

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

July 2006

Living the Word

By Ken Miller Rieman

You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. 1 Peter 1.23

I'm learning new seasons here in the Northwest, and I'm discovering the time when the new growth of spring turns into the full heat and dryness of summer. Already the grass is turning brown. Blossoms have shriveled and fallen. The forest floor, only recently dark and rich and moist, and sprouting with new life, is beginning to accumulate dead matter. The decaying has begun.

Sometimes in the church, our hopes and fears begin to turn around our ideas about growth and decay, about attendance and income from offerings, and meeting our financial obligations. And it is good for us to dwell on the mystery of growth and consider how we as a congregation are called to grow. But somewhere in our thinking about growth, it becomes easy for us to forget about the turning point that makes it all possible.

In 1 Peter 1.22-23, the writer is speaking about transformation and renewal. Indeed, the business of the church is just this. Our God is a

creative God. Our God is making all things new. For the church to be about the business of God, we must be about the business of transformation.

I'm still pondering the enigma of the church. As an institution in society, it seems to always be engaged on two fronts. On the one hand, much of the church is urging society forward, into a more compassionate and just way of serving human need. On the other hand, many religious people resist change, both in thought and behavior, calling our attention back to so called 'more moral days.'

And in our concern for survival and growth, we easily overlook the biblical secret to staying power. "Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the *truth* so that you have *genuine mutual love*, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of *imperishable seed*, through the living and enduring word of God." To our biblical writer, obedience to the truth is a prerequisite to genuine mutual love. And this quality of love is a prerequisite to re-birth into the eternal reality of God's realm. This is

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Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren
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Seattle, WA 98115

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why the preservation of tradition is not sufficient for the preservation of a community of faith. If we desire that our body be born anew, of imperishable seed, we must be open to the continual process of death to that which must expire, and re-birth into that which shoots forth from truth and love.

Some traditions speak of this re-birth as an awakening. As we awaken to our innermost worries, fears, resentments, biases, and assumptions, we are given unfiltered glimpses of the world *as it actually is*. The beauty, for members, of belonging to a body of believers is found in learning to interact with people who have different experiences, assumptions, concerns, and perspectives. Sure, it's easy enough to give the celebration of diversity lip service. But without diversity, the same things that discourage, blind, or paralyze me do the same to everyone around me. And when I listen to NPR and hear news of more torture at Abu Graib, or another round of the seemingly ceaseless violence of retribution in Israel and Palestine, I get overwhelmed. I wonder how I could ever do anything about it. And if no one around me has any ideas, it becomes easier to just tune out troubling news. It's easier to invest my emotional energies in safeguarding my own happiness. It's more comfortable to relate to those who agree with me than allow myself to be challenged by those who believe that there is indeed something I can do.

The good news is that the Holy Spirit brings a different quality to my interactions with people. Rather than surrounding myself with only like-minds, the Spirit leads me to a discovery of how others understand the world. From my Palestinian and Jewish friends, I learn that there are people on both sides who are committed to making peace, but their efforts are often stymied by extremists whose power stems from the ignorance, cynicism, fear, and prejudice of those who remain closed to new understanding. From my friends I learn that some of my own most challenging interpersonal conflicts stem from deep seated misunderstanding painful ex-

periences from the past. These kinds of insights reveal realities that were previously obscured from my perception. The new awareness changes my world. It turns out that God really does act as an agent of healing and transformation.

This kind of new understanding and transformation is what we hear scripture speak of as a spiritual re-birth. Scripture points to this as the path to eternal life. It is a journey of the discovering of God's eternal reality and of living into a new way of relating to the world around us.

Different religious traditions sometimes pronounce that 'their way' is the 'only way' to salvation. Sometimes, that sentiment is expressed in a proud, and exclusive way. Yet I believe that the deepest truth that we know in Christ transcends all religions. I believe that freedom from brokenness and sin comes only as we awaken to the reality of Love, as known in God, as known in Human flesh, and as known in the Spirit which makes, of our many members, one body.

