



JOY MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Pastor's Corner...

Jeremiah was a young man when God called him to a prophetic ministry. He was so young he was afraid no one would listen to him.

Josiah was only a child when his father died and he was made king. As a young man Josiah had a passion to abolish the idolatrous worship and restore the temple and the celebrations of worship Israel had known before. Despite his passion to restore Israel to true faith, Josiah aligned himself to a military power and died a tragic death in a battle with a foreign king. Jeremiah did a public lament for the deceased king.

Jeremiah focused much of his prophetic ministry to warn against unholy military alliances. It may have been the tragic death of Josiah that caused Jeremiah to focus on this issue. Jeremiah believed that trusting in man or the flesh

was not only sinful, but left one at the mercy of the elements that surround you. On the contrary, Jeremiah believed that one who trusts God is not at the mercy of the elements that surround you, but is like a tree planted by the water. A tree planted by the water continues to flourish no matter what the surrounding elements are (Jer. 17:7).

Jeremiah never had much popular support. Sometimes he had a few supporting friends, at other times he was very alone. Jeremiah did not speak glibly about trusting God as if it was his nature. Trusting God is not our nature, at least we do not act as if it was. If we feel secure we feel no great need to trust God, even though we may speak as if we do. When we feel insecure we feel compelled to do something. When the elements around us are troubling we go to great

extremes to make ourselves secure.

The biblical language of trusting God is like wrestling. Our will wrestles with the will of God. It is sometimes filled with uncertainty. There are questions of why, and why not. We can speak glibly about trusting God if we don't have to trust God for anything, like having the money to pay for what I need. To trust God is to trust God for something.

We learn to trust God when God calls to go a certain way and we feel insecure in that way. It is not trusting if we are lured that way by our own desires. We learn to trust when we know a way is right but also filled with risk.

Trusting God does not mean nothing bad will happen to us. It is also true that when tragedy strikes and we are upset does not mean we do not trust God. How we continue after the tragedy,

how we recover, how we heal, how we are shaped by the experience tells us much more about how we trust God.

The world seems filled with a kind of madness to make ourselves secure. Wise counsel is shunned in favor of brute force. We cannot stop the madness. We can only make sure we are planted where the water of God's grace and mercy will nourish us no matter what the elements are that surround us, and entice us to join the madness. Trusting God is a pillar of security in an extremely insecure world.

Moses Mast



Valentine's Day!!!!

by Frank Bliss

Valentine's Day is celebrated on Feb. 14th as a festival of love and romance. The day is named after two Christian martyrs named Valentine.

What is the meaning of "Valentine's Day" in America? Well, while I was growing up, we gave cards to our friends at school. It was neat to get a card in return. I guess this kind of love translated in Greek would be known as Phileo

love (a friendship type of love).

As we get older, we reserve this day for a special friend, usually a loved one; maybe a wife, husband, girl or boy friend, daughter or son, mother or father. We exchange messages of love

as well as presents with these loved ones. This kind of love can be thought of as possibly Eros love, another kind of love in the Greek language (a romantic love). I think Jesus would have us send Valentine cards to (continued...)

everyone in the world if possible. Agape love is the type of love that Jesus has for us and we aspire to have for others. A love so intense that Jesus died for us. At the last supper Jesus was quoted to have commanded the apostles "To love one another, just as I have loved you; love one another so that people everywhere will know that you are my disciples."

I was asked to introduce myself. My name is Frank Bliss. I am the father of seven children. My interests involve trying to get as close to God as possible. I am convinced that Agape love for others, as Jesus loved us, is the way to it. Happy Valentine's Day. Love, Frank Bliss.

Remember...

That Wednesday, February 25th, is Ash Wednesday, and marks the beginning of the Lenten Season.

We should remember the path our Savior walked for our salvation.



News...

A work day is planned on Saturday, March 7th, to do repairs on the Hammon, Oklahoma Church. Several congregations will be involved in this project, which may continue past this date. If you would like to be involve, you may contact Moses Mast or Bill Klassen.

Note...

We are still collecting labels from Campbells' products to benefit the Hopi Mission School. Some of the brand names include Campbells, Prego, Sanwa, Pepperidge Farms, Mrs. Pauls, Swanson, V8, and Franco

American. If your church is not doing this, you might consider saving some labels and sending them our way. Thea Klassen in is charge of collecting them, and there is a can for them at Joy.

Prayers...

It would be good for us all to pray for the leaders of our country and the world, as the threat of more bombs falling on Iraq increases. God grant us peace.

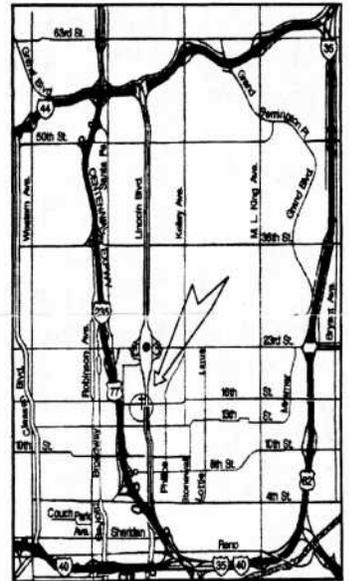
Please continue to pray for our young people here at Joy, and for all of us that we would have the wisdom to help to guide them.

As Spring Break approaches, we wish everyone a nice break and pray for safe passage for those who will be traveling.

Women...

A very interesting conference is planned on June 25-27 at Bethel College, in Kansas. It will be called, "Journey Toward Healing: Women Doing

Theology." Cheryl Crichley has some information and a registration form. You may also request more information and forms from Gwen Groff, MCC Women's Concerns, 717-859-3889, gmg@mccus.org.



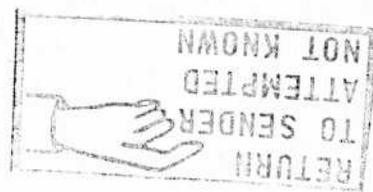
Joy Mennonite Church is located at 504 NE 16th (just west of the oil derrick on 16th, south of the State Capital.)

We meet at 10:00 am on Sundays. You are welcome!

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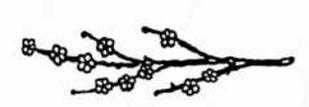
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