



# e- Vigil

Electronic Communication from the International Christian  
Community Church

July Issue

July 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 accepting.

## PRIDE

The last beat of the drum fades off into memory land. Thousands of rainbow flags and ribbons return to storage boxes. Hundreds of experiences will be recalled over the next few months. And according to the Atlanta Journal Constitutions plans are already in the works for next years Pride celebration. It is my hope that our readers who celebrated Pride 2007 this month will have "fabulous" memories to recall. But, tell us sisters and brothers what were you the most proud of????

Pride, when it began, was a visible sign that we were one. We were no longer children of the night but rather we were children visible in the light. Homosexuality became visible. We had faces. We were neighbors and employees or bosses. We exposed ourselves to the harsh glare of being real people. We broke the binding closet doors and identified our selves as children of parents, beloved cousins, Aunts and Uncles. And even Parents. Under someone else's flag (The rainbow Coalition) we marched publicly and proudly. It grew from a few brave souls walking down empty streets to cities like Atlanta where thousands of spectators cheer on thousands marching down a major public street. We were brave naive children in the beginning with fear as a constant companion. Our Banner then was pride.

Those days are far behind us, we are no longer the display of unity we once were. Our bond as people of diverse sexual orientation has become weakened. Atlanta has three parades one for Lesbians, one for Blacks, and one for everybody else. Our common bond in our exclusion from society now mirrors the separate but ever so equal exclusiveness by sex and color.

I did not attend Pride for the first time in my adult life. I admit I got hung up on the pride part. Am I proud of the semi naked drunks clinging onto poorly decorated floats? Am I proud that banks, car dealers, airlines, insurance companies and cruise lines have figured out that I have money so they allow the handful of gay employees to distribute advertising in our parade. Politicians also ride in open cars asking for my vote yet there stands in every state laws against my life choice.

Two generations of our people are dead. AIDS. And now we watch our young people act as if the disease is an act of passage into our society. Boys and girls thrown out of their homes and families because they are gay now sleep in dark passageways and abandoned buildings. Bullies force them out of schools Fear and abandonment lead them to alcohol and drugs, allowing them to escape the pain of their existence. Pride? Young people just like you and me selling their bodies to survive or to experience a sense of love and belonging if just for an hour. And where are we putting our money? Our time?

At lunch with ministers and friends I could see the people walking past our restaurant window to find a place in the crowd to watch the parade. Many were bringing children. I thought about them. What would the future hold for them? How many of us have registered to vote? How many laws lay hidden in the books that might one day be used against them? In my own circle of friends lay the seeds of injustice for others: My vote doesn't count. All politicians are crooked. I don't have time to register. Is today election day? It is all a joke! What we don't realize is the joke is on us.

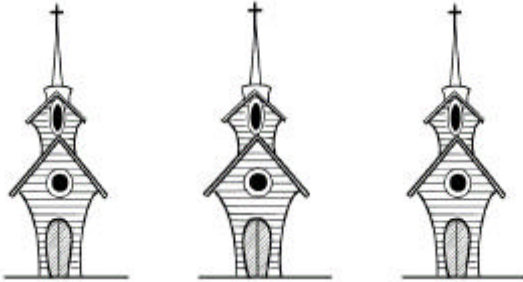
I attended a Homiletics (preaching) Conference this May. A major theme was telling the truth. There is much talk about the hurt evangelicals cause; their constant harping on sin in a hateful way. There is no one who will read this column that is not a sinner. It is a fact jack. Even the more enlightened churches preach on the feel good and how not mentioning sin will keep people positive (and in our pews). As they sing in the WIZ, "Don't Bring Me No Bad News", is our preferred anthem. But there is bad news.

Works alone will not save you nor will sitting in church because it is not accepting, nor being a Board Member, Preacher, Pastor, Choir director, or small group member or tither save you. It is the refusal to change that will do you in. Even though we have returned to open and accepting churches we are not free to keep and pass on our old sinful ways. We are not free to use sex like masturbation only caring about and satisfying ourselves. We are not free to destroy a committed relationship. We cannot steal. We must not take God's Name in vain. Worship is not a weekly option. Christ like is not just once a week. Gossip destroys lives and is a cowardly act. Abuse of God's gifts is a sin. Loving God with your whole heart and soul is not optional to salvation. It is not suggested that we love our neighbor but it is a command upon our lives. If only we were as proud of God as we were of Pride how different would we be?

