



The monthly newsletter of The Community Church of Issaquah March 2011

A Word from the Pastor

“Whoever says ‘I am in the light,’ while hating a brother or sister is still in the darkness.”

-1 John 2:9 (NRSV)

This past week the Supreme Court decided 8-1 that the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, KS had “free speech” rights when they disrupted a military funeral (which they have done in a number of occasions.) They said that the First Amendment protects this group’s right to do what they do, despite the pain they cause grieving families. Cathy and I know all about this pain, as several years ago the group picketed the funeral of Cathy’s nephew who died because of a roadside bomb in Iraq. Justice Samuel Alito was the lone dissenting vote, nothing in his dissent that “Our profound national commitment to free and open debate is not a license for the vicious verbal assault that occurred in this case.”

Of course, I am not an expert in constitutional law, so I cannot effectively comment on the appropriateness of this ruling. However, I am a pastor and I do want to comment on the actions of this church which is supposed to act on behalf of Jesus Christ. The church’s actions are hateful and judgmental. First of all their picket signs are full of hate: “God hates fags”, “God hates the USA”, “You [the dead soldier and their loved ones] are going to hell.” Then in addition, when the father of the dead soldier who initiated this particular legal action was surfing the internet for tributes to his dead son, he came across a poem on the church’s website attacking him and his wife for the way they brought up their son – this in spite of the fact that the church people knew neither the son nor his parents.

One wonders whether the leadership of this church ever really reads the Bible. A church is supposed to be a light to the world, and yet what does this church do with the verses like the one at the top of this article? How can they think that why can be a light to Jesus Christ when they are full of hate, and John clearly tells us “Whoever says, ‘I am in the light’ while hating a brother or sister is still in the darkness”? Christ himself tells us “Do not judge, so that you may not be judged” (Mt. 7:1). Paul tells the churches of Galatia (the Westboro Baptist Church of their time) that if salvation comes by living up to all of the laws of the self-proclaimed righteous, then grace is nullified and “Christ died for nothing” (see Galatians 2:21.)

A church that seeks to represent Jesus Christ should embody the very graciousness and mercy of God himself, The Westboro Baptist Church has received a lot of publicity for itself in recent years, but it has shed little light, certainly not in the sense that Jesus Christ is the *light of the world*. That might result in having their time in the spotlight in this temporal world, but it does little to witness for a God of love. For a church which refers so much to God’s judgment, they better hope that judgment is more gracious than their own, because Scripture holds our speech to a higher standard than the US Bill of Rights. Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:29, “Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for *building up*, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.” Doing what Paul calls us to do leads to speech that is *freeing*, and not simply free.

-Pastor Keith Madsen

Special Dates for March

- World Day of Prayer, March 4, 2011
- Transfiguration of the Lord, March 6, 2011
- Ash Wednesday, March 9, 2011
- First Sunday in Lent, March 13, 2011
- Daylight-Saving Time begins, March 13, 2011
- Second Sunday in Lent, March 20, 2011
- First Day of Spring, March 20, 2011
- Third Sunday in Lent, March 27, 2011

LONG TERM PRAYER LIST

Perhaps you would like to add these church family members
to your prayer concerns:

1. Marge Armstrong, Lake Hills Family Home
2. Faye Cooper, at Marionwood
3. Rose Matthai, Aegis Assisted Living
4. Robert (Bob) Pusch, Group Home, Burien
5. Ken Schmelzer, at home
6. Dorothy Swearson, Issaquah Care Center
7. Sylvia Olsson, living with daughter in Maple Valley
8. Florence Watkins
9. Martha Nordhagen Adams House, Oregon
10. Geri Hardesty

AMERICA
FOR CHRIST
OFFERING
2011

**March is designated as the time of
America for Christ Offering
For 2011**

Watch the bulletin blurbs and announcements from the
pulpit on
Sundays March 13th, 20th and 27th.

Touching
Lives,
Transforming
People

MATTHEW 9:13



*Arlene and I want to express our deep appreciation
for all the calls, cards, support and love offered to us
by our church friends. Thank you for your expres-
sions of compassion during our time of loss.*

Arlene and Dick Birdsall

COMING UP IN APRIL: WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

WOMEN... Destined for God's Purpose: Mission Possible!

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11

American Baptist Women's Ministries/ Pacific Northwest Conference

April 15-17, 2011

Clarion Hotel, Yakima, WA

Registration forms available on narthex bulletin board - *check it out!!!*

Questions? Call Charlotte 392-1185 or Lynora 255-4863



March 2011 at CCI:

- WMF Meeting - Tuesday 3/1..... at 1:30 pm
- Deacons Meeting - Thursday 3/3 -----at 2:00 pm
- Trustees Meeting– Sunday 3/6 ----- at 12:30 pm
- Council Meeting - Sunday 3/13----- at 12:30 pm
- Young At Heart-Thursday 3/17-----at 11:30 am
- Bell Deadline - Monday 3/28

Happy March Birthday to....



8 Daisy Cox
8 Stephanie Hansen
24 Craig Akishin



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