



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—Worshipping together, welcoming, accepting, encouraging, and inviting all to follow Christ.

Inside this issue:

Caregiving Corner	3
Church Board Report	3
Worship Commission Book	6

FMC Connections

Volume 28, Issue 9

October 2018

FMC: A Safe Place for All

In February of 2018, the FMC Safety Team was formed after concerns and questions were expressed about the general safety and the emergency procedures (or lack of) at FMC. The Safety Team is comprised of Jordan Miller (Property Committee), Alan Entz (Property Committee and usher), Pat Denno (Safe Sanctuaries Committee and greeter), Gail Pryce (Nurture Commission), Gary Moore (Outreach, Missions, Peace Commission), Pastor Anita Kehr, and Pastor Joel Schroeder.

The Safety Team's purpose is to review and update current emergency procedures, to address general safety concerns at FMC, and to provide emergency training for persons at FMC. The hope is to increase everyone's awareness and preparedness as we remain a welcoming and encouraging gathered group of brothers and sisters in Christ. While risks cannot be eliminated completely, we hope to minimize the risks and make FMC safer for all.

The Safety Team is viewing safety and emergency response in three general areas: large group gather-

ings (worship, special events, Christmas Eve, etc.), small group gatherings (Sunday School, Church Family Nights, etc.), and general safety (parking lot, locking of doors, increased awareness, etc.). The Safety Team, through work with various commissions, has initiated safety exercises (tornado drills, evacuation drills, etc.) and has placed "FMC Emergency Action Plans" flipcharts in all classrooms and various locations throughout the church. These flipcharts include emergency phone numbers, as well as instructions if an unknown (threat) person is encountered, if there is a medical emergency, if there is severe weather, or if the building needs to be evacuated. Everyone is encouraged to look at one of these flipcharts and become familiar with these procedures.

The Safety Team has also had conversations regarding an active shooter situation. All agree that this is a sad reality in our world today, and we can no longer say that this will never happen here. Therefore, an A.L.I.C.E. (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) awareness training event has been scheduled for Saturday, October 27 at 10:00 AM at



Pastor Joel Schroeder

FMC in conjunction with the Newton Police Department. Everyone is invited to attend this awareness training. The Newton Area Mennonite Churches will also be invited to attend and have additional conversation over lunch about how we as Mennonites are to respond.

A special thank you to the Safety Team and the work they have done. Ultimately, however, safety at FMC is everyone's responsibility. And while the Safety Team is working diligently, if you see something, say something. If you feel unsafe, call the police. If you have concerns, express them. Together, we can be more aware, more informed, and more prepared as we strive to be a safe place for all who gather.

PARENTLY PARABLE

In a mother's womb were two babies. One asked the other: 'Do you believe in life after delivery?'

The other replied, 'Well, I don't know, but I hope and trust that there is something after delivery. Maybe what we understand now will not always be.'

'Nonsense' said the first. 'There is no life after delivery. What kind of life would that be? What would we do all day?'

The second said, 'I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths. Who knows, maybe we will have other senses that we can't understand now.'

The first replied, 'That is absurd. Walking is impossible. And eating with our mouths? Ridiculous! The umbilical cord supplies nutrition and everything we need. If we get delivered we would be without it.'

The second humbly replied, 'Well I hope there is something and maybe it's different than it is here. Maybe we won't need this physical umbilical cord anymore.'

The first replied, 'Nonsense. And moreover if there is life after delivery, then right now doesn't even matter does it? No, delivery is the end.'

'Well, I don't know,' said the second, 'but certainly we will meet Mother and she will take care of us.'

The first replied 'Mother? You actually believe in Mother? That's laughable. If Mother exists then where is She now?'

The second said, 'She is all around us. We are surrounded by her. We are of Her. It is in Her that we live. Without Her this world would not and could not exist.'

Said the first: 'Well I don't see Her, she seems absent, so how would I believe She exists?'

To which the second replied, 'Sometimes, when you're in silence and you focus and you really listen, you can perceive Her presence, and you can hear Her loving voice, calling down from above.'

From Wellman Mennonite Church

Church Board Report

The Board met on September 13, 2018. Ron Ratzlaff led devotions.

The September meeting was an important one as the Church Board met with parents of children in our church to listen to their concerns. We also met separately with Cindy Combs and her support team to listen to their concerns. The concerns that were shared with the board will be important for the guidelines and process that we will establish in November for the

future review of Cindy's involvement in children's ministry at First Mennonite Church. (She is not currently involved.) The Board plans that the next review will be in three years (November of 2021). At that time there will be a discernment process using the guidelines established this year. The outcome of the discernment process in 2021 is not predetermined; it could be that Cindy can't be part of FMC's children's ministry or a new review timeline could be set or a process of reinstatement could

be defined.

The Church Board also set the fall congregational meeting for November 11. They read our congregational Vision and Mission statements and then closed with the FMC vision prayer.

