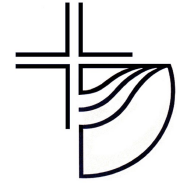


News from the Brick

Nettle Creek Church of the Brethren
5352 N. Brick Church Road
Hagerstown, IN 47346

Established 1820



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Eloise Beeson, Secretary
Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.
Worship: 10:00 a.m.

March
2005

*Continuing the Work of Jesus.
Peacefully. Simply. Together.*

Carol's Comments

"Vanilla or Tiger Paw With Sprinkles"

John 10:10 ...*I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

I am thinking about ice cream. The ice cream shop in town just opened again under new management. Yes, I've been there already. But I didn't get chocolate, my favorite. I got vanilla. Actually, vanilla is the number one selling ice cream according to polls. Chocolate comes in second place. I like ice cream. My personal favorite, though, is probably chocolate almond or mint chocolate chip. (Are you surprised?) When Bob and I go to an ice cream parlor that has lots of flavors, I usually stick to my favorites though it may take me a long time to decide. Vanilla just doesn't seem to have enough flavor for me.

I thought I'd take a look at some different flavor names on the internet, and I found these "conservative" flavors from Star Spangled Ice Cream website. There I discovered such names as KerryBerry, Choc & Awe, Iraqi Road, Government, Prale to the Chief and others. On another site I found Wisconsin Cherry Cheesecake and Cherry Almond. Kids tend to like Superman or bubble gum flavors. Not me. I never did like those exotic flavors. Give me a chocolate cone or one that has some chocolate in it any day. Cherry Cordial will do just fine too. (It has chocolate in it). We even have different types of cones in which to put our ice cream: cake cones, sugar cones, waffle cones. Or you can just get your ice cream in a dish.



Going to an ice shop can be an adventure in itself in trying to decide what flavor to choose—so many choices. I've often changed my mind from one chocolate choice to another. And then I still have to choose the kind of cone! You might say that I play it safe with flavor—the familiar.

What does ice cream have to do with God? When we walk into an ice cream parlor we are confronted with so many choices. In our life of faith we are confronted with the challenge or adventure to grow in Christ. It can be daunting to figure out how to go about strengthening our faith. Some of us take our growth in Christ seriously and are open to different experiences to stretch us. Others of us like to play it safe with the same kind of services, programs, or devotional life. Or we could say we like to play it safe with just having a vanilla or chocolate cone faith.

In this Lenten season, we need to reflect upon what kind of spiritual people we are: vanilla in a plain cone or double-scoop tiger paw in a waffle cone with sprinkles. Does Christ, our Lord, bring "life" to us or not? Are we playing it safe in our faith not thinking about our experience and not exploring opportunities to grow in new ways? I pray that during this season of Lent that we will each examine our lives and see if we are indeed living the "abundant life." Jesus came so that we might have *life and have it to the full* (John 10:10). If faith feels dull, lifeless, plain like vanilla, then maybe it's time to let God surprise us with a new "flavor" to life. Maybe we need to review our life of faith and notice where God has put in some sprinkles of life but we were too busy to notice. Or maybe we need to open ourselves up to receive a burst of the Holy Spirit in each of us.