

# 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

August 2006

## How Guilt Plays A Part in Mental Health and Spiritual Wellness

By John Wenger

*Friends,*

*I found this article to be compelling and I wanted to share it with you. Perhaps because of my awareness of the ways that Christians have often abused guilt, I have failed to view guilt with the thoughtfulness which it deserves. I would covet the opportunity to hear your feedback on this piece. Does it ring true for you? Does it overlook an important perspective? Does it give you new insight into your life, or the life of our congregation? Please let me know.*

*Ken Miller Rieman*

In our Christian tradition, we know the benefit of guilt. We imagine an electric fence like an invisible fence for pets, around our behavior that zings or reminds us when we step beyond the boundaries of conscience, or what we know as God's will for our lives.

Our conscience allows us to establish and understand clearer guidelines of right and wrong in our lives. We are first taught by loving parents and an objective community that there are specific rules for living within a family and society. We learn the rules for safety, respect and cooperative living. We learn the logical consequences for certain behaviors. When rules are violated, guilt allows us to use God's gift of

free choice and to apply God's instructions on how to relate to others. Guilt over wrong behavior has the potential to redirect us and allow us to find real freedom within the parameters that God set forth in scripture.

However, guilt can also enslave people when matched with fears or a person's attempt to manipulate others. A dictator may try to elicit guilt in his/her citizenry or community so the people will follow certain beliefs that only benefit that dictator.

Guilt also can occur when someone believes that they have responsibility for another person's behavior. This can occur when a parent feels guilty over the poor choices of their children, or a spouse over misbehavior of a mate, or a child over the inappropriate behavior of a parent.

Guilt sometimes occurs when we look back at past decisions and regret the outcome. Guilt can be helpful if we make a decision with malice of intent. Then guilt should help us revamp our choices, to reevaluate our intent or purpose for our behavior.

If our purpose is to seek revenge for someone

*(Continued on page 2)*

### The Olympic News

Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren  
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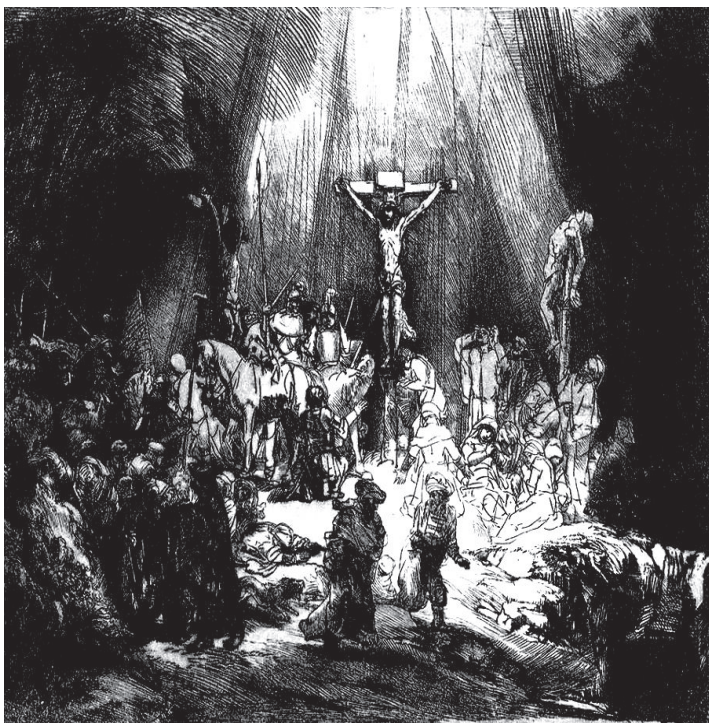
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else's action, the guilt over that decision may help us discover another response that can address the issue instead of simply projecting something hurtful.

Sometimes Christians feel guilty for regrettable outcomes, even though their intentions were good. An example might occur when we feel someone needs to be confronted on a behavior we feel is detrimental to them, but instead of welcoming the feedback they become angry and take offense at what is said.



Some individuals feel so anxious about a potential action being wrong, they choose to never act at all, which often only makes issues in relationships worse and, thus, piles guilt upon guilt.

Jesus acted, even if his action was misunderstood or received poorly. He responded in many novel and unexpected ways, as he did with Zacchaeus (Luke 19).

Whether his actions were received well, as they appeared to be with Zacchaeus, or with confusion, sadness or hurt, as they were with many Pharisees and the rich young ruler (Luke 18:18–30), Jesus simply did his best at that moment and did not feel guilty about the results. He probably was sad that others misunderstood him or even felt their way of life was threatened by him.

