



FIRST
MENNONITE
CHURCH,
NEWTON

OUR VISION: Together in Christ: rooted deeply, reaching widely, loving well

OUR MISSION: With Jesus as our center, we are called to be:

- Faith-Focused—Growing spiritually, anchored in God's love and faithfulness.
- Mission-Minded—Sharing hope and grace through Spirit-inspired, passion-driven faith in action.
- Community-Connected—Worshiping together, welcoming, accepting, encouraging, and inviting all to follow Christ

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FMC CONNECTIONS

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MEASURELESS AND STRONG

The predecessor to our current hymnal (variously known as *The Mennonite Hymnal*, the red hymnal, or the brown hymnal, depending on how you see that odd color) was published in 1969, when I was nine years old. It is the hymnal that I remember best from my growing up years, al-though I do remember the embossed title from the prior hymnal that we could shade in on our bulletins during church on Sunday mornings.

The Mennonite Hymnal put all the gospel songs into one section at the back of the book, and that was the section from which the congregation I grew up in sang most often. And in that section of gospel songs there was one that captured my imagination like no other. Actually, it was the third verse of that song that created pictures in my mind and stirred my heart.

*Could we with ink the
ocean fill
And were the skies of
parchment made;
Were every stalk on
earth a quill,*

*And every [one] a scribe
by trade;
To write the love of God
above
Would drain the ocean
dry;
Nor could the scroll con-
tain the whole,
Though stretched from sky
to sky.*

*O love of God, how rich
and pure!
How measureless and
strong!
It shall forevermore endure
The saints' and angels'
song.*

These images of the im-measurability of God's love have shaped how I understand and experience who God is and what salvation means. It has played a part in shaping my theology. I read the scripture, I read the hymn, and I confess: God is love. God loves me. God loves others. God calls us into relationship through Jesus Christ because of love. God asks us to return the love poured out on us, and God asks us to love others as a reflection of what we have ourselves experienced, as imperfect as that reflection may be.



Pastor Anita Kehr

I think I was not the only person who embraced that gospel hymn. It did not appear in our current *Hymnal*, but it immediately reappeared in the first supplement that was published afterwards. I think I was not the only person who has been captivated by those images of the love of God that reconciles and pardons and redeems and that stretches from sky to sky. I think I am not the only person who relies on that immeasurable love, day to day, year to year, on into eternity.

May the love of God be our guide—

Anita Kehr

What If?

*On the occasion of the celebration of the 130th Anniversary
of Women's Groups at First Mennonite Church
on June 11, 2017*

In 1887, Pastor Abraham Sudermann imagined, "What if the creative ladies at First Mennonite Church here in Newton, Kansas, could raise money for missionaries around the world?"

In response to Pastor Sudermann's idea, six creative ladies imagined, "What if we were to call ourselves the Mission Sewing Society and use our sewing skills to help support these missionaries?"

Upon hearing about this, women from the community imagined, "What if we could take the quilts we have prepared to the gifted quilters at First Mennonite and have them do the quilting for us?"

In 1933, members of the Mission Sewing Society imagined, "What if we could create a Mission Study Circle for the purpose of informing and educating women on the specific needs of these missionaries?"

In addition, these same dedicated ladies imagined, "What if we would invite young girls to assist us by making marketable crafts and older girls to prepare mailings for missionaries seeking support?"

At the same time, the older women imagined, "What if we were to expand our mission by making comforters, layettes and kits to be distributed by the Mennonite Central Committee?"

In the years that followed, persons in the community imagined, "What if, for example, we would have these Mennonite ladies, who are known to be great cooks, prepare and serve lunch for our auction crowds?"

With regard to the ladies, they were having such a good time working together on all their projects that they imagined, "Why don't we call ourselves the Mission Fellowship Circle?" And so they did!

On this day, June 11, 2017, under the capable leadership of Amanda, Kathryn, and Ella, the ladies of First Mennonite are looking forward to the future and imagining, "What if...?"

---Dorcas Lady Good

*With grateful credit for the idea for "What If?"
to Marty Troyer and his inspiring book "The Gospel Next Door"*

CAREGIVING CORNER

The last of the 5 Languages of Love is receiving gifts. A gift is a tangible reminder that someone has remembered or thought about you. In order to give a gift, someone has to be thinking of you. A gift is the symbol of someone's thoughtfulness. The importance of the thought is that it is expressed in actually creating a gift and giving it as an expression of your feeling. Gifts are visual symbols of love, care and concern. Receiving these gifts make us feel loved and cared for. By accepting gifts and appreciating them we validate the feelings of the givers.

In a church, there are many ways that we give each other gifts. We have all been recipients of gifts of food, cards and memorials. A fresh baked loaf of bread or a casserole for a family with a new baby or a

grieving family are ways that we give and show our love and desire to help in situations where we stand together with each other.

Many of us make gifts of salads or cakes for families after funerals. Eating together is a comforting time of remembering and being together at a time of loss.