This is why the Christian life must be self-reflective, self-critical, and engaged with the world. This is why confession and repentance are a vital part of the process of re-birth. This is why we gather as a community, rather than succumb to the televised church of entertainment. We need each other. We cannot possess truth on our own. We cannot possess truth apart from genuine mutual love. Indeed, truth is not something that we can possess. Rather, it is something which possesses us.

To be about the business of the church is to be about the business of God. And that business is transformation. It is not just change, but the continuing cycle of death and re-birth which we can observe in the world all around us. To be faithful to this process requires an awareness of our tradition, an awareness of ourselves, and an awareness of the world around us. I hope that our congregation can embrace the goodness of this journey. If we hope to be a body, united in Christ, it is a journey we must all make together.

Vacation Bible School

AUGUST 6th-10th, from 6:00 P.M to 8:30 P.M.

by Carol Bowers

Jesus Friends invites children to become friends of Jesus and to share that friendship with others. In his daily activities, Jesus showed us how to practice the friendship of God. He spent time alone with God in prayer; he called his friends to follow his way; he healed the sick, and shared God's love with anyone who would listen. Through the daily themes of *Jesus Friends*, children, too, will learn ways to spend time with God, share what they have, care for others, practice hospitality, and tell others the good news of God's love.



Vacation Bible School will begin each evening with worship in the sanctuary including music, a drama, prayer, and an offering of food items for the Lake City Food Bank. The students will then go to their respective classrooms (Early Childhood ages 4 & 5; Primary grades K-2; Middle grades 3-5; and Junior youth grades 6-8). Each evening the students will participate in 2 different "Friendship Stations" which will include activities and topics such as *be still and know; caring blanket, drum circle, friendship Frisbee, friendship SKituations, games to play with friends, hospitality café', Jesus friends in Japan, sharing my money, and when we pray.*

Leadership for Vacation Bible School is being put together now. If you would like to attend one or more evenings, or participate in some way, you are more than welcome to join us. Please contact Carol Bowers for more information by leaving her a message with the church office (206) 525-8900.

Also, please tell any children you know in your family, in your neighborhood, or in your larger community about Vacation Bible School and invite them to attend. This is a great way to meet people in our community *and to serve the children.*

Carol Bowers, VBS Director

Deacons Break for Summer

Deacon Training meetings, originally scheduled for 7:00 PM on July 25th and August 22nd, have been cancelled. Deacon Training resumes this fall on September 26th. See you then!

Sunday Bulletins by Mail

If you, or someone you know, are unable to attend Sunday Worship and would like to receive the weekly bulletin, please contact Kim Thomas, Church Secretary, by phone (206) 525-8900.

