



FIRST
MENNONITE
CHURCH,
NEWTON

FMC CONNECTIONS

Volume 26, Issue 6

June/July 2016

A PARTNERSHIP OF HOPE IN GOD'S KINGDOM

Our Mission is to glorify God:

- ✦ Through expressing our love to God in worship.
- ✦ Through experiencing love in Christian community.
- ✦ Through extending God's love to the world.

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In 2014, multiple EF4 tornadoes ravaged the Pilger/Wakefield

area of northeastern Nebraska, causing extensive damage to towns and farms. A small mobile home park three miles outside of Wakefield took almost a direct hit. The mobile home of Gumaro Jimenez and Emperatriz Nuñez was one that was destroyed. The Jimenez Nuñez family



secured a house in Wakefield only to have an electrical fire gut that home several months later. Inadequate insurance and some legalities about receiving disaster funds has kept the Jimenez Nuñez family from rebuilding their lives. Yet, through it all the Jimenez Nuñez family has been helping others by providing food and shelter to those who have experienced cri-

sis themselves and/or to volunteers who have come to help.

The eight members of the Jimenez Nuñez family currently live in a one-bedroom, one-bathroom house with two dogs. Recently, two friends have also moved in with them. Obviously, this is not a sustainable long-term situation.

In the fall of 2015, members of First Mennonite Church began exploring the possibility of participating in Mennonite Disaster Service's Partnership Home Program. In this program, a local congregation provides leadership and partners with other congregations and agencies to build a home for a family that has experienced loss after a natural disaster. The commitment from the partnering churches is to build the home from start to finish. In February of 2016, representatives from First Mennonite were contacted by MDS about the Jimenez Nuñez need, and the wheels were set in motion.



Pastor Joel Schroeder

Letters were sent to area churches inviting them to partner in this project. Four congregations (Casa Betania, Faith Mennonite, Grace Hill Mennonite, and New Creation Fellowship) responded and have been actively involved in the planning of this project. Other congregations are inviting their members to be involved individually. In addition to local congregations, partnering relationships have been developed with the Wakefield Ministerium, Wakefield



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CHURCH BOARD REPORT

The board met May 12, 2016. Bev Regier led devotions and opened with prayer.

The board noted that the highlight of the recent congregational meeting was the 98% vote of affirmation for Pastor Anita. Then the board engaged in reflections on the board's role of spiritual leadership in the congregation. The board noted past involvement in projects like the selection of the congregation's 12 foundational Scriptures and the impending mission and vision process. The board leads spiritually by the way they make decisions through prayer and by asking for guidance from the Holy Spirit instead of emphasizing personal agendas. They also felt that the diversity of the board enhanced respect for one another. Listening to the congregation is an important part of the board's spiritual role. The board asked itself how its behavior can invite congregational members to feel free to initiate leadership ministries they feel led

toward without asking the board for permission. More of the board's role in this aspect of leadership will be addressed from time to time.

In reporting from the pastors, Pastor Kay highlighted her visitation efforts. One person had asked her whether the former Ministers of Visitation role was still active. Members who cannot regularly attend still feel very connected to the congregation. Pastor Joel spoke of the Catechism group, the house building project and the fact that we have a lot of graduating students, particularly Bethel College students, this year. Pastor Anita indicated that April had been a full and challenging month with experiences of sadness and frustration surrounding certain events and needs in the congregation.

The treasurer reported that April was a good giving month for local expenses but the year-to-date expense is \$13,858 above income.

Property Committee reported that the south wing roof replacement was 9% under budget. They are updating signage and have started work on the sanctuary windows. Caregiving and Membership Commission spoke of the Adopt-a-Month Program that still has need for persons to participate in the next four months. A mentoring program for newly-married couples is being considered. Nurture Commission is planning VBS. An Anabaptist series is being taught to the Junior High class this summer. Outreach, Missions, and Peace Commission is working on new guidelines to support persons in short-term mission. Church and Staff Relations Committee has recently finished their annual review of pastors Joel and Kay.

Pastor Anita led the board in closing prayer incorporating some requests that had been shared.

