



FIRST
MENNONITE
CHURCH,
NEWTON

FMC Connections

Volume 27, Issue 9

October 2017

World Communion and Us

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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On October 1 (which is, of course, also the first Sunday of October), we will be celebrating World Communion Sunday. On that day, we will remember that we are linked to other Christians around this globe that we live on by virtue of our common faith in Jesus Christ. We will also remember, as we do every time we take communion together, that we are joined with each other in our journey of faith. We will remember that the Church is bigger and beyond this particular time and this particular place.

The idea of a “world communion” observance began in 1933 by Hugh Thompson Kerr, a Presbyterian pastor of the Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, PA. Kerr was serving as moderator of the General Assembly of his denomination at that time, and World Communion Sunday was an “attempt to bring churches together in a service of Christian unity—in which everyone might receive both inspi-

ration and information, and above all, to know how important the Church of Jesus Christ is and how each congregation is interconnected one with another.” (1)

The idea did not take off very quickly. It was not until World War 2 began that the concept took hold because, said Kerr’s son, “we were trying to hold the world together. World Communion symbolized the effort to hold things together, in a spiritual sense. It emphasized that we are one in the Spirit and the Gospel of Jesus.” Today World Communion Sunday is celebrated around the globe; it reminds us Christians who live in an increasingly-fractured world that we are citizens of a different kingdom.

What is true in our congregation is that we are going through a challenging time in our life together. There are some stress fractures showing up. In light of that fact, I’ve been asked (and have asked myself) how we can celebrate



Pastor Anita Kehr

communion with integrity.

After a number of conversations, including among the members of the Caregiving and Membership Commission who serve as our deacons, here is our conclusion: How can we not take communion? How can we not remember how deeply each of us is in need of God’s grace through Jesus Christ?

One of the threads of these conversations included the importance of confession, of taking time to come before God honestly in revealing our brokenness, our need, our sin. We prepare to come to the communion table via confession. It is during that time that we understand our hunger and our thirst for the bread and

(Continued on page 6)

Thank you!!

Dear First Mennonite Church:

Thank you for the ways that you enrich Bethel College—the students you send, your thoughts, your prayers and your financial support. Your gift helps each student in some capacity. Thanks for all you do for Bethel College and for the generous gift for the Bethel College Fund. It is very much appreciated!

Rob Schunn
Annual Fund Director

Dear First Mennonite Church~

We wanted to write and thank you for your contribution to the Harvey County Homeless Shelter. We appreciate your continued support!

God's Blessings~

HCHS staff and residents

From Mennonite Mission Network~

Thank you for your generous and faithful support!

Sandra Miller, Director for Church Relations

Dear Friends:

Thank you for your recent gift toward the mission of Health Ministries Clinic. In 2015, community support like yours enabled more than 1,550 people with low income and no health insurance to receive comprehensive, quality primary-care services.

Your gifts are helping us to carry out our mission in Harvey County.

Sincerely,
Matthew Schmidt
Executive Director

Thank You!



Dear FMC—

Thank you so much for your wonderful donation of school kits to MCC! These will help to bring love and joy to children all over the world! Your generosity and efforts are so appreciated.

Mennonite Central Committee

Update From Sharon Harder

Jesus Our best Friend—

Greetings from South Texas! We are looking forward to cooler weather here on the Mexican border. Temperatures are still in the upper 90's with a triple-digit heat index but it is nice to be outside in the mornings or late evenings now. Early mornings are the best moments of my day. That's because that is when I set aside a time to meet with my best Friend. He's always there when I go and His mood never changes. He consistently needs to straighten something out in my life and I am so glad He knows just how to do that. Everything is under His control (even if or when I don't believe it), and He is the One who speaks to me any time I can connect to Him. I am very aware that the days I do not have that communion, the hours in the office seem very empty.

