

DOLGEVILLE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Newsletter ~ December 2011



Beloved Saints:

It has been said that if you don't expect much you won't be disappointed. That doesn't sound very Christian to me. William Carey wouldn't agree with that statement either, for he said, "Expect great things from God and attempt great things for God." Since our God is so great, how can we have small expectations? Because we have trivialized the things of God we have therefore trivialized our expectations. I am not talking about expecting something great for Christmas and claiming it with a positive confession. I am talking about being in readiness for a great revelation of our great God. When God is big in our view, our expectations will be big and the Bible promises that those who "trust in the Lord will not be disappointed!" I'll take that.

One of the dangers of Christmas is that it is so safe with "little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay." He is not little and He is not asleep. He is our great God and Savior! One of the Christmas songs that I love, (unfortunately, we don't sing it very often) has the Latin title, DIVINUM MYSTERIUM.

"Of the Father's love ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, He the Source, the Ending, He.
Of the things that are, that have been and that future years shall see
Evermore and evermore!"

This time is all about Jesus, it is not about us, it isn't even about Christmas. It's about Jesus. That's all! Let Jesus fill your hearts, minds and homes during this wonderful season. You can say Jesus and Christmas. It's all right. I give you permission to be politically incorrect!

Our Advent to Christmas theme is HOLY ANTICIPATION. Check yourself, and see that everything you do, cooking, baking, shopping, fosters that holy anticipation, not for Christmas but for the revelation of the living God. I want to challenge us to memorize John 1:1-5, and 14 as our confession of faith during this Advent season. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and God was the Word. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created by Him and without Him was nothing created. What was created in Him was Life, and that Life is the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." Each Sunday will emphasize an aspect of this holy anticipation. These aspects are HOPE, PEACE, JOY, LOVE, and culminating on Christmas Eve with FULFILLMENT.

This season of the year is filled with wonder, amazement and mystery. Be a child and discover the joy of wonder. Never allow this season or your life to become "the same old, same old." Raise your expectations beyond your range of expectancy. Learn to sing the Advent hymn,

"Come, Thou long expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free.
From our fears and sins release us, Let us find our rest in Thee!"

Martin Luther



Once again, we will be collecting money for Mindy Juliano and her mission work in Ghana. Each family is encouraged to collect change until the end of December for Mindy in Ghana. Be sure to pick up your "change jar". When your jar is full and/or at the end of December, bring it in and add it to the large jar that will be available at church.

Mohawk Valley Choral Society
presents

A Christmas Tapestry

with Chamber Orchestra

Director: Randy Davis

Sunday, December 11 @ 7:30 p.m.

Holy Family Parish, Little Falls, NY

Tickets: \$12.00 in advance

At the door: \$15.00



DCF LADIES MEETING

The DCF ladies will hold their regular meeting on Saturday, December 10 at 9:30 a.m. at the home of Bonnie Boyd and Bonnie Kaminiski will be the speaker.

COOKIE EXCHANGE

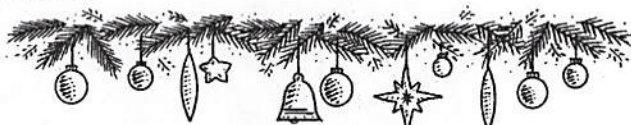
The DCF Ladies will be sponsoring a "Cookie Exchange" on Sunday, December 18 at the church.

For those wishing to participate, there is a sign-up sheet at the church for your name, type of cookie and how many dozen.



DECORATING THE CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS

On Thursday, December 1 from 5:30-8:30 p.m., the ladies of the church will be decorating the church for the Christmas season. Join in the fun of working together and sharing the season with each other!



CHRISTMAS EVE CELEBRATION

Saturday, December 24

7:00 P.M.



There will be no church service on Sunday, December 25.