At baptisms, we as a church give towels and candles. These tangible gifts are reminders of covenant and promises made. These gifts hold special and sacred memories that we want to honor. Friendship meals are another gift that we give each other. The gift of a meal that you did not cook and the time to sit down to eat with the church family is an opportunity to be present and share conversation with each

other. We gift our youth with opportunities such as Mennonite college scholarships, service trips and they gift us with fund raising meals and enthusiastic reports. Sometimes we think that people's acts of service are part of their job title or duty. But think of the happy surprise that it would be for our church staff to receive a tangible symbol of appreciation.

We should be encouraged to act on a nudge—if we feel the urge to give a gift as an expression of love, concern or thankfulness, we will feel loved by the act of giving as well as in the receiving.

Thank you for all the ways that you gift and show love.

From the Caregiving and Membership Commission

WELCOMING PLACE: TIPS FOR WELCOMING NEWCOMERS

- Offer a genuine welcome to everyone---long-time members, newer members and visitors.
- True hospitality means putting visitors first when making choices in the use of time. Visitors need more attention than regulars.
- Rather than immediately asking if someone is new, consider a simple introduction like: "Hi, I'm not sure we've met. My name is _____."
- Families come in many forms, including single parent, same gender, multi-generational, and others. **Don't make assumptions about relationships.** Ask open-ended questions that encourage the visitor to speak about him or herself, e.g. "Are you new to town?" or "How did you hear about us?" Try to avoid questions like "Are you married?" or "Where is your husband today?"
- If possible, and if the visitor is interested, introduce the visitor to one of the pastors after the service.

First Mennonite Church is already a very friendly and welcoming place! We've heard this time and time again from countless visitors. At the same time, the Outreach Commission believes that there is always room to grow and push ourselves to more completely show God's love to everyone.

MANY THANKS!!

Greetings from Camp Mennoscah!

Thank you so much for your gift! Our vision to create a sacred space for people of all ages to renew themselves, their relationships, and their connection with God through Jesus Christ is realized only with your help.

On behalf of the Camp Mennoscah Board of Directors and the Camp staff, I would like to thank you for your donation to Camp Mennoscah. Your gifts will be used to continue our mission to provide a retreat for people of all ages. Your willingness to share in our work through your giving is greatly appreciated.

Olivia Bartel, camp director



Dear Friends—

We appreciate your wonderful donations toward Health Ministries Clinic's mission. Health Ministries is blessed to have your support as we provide health care for around 5,000 area residents, many of whom can't afford the full cost of their care.

Bless you for giving,

Matthew Schmidt
Executive Director

Dear First Mennonite Church Members:

Thank you for your generous donation of continued support for the families we serve. With more than two decades of outreach and advocacy service in Harvey County, the Harvey County Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Task Force is undergoing some big changes, including an expanded service area, and a new name. As announced, the agency is now officially called Safehope, and provides services in Harvey County, as well as Marion and McPherson Counties.

Respectfully,
Jan Jones
Safehope

Greetings from Camp Mennoscah!

The 551 campers attending Camp Mennoscah's summer youth camp were blessed by many volunteers who gave their valuable time during busy summer schedules to help at camp. Camp would not be possible without the support of our fantastic volunteers. We love our camp volunteers!

Below is a list of cheery, hard-working folks from your congregation who volunteered at Camp Mennoscah during the summer.

Isaac Entz	Kara Schmidt	Lisa Joliff
Addie Regier	Kate Joliff	Mitchell Murphy
Amanda Entz	Kiley Schmidt	Morgan Murphy
April Kabagambe	Levi Knopp	Stephanie Brown
Ashlynn Hamm	Linda Gaertner	Susannah Epp

May you and your congregation find your way back to Camp Mennoscah soon.

The Camp Mennoscah Staff

Dear First Mennonite Church—

Thank you so much for donating school supplies for our Santa Fe students! I promise they will be used all through the school year!

GB Jost
School Social Worker
Santa Fe 5/6 Center

CHURCH BOARD REPORT

The Board met on August 2, 2017. Ryan Koehn opened by leading the board in prayer.

The meeting was dedicated to discussing items related to the GRACE report.

Angela Black of the Nurture Commission reviewed suggested updates to the Safe Sanctuaries policy. Board members discussed the document and made suggestions for additional changes. The Board spent a significant amount of time in this process with many ideas and suggestions shared. More revisions will be made to the document.

The Nurture Commission requested the Church Board to make an announcement on Sunday, August 6, to encourage all adults to attend the Safe Sanctuaries training on August 13 and 20. The Board approved by consensus.

Ryan Koehn reported on the costs from the GRACE assessment. The assessment took more time than was originally anticipated due to the good survey response and requests for interviews. Ryan Koehn and Ron Ratzlaff will have further discussion

with GRACE on their costs. Cindy Combs submitted her resignation from the Nurture Commission.

The Board approved Linda Shelly as an FMC delegate to the Western District Conference Annual Assembly.

The Board also met on August 10, 2017. Ron Ratzlaff led the board in devotions and prayer.

The Board had a round-table discussion about what each member is hearing from the congregation after receiving the GRACE report. Each Board member also discussed their own feelings about the report. It was a good, healthy discussion. The Board shared a range of thoughts and feelings which seemed to be a good representation of what the congregation is thinking and feeling.