Jim Schrag,
Church Board Chair

Vacation Bible School Information

June 10-12, 2016
For ages 4-6th grade

Invite your friends and neighbors to FMC



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The theme for 2016 Vacation Bible School is, "building on a firm foundation." (Matthew 7:24) This is in relation to the house project for the Nuñez family in Wakefield, NE. Vacation Bible School is for children 4 years old (preschool) thru 6th grade. The kick off for Vacation Bible School begins on Friday, June 10, with a FREE barbeque served 5:00-7:00 PM. Then there will be swimming at the Newton public pool, 7:15-8:15 PM. Registration begins on Saturday, June 11, at 8:30 AM, in the Court Area followed with fellowship in song, Bible scripture search, making prayer swatches, snack bags and name tiles for the six Nuñez children. Lunch will be provided. Parents should pick up their children at 4:00 PM in the west parking lot of the church. VBS will conclude Sunday, May 12, at the 10:30 AM church service in the west parking lot when the Partnership Home Project (PHP) dedication will be held. Bring your lawn chairs, table service, and finger food meal items to share. It will be fun for everyone!



JUNE 2016

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat



			1	2 Casa Betania sanctu- ary 6:30 PM Nurture 7:00 PM	3	4
5 Casa Betania service 3:30 PM Outreach-7:45 AM	6	7 FH reserved 7:00 PM	8	9 Casa Betania sanctu- ary 6:30 PM	10 VBS Cookout 5:00-7:00 PM Swimming 7:15- 8:15 PM	11 VBS 9:00 AM- 4:00 PM
12 Casa Betania service 3:30 PM Worship in the park- ing lot-10:30 AM/ Potluck/Dedication at 1:00 PM	13	14	15	16 Casa Betania sanctu- ary 6:30 PM Church Board 6:30 PM	17	18 Guys Grubfast 8:00 AM FH and Kitchen reserved 12-6 PM
19 Casa Betania service 3:30 PM PHP Volunteer train- ing 4:00 PM-FH	20 Property 7:00 PM	21 Caregiving 7:00 PM	22 PHP Volunteer train- ing 7:00 PM-FH	23 Casa Betania sanctu- ary 6:30 PM	24	25
26 Casa Betania service 3:30 PM	27	28	29	30 Casa Betania sanctu- ary 6:30 PM		

All events must be scheduled in the Church Office and cannot be scheduled more than six months in advance.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

If you see these people,
wish them a Happy
Birthday!

Leon Salmons—6/1	Camryn Entz—6/9	Don Schmidt—6/18	Xavier Garcia—6/29
Judy Schrag—6/1	Lee Penner—6/9	Alec Stahly—6/19	Nathan Murphy—6/29
Savannah Simmons—6/1	Betty Bartel—6/10	Bill Black—6/21	
Ron Sybesma—6/2	Kaitlin Abrahams—6/11	Linda Gaertner—6/22	
Riley Kingsley—6/3	Connie Weber—6/14	Laura Myers—6/23	
Charles Wilmore—6/3	Irene P. Schmidt—6/15	Terry Pryce—6/23	
Melody Bontrager—6/5	Angela Black—6/16	Shawn Bontrager—6/24	
	Gus Dorado—6/16	Christa Hiebert—6/24	
	Zachary Kennell—6/16	Justin Dietzel—6/26	
	Wade Nye—6/16	Bentley Hiebert—6/26	
	Carolyn Miller—6/18	Sophia Miller—6/28	

Remember to pray for each other!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Jim & Mary Enz—6/1	Clint & Pat Litsey—6/8	Eric & Judy Murphy—6/23
Rod & Andrea Pauls—6/1	Jim & Judy Schrag—6/11	Melvin & Nancy Pauls—6/24
Vernon & Velma Frey—6/2	Willis & Anna Marie Harder—6/12	Scott & Cindy Erb—6/28
Lee & Deb Penner—6/4	Clarence & Amanda Rempel—6/14	Bob & Mary Lou Schmidt—6/29
Jim & Alice Huxman—6/5	John & Janice Good—6/16	Mike & Cindy Combs—6/30
Randall & Carol Goering—6/6	Jordan & Diana Miller—6/18	
Ryan & Rachel Koehn—6/6	Brian & Barbara Walker—6/20	
Ron & Deb Ratzlaff—6/6	Kent & Lynette Erb—6/21	
Dwight & Janet Regier—6/7	Harry & Joan Ensz—6/22	

CONGRATULATIONS!!



Four Chisholm Middle School seventh graders who were invited to take the ACT or SAT College Entrance Exam as part of the Duke Talent Identification Program have been recognized for their high scores on these “above grade level” tests. Jakob Graber was one of the students who took the test. Duke has hosted

an annual recognition ceremony at Kansas University to honor the seventh graders who score the highest on these exams. The ceremony was held on May 22 at the Lied Center in Lawrence.

As seventh graders, the students have achieved scores on the ACT or SAT rivaling those of college-bound seniors who took the tests.