Intercessory Prayer

When: Tuesday's

Time: 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Where: DCF



Bible Study

When: Tuesday's

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Where: Pastor Marvin & Sandy Isum's home

NEWSLETTER ITEMS

Any upcoming events, meetings, activities, stories, pictures, poems, or testimonies for the newsletter, please submit by e-mail to Pastor Marvin at nanowetea@msn.com or Irene Tooly at iltooly21@hotmail.com or leave in the "Newsletter Basket". Deadline for the January 2012 newsletter is Sunday, December 11 so that it can be distributed the following Sunday, December 18.



NEW PIANO APPROVED FOR DCF

If anyone would like to make a contribution toward the purchase of this piano in memory or in honor of a loved one, it would be very much appreciated.



Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Haas

On November 12, 2011, Daniel Haas and Jennifer Keiper were united in marriage at the First Baptist Church in Little Falls.



On Sunday, November 6, The Rev. Dr. Scates and The Rev. Meier from Johnson Park. Center conducted the church service at DCF.

Below: The Rev. Scates and The Rev. Meier and their group along with Bob and Wendy Polivka who are on the Board of Directors of this ministry.

Pictures courtesy of Debbie Hess



Poetry by Amy Haas

COVENANT

*Rejoice, O barren one, and sing for joy;
Do not despise the formlessness inside,
For God has vowed to cleave to human dust,
Impart His life and take us for His bride.*

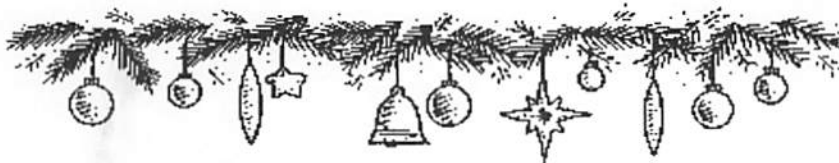
Dust – arid earth fragmented,
Crumbled, formless, dissipated,
Gathered up and consecrated.
Vows resound,
Love – unbound –
Hovers over barren ground.

Hovers, then a Word comes forth.
Love descends and touches earth.
Barrenness is shaped for birth.
Vows resound,
Love – unbound –
Bends its face and kisses earth.

Spirit! Life all-glorious,
Breathing into earthen dust.

Breathing
breathing
Living
living
Loving
loving
God
And bride.

~ Amy Haas



The Bride of Christ

by Linda Haas

There is one name for the people of God that best describes the most intimate relationship we can have with our Lord and that is the "Bride of Christ." The corporate bride of Christ is presented in the book of Revelation at the end of the ages, and she is indeed glorious. She is described as holy, without blemish, spot, or wrinkle, and she is adorned with fine white linen, jewels, pearls and gold. But what of the individual members who will make up this beautiful bride, what is their relationship with the Lord here and now?

By looking at the type of this relationship with the Lord that God has established here on earth, that of marriage between husband and wife, we can draw many insights into this most intimate walk with the Lord.

Genesis 2:24 defines marriage for us, "therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh." This passage identifies three characteristics of the marriage relationship.

First, there is the leaving. The two people to be married must each leave their former way of life and all that they have known. So too must each of us turn from our old way of life to enter into relationship with God.

The leaving is then followed by a man cleaving to and being joined to his wife, and so we too are joined or united with the Lord through repentance, faith and a commitment to Him.

Finally, the couple is so united that they become one. They are no longer two individual lives, but are formed into one new completed union, a couple acting as one. So we become one with the Lord, as our life and the life of Christ are merged together within us and we begin to live by His life, in accordance with His mind and will.

Earlier in Genesis chapter 2, the Bible tells us that God caused Adam to go into a deep sleep during which He opened Adam's side and removed his rib. From that rib, that substance of Adam, God then formed Eve. In essence then, Eve was in Adam all along and marriage then reunited them into one flesh.

Ephesians 5:30-32 repeats some of these same sentiments, "For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Paul is saying here that the same union that was between Adam and Eve, between a husband and wife, is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church.

Just as God caused Adam to go into a deep sleep, and his side was opened to bring forth that part of him that was to become his bride, so Christ went down into death (of which sleep can be a symbol) and His side was opened so that that substance of Christ, His Spirit, could be brought forth to form Christ in us.