There are 138 students at the Rio Grande Bible College this semester from about 16 countries in South America. I am able to receive several students each semester at Radio Esperanza on the RGBC campus where I have a counseling office. One girl, now an alumnus, came with so much emo-

tional pain. She was a single mother whose teenage son was living a life estranged from the Lord. She had a lot of remorse for her past life but after making a decision to believe in Jesus' death on the cross for forgiveness of sin she began to serve in her church in southern Mexico. The pastor there encouraged her to get Bible training and that church supported her faithfully during four years of a Bachelor of Arts program here at the RGB College.

Even though she was a believer and studying the Word of God every day, she couldn't rid herself of the regrets, negative thoughts and anger stemming from her youth. As she shared her story we discovered that her dad was seldom home and mom always had to work. She never received affection or attention as a child. Added to the pain of not being cared for there were large responsibilities placed on her and criticism by family members. At the age of 10 she had to cook, clean and take care of her younger siblings. The emotional needs that weren't met as a child plus feeling overwhelmed with responsibilities she couldn't emotionally handle at such a young age caused her to enter into moral failure with the father of her

son. When she came to my office she was growing spiritually but still carrying the emotional pain of her youth. As we went to God in prayer, we made sure that the moral failure was totally forgiven, with no remaining guilt. Then we took each area of emotional pain identified to the Lord. She asked: "Jesus, do you care that I felt so alone and ignored as a child? Were You there? Jesus, am I important to You? Do You think I'm special? Jesus, would You be my friend? Every time I feel lonely or overwhelmed because of too much stress/responsibilities now, what would You want me to think instead of feeling down with all those memories?" Jesus gave her a new song to sing: "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bare. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer. Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care; Precious Savior, still our Refuge! Take it to the Lord in prayer!"

Sharon Harder

Caregiving Corner

The Caregiving and Membership Commission is asked by our FMC constitution to "provide resources to the congregation and training for mediation and reconciliation." As a partial response, we have borrowed a number of resources from the Western District Resource Library that will be on a cart in our church library in October and November. We invite you to browse and check out these resources at your convenience.

We have sought to find digital resources as well. KIPCOR (The Kansas Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution) suggests these sites:

Specific resources on congregational conflict:

www.bbministries.org.uk/resources/ includes bibliographies, resource lists, as well as some blog articles.

www.congregationalconsulting.org/ includes quality blog articles.

And our own Kara Schmidt, a school librarian, suggests these sites for families with children:

Storyline Online

This site has YouTube videos of celebrities reading kid's books. Titles include "Enemy Pie" and "Rainbow Fish." www.storylineonline.net/

Free Rice

This site quizzes users with multiple choice questions on a variety of educational topics. For each correct answer, ten grains of rice are donated to people in need.

www.freerice.com/about

Kansas State Library Resources

The Kansas State Library has a vast amount of resources for kids and adults. www.kslib.info/963/eBooks-for-Kids

Happy learning!!

