



e- Vigil

Electronic Communication from the International Christian
Community Church

May Issue

May 1, 2007

The International Christian Community Churches celebrate the diversity of God's people and their mission to bring others to Christ. All of our churches are open, welcoming and accenting.

The winter is far behind us and the promise of spring has been fulfilled. We journey into summer with dreams of vacations and adventures. Even though most who read this are no longer children, when summer comes we all long to hear the bell ring the last day of school. Habits are hard to break.

Churches, too, prepare for their summer. Membership classes, promotional church growth programs, Bible study groups prepare for their summer break. Pastors try to figure out how to squeeze some time away and keep their pulpit covered. Balancing time is difficult, but the dream of vacation a chill time drives us into a world of fantasy.

We all need time to rekindle our spirits. We need time to dream. We all know that even during vacation we are never far from the demands of reality but the dreams are never far from our hearts and minds.

I have heard recently that we can not change yesterday. What is done is done. Let go and live today. During the summer we have time to reflect on what we have done from Fall to summer. Some things we have tried have been successful. Some good ideas have not worked as we expected them too and some projects were not thought out enough and have not been successful.

Recently, my computer began to act funny and seemed to be getting slower and slower. I tried talking to it and coaxing it but to no avail. A friend told me that my memory bank was to full. It seems I have filled my document storage to the breaking point. Naturally I think everything I write should be saved (I might need it in the afterlife). He suggested that I hard copy and file those things that I needed to save and delete all the rest. Documents he informed me were for projects I was currently working on. I did as he asked and I now have plenty of room to create new projects.

Our minds are like the computer. This summer delete the old stuff. Make room for new dreams And visions. Happy Summer. Rev. Philip Maniscalco



NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Christ First International Christian Community Church

You are invited to a fun and free

CommUNITY

Celebrating the belief that: "Hate Is Not A Family
Value"

May 5, 2007

11:00AM until 4:00 PM

At the Dogwood Pavilion at Longwood Park on Lake

Refreshments will be available all day. There will be
entertainment through out the day and there will be games
and prizes for the kids!

Lunch will be served from 12:00 PM until 2:00 PM

Please come help us to celebrate diversity. Family, friends

**A Touch of Sadness and the Joy of Resurrection
God has graced this church with many talents. These blessings rise up at every
occasion to lift up this body of believers to God. This Holy Week was proof of the
dedication and love of God.**

Good Friday was a sad but beautiful service. The service was entitled, "A Journey to the Cross." The Good Shepherd Pulpit Players presented the service. The service was a dramatic reading of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The Gospel passages follow Christ from his prayer in the Garden to his death on the cross. Each passage from scripture was preceded by a reflection on the Gospel in light of our time and a prayer followed each passage. The church was empty except for a crucifix on a bare table and the Christ candle.

At the end of the service when the death of Christ was read all the readers bowed their heads as the light of Christ was extinguished and the cross was covered with a black veil. The readers left in silence as the congregation pondered on the price Jesus paid for our salvation. Many stayed in their seats to pray and contemplate leaving in silence.

The Players were: Marty Martensen, Jo Ann Jensen, Jackie Pruitt, Zeke Alejandro, Frank Harrell, Joe Brown, and Joseph Story. The presentation was under the direction of Rev. Maniscalco. A special thanks to this wonderful and dedicated cast of players con't

Easter Sunday was amazing. Rev Mena Johnson, Deborah Fanning and Darrin Minor broke forth with the sound of Joy and Praise. Those of you who have heard this trio know what a real blessing this is. Even Rev. Philip was seen tapping his foot and swaying to the rhythm. Rev. Jay and the congregation were in Rapture. As always Randy Barnes our Minister of Music brought life and excitement to the service. with his magic fingers gracing the piano keys.

Special thanks to Marty Martensen and Jo Ann Jensen for the beautiful Easter cake decorated with spring flowers and shaped like a cross. Randy Barnes was also surprised with a Chocolate Sauerkraut cake for his birthday.

It was a glorious celebration and a beautiful Easter. I can only imagine what Pentecost will bring!

New Church in Seattle Washington

On May 7, 2007 a new ICCC congregation will be born in Seattle, WA. Holy Covenant ICCC will begin its life of service to Christ. For several reasons, Rev. David Strong has been led to transform the former Community Church of Joy into Holy Covenant. His vision of an affirming, open, disciple-making congregation is really exciting; I would ask all of the churches to support them in prayer and praise. Rev. Carlene Wood, Clerk of the Governing Board

Please check the church websites, which can be located at
[www. Intlccc.org](http://www.Intlccc.org) for other activities

Emmaus Institute Has Proposed Opening

The Governing Board will consider appointing an additional person to the staff of the Emmaus Institute. Rev. Wood, the current Interim Director of the Emmaus Institute, has requested assistance. The position would involve some teaching and help with curriculum development. This position is still in development. The Governing Board has recommended that a survey be conducted to see if there is any interested clergy or members that would like be considered for the position. A complete job description and job requirements will be posted in the e-Vigil. If you are interested please contact the e-vigil at philipmaniscalco@bellsouth.net or intlccc@aol.com. When the information is completed and released it will be forwarded to you..

