



INLAND STREAM

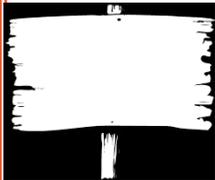
INLAND WEST USA MISSION CENTER NEWS

Inland Stream Fall/Winter 2017-2018

Volume 13, Number 2

Everywhere There's Signs

By Brad A. Martell, Mission Center President



Signs, Signs, Everywhere there's signs. / Blocking out the scenery. Breaking my mind. / Do this! Don't do that! Can't you read the signs? ~ Five Man Electrical Band

This will be a sign for you; you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger. ~ Luke 2.12 (NRSV)

On a street corner a church has put out a sign that reads: "Journey to Bethlehem." It is the size of a realtor's sign with a dark blue background and white lettering. A golden Christmas star bursts brightly behind the date and time inviting people to an event to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

When I imagine the journey that Mary and Joseph took from Nazareth to Bethlehem I think about how difficult that journey must have been. I'm sure the last thing a pregnant young woman would want to do is ride on the back of a donkey being bounced and swayed for miles and miles. And then arriving, totally exhausted, to discover there was no room at any inn for them to stay at. The best they could get was a manure smelling and straw-strewed stable. It sure does not intimate an ideal place for the birth of your baby and receiving of diverse guests.

However, maybe such a humble place and beginning are, in fact, *ideal* for us to reflect upon our discipleship journeys today and our journeys through the Advent season toward Christmas.

The Journey to Bethlehem sign is not the only message I see or hear while driving down the road, leafing through a magazine, listening to the radio, or surfing the web. There are all kinds of messages out there trying to capture my attention, energy, and money; trying to influence my life journey. Particularly now there are signs everywhere using "Christmas" to catch my eye. However, so many of these messages are not the Christmas "humble stable" quality. They are not about humility, sacramental living, generosity, reconciliation, welcoming, and sacred community we associate with the birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

To be a bit cliché I would describe these other messages as "i-messages." "I" as in me, myself, my ego, my self-importance. These messages are powerful and tricky because they feed (but don't fulfill) some of our deepest desires: 1) wanting to be accepted and popular, 2) being seen as physically attractive, 3) being thought of as intelligent and knowledgeable of the latest cultural trends and news, and 4) being loved and accepted for who we truly are as a person.

But the journey to Bethlehem and our journeys of discipleship are not "i-messages." They are "we-messages." Messages and invitations for us to cultivate loving relationships, build sacred community, embrace unity in diversity, experience the sacredness of creation, and intersect our journeys as we pursue Christ's Mission.

What are the signs and messages you are paying attention to this Advent season as you journey toward Christmas? Are they "we-messages"? Are they signs that express Community of Christ Enduring Principles and Mission Initiatives? Are they signs that deepen and grow your discipleship? Are they signs that encourage you to pursue justice, healing, reconciliation, and peace? Are they signs that inspire you to share God's grace and generosity more abundantly? Or, are they signs blocking your view and distracting your mind and heart from truly seeing the child, Jesus, wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger?

Congregational News

The Whitehall Congregation has had a very busy year. We had a lovely Community Garden again this year thanks to Dan Volz and his work. It was a source of produce and fresh vegetables for many people in the Community. We donated to anyone who wanted to come and pick the vegetables or help weed, as well as the Senior Citizens Center here in town. When the corn was ripe we had an open canning/freezing event for people to come help harvest and process the corn for winter use. We harvested about 1000 lbs of different types of potatoes, and stored them for distribution through the winter.

We sadly lost our dear child/sister Kristen Ryerson this summer. She was such a joy to all of us and her death was a big loss for our congregation.

On a happier note, our family grew with 4 baptisms, and a baby blessing. We welcomed three calls to Priesthood this year. Dan Volz to the office of Elder, Christina Strabinsky to the office of Deacon, Brenda Volz to the office of Priest.



We also hosted a warming tent with free games, crafts, refreshments, cider, and hot chocolate this past December for the local Christmas Stroll. We will be doing that again in December.

Darcy Volz headed up a cooking program, Monday Munchies for kids this past year. It was aimed at not only showing kids how to prepare healthy meals, but giving them some simple skills at helping prepare family meals. It was a lot of fun and very successful.