We may feel guilty when things feel unfair, such as compassionate parents may feel when a child complains that they didn't receive the same benefit or value as a sibling. God's plan was, and is, for grace and mercy. How unfair is that!

When we follow God's plan we will experience regrets, even moments of embarrassment and shame, but God only asks that we attempt to do the best we know to do at this moment and then accept the unlimited grace and mercy God bestows.

Guilt can temporarily help redirect our options and choices, but to feel guilty and unworthy continually denies God's grace and mercy. As church leaders, either pastors or laity, we are called to be caregivers. In caregiving we can give out of joy or resentment. When we give because others simply expect it of us, or because we would feel guilt if we did not, then we may start an "anger or resentment to guilt" cycle. Many wonderful Christians feel guilty because they feel resentment, then feel resentment and anger because they feel guilty. And the cycle just continues to repeat itself. I have spoken to many bitter, hurt, guilty Christians who have spent a lifetime doing the majority of the church's work only to end up later in their life feeling resentful and guilty, because they have been underappreciated.

When we follow better the second Great Commandment and love ourselves as we love our neighbors and friends, then we can give whatever we desire out of love. When we give out of guilt often our giving is perceived by the person experiencing it as less compassionate, genuine or simply done out of duty. But when we give out of joy, our enthusiasm and faith shine through.

#### **About the Author**

*John Wenger, Ph.D., is a psychologist and owner of the Anderson Psychiatric Clinic, Anderson, Ind. He is a member of the Anderson Church of the Brethren.*

*John serves the Church of the Brethren by serving as a board member of the Association of Brethren Caregivers and working on Voice: Mental Illness Ministry of ABC.*

## Vacation Bible School

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

By Carol Bowers

I wish to thank all the volunteers for Vacation Bible School this year. We are using "Jesus Friends" materials from Faith and Life Resources, a division of Mennonite Publishing Network. In His daily activities, Jesus showed us how to practice the friendship of God. He spent time alone with God in prayer; he called friends to follow his way; he healed the sick, and shared God's love with anyone who would listen. Children are invited to become friends of Jesus as they, too, spend time with God, share what they have, care for others, practice hospitality and tell others the good news of God's love.

### The memory text is *John 13:34-35*

Jesus said, "I give you a new commandment, That you love one another, just as I have loved you. You also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another."

### DAILY SCHEDULE

Registration performed by Gracie Edmark as children arrive.

#### 6:00 pm – 6:30 pm

Worship and drama in the Sanctuary: Carol, Lenore, Jerry, Kate, Jimmy, Ken and helpers

#### 6:35 pm – 7:10 pm

Small group session and snacks (Stephanie, Geraldine, Trisha) in classrooms (Goldie-pre-school, Kathy-K-2, Patti-3-5, Roger 6-8)

*The small group leaders will attend worship and friendship stations with their classes. Kathy Korff will assist with the friendship stations as groups visit each station twice.*

**7:15pm – 7:45pm** Friendship stations

**7:50pm – 8:20pm** Friendship stations

### Sunday's Friendship Stations

*Be Still and Know*, Marilyn, Social Hall

*Caring Blankets*, Nancy, Germantown Room

### Monday

*Drum Circle*, Jimmy, Social Hall

*Friendship Frisbee*, Carol, Germantown Room

### Tuesday

*Friendship Skituations*, Ken, Germantown Room

*Hospitality Café*, Peggy & Geraldine, Social Hall

### Wednesday

*Games to Play with Friends*, Ken, Social Hall

*Jesus Friends in Japan*, Edmarks, Germantown Room

### Thursday

*Sharing My Money*, Marilyn, Germantown Room

*When We Pray*, Lenore, Social Hall

### 8:25 pm – 8:30 pm

Closing will be led by Carol and Lenore in sanctuary.

Our giving project will be for the Lake City Food Bank. Children will be encouraged to bring a food item each evening to present as an offering. I will prepare letters of explanation to send home with students the first day. Then, I am hoping a food bank representative might come to worship the Sunday following VBS to accept the food.

If you haven't volunteered to help with VBS you can still help by inviting neighbors, friends and family. You can donate food for the food bank or supplies for the leaders. Contact any one of the leaders if you have a desire to help in their ministry.

## Landis Anniversary Lunch

We appreciate all of you – our extended family – for sharing our anniversary luncheon. It was a wonderful day for us.

We especially want to thank the Fellowship Committee and all the other volunteers for the work they did to make this day a success. Goldie and Jim Barnes, as the couple in charge, worked very hard and we send them our special gratitude.