Of Interest To The Churches:

James L. Evans

For some time now a contentious battle over homosexuality has raged in our country. The war has been fought primarily on three fronts: religion, politics and science.

Religion and politics are by far the most volatile, and the most destructive. Some of the language used by segments of the faith community to wage their part of the war comes very close to dehumanizing gays and lesbians.

Politics, for its part, is always glad to take whatever hysteria is offered, and use it to leverage votes and power. For instance, conservative political operatives discovered that homosexual issues such as gay marriage have enormous potency for turning out evangelical voters. In the 2004 presidential election, no less than 11 states held referendums on gay marriage. Political conservatives won in each one of those states.

Science offers the best hope for finding a way to end the war. If science could somehow definitively prove homosexuality occurs naturally in humans, it would force us to rethink our religious prohibitions. After all, behaviors that are somehow part of the natural order cannot be regarded as matters of choice and are therefore beyond judgment. It would be like condemning someone for being left-handed.

And without a religious prohibition the fuel for the political engine would evaporate. Politicians would be forced to find some other culture war issue to scare us with.

Unfortunately, there's one problem with relying on science. Many people of faith will never accept a scientific view that contradicts their biblical understanding about homosexuality. They would be forced to find other scientists? Faith-based scientists? to refute the findings. Or at least that's what happens with global warming and evolution.

But here's a twist. A conservative evangelical seminary president believes science has already determined that homosexuality has a biological rather than a volitional origin.

Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., acknowledged in a recent article that homosexuality has a biological basis. But, rather than concede the obvious that something we are born with cannot be sinful? Mohler instead recommends the development of some sort of medical procedure that will undo the biology and render the child heterosexual.

If you think religion and politics has been destructive so far in this debate, just imagine what will happen when eugenics gets mixed into the matter.

I wonder what other behaviors we might be able to eliminate in the pre-born. Andrew Newberg, in his new book "Why We Believe What We Believe," argues human beings

are "hard wired" to believe in God. What Newberg means by this is there seems to be a biological basis for faith in human beings. If he is right, Mohler may be interested in finding a way to eliminate atheists while they are still in the womb. By manipulating their brain chemistry Mohler could be assured that all newborns are future believers in God.

Of course, I don't imagine Mohler would want to create any liberal God believers, so I guess we need to look for a conservative theological gene as well.

The prospects are truly amazing. By manipulating the fetus with pre-birth medical procedures we could pre-program people to be just like we want them to be. We could create a race of super people, perfect and beautiful in every conceivable way. It would certainly be a Brave New World, Dr. Mohler.

James L. Evans, a syndicated columnist, also serves as pastor of Auburn First Baptist Church. He can be reached at faithmatters@mindspring.com

THOUGHT

In the opening of our Articles of Covenant it states that we are not called to form denominations. We are called to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. Are we doing what God has called us to do?

Each congregation of the ICCC tries to establish a place of worship where we can give God thanks and praise. We create a church where we can find refuge in an unjust world. Will celebrate God and create space for fellowship. We proclaim that our doors are open to all.... and they are! If we are to proclaim the Good News to the world don't we have to go outside our own doors? Are we a spider people who only wait for fly to come into our nest before we, as Christians take any action?

We must witness our faith in the public arena: at work, at play, and at home. It is our presence in the world that draws people to Christ. How many people in your city know that you exist or even have doors that are open? Are you a visible church? Not your worship space but the temple of God that you are? Just a thought.

Rev. Philip Maniscalco

NOTICE

ALL Pastors have received a copy of the Articles of Covenant with suggested revisions. Please read carefully and discuss with your Congregations. Changes will be voted on at Convocation

Do You Know
The Dates Of
CONVOCATION
2007
?

Governing Board

Presiding Minister: Rev. Jay Neely
 Assistant Presiding Minister: Ms. Sharon Lindenbaum
 Clerk of the Board: Rev. Carlene Wood
 Treasurer: Mr. Milton Blanchett
 At-Large: Rev. David Strong
 At- Large: Rev. Jerry Ethridge
 At- Large: Mr. Rob Hagen



Board of Ministry

Chairperson: Rev. Emily Bel
 Rev. Mena Johnson
 Mr. Tim Sharp

Area Leaders

Rev. Jerry Ethridge: GA
 Rev. Carlene Wood: NC.; SC.
 Mr. Rob Hagen: AL.; TN., WA

Emmaus Institute

Interim Director: Rev. Carlene Wood

Reminder:

- Check your calendar for due dates for articles to be placed in the e-vigil
- Regional Planning Meetings
- **Board of Governor reports past due.**
- Please make copies of this newsletter to be distributed at your church
- Homiletics Conference, Nashville TN
May 21-25

e-Vigil Editor:

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Deadline: 25th of the month

***Christ Centered
 Open and Affirming
 Inclusive
 Where the Door
 is always open***

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