

FEBRUARY 5, 2023

# CROWN HILL NEWS

**Preaching: Thomas**

**Sermon: The Jerusalem Council**

**Scripture: Acts 15 & Galatians 2**

## PRAYERS

- Remember the unspoken requests for families in our congregation
- Remember Wiley, Tina & Lowell as they recover from surgeries and hospital stays.
- Pray for peace between Ukraine & Russia.
- Remember Larry Morrison & Ken Kurtz as they go through treatments for cancer. Larry will be receiving radiation treatment for a mass found on his brain. Ken will be undergoing monthly immunotherapy treatments.
- Pray for our shut-ins & nursing home residents: Suzan, Carolyn, Pete, Elmer, Mary, Ila, and Fred's mother Doris. Pray for the caregivers in the congregation and others who are providing much needed support.
- Pray for Ohio Mennonite Conference delegates, leaders and congregations as we continue to seek Holy Spirit guidance for the future of our ways of connecting with each other.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- On February 12 we will celebrate communion (no foot washing). All are invited to consider a donation to the Compassion Fund which can be put in the offering box with a memo.
- On February 19 we will have a congregation meeting during the Sunday School hour. This meeting will be focused on the Ohio Conference discernment process as we prepare for the Annual Conference Assembly on March 3-4.
- Ladies Bible Study is continuing at 8:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. We will be doing a Study on James "Growing in Wisdom and Faith". All women are welcome.
- Wednesday Evening Prayer All are welcome to gather for a time of devotions, prayer and singing from 6:30 to 7:30 PM. Location will be announced. Please call Myrna or Dan for information.
- Meal Support If you'd like to assist with meals for Elmer Richard, please contact Kris at 330-317-5707.
- 2023 MISSIONAL WORKSHOP Ohio Mennonite Conference is offering this workshop to assist congregations. If you'd be interested in attending with a group from Crown Hill, please talk with Dan.

**OFFERING 1/22**

\$2319 General



**Congratulations to Earl and Pearl on their marriage last Sunday, January 29.**



## **HOLY INDIFFERENCE**

**NOVEMBER 17, 2022**

**By Dick Barrett, Conference Minister**

In my last article for the Evangel, I wrote about the spiritual discipline of Christian discernment. As individual Christians we should be discerning the will of God in our beliefs, decisions and actions each and every day. Our discernment of God's will for our lives should be based on what has been revealed to us in the Bible and in God's Son Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit. As difficult as discerning God's will for our lives as individuals can be at times, it becomes exponentially more difficult to discern God's will as a body of Christ — whether it be one church or a collection of churches such as a conference or a denomination. It is even more difficult for us as Mennonites and Anabaptists who believe that the will of God is to be discerned collectively. Mennonite educator Michael King says, "Christian discernment involves the community of believers gathered in Jesus' name around Scripture to find its way through [forward]."

In her book *Pursuing God's Will Together*, Ruth Haley Barton writes about the practice of "Holy Indifference." Holy Indifference applies to the practice of discernment in that it should be the goal of every Christian involved in a discernment process to be indifferent to anything and everything but the will of God. How do we determine God's will on specific matters? Again, God has chosen to reveal his will through the Bible and his Son Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that "The Son is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15a). In our 1995 Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, Article 4 on Scripture states, "We accept the Bible as the Word of God written . . . God has spoken above all in the living Word who became flesh and revealed the truth of God faithfully and without deception . . . Because Jesus Christ is the Word become flesh, Scripture as a whole has its center and fulfillment in him."

In the same way we need all the aspects of the triune God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — to help us discern who God is, we need to look to Scripture, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to find our way forward. Ruth Haley Barton says there are two distinct elements of Holy Indifference, the prayer for Holy Indifference and the practice of Holy Indifference. The prayer for Holy Indifference needs to come first. Whatever it is we are trying to discern, we need to pray for indifference to anything and everything but the will of God as revealed through the Bible, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. If we are discerning God's will correctly, those three should be in agreement.

As we as a community of Mennonite churches across Ohio continue to try to discern God's will for us into the future, and as the Strategic Planning Team that is now in place reviews all the feedback we have received from our pastors and delegates, and prepares to present options at our winter cluster meetings in January, may we all be in prayer for Holy Indifference.

As we enter into this season of Advent and Christmas, may our prayer for Holy Indifference be the same as that of Mary at the angel Gabriel's announcement that she was to give birth to the Messiah, "I am the Lord's servant, may your word be fulfilled" (Luke 1:38), and Jesus' words near the end of his life in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Father, not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42).