SAT recognition is given to a 530 in math, a 500 in writing, and/or a 510 in reading. Jakob is recognized for his reading and his writing scores.

Summer Sunday School

Summer Sunday School is always special for the children.

The Beginners class and the Preschool/Kindergarten class will remain in their usual rooms for the summer and will be led by the teachers they have had during the school year.

Grades 1-6 will join together in the upstairs of the education wing to study the early church and the missionary journeys of Paul. Renee Hamm, Bev Regier and Judy Schrag will be leading this group. Spoiler alert: does anyone have a small row boat we could use for part of the summer?

Grades 7 and 8 will study the Adventures of the Anabaptists, a class that is repeated every two years for the Junior High students. Amanda Entz, Bryan Kehr, Paul Schrag, and Cindy Unruh will give leadership to this study.

Pat Denno will oversee all classes as the Sunday School Superintendent.

Pray for all of our children as they continue to learn the Good News of Jesus Christ and our Anabaptist heritage.

GOD'S CONTINUING GRACE—SHARON HARDER

What an important influence First Mennonite has been to me personally and especially in ministry over the last 40+ years. Something very special happened in my heart when Dr. Albert Epp and the deacons called me on stage, laying hands on me to commission me to full time Christian service. That was April of 1972! The many gifts of love to prepare an outfit of household items, etc... (back then we took it with us), the generous giving over the years but most importantly the continuous prayers on my behalf by the congregation, Sunday School classes and individuals is what has sustained me. Only eternity will show what you have done for eternal values, but please permit me to give a resounding **thank you** for your participation in the Gospel in these ways!

To those I haven't met yet: I served in Colombia, South America for 33 years with TEAM, the majority of time in a church start ministry in Bogotá. Since 2006 I have been on a Secondment Assignment from TEAM to Rio Grande Bible Ministries in Edinburg, TX. Among the various ministries on campus of the RGBM, which include Bible College, Missionary Language School, Book

Store, Print Shop, Large Winter Texan Program, etc. is the Spanish Christian Radio Station, *Radio Esperanza* (Hope). In my office at the Radio I receive counseling appointments from the community or students from the Bible College. Even though my title is "counselor" perhaps a better title would be "facilitator" or "mentor" because this is primarily a ministry of prayer. After evaluating the cause of what is happening in their lives, either in a spiritual or emotional area, we go to prayer to have Jesus disconnect each area of damage in the heart emotionally or repent of areas where there has been sin. It is awesome to see how God takes over and does the work. I can honestly say: If anything is happening in the office I didn't do it! Only God can cleanse and heal! What a privilege it is to listen to each individual story and then lead them to Jesus!

Please pray for me: 1) that I will always maintain **a close communion with the Lord** so that He can use me; 2) and for **wisdom** from on High as I lead individuals to freedom.

A personal need I am experiencing this year is to have **a mentor** with

whom I can share my heart. I feel it is not healthy to continually give out without being able to share personally. 2015 brought some different challenges to my life. Four individuals with whom I shared were taken away. My co-worker and fellow counselor at the Radio Station with whom I shared daily became ill with cancer and passed away last October. In December my sister, Myrtle Loy Busenitz from Elbing and former member at First Mennonite, with whom I shared almost on a weekly basis, also went home to heaven because of cancer. Two other friends with whom I was beginning to share or meet with for prayer also left the area for various reasons. Perhaps God is beginning to supply now through several friends at church or on campus. I am so thankful for God's plan of Christian friends and fellowship and am also aware that these times of adjustment can draw us closer to our Lord if/when we respond correctly!

Again, thank you for being a vital part of my life all these years in sharing the gospel with Latin Americans.

Sharon Harder

(continued from page 1)



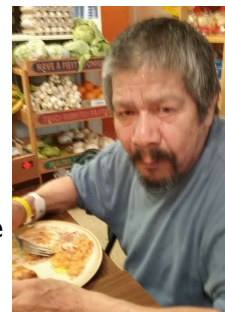
Presbyterian Church, and Beemer Mennonite Church as well as with additional lumberyards and other agencies.

Perhaps the most important partner in this project is YOU. You have the opportunity to be a part of

something that is much bigger than any one of us could do by ourselves. You can participate in the Parking Lot Build here in Newton (June 7, 8, 9) and/or by spending a week in Wakefield, NE (late June through middle of August) working on-site to complete this project.

The hope is to provide the Jimenez Nuñez family with a new home by the middle of August.

However, the ultimate hope is that everyone involved will discover and experience what people of God can do when we are unified in purpose and effort: becoming the blessing we are called to be in this world and—as is often the case—being blessed ourselves in the process.



