her love-filled life. She is a survivor because her life will continue to inspire and encourage us.

A graveside service was held on November 17. She and her husband Al are together again.

Thank you from the Pride family to everyone at Olympic View Church for the opportunity to celebrate mom's life after worship on Nov. 15.



Christine Pride
April 20, 1925 to November 12, 2009



The Oregon/Washington pastors shared their presentation at the Mary and Joseph Retreat Center in Palos Verdes, overlooking Los Angeles.

Pastors wrap-up two year study

by Ken Miller Rieman

I decided 'Retreat' was a misnomer for the official gathering of 28 Church of the Brethren pastors who wrapped up their two years of study. Directly on the tail of the National Council of Churches General Assembly in Minneapolis, and the Progressive Brethren Summit in Elizabethtown, PA, I flew to Los Angeles to join the professional 'cohort' of Oregon/Washington clergy with whom I've traveled and studied over the last several years.



Our group actually formed back in 2005. That's when we first learned of the opportunity for Brethren pastors to request grant money to sustain their vocational vitality. In the fall of 2007, Jeanne Rempel, Mike Titus, Howard Ulery, Pearl Rohrer and I submitted a proposal to study the question: "What leadership skills and behaviors help congregations build partnerships of learning and service across boundaries of culture and faith?" A few weeks later, we learned of its acceptance, and we made plans to travel to Guatemala the next February, to immerse ourselves in the life of a rural village of refugees re-

settled from Guatemala's civil war.

Our time there in Unión Victoria was amazing. We discovered that people of different faiths and tribes can pull together to overcome adversity of biblical proportions. These people, whom the world sees as poor, have learned to tap the greatest sources of human wealth. They work together. They make decisions together. They share their resources. They honor their differences.



Our group returned home inspired. We proceeded with the study of our question, using books, an outside leadership consultant, and regular meetings, both in-person, and by web-cam.

At our November 'retreat' we were one of 6 cohorts who shared our learning from the last two years. It was intense. We spent about 12 hours each of three days listening to presentations, and looking for ways to connect the insights of others to our own.

Now, that our grant requirements have been met, the work of integrating our learning into our ministries continues in earnest. I look forward to deepening our mutual learning in the coming years. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the Lilly Endowment which funded our travel and study, Bethany Theological Seminary who administered the grant, and each of you who have supported my professional growth as your pastor.



THANK YOU!

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Lake City Food Bank

By JoAnn Shoemaker

I would like to thank everyone who contributed their travel soaps, shampoos, conditioners, and tooth aids to the glass container in the foyer throughout the year. Twice a year I take our collection of your items to the Lake City Food Bank which is in great need of these items, especially this year of difficult financial times.

For the coming year, 2010, I will be asking each month for certain items to help fill the needs of the less fortunate who seek help at the food bank. Please continue to donate your unopened travel samples or any extra toiletries you may have, in addition to the monthly requested items.

Thank you,

JoAnn

Sharing Together in Prayer

In Our Community:

- For **Harold Lawrence**, recovering from an infection.
- For **Geraldine Campbell**, whose Leukemia is requiring another round of Chemotherapy.
- For **Kathy Korff**, now recovering from pneumonia at Ballard Rehab.
- For **Maurice Carlson** at Park Ridge Nursing Home in Shoreline
- For the family of **Chris Pride**, mourning her death last month.

Ongoing Prayer Requests:

**Lowell Geiver, Jimmy Barnes
Peggy Cochran, Adam Ford,
Nancy Louise Wilkinson, Eunice Jarboe
Ed Enzi, Elsie Clayton, Gloria Sherwood
Eileen Birky's mother, Vera Gastfield Wolfe
Gene & Donna Harnden
Bill Case & daughter Carol Kamada
Lew Fortin's nephew, Michael Rogers
Sharon Haley's siblings: Mark, Ruth, and
Paul Andrews**

Former Brethren Voluntary Service worker at OV, **David Berscheminski**, now living in Germany, recently sent us this photo celebrating his recently earned commercial pilot rating.



Ladies and Gentlemen...
my dream of being a PILOT finally came true.
Last Friday I passed my CPL/IR Checkflight
on this wonderful Piper aircraft.
After two hours of flying approaches,
manoeuvres and a relaxed cross country
flight in the vicinity of Zadar, I've got my
licence. The examiner is smiling – must be
a good sign.
Thanks for all the support I had from all of you.
David

Christmas Rhymes

Mother Goose - style

©2009 by Dan Smith-Derksen

The Angels & The Shepherds

Lk. 2.8-16

Baa, Baa, Black Night

Baa, baa black night, so quiet and so clear.
Angels, angels, suddenly appear.
Fear not, fear not, the angels loudly sing.
This day is born to you,
Jesus Christ our king.

Tom, Tom the Herder's Son

Tom, Tom the herder's son
Left his sheep and away did run
To find the child, he hurried wild
To see the babe and mother mild

Little Boy Blue

Little Boy Blue come blow your horn
Shepherds have heard
the Christ Child is born!
But where is the babe
who's called Prince of Peace?
He's there in a manger, fast asleep.



The Birth of Jesus Lk. 2.5-7

Blessed Virgin Mary

Blessed Virgin Mary
let the donkey carry her
into Bethlehem town.
But when they got there,
twas no room to spare
though they searched both up and down.

She said to dear Joseph,
who was truly devoted,
"Please find us a place to stay."
The stable was dry, so they gave it a try
and nestled into the hay.

Mary Had a Little Child

Mary had a little child
whose name we all do know.
Jesus, our savior, born on high
come down to earth below.
"Peace on earth, good will to all."

The angels sing above.
Jesus Christ God's only son
is born to show God's love.

Little Jack Horner / Jack Be Nimble

Little Jack Horner sat in a corner
the only place he was able.
The inn was bursting at the seams.
The last two went to the stable.

"Jack be nimble, Jack be quick!"
His mother loudly cried.
"Come see the baby in the stall,
with animals all by his side."



The Visit of the Magi

Mt. 2.1-2, 10-11

Ren-a-Den-Den

Ren-a-den-den, three wise men,
and who do you think they are?
Faithful Magi from the east
Following yonder star.

Diddle, Diddle Dumpling

Diddle, diddle dumpling
three wise men
Followed a star to Bethlehem
To see the baby king foretold
And bring him frankincense,
myrrh and gold.

Over the Desert and Through the Woods

Over the desert
and through the woods
To Bethlehem town they came.
To praise and honor the newborn king
Giving thanks in God's holy name.