We hosted a Cider squeezing party at the Sacry Ranch this past fall inviting anyone who had apples or wanted to come participate to help make cider. We had chili, fresh donuts, and cider to top off a fun event.



In addition we had two witnessing ministry weekends with Frank Young in January and October.

Members of our congregational family have been very active in the community. From the Whitehall Food Pantry to the After School Program, and community events, we are a contributing body to the well being of our community and our congregation IS family in the mission of Christ.



By Nancy Sacry

Our Ogden Congregation may be small, but we can still experience congregations in mission and make an impact in the community by joining with other churches & organizations. Here are some examples:

- Youth Futures, a homeless center for teens who also allowed OUTreach Ogden to meet there (they provide support to the LGBTQ teens in Ogden)—we prepared & served meals
- Family Promise—13 area churches host & feed homeless families for a week at a time on a rotational basis at different locations...we work with 2 other smaller congregations when they are hosted at Universalist Unitarian
- Church Women United—2 of our members are on the planning board for the local Ogden chapter, and we have hosted 2 celebrations in our building during the last year
- Community Dinner—We join with other area churches to greet, help serve dinner to & sit & fellowship with those in our community less fortunate than we are & we provide hygiene kits to be handed out
- Boy Scouts—We host the 1st Commandment on the Ten Commandment Bike Hike, where the scouts stop at a church, and talk about that commandment, then ride to the next church
- Old Souls Never Die—A few times a year we take worn out running shoes, flip flops & similar to the Nike Outlet where they send them off to be recycled into rubber to be used under playgrounds (continued)

Congregational News (continued)

- Prayer Shawl--Each Wednesday many of our congregation meet to have a devotion, then fellowship as they knit or crochet prayer shawls, which are blessed in a service during the year and given to people that need an extra "hug" that the shawls provide. Other service projects are also worked on during this time.
- Quarterly Community Organization Donations—We have a table with displays of items being collected each quarter--This year we have helped the YCC (Your Community Connection Domestic Violence Shelter), Homeless Veterans Fellowship, and Gigi's Play House (a Down's Syndrome Achievement Center providing services for preschool to adult)
- Ogden Interfaith Works (Interfaith Council meeting of civic & religious organizations) The list will hopefully show even a few of us can add to help in worthwhile activities that already exist.

By Doris Cadman

The BLOG

I am so grateful for members of many congregations throughout the our Mission Center, who have shared inspirational ministry on the blog.

And NOW, when you go to the blog at <http://cofchrist-inlandwest.blogspot.com>, select "Follow by Email and the latest offering will arrive in your email each month.

God is working in our lives and these stories of his Love bring Hope and new vision for us all. If you have a message to share Please contact me at k7zall@gmail.com. Lavera Wade

Presiding Bishopric Financial Update November 2017

Stassi Cramm, presiding bishop and counselor to the president, had two items of good news November 16 when she offered the third of three promised messages on the financial condition of the church.

Community of Christ ended fiscal year 2017 on June 30 with a surplus of just more than \$600,000. Although total income was a bit below budget, expenses were held within the available income for the fiscal year, Cramm said.

In September, the Presiding Bishopric paid off a line of credit with Bank of Kansas City, using the \$600,000 surplus and other funds. Cramm explained the financial position of the church, the valuation of its assets and plans for a way to make income more predictable and sustainable in materials available to view and read online.

For more information go to: <http://www.cofchrist.org/announcements>.

Priesthood Gathering

TWO Dates and Locations:

March 16 to 18, 2018 at Spokane Valley, WA

March 23 to 25, 2018 at Boise, ID

Choose what's BEST for YOU!

Informal reception Friday evening, program runs all day Saturday through Sunday noon.

Guest Ministry: Robin Linkhart, Karin Peter, Denise White and David Anderson.

Save the dates for 2018 Reunions!

**Echo Valley
June 14 - June 18**

**Samish Island
June 23- June 30**

**Red Cliffe
July 7 - July 13**

**Cascade
July 10 - July 15**



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Community of
Christ
I-West Mission

SPEC 2017



I delight in any opportunity to get out of my congregation and meet the larger body of Community of Christ. So, when I was asked to attend Spectacular in 2017, I jumped at the chance! Originally my husband and I were asked to be SPEC Today facilitators, but we couldn't juggle both of us going, so I went and helped with a class, participated in a Q&A and spoke during the Communion service.