Perhaps this is what Ephesians 1:4 means when it says, "Just as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." Just as Eve was already in Adam, so that part of us which becomes the bride of Christ was already in Him before the foundation of the world.

Eve was of the same substance as Adam as too we must have the same substance or life of Christ. Christ's bride cannot be of the flesh, the old creation. She must be a new creation of His substance, brought forth from Him and brought back to Him. In Ezekiel 36:26-27 God declares, "a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

The Bride of Christ (continued)

Colossians 1:27 refers to the mystery that is this union with God. "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory".

John 3:6 states, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit". They are two different life forms and cannot be joined together.

Through belief in Christ and receiving His marriage contract (the New Testament) of all He has done for us, we are joined to Him and set free to live by His life in us.

Galatians 2:20 tells us, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

In the natural marriage relationship, the bride traditionally takes the husband's name as her own, thus giving her a new identity. What a privilege it is for us to lose our identity as it were, and to take on the identity of Christ, to always be associated with Him, to have people think of us first by our union with the Him. In a good marriage, self is taken out of the picture and thought is for the other. The Shulamite maiden in the "Song of Solomon" came to this place of having a single desire for her Beloved, no longer caring for herself but only for what He desired. In her profession, "I am my Beloved's and His desire is towards me," she no longer makes claims or demands on Him but gives herself totally and unreservedly to Him. The Lord promises in Jeremiah 24:7 that we too will come to this place, "then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart."

Jesus beautifully illustrates this union and oneness in John 15:4 when He says, "abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." We are to dwell, to remain in Him. It is only of that place of oneness that the life of Christ can come forth in us. In a sense the branch is hidden as it were in the vine. When you look at a plant you admire the whole plant, not just a single branch. So too, is our life hidden in Christ when we are one with Him.

I love the picture in the "Song of Solomon" when it says, "Who is this coming up out of the wilderness leaning on her beloved?" They don't recognize or identify her, but what they see is that close union she has with her Lord. The wilderness experiences of life afford us many opportunities to "cleave" to the Lord, to develop that closeness, that oneness. In Acts 11:23 Barnabas encourages the saints in Antioch that they should, "with purpose of heart cleave unto the Lord."

In the day to day experiences of life how is this life lived out? Andrew Murray describes it as a life of absolute surrender, absolute trust, and absolute dependence; a good definition of cleaving!

Even though this complete union with the Lord is ours positionally in Christ, it often seems to be a progression as day by day we choose to reckon ourselves dead to the flesh and alive unto God. As we do our self life decreases in its control and the life of Christ increases within us. We can say with John the Baptist, "He must increase and I must decrease". II Corinthians 3:18 says, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Just as longtime married couples can begin to resemble each other, so we too shall take on the image of Christ!

The picture given to us in the Garden of Eden of oneness and union is what God desires to have with His people. It is the mystery of the ages that God who created the universe and all that is therein should desire to dwell within us. Near the end of the book of Revelation when the bride of Christ is presented at the consummation of the ages, the proclamation that is made from heaven is, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Why The Shepherds?

In Luke 2:8-20 we are told that angels revealed to shepherds that the Messiah had been born and where. Of all the people on earth in places of “importance” and authority that the revelation could have been made, it was made to a small group of lowly shepherds out in the fields near Bethlehem.

Who would I have first announced the birth of the Messiah to? It probably would not have been to some lowly shepherds, men despised by many, an occupation that was not well thought of. Fortunately I am not God. He knows best.

God revealed it to these men who without question went in search of the baby and spread abroad the message shared by the angel about who this baby really was. Perhaps if God had revealed the true identity to more reputable or educated people they would have been too afraid of their reputation to risk making such a declaration. Would a more “cultured” person have considered going to a smelly stable? Perhaps a more educated person would have had to consult with scholars first to make sure that this could be the case. God’s ways are not our ways. God chooses the foolish things to confound the wise.

1 Corinthians 1:25-31 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.



Submitted by Debra Hess



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Merry Christmas



December Memory Verse: Isaiah 9:6 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given..And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."