



The Chimes

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Modesto Church of the Brethren

2301 Woodland Avenue, Modesto, CA 95358-9501 (209)523-1438

fax: 209-523-1469 ♦ e-mail: office@modcob.org ♦ web site: www.modcob.org

Pastor: Andrew Sampson

Ministers: Every Member of the Congregation

Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.



By Felton Daniels

North Carolina is beautiful. Karleen and I traveled about 100 miles on I-40, almost all of it lined with beautiful thick green forest. We soon found out how it got so thick when we received a flash flood warning, and rain, thunder and lightning pounded our car for 30 minutes.

Most of the fun of Annual Conference is seeing people I haven't seen in a long time, including J.D. Glick, my college roommate at LaVerne.

The only business this year was Compelling Vision questions and discussion at tables of 8 delegates. There were also tables of 8 for non-delegates. Worship started each business session.

I was lucky to have a very good table. We all kept our comments short; we used I-statements, and we listened to each other with respect. We did not argue. Did we agree? No!! The questions from the Compelling Vision Committee were geared for us to talk about how we might serve and be in the world together, but from the first session on, at least some of the discussion related to the LGBTQ issue.

I did not expect to change their minds, but I decided I would give them something to think about. Over the seven sessions, I told them that our congregation is Open and Affirming. I said there were only 7 verses in the whole Bible that are "gay bashing", and they are questionable. Compare that with verse after verse about God's love, Jesus being inclusive, and that we are all God's children, and I wonder why those 7 verses get so much attention.

By the third session, I could see there was no hope in the room for supporting LGBTQ persons in our church. I told my table mates that I liked them and cared about them, but that I was going to become active in working for Open and Affirming churches to split off from the denomination.

In the Friday morning discussion, a table mate looked at me and said, "They are sinning," meaning the LGBTQ persons are sinning. The last hymn we sang before we started our discussion was "For We Are Strangers No More"; 2100 persons singing that hymn with gusto, saying "we're neighbors to each other now". When the discussion began again, I said to my table mates, "We just sang a song about being neighbors. There is one problem. LGBTQ persons are our neighbors, but they are not welcome in our denomination and our churches." One of the two conservative people said, "You have me thinking."

I went to an insight session led by Carol Wise and Brian Flory, leaders of the Supportive Community Network, which is the Brethren/Mennonite organization that we as an Open and Affirming Congregation belong to. I learned several things there. There are 52 Brethren congregations and 71 Mennonite Congregations in SCN, for a total of 123 congregations that belong to the Network. That number includes La Verne, Modesto and San Diego, the three Open and Affirming congregations in the Pacific Southwest District. I was thinking during Conference that those 123 congregations could form a new denomination. But I have heard since that conservative groups might be leaving the Church of the Brethren at Annual Conference in 2020. Since we are currently able to serve our community as we wish to, staying the course seems the thing to do at this time.

Karleen and I visited the American Civil Rights Museum in Greensboro, where 4 young black men sat at a Woolworth lunch counter in 1960 and started the sit-down protest. We also traveled to Old Salem, where the oldest Protestant church in America sits. It is a Moravian church in a Moravian town. The Moravians lived in Germany at the same time as Alexander Mack and may have influenced his thinking.

Both of these visits were about groups who were excluded from full participation in society, just like our denomination excludes a group from full participation in it. At AC I heard a lot about sin. I believe one form of sin is excluding a group of people from full participation in the church by interpreting the Bible in an exclusive way. Our denomination is doing just that.



August 4

Scripture(s): Luke 12:13-21

Title: "Generosity, not Greed"

Summary: All of today's lectionary texts speak of how one who seeks to live a life of faith must put aside the ways of the world. One way to do this is to set aside the measuring sticks of success according to society which preaches the need for, "More, more, more!" and following Jesus' words, take care of the needs of others. How difficult this can be! Even churches can fall into the trap that bigger is better - bigger buildings, bigger budgets, bigger congregations. So how can we not only be satisfied with what we have but use what we have for our neighbors' benefit?

August 11

Scripture(s): Luke 12:32-40

Title: "Citizenship Requirements"

Summary: Regardless of where we live there are certain expectations for what it means to belong to a community - pay taxes, mow the lawn, keep the noise at a respectable level, etc. Jesus lays out what these are for those who are seeking to be his disciples, and the list may have some surprises - sell your possessions and give generously to the poor, for example. However, it also means that we are not to sit idly by and do nothing but are to keep active in faith. (This text is not the easiest to understand and I would recommend reading it in The Voice translation to get a better idea of what Jesus is saying.) Really what he is asking is for us to consider our priorities, and to align those with God's.



Greeters

August 4 - Bob & Lynda Sesser

August 11 - Eldon & Linda Williams

August 18 - Larry & Luella Cole



Allison Sampson rejoices that July FUN night was great fun at the pool in their neighborhood.

