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Search for answers continues

Police report no new leads as pastor prepares to address couple's shocking murder



By RICHARD HARROLD
Staff writer

Facing a congregation with questions, fears and doubts, the Rev. Rick Hoppe of Immanuel Baptist Church knew he had to make trust in God the center of his sermon today.

COUPLE: A family photo shows Jason Allen, left, and Lindsay Cutshall at their wedding shower in May at the home of Jason's parents, Bob and Delores Allen of Zeeland.

AP/via The Coshocton Tribune

Two of his congregants, Bob and Delores Allen, are in California, where their son, Jason, and his fiancée, Lindsay Cutshall, were found murdered on an isolated ocean beach, and Hoppe knows other church members will be hoping for his guidance to make sense out of the killings.

"People are going to be hurting, they're going to be having questions," Hoppe said Saturday. "I want to be there to answer those questions for them."

Police have identified no suspects and no motive in the deaths of Lindsay Cutshall, 23, of Fresno, Ohio, and Jason Allen, 26, of Zeeland. Their bodies were discovered Wednesday on remote Fish Head Beach, about 75 miles north of San Francisco. They were shot in the head while they slept, each in their own sleeping bag.

Allen and Cutshall were spending the summer working as guides and counselors at Rock-N-Water, a Christian outdoor adventure camp in the Sierra Nevada foothills town of Coloma, about 40 miles east of Sacramento. They

were reported missing after they failed to return to work the evening of Aug. 15 from a weekend outing.

The Sonoma County Sheriff's Department said investigators had uncovered no new evidence Saturday.

"They're just combing the area and looking for leads from the public," spokesman Dave Huber told The Associated Press.

Because they have no leads, police are being particularly thorough, considering virtually everything they find as evidence to be examined. They are hopeful that they may find some fingerprints or DNA evidence in the couple's car, which was found locked up on the bluff above the beach where they had been camped.

In his nine years as a pastor, Hoppe has had to counsel people on dealing with the premature death of a loved one, but those have often been accidental deaths. He realizes it's different and more challenging when it's murder.

"I know they're going to be wondering that if God really was in control, how could He let this happen?" Hoppe said. "It really forces you to see if you really understand and trust God."

He plans to center today's sermon on Proverbs 3:5-8, because, he said, "It's all about placing our trust in God and not trying to figure things out ourselves."

Allen's parents are awaiting news in California, staying in Placerville near the camp where Allen and Cutshall had worked. His two sisters are at home in Zeeland staying close to friends and other family for support.

"He was the greatest guy and I loved him so much," said Elizabeth Westra, 23, one of Allen's sisters.

Vanessa Allen, 18, said that although she had only met Cutshall a few times, she knew her brother's fiancée was a perfect match for him.

"Jason waited so long for someone who could share his love for the outdoors with him," she said. "They were perfect for each other."

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