– Bob and Carol Landis

Sharing Together

## Our Mother

(1)

Our Mother now has gone above,  
To answer God's homeward call,  
To that happy home that all should love.  
For there is a place for one and all.

(2)

We all are very lonely now  
As lonely as anyone could be.  
But we would not wish her back again  
And to see her suffer so needlessly.

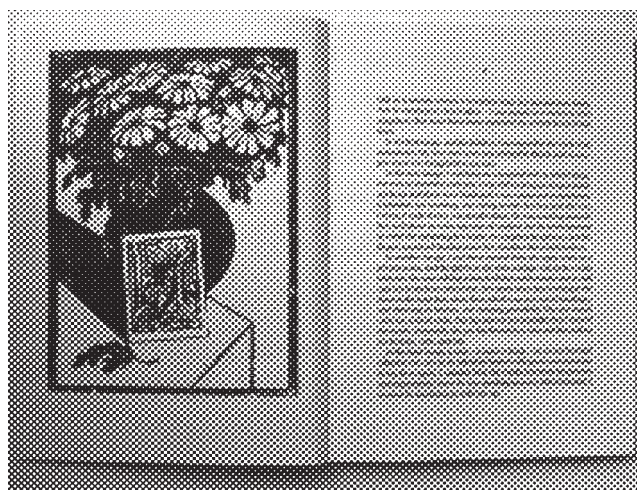
(3)

Her work on this old earth is done  
And ours has only just begun.  
From this old earth she now has gone  
And we are left to toil on.

(4)

But we all shall meet again someday  
As we all shall follow the very same way.  
For our lives too will come to an end  
And we'll meet once more around the bend.

*Written by Phoebe Smith, January 1934*



### **Olympic View Book Club**

*Time:* the club will meet at 10:30 am.

*Date:* Friday, August 25th

*Place:* Betty DeBon's house

*Book to read:* *Second Watch*

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## Executive Committee Report

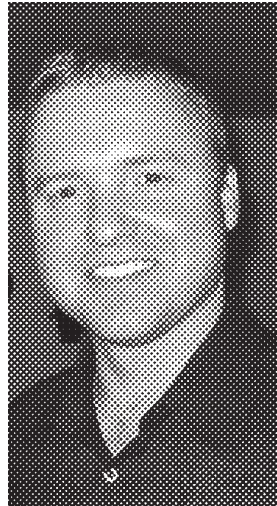
Although the Board of Administration is taking the summer off from meetings so that people are free to work on other summer-related ministries, the Executive Committee has been meeting to discuss staffing, finances, and future planning.

It has been determined that developing church leadership, spiritual gifts, and communication skills are priorities for the coming year. The Executive Committee is in conversation with several possible leaders to work with us. Sept. 9th or Oct. 21st are possible dates for a one-day Board Retreat.

Maintenance and upkeep on the church building continue. The sound system is continually being improved. Repairs and improvements have been made to plumbing and painting.

Although we are saying goodbye to our wonderful pianist, Balazs, and talented choir director, Kathryn, we are welcoming James Bowyer into our midst.

We'll plan to share more about James in our next issue, but we want you to know that James has extensive educational and professional experience in music education and performance. He earned a Master of Arts in



Theology from Bethany Theological Seminary (where he studied with Ken Miller Rieman); and Master of Music degrees in Choral Conducting, Music Education, and Voice Performance and Pedagogy from Westminster Choir College. He is currently working on Doctorates in Choral Conducting and Voice Performance from the University of Washington. James has directed choirs of all ages and abilities and is excited to be working again with a Church of the Brethren.

James will be serving as both our Pianist, and as our Choir Director. As such, he could be available to help direct the choir more frequently than Kathryn's schedule permitted, or our budgeting currently allows. James will begin playing piano for us August 6<sup>th</sup> and leading the choir in September. If you like

what you hear, and would consider donating money for us to hire James to lead the choir more than once a month, you could designate your gift 'choir directing.'

We hope you'll welcome James warmly, and if you've hesitated to join the choir before, now would be a good time to give it a try.

Thanks,  
Carol Bowers, Moderator

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## Monthly Shared Prayer Requests

### In our community...

For **Russell Jarboe**, who is recovering from brain surgery in skilled nursing at *Bethany at Silver Lake*, 2235 Lake Heights Dr, Everett, WA, 98208, Room #201.

For **Bob Oberg**, experiencing issues with pain.

For **Jerry Vierthaler**, who has been undergoing tests in echocardiogram at Virginia Mason.

For **Gloria Sherwood**, who spent time in Northwest Hospital the week of July 24th due to heat exhaustion.

