

The Vigil

July 2008

A Communication Of The International Christian Community Churches



A Message From The Presiding Minister

- Rev. Carlene Wood

As I write this, I am filled with very mixed emotions. There is a part of me that is putting on battle gear in preparation for a great conflict. Another part of me is feeling righteous indignation. Still another part is just so very sad, and a bit tired of fighting the same battle over and over again. You see, the 2008 Exodus International Freedom Conference will be held here near Asheville at Ridgecrest (Baptist) Conference Center in mid July. As many of you know, Exodus International offers of Christ to those who want to ally and learn to be something



How to convince our sisters and part of the same family of God) mental disorder, that we are not God created us to be? How to they do is unethical, psychological and not in the least bit God-conference, there will be rallies, gatherings, and a "real-family" for the Christian GLBT and af-participate in these events, I have little hope that they will change anyone's mind. So I've asked myself, "What will?"

"reparative therapy" in the name denounce their sin of homosexuality different.

brothers in Christ (yes, we're that we are not suffering from a perverted, and that we are as make them understand that what cally and spiritually damaging, pleasing? In response to the movie nights, small and large picnic day. While it is important firming community to partici-

The proof is in the power of our witness to the love and grace that we have received through
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Who Do You Say I Am?

That is the theme for **CONVOCATION 2008**. Not just a question, but a statement. More than that it is a reality, a thought, an idea, a feeling, an expression. It is a way to love, to think, and to understand. It is songs to sing, words to speak, prayers to utter, joys to express and questions to ask.

It is **CONVOCATION 2008 - November 7-9 at the Crowne Plaza, Atlanta, GA.**

New, different and exciting. A Convocation filled with the joys of God, the music of a new Christian musical group - CANAAN BAND, preaching, teaching and workshops filled with wonder.

**BE THERE. FEEL THE MAGIC. EXPERIENCE THE MYSTERIES OF OUR FAITH.
HEAR THE BRUSH OF ANGELS WINGS AND FEEL THE BREATH OF GOD.**

CONVOCATION 2008 - Atlanta, GA - November 7-9.

Watch for postcard announcements in the mail!

NEW HOPE'S NEWEST!



It is with pleasure that we introduce to you, Dillon Reese Ethridge! Dillon is the new son of Rev. Jerry Ethridge and Ray Powell. Dillon was born at 6:45 PM on May 24, 2008, and weighed in at 5 pounds and 15 ounces and he was 19 inches long. Congratulations to Jerry and Ray and their new family member Dillon.

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A Message From The Presiding Minister

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the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Christian GLBT and affirming community must lead by example. We must be obedient to the call that Christ has on our lives, and we must show the same love and acceptance to our detractors as Christ showed to us. This is not an easy task! We can argue scripture and church tradition, we can cite modern scientific research, and we smugly talk of Sodom's sin of *inhospitality*, but these things rarely make a difference.

Our witness, however, cannot be disputed. We should be known for our faithfulness -- faithfulness to Christ, to the power of prayer, to reading and following scripture, to caring for others and for the earth, to being the "royal priesthood" that we are called to be, and to our commitment to love as Christ loved us. Only when others are able to see the Christ within us will we be effective in our pursuit of true Christian inclusivity.

MINI GOSPEL CORNER

Sharon Lindenbaum, Assistant Presiding Minister

The Gospel According to Sharon

Chapter 1 – Verses 1-20

In the beginning, God created lots of stuff; you know, people, animals, birds, things that crawl, things that swim, things that slither. And God created people - man and woman. And God created the stars, the heavens, the moon and the sun and lots of other stuff. And when God was finished with all this creating God rested – well sort of. God DID take some time to create something very, very special. It is called FREEDOM. Ah, what a wonderful idea; what a wonderful way to live; what a wonderful way to co-exist in this crazy world of ours. And God looked at ALL the creations and thought they were all good. And God looked at FREEDOM and could not help but wonder if people would ever really understand it. You see, God knew that FREEDOM is a two-edged sword. If people do not use it properly or wisely, it can do as much damage as good.

God said to the people, "This thing called FREEDOM is how you are to live your life. It is how you govern yourselves. It is how you learn to be just and show mercy. It is how you and your children, yes, you will have children, will learn how to chose right from wrong, how to discern things, how to be honest, and how to be humane. FREEDOM is a gift, a choice, sometimes a right and always a need to be. Take good care of this gift; use it wisely. Do not abuse it, do not deface it, do not harm it and do not manipulate it. It can be your friend and it can be your worst enemy. So, I give you FREEDOM. Love it, protect it, cherish it and do not abuse it".

