

# JOY MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER

## Pastor's Corner

### A Christmas Meditation for the Whole Year

St. Nikolaus was a priest whose generosity and compassionate acts of kindness made him a legend after he died. Many believed his acts of kindness were miraculous acts of God. This was over 1600 years ago. Now many countries have created a figure in his memory in their own cultural image. Americans speak of an elderly, robust man dressed in red who lives at the North Pole and at Christmas delivers gifts to children on a sled pulled by reindeer.

We hear a lot about putting Christ back into Christmas. Might it not be better to say we should put the Christ of the gospel records back into our lives. Have we not also made Jesus into a suitable cultural

image, one that pleases us, one that we are proud to present to our secular society.

According to the gospel record Jesus was born in Bethlehem. To be born in Bethlehem had a divine interpretation, not only for the Messiah but for national leaders. The prophets of Israel all said at various times that God's choice of a national leader would come from Bethlehem. Bethlehem stood in contrast to Babylon. Bethlehem, a small and insignificant place, spoke of servant leaders rather than a person of royalty born in centers of power.

The gospel shows Jesus as being born to a peasant girl and raised in a poor peasant family. The circumstances of his birth are like a displaced or homeless person. When Jesus began his ministry he lived somewhat like a homeless person. Jesus had a passion for what he understood as the

misguided masses by the religious establishment. Jesus focused on his ministry of teaching and healing. He depended on the goodwill of people for food and a place to stay. Jesus was later described as one who went about teaching and doing good. Jesus was rejected by the establishment in his time. We too would probably consider Jesus an irresponsible person. Just like we changed the image of St. Nikolaus from the human person of compassion and generosity to the other-worldly figure of Santa Claus, we present Jesus not as the human person that he was, but as divine royalty. The way we build buildings and the elaborate way in which we decorate them is more suitable for royalty than the homeless person of the gospels. The Apostle Paul said that Jesus was an embarrassment to the

secular culture (Greeks), so we change the image to one we can be proud to present. What I understand as the popular proclamation of American Christmas to the secular world by our lifestyles and elaborate centers of worship is that we have as much of the good life as you, with an added bonus, eternal life. We must think deeply and prayerfully about what we are doing.

We hope you had a happy celebration of Christmas and wish a good year for all of you in the year to come.

*Moses Mast*

*Happy New Year  
to everyone!*

## Editorial...

### by Martha Shoemaker

(Note from the publisher: The following is compiled and condensed from several journal-like stories written by Martha. It was a shame to leave anything out, yet hopefully the message will shine through. I plan to make several copies of the entire works available. If you would have an interest in reading them, please contact Martha or myself, Cheryl Crichley. I'd like to include, in particular, information she gave about the neighborhood where Joy is

located. On a personal note, I think that you will agree that, by her own definition of what it is to be a Mennonite, Martha was already on the way before she joined us.)

I live in an almost all black neighborhood. It was all white when I moved into the neighborhood in 1958. In 1959, the schools were integrated and all the white people began to move out of the neighborhood. With the good people who moved in came the drug dealers, bootleggers, and gangs. You

could hear gunshots night and day. I had women and children coming to my house to escape from their violent husbands or men friends. I would call the police for them. Police wouldn't come unless they had back-up. I started a one-woman crusade, trying to get rid of the drug houses, bootleggers and gangs. I called the police, drug enforcement, the FBI, gang enforcement, and other people who would listen. In 1974 was when it got really bad. They threatened to burn down my house and run me out of this side of town. I decided

I needed to go back to church. I needed help from the Lord Jesus Christ.

I met Sadie Mast about two years ago. Sadie was walking alone in our neighborhood. I was afraid for her safety. There were gangs, drugs, gunfire, fights, and people shouting at each other. I met Sadie and we talked. I knew she was a Christian woman. I asked her what faith she was. She told me Mennonite. I asked her about it, and she told me that they believe in the Bible, and to love everyone (continued on back...)