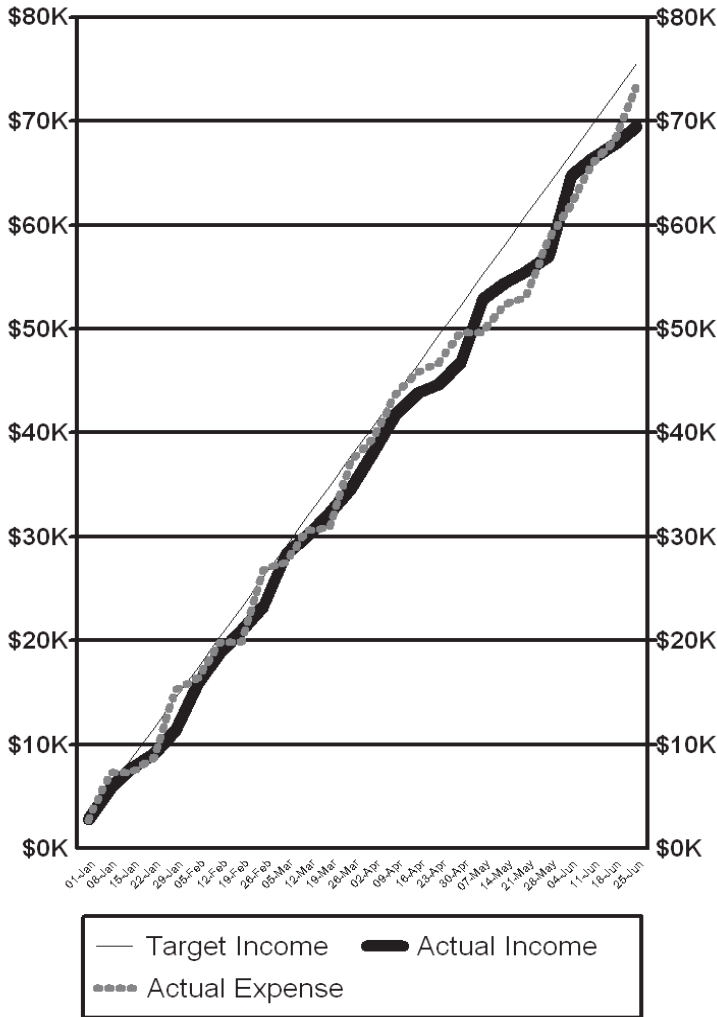
Landis Anniversary Lunch

Bob and Carol Landis invite all the members of the church to help them celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary in the Social Hall, after Worship, on Sunday, July 16. Lunch will be provided. Bring your good cheer and congratulations for the happy couple!

A Departure from the Ordinary

2006 YTD Financial Support for Ministries

Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren



The above chart compares our actual income to our target. Overall, our giving is fairly strong, but just slightly under our goal. To meet our goal by year's end, we need to average \$3,134 each Sunday. As of June 25, our average is \$2,672, leaving us a year-to-date deficit of \$6,123. The thin black line shows that our actual expenses are, at this point, under our income, and well under our budget. Unfortunately, that does not really reflect a trend. Annual Conference expenses, and a resumption of Secretarial salary will move that line up in future reports.

Olympic View Book Club

Please join the Olympic View Book Club for this month's meeting; the club will meet at 10:30 am.

July 28th at Olive White's house

Upcoming Events for Red Hatters

By JoAnn Shoemaker

Hold on to your hats, hatters! There's a variety of spirited events scheduled for Red Hatters throughout the months of July and August. On **Sunday, July 9th**, between 9:30 AM and 12:30 PM, new and used Red Hat accessories will be displayed by JoAnn Shoemaker in the Germantown Room. Next, on **Saturday, July 15th**, let's meet at OVCC at 11:30 AM and carpool to the Grand Opening of the new Northgate Community Center in your Red Hat Finery. Before you know it, August will arrive, and with it comes the Red Hat Sale, on **Saturday, August 5th** between 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM at the Tacoma Elks, so watch for carpool information. To round off the summer with a blast, let's show our purple and red spirit at the Bowers' church-wide BBQ on **Saturday, August 26th**. Contact JoAnn Shoemaker with questions about these events or if you are interested in becoming a Red Hatter.

Electronic Entry System is a Success

By JoAnn Shoemaker

Many recipients of the new, electronic key fobs have expressed their appreciation for this safe and easy way to access the Church via the front door. Members of OVCC report their relief to know that when a key is lost, one simply informs the office and the lost key is de-activated. To date, we have received donations totaling \$225.00 toward the overall expense of \$2925.00 for the electronic entry system. We are still accepting donations to offset the expense of installing this system and would appreciate your generosity in eliminating the remaining debt. Additionally, if anyone is in need of a key fob, or other keys to the Church, please contact Ken Rieman, our Pastor or Kim Thomas, our secretary.



Monthly Shared Prayer Requests

In our community...

For **Russell Jarboe**, who is scheduled to undergo brain surgery on June 29th, at Providence Hospital in Everett.

Barbara Ehli gives thanks for steady healing from her hip replacement.

For Bill Case's daughter, **Carol Kamada**, with ongoing health concerns.

For **Mel Hart**, friend of the church and Northaven resident, recovering from a fall and a hip replacement.

For **Francis Bunger**, friend of the church and Northaven resident, recovering from the two heart attacks he suffered last month.

For **Liz Lindley**, recovering from hip-replacement surgery.

For the **Smith-Derksen family**, performing mission service in Chad, N. Africa.

For **Gene Harnden**, who is recovering from surgery to remove cancer from his scalp.