And so, thousands of years later, God "created" the Fourth of July, a day to celebrate FREEDOM in a free country that God also created. And several years ago, God even allowed the writer of this Gospel to be born on the Fourth of July. She learned to love freedom, to cherish it, to treasure it, to fight to protect it. She also learned it is indeed a two-edged sword. It can cut the handle of those who hold it. It allows good and bad organizations to exist in the world together, and it gives pleasure when used properly and lovingly.

So in the future, say the summer of 2008, may you look at that day and remember the gift of this moment. The gift of FREEDOM. And remember men and women will die to preserve it and live to defend it. May it be as precious to you as you are to me.





Why do we use candles in our worship?

By Rev. Philip Maniscalco

Candles

Candles have been used in Christian worship from our very beginning. Originally they were used to provide light so the ministers and people could see. No symbolism was attached to them until the Middle Ages. In the history of using candles in worship there has been a great variety and number of candles. Generally, in today's worship we use three candles - two on the altar and the Christ Candle. Candles symbolize joy and also represent Jesus, the light of the world.

Altar Candles

The placement of the altar candles is up to the custom of the church. They may be placed at either end of the Altar. They may be placed on one side of the altar together. They may be placed next to the altar on floor standing candlesticks. On some occasions the candles may be carried in the entrance procession and placed on the altar.

When the Christ Candle is used this candle should be the first lighted. The altar candles are lit next; first the one on the Gospel side (the candle closest to the pulpit or lectern) and then the following candle is lit. Note that the candles may be lit before the service begins and extinguished after the service is over. Many churches, seeking to involve more people in their service, have someone light them before the procession of the choir or ministers and extinguish them after the ministers or choir recess. People identified as candle lighters or acolytes (altar servers) perform this task.

Christ Candle (Also called the Paschal Candle meaning the Easter Mystery)

The Christ Candle is a large candle that represents Jesus Christ. It appears during the Easter Worship Service and is recognized as Jesus Christ, the light of the world. In its use during the Easter Worship it is Christ destroying darkness by overcoming death. It is placed next to the pulpit or lectern during the Easter Season from Easter until Pentecost. After the Easter Season it is used during Baptism and at funerals. It is a visible sign of Jesus present in the world and the promise of our salvation.

Prayer Votives

These are small candles placed in glass votive candleholders. People light small votive candles offering up prayers for loved ones or for a special intention. It gives a visual picture of an act of prayer.

For more information about the use of candles in worship or any question about the things we use in worship or the things we do in worship please contact me at philipmaniscalco@bellsouth.net

ICCC Presiding Minister Visits Potential Congregation in Florida

Rev. Carlene Wood met with an inquiring congregation in Daytona Beach, Florida at the end of June. Here is a portion of her report:

"The congregation of New Family Church in Daytona was delightful! We met with them on Saturday afternoon for a meet and greet and then had dinner with Rev. Beau and Susan McDaniels (pastor and spouse) and a few others from the church. We worshipped with them on Sunday morning - I preached and Sandi helped serve communion. We then had a potluck and an information session about ICCC. They had already read our articles, and had great questions."





News from New Day Greer, SC

Great news! Our yard sale was deemed a huge success. The church made a little money, sellers made a little money and shoppers found some super buys.

Under the trees in our parking area 8 tables, a trailer and the back of a pick up truck displayed wares from collectible glass to chain saw sharpeners.



Over 100 door hangers passed out to area neighbors, ads on the radio and ads in local newspapers brought over 150 people to our grounds. New Day provided a free hot dog lunch and we were able to tell many local residents about our church and its mission. Surprisingly, several visitors wanted to sit and chat under the awning where a cool breeze showed up every now and then. We are ready to plan another one in the fall.

On July 5 several of our "bravest" members got all wet in our annual tubing trip down the Green River in Saluda, NC. After all was said and done these brave souls decided that perhaps at "our age" we are more suited to putt putt and a cookout! Fun was had by all, but sore muscles reminded all of us that we just

aren't as young as we used to be!

Plans are underway for our yearly Homecoming Weekend scheduled for September 21, 2008. Our special guest speaker will be our Presiding Minister Rev. Carlene Wood. Following worship we will enjoy food and fellowship with dinner on the grounds. We would love to see some "new faces" with us that day, so this is an open invitation to join your brothers and sisters for a day of worship, celebration and great food!