JULY 2016

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat



1 Sanctuary/FH reserved for Kerr wedding rehearsal.
2 Sanctuary reserved for Kerr wedding 4:00 PM

3 Casa Betania service 3:30 PM

4 Church office closed

5

6

7 Casa Betania sanctuary 6:30 PM
Nurture 7:00 PM

8

9

10 Casa Betania service 3:30 PM

11

12

13

14 Casa Betania sanctuary 6:30 PM
Church Board 7:00 PM

15

16

—Youth Trip —PHP Nuñez Summer Mission Project—

17 Casa Betania service 3:30 PM

18 Property-7:00 PM
Worship Commission 7:00 PM

19 Caregiving-7:00 PM

20

21 Casa Betania sanctuary 6:30 PM

22

23

24 Casa Betania service 3:30 PM

25

26

27

28 Casa Betania sanctuary 6:30 PM

29 WDC Assembly

30

31 Casa Betania service 3:30 PM

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

If you see these people,
wish them a Happy Birthday!

Paul Voran—7/2
Paige Weaver—7/2
Nancy Pauls—7/3
Ray Franz—7/7
Kaven Denno—7/8
Rebecca Epp—7/8
Stephanie Brown—7/9
Donnie Kingsley—7/9
Janet Regier—7/10
Steven Voth—7/11
Delora Decker—7/12
Diana Miller—7/12
Paul Buller—7/13

Clay Nye—7/14
Dr. Tim Wiens—7/14
Myrna Grochowsky—7/15
Randall Goering—7/16
Wendy Funk Schrag—7/16
Cora Voran—7/16
Ron Bachman—7/17
Evelyn Smith—7/17
Michael Garcia—7/18
Evelyn Pankratz—7/18
Nancy Entz—7/21
Willis Harder—7/25
Cindy Epp—7/26
Jackson Hiebert—7/29
Larry Entz—7/30
Pat Litsey—7/31
Dana Neff—7/31

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Chuck & Bev Regier—7/2
Ken & Neva Frey—7/6
Ryan & Angela Nye—7/11
John & Jan Sommer—7/12
Randy & Lynnette Doty—7/14
Marvin & Carol Gerbrand—7/14
Nathan & Marissa Murphy—7/26
Ken & Amy Regier—7/30

PRAYER STORY

On April 24 the Worship Commission invited the congregation to share stories about prayer during the month of May. The following story is shared by Lewis Wiebe.

In 2010 Life-line Screening was in my neighborhood and I decided to go for a health screening. My carotid arteries showed moderate blockage which reduced blood flow. They recommended follow up visits each year after that. The results always came back the same – unchanged.

In 2015 the results showed moderate plaque in the left side and significant plaque in the right side. At that time they referred me to my doctor. My doctor confirmed that I had blockage. He stated

that they would not do surgery until the artery was around 70% blocked.

It weighed heavy on my mind and I prayed that surgery would happen before I suffered a major stroke.

I look forward each morning to watching the 700 Club on the Christian Broadcasting Network at 9:00 AM on CBS. During a portion of the show they pray for people whom they don't know who have all kinds of medical conditions. My ears perked up one morning when they prayed that someone out there has blocked carotid arteries. "God is healing that for you right now in Jesus' name." I



thought in my mind that prayer was meant for me. In February of this year I had another

follow up scan along with other tests. This time I did not receive a comparison chart to the last test. The doctor said results are normal at this time. The cost of these tests are \$627, and Medicare has always paid the bill.

After two months I received the Medicare statement which listed \$627 not paid. I thought to myself "oh no." Reading further on the statement it stated that these tests were not warranted, but you did not know this, so you do not have to pay this bill. I prayed and gave thanks to God for his healing power.

FMC Connections

First Mennonite Church
PO Box 291
429 East First Street
Newton, KS 67114



Caregiving and Membership Commission Corner

Have you received a blessing by volunteering your time and ability to help out a fellow church member with a small task around their home lately? The “small needs” ministry of the Caregiving and Membership Commission is slowly beginning to catch on as those of you who would like a little help with fixing, building, moving, replacing, maintaining, rearranging, transportation, etc. People are matched up with a volunteer who has indicated their willingness to occasionally help with that specific type of task.

Many of those who have been called upon to volunteer in this way report the blessing they received in the process! Not only are you able to help someone out, but you get to know someone you may otherwise not have known very well. So, if you are interested in volunteering, or if you would like to request help with a small job, contact the church office or talk to a member of Caregiving and Membership Commission. Let’s keep on “caring” for each other!