Happy Birthday

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

Tyler Shelly—10/1

Gladys Graber—10/3

Dwight Regier—10/3

Amy Grochowsky—10/6

Jordan Penner—10/6

Helen Entz—10/9

Lynette Erb—10/9

Eli Weaver—10/10

Karen Bachman—10/11

Mark Gerbrand—10/13

Kay Schroeder—10/15

Florene Wiens—10/15

Kenna Graber—10/16

Naaman Frey—10/17

Krys Hiebert—10/17

Bryan Becker—10/18

Denetta Denno—10/18

Elvera Suderman—10/19

Tyler Doty—10/20

Megan Voth—10/20

Jerry Decker—10/21

Seth Bontrager—10/22

Marvin Gerbrand—10/22

Dave Goering—10/22

Kevin Hamm—10/23

Ethan Entz—10/24

Addie Regier—10/24

Cameron Weaver—10/25

Hannah Epp—10/27

Rod Schmidt—10/27

Gary Grochowsky—10/29

Sarah Koehn—10/29

Lewis Wiebe—10/29

Galeard Hackney—10/30

Callie Knopp—10/30

Carson Knopp—10/30

LaVerna Schierling—10/30

Kiley Schmidt—10/30



Happy Anniversary

Rod & Ethel Wedel—10/3

Tim & Kathy Wiens—10/5

Roy & Sheralyn Goering—10/14

Phil & Linda Gaertner—10/16

Jeremy & Jyl Ewy—10/18

Bill & Wenda Black—10/29

“One pencil, two pencils, three pencils, four.” This story was repeated 189 times as the children and the church collected 756 pencils as part of the MCC School kit children’s offering project. The entire church banded together to collect spiral notebooks- 224 to be exact, 79 boxes of colored pencils, 104 rulers and 112 erasers.

This intergenerational project included multiple seamstresses who sewed 104 bags for the kits, persons who donated school supplies and adults who gave money to the FMC-Mart where the school supplies were sold on Sunday morning, so that ALL

children could buy school supplies. The joy on the faces of the children was unmistakable. The children carried their purchases to their Sunday School rooms, and added the items to the growing piles in their classrooms. At the Children’s Day Celebration, the children were intent on getting all of the bags assembled before they went out to play at all of the options available outside.

The financial gift to MCC was \$330.25 which included two generous donations of cash. The value of the 56 school kits (@ \$4.00 per kit) was \$224.00 and the individual school kit items equaled

\$309.50. The total value of this project was \$863.75 in cash and items in kind.

Who can say that “one pencil, two pencils, three pencils, four” don’t add up to a sizeable contribution to MCC! Thank you First Mennonite Church for your generous gift to MCC!



October 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Casa Betania Service 4PM Men's Ministry Forum 5-7 PM—far west parking lot	2	3	4 CFN Meal 5:30 PM Choir 6:45 PM YG 6:45 PM Bible Study 6:45 PM	5 Nurture 7 PM	6	7
8 Casa Betania Service 4PM 2nd's Potluck— noon YG Bible Study 4 PM FH/kitchen reserved	9	10 Church Board 7 PM	11 CFN Meal 5:30 PM Choir 6:45 PM YG 6:45 PM Bible Study 6:45 PM	12	13	14 FH and Kitchen reserved
15 Casa Betania Service 4PM	16 Property 7 PM	17 Caregiving 7 PM	18 CFN Meal 5:30 PM Choir 6:45 PM YG 6:45 PM Bible Study 6:45 PM	19	20	21
22 Casa Betania Service 4PM YG Bible Study 4 PM	23	24	25 Worship Comm. 11:30 AM CFN Meal 5:30 PM Choir 6:45 PM YG 6:45 PM Bible Study 6:45 PM	26 Church Board 7 PM	27	28
29 Casa Betania Service 4PM Outreach 7:45 AM	30	31				

All events must be scheduled in the Church Office and cannot be schedule more than six months in advance.
 *Church Family Night. Meal starts at 5:30 PM. All other activities start at 6:45 PM.

Church Board Report

The board met on September 14, 2017. Nancy opened with devotions and prayer.

The board approved a taskforce to be formed and report to the Caregiving and Membership Commission. This taskforce will be charged with developing a policy for the care of survivors of sexual abuse and sexual offenders. The goal is to have the policy ready to present to the congregation at the congregational meeting in April of 2018.

The board spent time reviewing the past two meetings that were focused on the GRACE report. We are very thankful for the survivors who were willing to share their stories with the congregation. Hearing the stories, and lessons that

FMC can learn from them, was very important as we learn to become a survivor focused church. The board made plans for the third congregational meeting. This was held on September 24, 6:00 PM, in the Fellowship Hall. This meeting focused on processing the GRACE recommendations.

The board spent time reflecting on the recommendations to help prepare ourselves for the September 24 meeting. No decisions will be made on the recommendations until after the congregational meeting. A special board meeting was scheduled for October 26. The focus of this meeting will be to make decisions about the GRACE recommendations.