HAPPENINGS IN HICKORY

Christ's Church of the Foothills has been busy enjoying the fun of family and fellowship. The church participated in Dining for Friends in May, having a potluck with the theme of "Cartoon Characters and Super Heroes". We were able to raise several hundred dollars for the local AIDS service.

June proved to be a real "zoo" for the church as over 20 people went to the Lazy 5 Ranch. This is a very large animal reserve with over 70 different species of animals and birds from all over the world. The group took a wagon ride through the park and enjoyed the animals first-hand as they fed buffalo, goats, pot-bellied pigs, various types of birds, deer, antelopes and even giraffes up close. The animals actually come up to the wagon to be fed - all the animals except the giraffes. They just sort of hang their heads over the wagon and eat out of buckets of food provided by the park.

Hickory is preparing for their anniversary, to be held the first weekend in August. The church will also celebrate the 7th anniversary of their pastor, Rev. Christine Oscar.



Good Shepherd Models Change

Rev. Philip Maniscalco

On Sunday June 22, following a potluck lunch the congregation met to select a new pastor. The fourteen members had expressed concern that choosing a new pastor would be very difficult. The Selection Committee had not been able to select a candidate to present to the congregation for election. They suggested that the congregation choose between the two candidates for the office: Rev. Mena Johnson and Rev. Philip Maniscalco. It seemed to both the committee and the congregation that neither candidate would receive the necessary 75% vote needed for the election of a candidate.

In response to this dilemma, which could divide or even destroy the church both candidates met with officers from the Governing Board to develop a proposal that might be less destructive. Instead of choosing one candidate to pastor the church, it was decided at the consultation that both candidates would withdraw their names for consideration as pastor. Atlanta is a very large city with millions of people. Perhaps it would be helpful if the church divided into two churches. It would help meet the needs of people living great distances from each other. The plan would create two I.C.C.C. churches in the city - one on the Southside and one on the Northside.

Both candidates are very talented and bring many gifts with them. They each bring their own style of worship and preaching which until the retirement of Rev. Jay Neely had enriched the congregation. The congregation had expressed to the selection committee that they would have preferred co-pastors, but considering the vision and mission each pastor shared with the congregation it appeared that this would not be possible.

The Proposal was presented to the congregation for approval. There was great debate as the congregation realized that the family they had become would be different after this vote. Each candidate explained that establishing two churches would help bring others to Christ. There is plenty of room in Atlanta for two churches. The congregations would always be linked by friendships and a shared faith experience. The two Atlanta churches would encourage each other and continue to celebrate with each other.

Having given everyone a chance to express their concerns and ask the hard questions, the Proposal was put to a vote. It was decided to form two churches. Rev. Maniscalco would pastor the South church and Rev. Mena Johnson would pastor the North church. The present funds will be divided equally between the two churches. Rev. Johnson and Rev. Maniscalco will set the time for the official separation of the two churches. Both are eager to begin this process and to grow these two new churches. It is believed that the churches will separate before Convocation 2008. Until then they will continue to meet in their present location and Rev. Jay Neely has volunteered to stay in the pulpit until the churches form their own boards and have established their financial plans.

This is a first for our church and the denomination. To our knowledge this has not happened before. All of us will benefit from this transition. Good Shepherd asks for your prayers as it moves to transition. It has been prayer that has brought us this far and we believe that prayer will bring us through this change.



The Vigil

July 2008



Governing Board

Presiding Minister: Rev. Carlene Wood
Asst. Presiding Minister: Ms. Sharon Lindenbaum
Clerk of the Board: Ms. Kim McGinnis
Treasurer: Rev. Steve Garrett; Vigil Liaison
At-Large: Rev. David Strong
At-Large: Rev. Linda Simonds; Web Liaison

Emmaus Institute

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Board Of Ministry

Chairperson: Rev. Emily Bel
Rev. Monica Ledford
Rev. Mena Johnson
Mr. Ray Powell
Mr. Alan Hathcock
Rev. Christine Oscar, Alternate and Chaplain

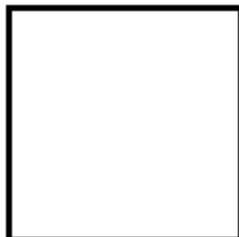
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