Karen Cosner is grateful to be home after surgery and some heart issues that will continue to be monitored. She also celebrates 57 years of marriage to John.

Bev Jefferies is rejoicing that her son is home after a stay in the hospital.

Kelly Gepley is excited to start the school year in a new school, as a resource specialist.

Jonathan Goodrich asks for prayers for his mother, who is waiting for a heart transplant.

David Messamer had an old stent removed and replaced with 2 new ones. He is home and doing much better, with more energy. Sue Messamer is starting outpatient rehab for her back pain.

Mimsie Farrar is concerned about the prospect of a "Straight Pride" event in Modesto. Many others share her concern.

Tammy Firch prays for the well-being of the Church of the Brethren denomination after hearing the AC report.

Pastor Andrew expressed joy at being at Camp Peaceful Pines last week.

Chelsea Feeney had a procedure that returned her heart to regular rhythm.

Trish Galt has had surgery to repair the fracture in her tibia. She is getting physical therapy at home and will be able to put weight on the leg after August 30. Dan is caring for her, but also is in PT for a back issue.

Steve Hay had his cardiac bypass and will go back to work next week.

Michael Fletcher sent an update on his treatment, saying that the surgery was successful and he is recuperating faster than expected.

Many are dismayed at the attack on the Sikh priest at the Sikh Temple. Members of the Stanislaus Interfaith Council have sent messages of support.

Keep in your prayers all those who are ill, in pain, lonely, or have troubles too deep for words.



Isaac Croyle, 15-year-old son of Alana Switzer Croyle, passed away in his sleep last week. His celebration of life will be Saturday, August 17th at 3 PM at the Modesto Church of the Brethren. Kim Boardman will oversee the service. Those attending are encouraged to wear tie-dye or bright colored clothing. A light meal will follow the service in the Gathering Place.

COMING SOON



Annual Birthday Dinner

August 14, 6 pm

Summer Supper (no) Potluck,

You don't have to bring anything unless you have signed up on the poster in the narthex to bring a cake for your birth month.



August 16, 6 PM

at Modesto Church of the Brethren

Fun Night for families with children from Kindergarten to 6th grade. Come for food, fellowship and FUN!



Come to the Senior Ministries luncheon at 12 noon, August 22, followed by a slide show of the highlights of the Owen's trip to Europe, cruising on the Rhine and Mosel Rivers through the center of Europe.



Modesto Church of the Brethren will host several families in the Family Promise program from Sunday evening, August 25 to early Sunday morning, September 1.

Look for the sign-up board in the narthex soon. We will need evening hosts, from 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm, to eat dinner and socialize with the guests. **We especially need overnight hosts from 8:30 pm to around 6:30 am.**

And of course, we greatly appreciate those who take bedding and towels home to launder!

If you are not able to do these tasks, Family Promise is always in need of many items: Size 6 diapers, baby shampoo, body wash, women's deodorant, Lysol, antibacterial wipes for cleaning, other cleaning supplies, and gift cards to restaurants such as Denny's, Panda Express, McDonald's, IHOP, for weeks when families are hosted in a hotel. Donated items may be dropped off at the Day Center in Room 7/8 in the Christian Ed wing.

The Family Promise Day Center has positions for volunteers who can do clerical work, transportation of the families, and other tasks. The Family Promise Board is also looking for persons with finance, legal and other expertise. If you are interested in any of these, please contact Tamra Losinski at the Family Promise office at [\(209\) 549-9454](tel:2095499454).



Our fall ALL CHURCH WORK DAY has been moved up a week to Saturday October 5th. Sign up board will go up the end of August.

Please save the date on your calendar. Solar panels, rain gutters, nursery cleaning, stump grinding, etc. will be on the list of things to do.

The Condensed Calendar

Monday, July 29

5:30 pm Building & Grounds Meeting

Tuesday, July 30

Wednesday, July 31

Thursday, August 1

Friday, August 2

Saturday, August 3

Sunday August 4

9:30am Adult Sunday School

11 am Worship

12:15pm Witness Commission Meeting



August 12 6:30pm Board Meeting

August 13 1pm Bible Study-Library

August 14 6pm Summer Supper Potluck
Birthday Dinner

August 16 6pm FUN Night

August 17 3pm Isaac Croyle Memorial

August 22 12pm Sr. Ministry Event-Slide

Show-Mosel & Rhine Rivers in Germany

August 25-9/1 Hosting Family Promise



September 2 Labor Day-Office closed

September 8 Grandparents' Day

September 15 3pm Shaun & Kelly's
Baby Shower

September 21 10:30 am David and Mary
Strohm's Memorial

Welcome Statement

Believing that God's unbounded love and



grace, as taught by Jesus, are offered to all and meant to be shared and celebrated by all, we embrace persons of every age, race sexual orientation,

ethnic and religious background, physical and mental ability, and economic means as vital and integral members of God's family. As an Open and Affirming congregation, we welcome everyone to participate in the life and worship of our church.