The board approved the following projects to be funded from the Mildred Unruh Estate: \$9K—Complete the Window Fund; \$15K—Replace the South and West doors; \$20K—Dream Fund.

The Board read the FMC vision prayer as a closing.

Ryan Koehn
Chairman, Church Board

(continued from front page)

the cup, for the salvation and healing that they represent.

Another thread was recognizing that communion reminds us of what we hope for. It is aspirational rather than descriptive. In other words, communion calls us toward what God desires of us, to be joined together in Jesus Christ so that we might become a holy (and whole) dwelling place. We know we're not all the way there, but communion renews our hope.

Finally, and probably most important, communion reminds us that our unity must be located in Jesus Christ who lived, who died, and who was raised again. It is by grace and through the faithfulness of Jesus that we become beloved children of God and members of the Body of Christ. We need that grace and so does everyone else, whether or not we're in agreement. That is the truth on which we rely and by which we become members of one another.

Let us give thanks to the One who loves, who forgives, who calls, who nourishes us in our faith and life.

Anita Keh

(1) <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/special-days-and-emphases/world-communion-sunday/>

Volunteering—Faith Enhancement



Welcome to Et Cetera!

It is a joy greeting the group of people entering the front door of our shop promptly at

9:30 AM each Friday morning when I regularly volunteer.

They eagerly select the items they have been “window shopping” while waiting for the doors to open.

It is the random acts of kindness that continues to build my faith in Christ’s work among us. The adage of “paying it forward” is alive and thriving at our store! Examples include: customers who may be just a few cents short to pay for their purchases and the person behind them in the checkout line provides the necessary change; I recall another instance where two young sisters donated \$10.50 as a result of a personal fundraiser for the MCC donation box by putting on a show for their neighborhood, and the business man within our community standing by the clerk’s station and paying for customers’ tally of purchases during the Christmas season. These are just a few examples of Christian love and sharing.

For those unaware of the processing of donations I would

like to share a tidbit about Carol Goering, a member of FMC, who prepared a progress chart on clothing donated to the Et Cetera Shop. Primary use: (1) sold, or (2) recycled to MCC Center in North Newton where clothing is baled, sold, and shipped to third parties within the U.S. and Canada; (3) discarded if moldy, smells offensive or (4) up-cycled which is torn or cut into strips, sewn together, wound onto shuttles and woven into rugs, placemats, hot pads or other creative items on the large looms at the front of the store then sold.

It takes many volunteers working together to accomplish the generous contributions both to MCC and the local community. The Et Cetera Shop is an anchor to our downtown merchants thanks to our local residents and the many out of town visitors that purposely come to Newton to shop.

In 2016 our local store gave over \$239,000 to MCC from sales and donation boxes, \$26,000 in local giving in addition to over \$25,000 in gifts in kind which included bicycles given to residents of New Hope

Shelter for transportation, store vouchers to local service organizations for persons in need and recycled clothing, purses, belts and shoes from our store to MCC-Central States.

Volunteering is more than donating time; it is the essence of living!

Blessings!
Pat Denno



FMC Connections

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



Church Family Nights are every Wednesday, September 27—November 15

- Mark your calendars for Fall Church Family Night, every Wednesday beginning on September 27-November 15. Supper will be served from 5:30-6:30 PM. Following supper, there will be activities for all ages. "Peace" will be the theme for grades K-6. There will also be a class for Preschoolers, ages 3 and 4 in room 234. Jr. High will be meeting in room 126, High School in room 122-124, Adult Bible Study will be studying Psalm in room 224, and Choir will meet in the

Sanctuary. Please join us and bring your friends for Fall Church Family Night!

- Some important dates to remember during Church Family night:

October 4—Flu shots will be available during the meal. (5:30-6:30 PM) Heath Kerr, Pharmacist from Dillons, will be available to give a flu shot. The cost is \$40 or free for Medicare patients. Medicare cards will need to be seen at the time of service. Please bring cash.

November 15—Youth Group Turkey Dinner.