Brothers and Sisters, I know that there are a lot of people who have abandoned God. I know many including myself who have turned from God because religion has been used as a weapon of mass destruction (even open and accepting churches). We are no longer drunken college kids at spring break. We can rejoice and celebrate without the necessity of stepping down to our lowest denominator.

We have the skills and talents to create magnificent and mind blowing floats. Our music is a draw for the world at large. Our diverse talents in creating parade magic could inspire and ignite wonder in the crowds. The religious dimension of our community should not seem like an interruption in the parade but a vibrant part of who we are. Pride, what does pride mean to you? Look what parades have done for others: Macy's Christmas Parade, The Disney Parades The Fourth of July Parades? And the Marches: Civil Rights? Viet Nam, Or the Stonewall Riot? Is Pride a positive manifestation of who we are? Are we united in creating change so that our children will have a better world to live in? Pride? Justice? Change? Perhaps you can voice your opinion; after all it is our Parade.

Rev. Philip Manicalco, Editor



## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

### **Good Shepherd: Atlanta, GA**

Good Shepherd reports that they are still in search for a place to worship. Setting up in the YWCA proves more difficult each Sunday. A store front in Stone Mountain has been suggested. It is the least expensive of several sites located. At \$1100 a month it is hardly affordable. The congregation will be making a decision in the near future.

The staff of Good Shepherd will be adding a Healing Rite and a Rite of Forgiveness and Renewal to its services the second Sunday of each month.

All three clergy will be preaching in other denominational churches in the next few months. Rev. Neely believes that this visitation will bring a sense of unity to the churches. It gives all of us to witness the diversity in our worship and the creativity found in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Michael Bates one of our congregation is still recovering from Gun shoot wounds he received while walking in Piedmont Park. Please keep him in your prayers.

Rev. Neely will be celebrating his 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday and he and George are celebrating 30 years as companions, lovers and spouse.

On Sunday, July 22, Good Shepherd will celebrate Gospel in the Park. The church will have a field day at Stone Mountain Park. They will celebrate the Eucharist, followed by a picnic and an exploration of all the attractions Stone Mountain has to offer. Come join the fun!

### **Assistant Pastor Named for Valdosta**

Rev. Jerry Ethridge has appointed Dale Goff as Assistant Pastor of New Hope. Pastor Jerry Ethridge has sent the required material to Rev. Emily Bel and the Board of Ministry. Pastor Dale hopes that he will be credentialed by the ICCC. The process of verification does take time, Rev. Bel explained. The Board of Ministry has begun the process. I know our prayers will be with Dale and all candidates that are in the process of being credentialed.

**Christ First: Gainesville GA.** Christ First Congregational Meeting will be held July 29. Deadline for agenda items will be July 15th

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

## Denominational News

### Emmaus Institute Has Proposed Opening

The Governing Board will consider appointing an additional person to the staff of the Emmaus Institute. As yet no complete job description and job requirements have been created. If you are interested please contact the Presiding Minister at [Intlccc@aol.com](mailto:Intlccc@aol.com). When the information is completed and released it will be forwarded to those of you who have voiced an interest. Academic Background suggested but not required

## GOVERNING BOARD JULY MEETING

The Governing Board will have their last meeting before the National Convocation in November of this year. The Board will be meeting in Atlanta, Georgia in the home of the Presiding Minister, Rev. Jay Neely and Mr. George Rogan. Board members will be staying in a local hotel. At this time all will be present.

Many of the Board Members will be attending the Formal Installation of Pastor Linda Simonds as the first Pastor of Holy Trinity in Montgomery, Alabama.

Rev. Neely has reported that this is a very critical meeting. The agenda is quite full. He asks that the denomination keep the Governors in prayer.