(continued from front) and to help people. Moses and Sadie joined the neighborhood association. They wanted to get the neighbors together and clean up the people's homes. They helped get a dumpster for people to trim trees and put old furniture stacked behind their homes and other junk in them. Our neighborhood looked so much better. Moses and Sadie asked other Mennonite churches to help. They came from everywhere to help, and they asked for nothing in return. I thank God for the Mennonites and Sadie, who came to our neighborhood walking alone. Our neighborhood is now drug-free, gang-free, and really getting fixed up. With Sadie, Moses, and the neighborhood association, and the Lord Jesus Christ, we are proud of our neighborhood. I give thanks to John Williams, past president of the association, gone but not forgotten. I am now a member of Joy Mennonite Church. The Lord has called me many times to help the less fortunate people. I saw on the news about Sister Ruth and her friend trying to feed the people in need. I had been to the store and had bought a 5 lb. box of cheese. We took it down where the

people were standing out in the rain and cold waiting for food. I saw a young woman and a child about four or five years old, standing in the rain with not coat or shoes. I took off my coat and gave it to the woman and went to the car for a blanket for the child. The woman put the coat on the child. She took the blanket and wrapped herself and her child with it. I went to a church, where I was a member, and the preacher came for a visit. I was wearing my jeans and a t-shirt. My husband was drinking. The next two sermons he preached were that if a woman wore pants to church she would be asked to leave, and if a woman lives with a man who drinks she is as much a sinner as that man. He also told me not to bring the neighborhood children or my grandchildren unless they had suits and proper dresses. I prayed about all this. I knew I wasn't a sinner. Sadie invited me to church and told me I could wear anything I wanted, just to wear clothes. I had almost given up on church. I asked if I could join Joy Mennonite Church. The people welcomed me with open arms. I have never seen so many caring people. The

people prayed for me when I was in the hospital, brought food when I was sick, before and after I came home. All the people from church prayed for me. Through prayers and the Lord Jesus Christ I am healed.

**News...**

Sunday, Dec. 21st, a good group went carolling to several homes in the area.

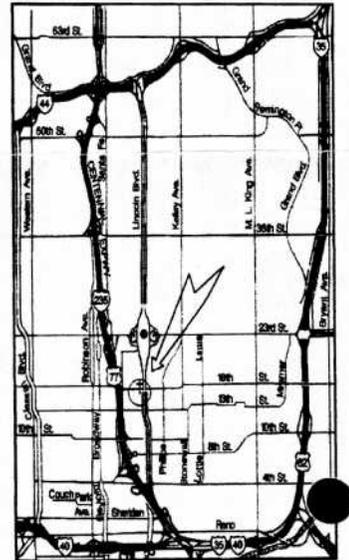
Walter Sawatsky will be speaking at the Corn Mennonite-Brethren Church on Jan. 21st at 7:30 pm. The topic will be Mennonites in Russia.

**The face of Joy is changing!**

If you recall the heartfelt letter by Terry Hostetler in the August newsletter concerning young people, you should visit us now! We have been blessed by two large families who have recently begun attending. Things are rowdier and more vibrant because of these young faces, and we praise God! This is a call to all the youth who have not been attending regularly. Come back and make some new friends! We ask for your prayers that we may listen to God's will in helping to guide these teenagers and children, and that we can also be willing to learn from them. Prayers are being answered and we are thankful.

**Do you know someone?**

We received a letter asking for help for some 8th-graders doing a research project on the migration of people out of Germany between 1931 and 1939. If any of our readers lived in Germany during this time and would be willing to share their memories of pre-war Germany, please contact: Mrs. Janet Hall Bethany Middle School 6421 NW 42nd Street Bethany, OK 73008



Joy Mennonite Church is located at 504 NE 16th (just west of the oil derrick on 16th). We meet at 10:00am on Sundays. Everyone is welcome!

MOSES & SADIE MAST  
4708 OUTPOST DR  
SPENCER OK 73084

REQUESTED  
ADDRESS CORRECTION  
POSTAGE GUARANTEED  
FORWARDING & RETURN

(405) 236-4938  
Spencer, OK 73084-2722  
4708 Outpost Dr

Joy Mennonite Church



NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
OKC, OK  
PERMIT NO. 2545