The Board would appreciate your prayers as they continue to work hard and make complicated decisions.

Ryan Koehn
Chair, Church Board

Caregiving Corner

When most of us hear the word "bullying," we tend to think of school yard brawls, locker room harassment, and cruel jokes targeted at the physically "weak." This topic has been the center of much attention and staff training in local schools of all grade levels in recent years. But it is important to realize that acts of domination and intimidation are not reserved for children and teens. In reality, anyone, regardless of age, can become a victim of bullying: "the use of superior strength or influence to intimidate someone, typically to force him or her to do what one wants" (Google Dictionary).

The Caregiving and Membership Commission is planning to host an informative presentation and conversation during the Sunday School hour (9:15-10:15 AM) on

Sunday morning, October 14, in Fellowship Hall. All FMC adults, in addition to junior high and senior high youth, are encouraged to attend. Erin Graber and Michelle Regier, local public school social workers and members of our congregation, will lead the session entitled "Bullying: A Christian Multigenerational Response." Possible topics include descriptions of bullying among all ages, how to respond and offer help to someone (of any age) who is a bully or is being bullied, how social media can be used to intimidate and bully others and what to do about it, and policies/laws that specifically address bullying. Following the Sunday School hour, we will move into the worship service which will focus on scripture and biblical teachings about

the importance of kindness to others and treasuring each person's worth as a unique creation of God. We look forward to this being an educational and worthwhile hour of learning and discussion for our congregation—we hope you will plan to attend!

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

Kay Schroeder—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

Barry Bontrager—10/21

Jerry Decker—10/21

Seth Bontrager—10/22

Dave Goering—10/22

Kevin Hamm—10/23

Ethan Entz—10/24

Addie Regier—10/24

Cameron Weaver—10/25

Rod Schmidt—10/27

Gary Grochowsky—10/29

Sarah Koehn—10/29

Lewis Wiebe—10/29

Galeard Hackney—10/30

Liam Knopp—10/30

Carson Knopp—10/30

LaVerna Schierling—10/30

Kiley Schmidt—10/30



Happy Anniversary

Rod & Ethel Wedel—10/3

Roy & Sheralyn Goering—10/14

Phil & Linda Gaertner—10/16

Jeremy & Jyl Ewy—10/18

Rick and Rhonda Brown—10/20

Bill & Wenda Black—10/29

Thank you, First Mennonite Church,
for giving \$19,322.08 to Mennonite
Mission Network in 2017! Your
donations, prayers, and enthusiastic
participation play a vital role in our
global church. Together, we were
able to share a message of hope in a
broken world.



October 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Nurture Commision-7PM	3 CFN Meal-5:30PM Youth Group 6:45PM Choir 6:45PM Bible Study 6:45PM	4	5	6
7 Outreach-7:45AM Joint Worship Service with Casa Betania—4PM with Potluck following	8	9	10 CFN Meal-5:30PM Youth Group 6:45PM Choir 6:45PM Bible Study 6:45PM	11 Church Board-7PM	12	13 Men's breakfast-8AM FH/Kitchen reserved 10AM-6PM
14 Casa Betania Service-4PM	15 Property Commission-7PM	16 Women's Fellowship—FH 9:30 AM-12 Noon Caregiving and Membership Comm.-7PM	17 CFN Meal-5:30PM Youth Group 6:45PM Choir 6:45PM Bible Study 6:45PM	18 Kitchen reserved— afternoon/evening	19 FH/Kitchen reserved	20 KS Food Bank—morning Sanctuary/FH reserved in afternoon
21 Casa Betania Service-4PM	22	23	24 CFN Meal-5:30PM Youth Group 6:45PM Choir 6:45PM Bible Study 6:45PM	25	26	27 Sanctuary/FH reserved for ALICE Training 10AM-2PM
28 Casa Betania Service-4PM	29	30	31 CFN Meal-5:30PM Youth Group 6:45PM Choir 6:45PM Bible Study 6:45PM			

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.

The Honest to God Church by Doug Bixby

Greetings from Worship Commission. We as a commission recently finished reading the book *The Honest to God Church - A Pathway to God's Grace* by Doug Bixby and wanted to share some tidbits that we learned and thought were meaningful. One of the main themes of the book was grace, how God shows us grace and how we should work to show others grace as well.

Action Steps:

Consider the direct and indirect messages our church sends out to others in the community. Consider journaling your own stories about God's grace. What things feed your ego? What things feed your soul?