#### REMINDER: ARTICLES of COVENANT

Churches have all received the proposed changes to the Articles of Covenant that will be voted on at Convocation 2007. Rev. Neely asked that congregations wanting to make other changes or modify the suggestions being made by the governing board need to do so quickly so they can be sent to the churches on how changes are made in our governance. Please contact the national office at [intlccc@aol.com](mailto:intlccc@aol.com) and we will send you a copy.

## Governing Board Seats will be up for Election

Four Positions on the Governing Board will be coming up for re-election. The Position of Presiding Minister, Treasurer, Clerk,, and one member at large position are available. . Pastor Jerry Ethridge has been serving a term as Member at Large to which he was appointed when the holder of that position resigned. The Board will announce this month those who are presently serving and wish to run for re-election. You will receive instructions on how the campaigns will be organized and run

### NOTICE

All Pastors and Churches have received a copy of the new monthly report form. The July report form will be reporting on the activities of the month of June. **DUE: July 5, 2007.**

Do You Know  
The Dates Of  
**CONVOCATION**  
2007  
Nov.9, 10, 11

## QUESTIONS FROM THE CHURCHES

From time to time the office receives requests for information perhaps you have an answer. If you do have an answer email us and we will publish your answer. Send questions to [philipmaniscalco@bellsouth.net](mailto:philipmaniscalco@bellsouth.net) ( 2<sup>nd</sup> Request )

There were no responses to the question, How do you define a member in Good Standing?

### MENTORS NAMED

Rev. Emily Bell announces that Rev. Philip Maniscalco, Rev. Carlene Wood, Rev. Bel, and Rev Mena Johnson have been named as Mentors. Rev. Garrett will be mentored by Rev. Maniscalco.; Pastor Cyndi Shepherd mentored by Rev Wood, Pastor Monica Ledford mentored by Rev. Johnson and Pastror Linda Simonds mentored by Rev. Bel. Keep them all in Prayer. These candidate have completed their studies at Emmaus

**Rev. Philip Maniscalco Selected to Teach Polity and Ecumenical Action**

Rev. Carlene Wood, Interim Director of the Emmaus Institute has sent a note of thanks to Rev. Maniscalco for offering to teach the course in church Polity and Ecumenical Action. Rev. Carlene stated that she would definitely take Philip's offer to teach these courses and hopes that others would follow and volunteer in this education process.

Having not taught the course herself she is sending a copy of the last syllabus that was used and will give it to Philip when she comes to the Governing Board Meeting in July. Rev. Wood asks that if you have specific training in an area of our syllabus and would like to teach please contact her at the Emmaus Institute. The last course of this semester is being taught this month. The new cycle of classes for Emmaus Students begins the Fall of 2007.



God Blesses America not because we are great and powerful..  
 Not because we believe in freedom and justice.  
 Not because we place God on our money.  
 Not because we have Freedom of Religion.  
 Not because of the diversity of our citizens.  
 Not because we are righteous.  
 Not because we are free.  
 God loves all who are Gods children and we are part of the  
 Family of God.

The ICCC now has an Ad running in Sojourner Magazine.  
 Tell us what you think !

### **The WHY of Monthly Reports.**

It has been felt during previous convocations that there is something missing in our communications at all levels of the denomination. Your Board of Governors is trying to address church concerns. The purpose of the report is simple: it allows the Board to know what is happening in the churches in a timely manner. It gives material that can be used in various publications of the Denomination. It gives voice to administrative problems that can easily be resolved by members of the Boards and place experience in the hands of many.

We already keep records of Baptisms. We are going to keep a record of those Baptisms on file as a precaution against loss or fire. Likewise, Marriage is coming into our realm of influence. Like all churches accurate records should be maintained. This will enable ministers to perform the act of marriage with out fear of legal complications. This would be true of Holy Unions as well. In this new age more responsibly is called for what was once considered a mere gesture is now reality.

Membership. Our churches being in different states and time zones it is important as we make plans for our future to understand how our churches are growing. This will also involve in the future how our monies may be divided and spent.