Ongoing prayer requests:

Charles Walker; Bob Oberg;

Carol Landis; Elaine Rankin;

Eileen Birkey's mother; **Ernie Ricketts;**

Tim Bisterfeldt's aunt **Diane Peters;**

Dorothy Rhodes; Ryan Halifax; Alvida Fite;

Sharon Haley's brother, **Mark;**

Violet Lauridsen; Adam Ford;

Susanna Rempel; and

Michael Rogers, Lew Fortin's nephew.

In our state, nation & world...

For the people of Israel and Palestine who seek to build understanding and trust in the wake of re-emerging violence and turmoil across their lands.

For the newly formed Muslim Peacemakers Taskforce which is working with CPT to reduce sectarian violence in Iraq.

For a peaceful resolution to the growing discord between Iran and nations concerned about the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology there.

For an easing of the escalating sectarian tensions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For the safety and return of all combatants, and for the difficulties which their families face in their absence.



Living Peace Church News & Notes

Greetings from On Earth Peace!
This is a column focusing on the peace & reconciliation ministries of the church.

Resources for the Church: War and its Lasting Effects

It is estimated that one-third of those returning from military service in Iraq and Afghanistan experience significant lasting effects to their emotional and mental health. The church – too often a place of silence, awkwardness, or superficial sharing about such trauma – needs to take advantage of the many resources available to educate ourselves.

A clear, easy-to-read book which explains what soldiers have faced is **Down Range: To Iraq and Back.**

Written by Bridget Cantrell, who holds a Ph.D. in combat trauma, and Chuck Dean, a Vietnam veteran, *Down Range* is published by WordSmith books and is now available for discount from On Earth Peace. Doris Abdullah, Brooklyn (NY) First Church of the Brethren, writes, "*Down Range* gives a broad depth of emotions, experiences, hurts, and traumas that both the family and returning service member may be experiencing. These are shared from memories of veterans from ravaged battlefields in Europe, Korea, Vietnam, and from today's veterans fresh from the urban cities in Afghanistan and Iraq."

Plato wrote that "only the dead have seen the end of war" and Chris Hedges in **War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning** helps us understand why. David Waas, Manchester (IN) Church of the Brethren, writes, "A brilliant writer, Hedges is a graduate of Harvard Divinity School and an author and articulate lecturer. He draws upon his experience as a war correspondent to explore the mysterious but powerful attraction that war has for the human race. This unforgettable bestselling book makes a powerful statement about the challenges faced by those who seek peace." *War is a Force* is published by Anchor Books and available in most bookstores.

Whether you have a family member in the military, or your congregation would like to develop ministries for returning vets, consider studying these books or contact On Earth Peace for more information and ideas.

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.brethren.org/oepa
oepa_oepa@brethren.org

Good Cause Car Wash

The youth of OVCC will hold a car wash on **Saturday, July 15th**, from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM in the Olympic View parking lot to raise funds for their trips to NYC and Summer Camps.

How does one raise funds at a *free* car wash?

It goes like this: Please bring your car in for a wash! We will gladly accept donations...

You can also help our youth by becoming a sponsor of the car wash. Pledge to donate a nickel, a quarter, or a dime - whatever amount you wish -for each car that we wash. We hope to wash at least fifty cars, so your pledge would work like this:

Dime pledge: $.05 \times 50 \text{ cars} = \2.50

Dollar pledge: $\$1.00 \times 50 \text{ cars} = \50.00

Pledge forms will be available starting July 2. Please support the youth of our church by bringing your car by for a thorough, sudsy cleaning!

Thank you,

Roger Edmark, Youth Coordinator



Guild Will Resume in the Fall

Give Up Inactivity and Live with Dignity!

A sincere "Thank you" to the Olympic View Ladies for their faithful attendance and fellowship at our functions. In June, we completed our 12th breakfast meeting. Guild will meet again in September and continue to meet on the third Wednesday of each month. The gift of remembrance card and the roses were thoughtful, appreciated kindnesses.

Thank you,

The Olympic News is published monthly (mostly)
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425 NE 95th Street, Seattle, WA 98115
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We welcome you to our services.