The Board also planned three congregational meetings to further process the GRACE report and to discern our path forward.

Wednesday, August 23 (7:00 PM) – Listening and Responding

This will be a time for the congregation to have round-table discussions. The purpose will be to listen to each other. Several questions will be provided to aid the table discussions.

Sunday, September 10 (12:30 PM) – Learning from the perspective of a survivor

We may have an outside speaker for a portion of the meeting. We will invite survivors in our congregation to share what they feel is important for FMC to learn from their experience.

Sunday, September 24 (6:00 PM) – Processing the GRACE Recommendations

We will spend time as a congregation reviewing and processing the recommendations from the GRACE report.

Funds are still needed to complete our obligation to GRACE. We need to raise an additional \$2,500. Thank you for the support you've already given.

Ryan Koehn
Chairman, Church Board

You are invited to join the choir!!



7:00 PM



Sanctuary choir loft

Questions?
Call Matthew Graber at
605-310-1656

Rehearsals begin on Wednesday, September 13

September 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
						YOUTH
3 Casa Betania Service 4PM	4 Labor Day-Church Office Closed	5	6 Youth Group 7:00 PM MDS KS parking lot house build--First Street	7 Nurture 7 PM MDS KS parking lot house build--First Street	8 MDS KS parking lot house build--First Street	9
FALL	RETREAT				Women and Girls Retreat	
10 Casa Betania Service 4PM Grocery Shower-FH 10:00 AM Potluck-12 Noon-FH Congregational Processing—12:30 PM-FH	11	12	13 Youth Group 7:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM	14 Church Board 7 PM	15 IBA Fundraising Dinner 6:30 PM-FH	16
17 Casa Betania Service 4PM	18 Property 7 PM	19 Caregiving and Membership 7 PM	20 Youth Group 7:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM	21 NAMI 7:00 PM	22	23
24 Casa Betania Service 4PM Outreach 7:45 AM Congregational Processing 6:00 PM—FH	25	26	27 CFN Meal 5:00 PM Choir 6:45 PM Youth Group 6:45 PM	28	29	30 Sanctuary reserved
All events must be scheduled in the Church Office and cannot be schedule more than six months in advance.						

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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

Belva Unruh—9/1
Amy Frey—9/3
Delia Schroeder—9/4
Matthew Shelly—9/4
Ryan Koehn—9/5
Ira Frey—9/6
Jan Sommer—9/6
Sarah Fleming—9/9
Melvin Pauls—9/9
Jenna Ratzlaff—9/9
Elizabeth Epp—9/11

Jan Claassen—9/12
Randy Doty—9/12
Bev Regier—9/13
Esther Epp—9/14
Stefanie Knopp—9/16
Dale Schrag—9/16
Ken Bachman—9/17
Jan Groves—9/17
Doug Pauls—9/17
Beverley Buller—9/19
Dennis Flickner—9/19
Ella Regier—9/19
Ashlynn Hamm—9/21
Haleigh Machmer—9/21

Levi Knopp—9/21
Roy Goering—9/22
Joel Schroeder—9/22
Carol Entz—9/23
Rod Pauls—9/23
Brian Kennell—9/24
Lori Kingsley—9/25
Gail Pryce—9/25
Jeryl Murphy—9/26
Harry Ensz—9/29
Pamela Garcia—9/30
Mason Unruh—9/30



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Donnie & Lori Kingsley—9/12
Dewayne & Betty Pauls—9/12
Bryan & Kathy Becker—9/23
Sammie & Robin Simmons—9/26



Mildred Unruh was a member of FMC since the 1960s. She passed away this year leaving \$148,834.23 to FMC from her estate.



Mildred was born in 1928 and lived in the Goessel community until she moved to Newton. She worked for 32 years with the Southwestern Bell Telephone company. After she retired in 1980, she spent time in volunteer work.

For many years, Mildred lived with her sister Martha on High Street in Newton. They would be seen

together attending Sunday school and various activities.

Mildred's first church home was the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church. Throughout her life church participation and attendance at FMC was important to Mildred. She played piano in church and helped serve lunch at many funerals. She valued the relationship with her Sunday school class members. She had many friends whom she kept in touch with through visits and letters. She was known for her remarkable memory of names and people.

She was also known for her service to others. Among her activities

were volunteering at the Et Cetera Shop, serving juice at the Bethel Home for the Aged on Fridays, and participating in the Bethel-Kidron Auxiliary. She enjoyed having lunch with friends and attending Life Enrichment at Bethel College. Relationships were very important to Mildred.

We greatly appreciate her generous financial gift to the church at her death as well as her contributions of time and talents during her lifetime.

~Financial Stewardship Committee

FMC Connections

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



September 2017

Church Family Night starts on September 27!! The Church Family Night kids theme will be *Peace*

CFN meal-5:30 PM
Youth group-6:45 PM
Choir-6:45 PM
Adult Bible Study-6:45 PM



Everyone is welcome to come!!