Regarding the Church

"The goal is not to become a perfect church; it is to let God's perfect love inspire us to do good things for others." pg. 29

"We must remember that everyone is welcome because Jesus excluded no one. He touched the untouchable and loved the unlovable." pg. 32

"We need to develop policies and practices that allow our churches to be compassionate toward the broken people who come to us for help." pg. 36

"Churches should encourage members to ask God to use them as instruments to help move others closer to Jesus." pg. 44

"Christian love demands that we pay more attention to our relationships than our arguments." pg. 18

"The church needs good news preachers of grace - not bad news proclaimers of shame." pg. 73

"We Christians should become competitive in regard to how much honor we show to others. We honor people by expressing our appreciation for who they are and what they do. We honor them by taking time out of our busy lives for them, listening to them and learning from them." pg. 104

Regarding Ourselves:

"If we do not acknowledge our own problems - then we fail to acknowledge our need for God and God's people." pg. 40

"To develop resilience and avoid entitlement, we must stop thinking about what God has failed to do for us and start thinking about what we have failed to do for God." pg. 42

"God does not want us to pretend to be perfect when we are not." pg. 52

"Shame is a direct consequence of our sin and our being sinned against. It is one of the primary reasons we need God and each other." pg. 60

"Acknowledging our human weaknesses and vulnerability allows us to be more open to God and one another in the church." pg. 63

"Because we are all created in the image of God, we never lose our value, no matter how much we get kicked around or spat upon in our lives." pg. 67

"Most Christians would benefit by getting their eyes off the sins of others and onto their own sinfulness." pg. 74

"Humility helps us to grow spiritually and become better stewards of God's grace." pg. 103

On Grace:

"What we need is God's grace, but we must recognize that the gift of grace is not a payment for services rendered or a consolation prize for those of us who experience pain and suffering. Salvation is a gift, not something we earn to even deserve." pg. 43

"Although we may be discouraged when we ask God to take away pain and it remains, we will never be content with our life circumstances if we do not learn to see God's grace as enough." pg. 48

"The real substance of the Christian faith is sufficient grace." pg. 49

Feel free to contact members of Worship Commission (Jyl Ewy, Michelle Claassen, Kay Schroeder, Cora Voran and Dave Wiebe) if you would like to borrow the book. We encourage you to reflect on how First Mennonite can become a more grace-oriented church.

My Year of Service



Sitha Mpofu (Zimbabwe)
Served as office manager and extended case manager with Episcopal Migration Ministries Wichita, Kansas.

This article is from the MCC monthly newsletter.

First impression or differences: At first, I felt very overwhelmed. It was a lot to take in being in a new environment. At the same time, I was amazed at how nice the people were both in my community and work place. It was almost as if they knew what I was going through and they made efforts to make me feel comfortable. There were differences of course between my home and my host family. My major adjustment was having to change from living with a family of six to living with just one person. Despite the change I still had so much fun with my host. I loved the way people were a family at work, and church was always a blessing to attend.

Memorable or funny experience: My memorable experience was when my kindergarten Sunday school kids brought

me chocolates just to tell me they loved me. I so enjoyed spending time with them and for them to do that was just so heart-warming. A funny experience was when I went ice skating with my host mum and the junior high class from church. Needless to say, I was so terrible at it. There was a lot of falling on the ice because it was so hard to balance. Most of the time I had someone holding my hand, so I wouldn't fall. In as much as I was so bad at it, it was just so much fun, and also funny to those who were watching my helpless-self fall so much.

Faith journey: I was able to fit into church and that was a huge relief to me. I joined the church choir and taught Sunday school and that helped me feel rooted in my faith. I also had a Sunday school class with people my age and through that I was able to interact and study the word with my peers. Having an active church life made my whole journey much easier because I had people from church to lean on when I needed it. Having them pray for me always was also a huge blessing to me.

New perspectives: I realized that people are different. Our thoughts, goals, beliefs, aspirations and views will never be the same. Sometimes the important thing is not making someone else agree with you; it

is actually listening and giving others an opportunity to express their views. Being around IVEPers from different countries made me realize that no matter what cultural differences we may have, we are all just the same people. You just have to learn to be open to others so that they can give the same to you.

Future plans: I am looking forward to doing more volunteer work because I enjoyed helping people in my placement. It seems like something I would enjoy doing. At the same time, I look forward to furthering my studies and doing my master's degree in law.

FMC Connections

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



2018

Thank you from Camp Mennoscah!!

Greetings from Camp Mennoscah! What an amazing summer! Over 600 campers were part of our eight youth camps this summer, the largest number of campers in the past 11 summers. Many lives were influenced by our dedicated volunteers and staff, most of whom come from our supporting churches. We are thankful and blessed by the number of people willing to share a week or more of their summer with us.

The people listed below are those from your congregation who were part of our mighty community of volunteers this summer.

Justen Schroeder, Kate Jolliff,
Kiley Schmidt, Stefanie Knopp,
Chloe Denno, Jordan Miller,
Emily Brandt, Susannah Epp,
Stephanie Brown, Addie Regier,
Amanda Entz, Linda Gaertner,
April Kabagambe, Isaac Entz,
Carlos Lujano, Jr, Miguel Lujano

These people are valuable to our camping ministry as mentors and living examples of a Christian life.

May your own ministries be filled with joy and laughter!

With peace,

The Camp Mennoscah Staff