Because of childcare, I arrived a few days late when the activities of the week were in full swing. I was hesitant and nervous, feeling like the new kid on campus in more ways than one. A friendly face picked me up from the airport and I was reminded for the millionth time that Community of Christ is my home and my community. Being at Graceland was exciting. I've heard countless stories of love and faith found on those grounds. So much history has happened in those dorms without air-conditioning and with those ice cream cones dripping on the sidewalks in the Iowa humidity. I was finally getting to experience it for myself!! Thankfully, I too found faith, love *and* ice cream at SPEC.

Because I attended as SPEC staff and not delegation staff, I was able to take a bird's eye view of the week and spend my time getting to know campers and leaders from all over the place. It was wonderful, but a little overwhelming for a new convert to the church like myself. Sometimes, I let the smallness of our church get to me. I wonder if our message is really something that will stick with younger generations. I wonder what my place in Christ's mission really is. However, that week I was able to let go of all my questions, take a step back and be overwhelmed by the love and potential of this community. As I walked the sidewalk between Walker Hall, the Shaw Center and the football field, I kept thinking of my own three kids and what kind of church they will have in 10-20 years. I was overwhelmed with gratitude for those who have come before me and of those who are paving the way for them. During SPEC, I was able to see the Enduring Principles and Mission Initiatives being lived out among teenagers as they planned and put on daily worship services (sometimes two in a day!) As they worked together to put on an entire play in a week, participated in group activities, and asked hard questions about the relationship between politics and faith. These kids WANT Community of Christ's identity to be their own. They want to lead. They want to participate. They want an active place at the table.

Coming from Salt Lake, I've been lucky to see the church in an area that is growing and thriving. Still, the energy and life at SPEC was unlike anything I could have imagined. The depth of understanding, faith, and leadership potential of the campers fired me up for the future of our church. In the Q&A I participated in with President Veazey, the campers asked questions about our unique identity, our history, why I find my home in Community of Christ, the process of receiving revelation, how they can get involved on a local and global level, and how they can take the spirit of SPEC back into their congregations. I was struck at how deeply they loved what we stand for, but were hesitant to know how they can live those things out in their local congregations. Over and over again I told them things like, "If you have a ministry you want to start, start it! Get a class on the Enduring Principles going. Start a Wednesday night service and sing your way through the hymnal. Contact local shelters or after school programs and see how your congregation can help. Just DIVE in!" It is one of my deepest hopes that they do just that.



I don't want to downplay the troubled times we are finding ourselves in as a church, but I also don't want to let the bright, beaming hope of the future go unnoticed. If you have youth in your congregation, use them in every way you possibly can. If you don't have youth in your congregation, get to know the ones in your neighborhood and invite them to activities. We can do this! The message of Community of Christ is more relevant today than ever before. I saw that as I shared Communion with 1,000 on the lawn of Graceland. I heard that in the songs, the prayers, and the conversations that were happening all around me. The talent we have budding up in our youth is breathtaking. I even joked with the campers who were in the worship class that they should come to Salt Lake and teach the adults in my congregation how to plan a worship service. Except I wasn't really joking!

As I was waiting to catch my flight home, I opened my kindle and highlighted before me was this verse from Doctrine and Covenants 162,

“Again you are reminded that this community was divinely called into being. The spirit of the Restoration is not locked in one moment of time, but is instead the call to every generation to witness to essential truths in its own language and form. Let the Spirit breathe.” By Brittany Mangelson



From around the Mission Center in 2017

Blessings:

- Leonidas Jensen, Whitehall, MT
- Pyper Montoya, Billings, MT
- Ezra Qualls, Sagle, ID
- Sullivan Qualls, Sagle, ID

Baptism/Confirmations:

- Tayla Andrews, Whitehall, MT
- Destiny Bullington, Billings, MT
- Benita Castile, Whitehall, MT
- Timothy Cochran, Billings, MT
- Eva Ann Gillespie-Larsen, Utah Mission Ministries
- Renata Godfrey, Whitehall, MT (Dec. 2016)
- Richard Meek, Billings, MT
- Dean Moore, Salt Lake City, UT (Dec. 2016)
- Magen Olsen, Salt Lake City, UT
- Laura Pennock, Salt Lake City, UT
- Emily Pomeroy, Salt Lake City, UT
- Finlei Reiff, Whitehall, MT
- Danielle Walker, Deer Lodge, MT
- Darcy Walker, Deer Lodge, MT
- Derek Walker, Deer Lodge, MT
- Kaden Weber, Whitehall, MT
- Aubrey Winn, Boise, ID

Marriages

- Brittany Andreasen-Parkins to Chris Parkins, Ogden, UT
- Kathleen Cadman and Edward Baxter, Ogden, UT
- Paul Hill to Kathrine Gardner, Sagle, ID

Ordinations:

- Kevin Pomeroy, Priest, Salt Lake City, UT
- Roy Schmidt, Elder, Salt Lake City, UT (Dec. 2016)
- Christina Sterbinsky, Deacon, Whitehall, MT
- Brenda Volz, Priest, Whitehall

Deaths:

- Dot Benson, Deer Lodge
- Doris Berglund, Inland West General
- Dale Bolingbroke, Inland West General
- Eleanor Bower, Buhl, ID (Dec. 2016)
- Marcia Crabb, Sagle, ID
- Tony Dennis, Boise, ID
- Elbert Gunter, Sagle, ID
- Wanna Mae Hyden, Ogden, UT
- Jordan Kersey, Ogden, UT
- Dale McDonald, Walla Walla, WA
- Elsie McDonald, Walla Walla, WA
- Jack McWhorter, New Plymouth, ID
- Barbara Premo, Billings, MT
- Kirsten Ryerson, Whitehall, MT
- Joseph Selzer, Spokane Valley, WA (Dec. 2016)
- Tom Sylvester, Spokane Valley, WA
- Bill Williams, Spokane Valley, WA (Dec. 2016)
- Randy Williams, Spokane Valley, WA

If there are life events or transitions happening in your congregation please send them to Sandy Decker at sdecker@cofchrist-ivest.org.

Visiting Ministry

The Mission Center Invitational Ministry (MCISM) Team, along with mission center staff, seventy, high priests, and evangelists, are participating in the recently launched Visiting Ministry Schedule.

The schedule provides a guest minister for each congregation once a quarter. This ministry provides opportunity for congregations to receive ministry from outside the congregation and to form broader mission center relationships. Please contact the mission center office if you would like more information on visiting ministry.



ProjectZion T-Shirts- \$20.00 and Mugs-\$15.00 are on sale now. Contact the Mission Center for more information. And, check out the latest podcast from ProjectZion: www.projectzionpodcast.org



Pictures from the
Sunday morning
worship at
Mission Center
Conference
Spokane Valley, WA
October 14 & 15, 2017



Supporting Our Children and Youth Through the YES Fund

Thank you for your generous contributions to the mission center's Youth Empowerment Support Fund (YES Fund). The YES Fund was established to help youth and children throughout the mission center to be able to attend camps/reunions/retreats, Spectacular, and other approved activities. YES Funds help by sharing the cost of a child's or youth's registration fees and travel expenses. For more YES Fund info visit: www.cofchrist-iwest.org/resources-forms.html.

Mission Center Fundraising Goal for 2018: \$10,000.00

Watch for updates in mission center communications as we meet our goal.

Ways you can give to the YES Fund:

Mark your checks for "YES Fund" and your Congregational Financial Officer (CFO) will forward the money to the Mission Center Office to administer.

Make an Honor or Memorial Gift on behalf of a loved one. Lavera Wade (Spokane Valley, WA) gave a gift to the YES Fund in memory of her grandson, Sam. We are humbled by her thoughtfulness and generosity.

Have a congregational or group fundraiser. At mission center conference Roselyn Bentz (Lewiston, ID) donated the sales of her handmade greeting cards to the YES Fund. We received over \$200 from her generosity.

Thank you for your help in supporting our youth and children. Any questions please contact Sandy Decker at sdecker@cofchrist-iwest.org.

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