



JOY MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER
JUNE 2002



PASTOR'S CORNER

Then Jesus said to his host, when you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, or your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Lk. 14: 12-14. Other stories that deal with the concern Jesus expressed here, are the stories of Lazarus, who was sick and covered with sores, laid at the rich man's gate hoping to eat the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and the story of the man who hired workers to work in his vineyard. The poor are easily forgotten and ignored. If they have nothing to offer in return, society will forget them. Those laid at our gate are those we can help if we choose to. Society, and especially a prosperous society gives us reasons why we should not help those lying at our gate. In contrast, the owner of the vineyard, who is intended to show us the nature and character of God, seeks out the idle people in town and invites them to work in his vineyard. Then he pays them, not what they earned or deserved, but what they needed to sustain them. I thought of these stories when we got invited in raising funds for relief in Afghanistan. The concern for relief in Afghanistan came from a person from Pakistan. This person understands, as we cannot, that when disaster strikes in this part of the world there are no resources within the family or the community to help. It seems he also believed that if the need is presented people will respond. The key however is the presentation. It seems to me it is fair to say that people do not respond unless they understand there is some kind of payback for their generosity. Americans are like people everywhere, when disaster strikes our heart strings are touched and we do want to do something to help. But long before the need is resolved the needy are forgotten. From professional fund raisers we can learn the following: first, if you look to prayer, make sure it is well publicized prayer. Second, connect your appeal to some well known person, preferably some famous person. This offers a form of payback for your gift. Third, make sure your appeal is to help the innocent. Children, of course are the most purely innocent. It seems the greatest concern for most people is that the funds will actually get to those who need it and not swallowed up in overhead. We can acknowledge that many of the concerns for giving are legitimate and we would encourage people to use discernment. We also understand that the person Jesus asked us to be, to invite those who you know cannot return the favor is a spiritual journey toward God. It is to become like God, to love others as we love ourselves. While successful fund raising does seem to offer some form of payback, our Lord has

asked us to act out of compassion, the left hand does not even know what the right hand does. This is the way God is and the way we seek to become. I hope you are all doing well and enjoying the good gifts of God in your life.

Mores Mart

The "Whole Thing" by Roy Evans

God loves us and cares for us. He wants to help us get through all of our problems. He tells us not to be afraid, angry or despairing: He will make things better. Even though the problems of sin, selfishness, greed, injustice, violence and apathy still exist, God is greater than all of these problems. God loved us so much that He sacrificed His Son Jesus on the cross so that we could have forgiveness of our sins and also eternal life in heaven with God.

Some people ask us to consider "What would Jesus do?" but I ask "What does Jesus want US to do?" Jesus accomplished the greatest good for us by dying on the cross. God raised Him from the dead, thereby assuring us, as Christians, of forgiveness of sins and eternal life. The greatest thing WE can do is accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior. After that Jesus wants us to tell others about Him and not only love God, but to love our neighbors as ourselves. We are all right as redeemed sinners, but now we need to help others as we struggle to give peace, justice, and true joy not only to ourselves, but to all people.

Human beings are made in the image of God and deserve peace and justice not only in the spiritual realm, but in the physical, mental, psychological, financial and social realms as well. Jesus cares about the WHOLE person. Let us do so too.

May Revisited
May was a month of highs and lows. Highs with our visit with Bill & Thea Klassen. Bill gave our message on the 19th and afterwards had dinner with those that helped load their moving van last Dec. Wonderful to see old friends again.

Highs also with Jessica Warkentine's graduation from high school. Jessie's plans and goals for her future are coming together and we wish her all the best in her endeavors. Go girl!!

Lows were our bizarre weather and the accident at the Arkansas river bridge on I-40. So many families experiencing that tragedy. Please keep these folks in your prayers.

Another high was an article in the Daily Oklahoman on the Afghan Relief Fund. The article appeared on the 22nd in the Today section in Ann DeFrance's column. Copies can be had

from the Oklahoman. Take a minute and read it.

June Events

Ahh, June weddings! June 8th, Christine Faith Evans, daughter of Roy and Karin Evans, will be wed to

Steven B. Miller. The ceremony will take place at the 1st Christian Church at 1625 N. Broadway in Shawnee OK. Everyone is invited to share this joyous day with the Evans and Miller families.

June 17th-19th- A group from the Salina Mennonite Church, Salina KS will be staying at the church. There will be a work day with Joy members on the 17th followed by a potluck that evening. The following two days the group will be working with other local ministries.

June 21st-23rd- Our annual church campout at Red Rock Canyon State Park. Please come join us. This is a beautiful park and everyone is welcome. If camping is not your "thing", join us for worship service Sunday morning or just drop in any time to visit, we would love to see you. Wilma McKee from Hydro will be our guest speaker that Sunday.

We continue our Friday noon prayer meetings. Again and still, EVERYONE is welcome. If you can't join us physically, join us spiritually and take a minute or two Fridays at noon to pray for discernment of God's will in your own life.

A man from Pakistan and a man of the Jewish faith, wanted to send relief aid to Afghanistan. Someone suggested that they speak to the Mennonites about getting aid to that country. We told them about Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

After reviewing what MCC has done and is presently doing, these gentlemen asked Joy Mennonite to receive donations and send them to MCC marked for Afghan Relief. In a recent development; Oklahoma Interfaith Disaster Relief has committed to matching all donations up to \$15,000.00. This means any donations you make(up to \$15,000.00) will be doubled and sent to MCC for Afghan Relief. How much can we help?

Our worship leader for the month of June will be Roy Evans and the preaching schedule is as follows: June 2- Karin Evans,

June 9th & 16th- Moses Mast, June 23rd- Wilma McKee at campout at Red Rock, and June30th- Karin Evans.

Did you know that the MCC we support at Relief Sale in Nov. is the same MCC that will be helping women and children in Afghanistan and others around the world? Are we really doing what Jesus wants us to? Are we loving others as we love ourselves? Am I loving myself more than my "neighbors" when I have that second Coke or a new pair of earrings? Maybe my Coke and earrings could help someone else better in another form.

**Final Thoughts
Deborah O'Neal**

Well, the baby birds are now big birds. Mom and Dad literally shoved them out of the nest this past week. Reminded me of a little song a friend of mine made up to sing to her

teenagers at those times when the limits were being stretched and tested: you wanted to be big, you wanted to be grown, you make your own decisions, go out on your own.

God teaches us so much stuff in our lives if we're willing to learn. If we are not willing and refuse to learn, we get taught the same lesson until we do learn it. Once we learn the things He wants us to know, then He sends us out to teach others. Sort of shoving us out of that safe, secure little nest. Boy, do we gripe about having to use our God-given lessons.

Love my neighbor!! are you kidding?? have you seen those people?? but they're _____ (fill it in-go ahead-we all know how)!!! Guess what? God didn't say only love the people that are lovable, He said everybody.

Hey, Father's Day is June 16th. Remember your Dad and thank your Heavenly Father too.

Come see us, we like you and miss you.

JOY MENNONITE CHURCH
504 NE 16TH OKC OK 73104
Sunday Services 10:00 am Sunday School 11:30
All are welcome, please join us as you are able

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