**First Report  
 Due  
 July 5th**

**Ask Not What God can do for you, but what you can do for God**

## From The Headlines

(Nashville, Tennessee) A regional gay and lesbian newspaper has been pulled from racks at Nashville-area Kroger grocery stores; the newspaper's publisher calls the action discriminatory.

"This is last thing that I thought would happen," said Jerry Jones, publisher of Out and About, a monthly newspaper for gay and lesbian readers in Tennessee. "It's a concern because it could happen to any publication."

A Kroger Co. spokeswoman said the Cincinnati-based company has a policy against displaying publications that promote "political, religious or other specific agendas" and cited the need to remain neutral.

But newspaper supporters say Kroger enforces the policy inconsistently, noting that Kroger allows the display of gay newspapers at its stores in other markets, such as Atlanta, and alternative weekly newspapers with political columns and ads for strip clubs in the Nashville area.

Kroger spokeswoman Melissa Eads said the policy speaks for itself and declined to answer further questions Tuesday.

"Kroger strives to be a store for the entire community, and that necessitates remaining neutral on many issues," the company said in a statement. "We think this is a fair approach to everyone."

But Kroger allows The Southern Voice, an Atlanta-based gay and lesbian newspaper, to be distributed on its stands in Atlanta-area stores. The grocery chain also advertises in the paper.

"It would be interesting to know why there is a different policy from one store to another," said John Wade, president of the Nashville Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Chamber of Commerce.

The Nashville Scene, an alternative weekly, is offered for free at Kroger stores in Nashville, and it regularly publishes political columns, along with advertisements for strip clubs and dating phone lines.

For the three weeks the May issue of Out and About was available at Kroger, about 3,500 issues were picked up, Jones said, a significant number for a newspaper that usually distributes about 14,000 copies.

Jones said the newspaper has no sexually explicit content and does not accept ads for dating or chat phone lines.

"The local Kroger managers that I've talked to received no complaints," he said.

"If Kroger were to review the paper, they would find it is a very clean and well-produced newspaper," Wade said. "The public perception of anything within the gay community is that it's sexual in nature. I think they are reacting to perception, which is not necessarily the reality."

Kroger, the largest U.S. traditional grocery chain, operates 2,468 supermarkets and multi-department stores in 31 states, under two dozen local banners.

# World News

Posted: June 4, 2007 - 1:00 pm ET

(Berlin) After nearly four years of delays construction will begin this year on a monument to honor gays and lesbians persecuted by the Nazis. Final approval of the design was made on Monday the government announced.

A government committee approved the design by Danish-born Michael Elmgreen and Norwegian native Ingar Dragset last year but until now could not agree on minor changes for the memorial.

It will be a gray concrete slab, with a window allowing visitors to view a film projected inside showing gay men and lesbians kissing.

The statement said that the memorial will be completed later in the year at a cost of slightly over \$800,000.

It will sit on the edge of Tiergarten Park near the memorial to the six-million Jews who died in the Holocaust.

The exact number of gay killed by the Nazis may never be known. Adolf Hitler declared homosexuality an aberration that threatened the German race. Some 50,000 homosexuals were convicted and an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 gay men were deported to concentration camps, where few survived.

The Nazi law against homosexuality remained on the books in West Germany until 1969.

In 2002 the German parliament issued a formal pardon for gays convicted under the Nazis.

There also is a monument to gay holocaust victims in San Francisco

Was God joking when it was said that every knee should bend at the mention of the name Jesus?  
God's ways are not our ways!

## 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 Reports due the week prior to the Governing Board July Meeting
- Board of Governor repots past due.
- G.B.. Meets July 13-14
- Please make copies of this newsletter to be distributed at your church

### e-Vigil Editor:

Rev. Philip Maniscalco  
[philipmaniscalco@bellsouth.net](mailto:philipmaniscalco@bellsouth.net)

404-906-3294

**Deadline: 25<sup>th</sup> of the month**

Christ Centered

**Open and Affirming  
 Inclusive**

Where the Door is always *open*

International Christian Community Church

P.O. Box 161991

Atlanta, GA 30321

[intlccc@aol.com](mailto:intlccc@aol.com) or [www.intlccc.org](http://www.intlccc.org) or 404-755-8998