### Ongoing prayer requests:

**Charles Walker; the Smith-Derksen family;**  
**Barbara Ehli; Gene Harnden;**  
**Carol Landis; Elaine Rankin; Carol Kamada;**  
**Mel Hart; Francis Bunger; Liz Lindley**  
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 Lebanon, Israel, and Palestine who seek peace in the midst of violence and turmoil across their lands.

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

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

## Two Poems for Michelangelo

By Kim Thomas

### Pietà I.

He lights a lamp to hang from the ceiling while he works. He works until the last day of his life.

The lamp shines orange like gladioli.

He works with hard tools on the cut of marble in his room.

Of grief, he understands the shoulders best; how these fall when there is nothing left to carry but oneself.

Without vulnerability he could not look so long at the mother's arms. Or feel the sharp star escaping her throat, rising now, awkward and white.

Better not to bind the wounds but seek the peace they yield.

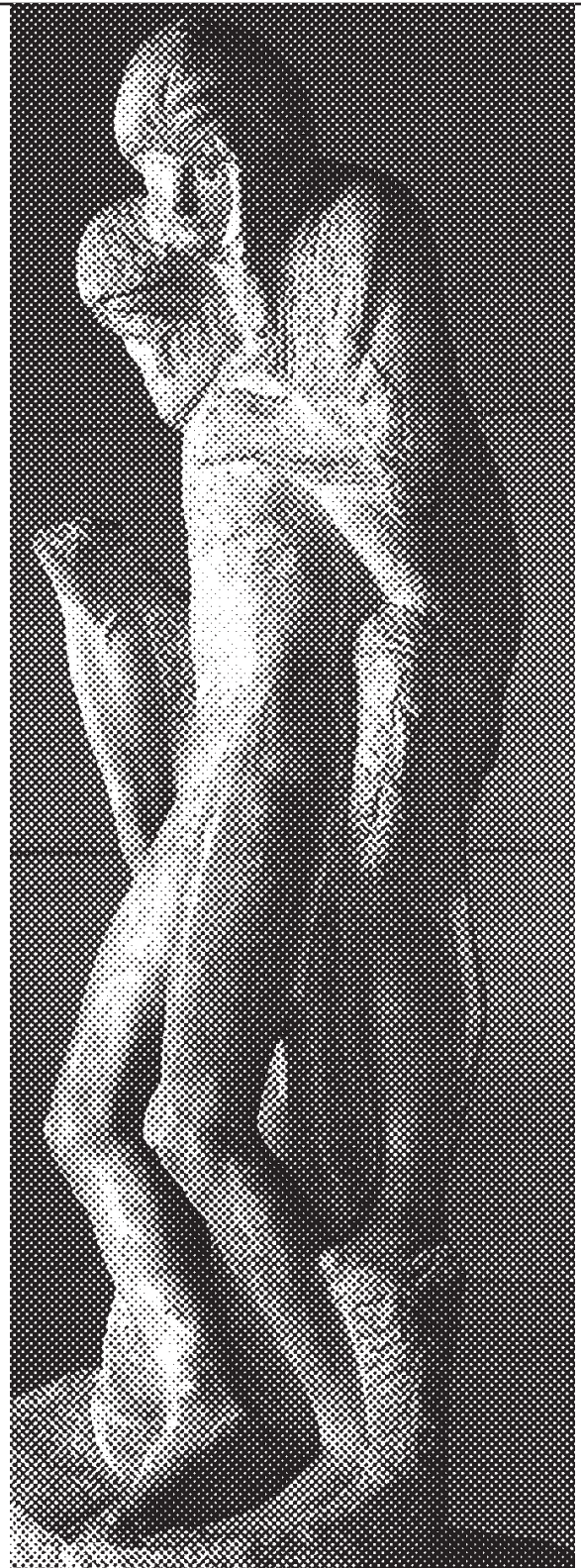
Ask, how do you shelter the heart wherein shelter is sought? See her fingertips tell his body to rest? Their chisel-scored skin an invitation to not understand, to augment gesture, to belong.

### Pietà II.

Days pass without the sculptor making a single indentation. Not sure where to cut – how does one divide mother from child? – he excavates the limbs as they are. Who holds whom, he wonders. Who let this sorrow come to pass? Who are we without it?

He sees his error in every cut; the bodies have arrived without great folds of cloth, without that polish marble can produce when sanded down by a fine-toothed rasp. Instead, he sees two peasants departing on stony ground. Stalling in the new sun at the base of a slope and waiting.

In their feet he finds a source of joy. Sometimes he finds them quiet.



Michelangelo Buonarroti - Pietà Rondanini, 1552 – 1564

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**We welcome you to our services.**