



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.

**Inside this issue:**

Short-term Mission Update	2
Church Board Report	7
Caregiving Corner	7

# FMC Connections

Volume 28, Issue 10

November 2018

## Hope in Love

“I take literally the statement in the Gospel of John that God loves the world. I believe that the world was created and approved by love, that it subsists, coheres, and endures by love, and that, insofar as it is redeemable, it can be redeemed only by love. I believe that divine love, incarnate and indwelling in the world, summons the world always toward wholeness, which ultimately is reconciliation and atonement with God.” Wendell Berry, *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays*

Election Day comes early in November. I think it is likely that you already knew that! Our televisions and radios and social media are filled with slogans and advertisements and messages of pro and con. Our mailboxes are filled with giant postcards.

Christians have opinions about who makes the best candidate. And Christians have different opinions about who makes the best candidate because they use different criteria to measure which issues matter most. However, I wonder if one criterion for measure-

ment that can be used across the board is that of love: which candidate best expresses the kind of love that is most likely to bring some wholeness to the world?

Often in election season, hopes rise and fall according to whomever is chosen at the ballot box. One of the truths of faith is that we are asked not to put our ultimate hope in anyone except the One who is perfectly love. We cannot expect any one person or any one party to fulfill perfectly what we hope for ourselves and for the world.

When we do place our whole hope in the structures of human government, two things will almost surely happen: One is that we will be disappointed; we will not get completely what we thought we would get. And the second is that we come too near to be able to see what needs changing or to critique what is unjust; there needs to be enough space to see clearly and well, no matter whom is chosen at the ballot box.

In this election season, when I do hope that you will



Pastor Anita Kehr

exercise your voting rights as citizens, I also hope that you will remember where your ultimate hope lies, in the gift of reconciled relationship and love that is ours because God loved us first and loves the whole world still.

With gratitude for you and for the surpassing love of God—

*Anita Kehr*

# Kaitlin Abrahams Short-term Mission Update



An Amish woman looking for horse books for her young daughters, an elderly man checking out the

latest James Patterson, a third grader who reads to us out loud and cries when she has to leave—those are just a few of the people that I might meet in a day on the Library System of Lancaster County (LSLC) Bookmobile.

My day begins around 6:30 a.m. Once I've gotten ready and packed my lunch, I walk twenty minutes through low income neighborhoods to the bus station in the chic downtown area—a stark contrast to the crumbling brick buildings and trash-filled streets just around the corner. After a twenty minute bus ride, I walk another ten minutes through the industrial park at the very edge of the city to get to the LSLC offices, where the Bookmobile is parked. Every day but Friday, we have two to five

stops. We spend about an hour at each location and our stops range from inner city pre-schools to rural Amish schools and stores to retirement communities and neighborhood stops.

The majority of our stops serve patrons who are below the poverty line and live in locations or under circumstances that would make it hard for them to access a library. We offer fiction and nonfiction books for children, teens, and adults as well as audiobooks and DVD's. Most of our collection is stored on moveable carts that can be put onto a chairlift at the back of our truck, lowered, and wheeled inside so that it is easier for patrons with limited mobility to browse. We also bring in a computer cart equipped with a laptop, scanner, printer, and Wi-Fi for check-ins, checkouts, renewals, holds, and the issuing of new library cards. Placing holds is an important part of our work because if our six carts do not have what a patron is looking for, we can put a hold on the item as long as it is available in any Lancaster county

library, which means that it will be pulled from their shelves and sent to us so that we can bring it to the patron the next time we arrive. Because we want to serve as many people as possible, we only go to each stop once a month.



Preschool stops are very different from other stops because we actually get to read to our little patrons before they check out books. I take turns reading with the other two bookmobile staff, Ed Miller and Meredith Hendrix. Since Halloween is in October, we've been reading a charming story called *The Monster's Monster*, in which three monsters decide to make the evilest monster ever, only their creation decides he would rather eat jelly-filled donuts and go to the beach with his friends instead of being a monster. Many of these children are not used to being read to, so getting them to sit still and listen can be a challenge. We try to make the reading as interactive as possible by asking them questions like, "What do you think will happen next?" and "Did that book end like you thought it would?" We also take care to define words that they may not be familiar with, like "brawl" and "mayhem." Before they check anything out, we talk to the kids about how to take care of books. Helping them find books they like can be a fun challenge, particularly when every single four year old



(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

boy refuses to read about anything other than dinosaurs.

My work day usually ends at 4:30, when I walk and ride the bus home. I live with four other Shalom Project participants (A.K.A Shalomies) in an old German house on High Street in the diverse but impoverished Southwest quadrant of Lancaster City. Hayley Schick is from Maryland and volunteers with Meals on Wheels. Julian Harnish is a recent graduate of Goshen College who works at the MDS office. Sarah Reagan went to EMU with me and works at the Mix, an after school program for low income youth (which happens to also be a Bookmobile stop). Chattu Sinha is an IVEP participant from India and interns at Landis Communities, which provides affordable housing for elderly adults.



Kaitlin's group, left to right—Sarah Reagan, Hayley Schick, Julian Harnish, Kaitlin and Chattu Sinha.

We take turns with cleaning, and each cook a meal for the group one night a week. We try to eat most of our suppers together and plan at least one fun activity a week to do together. This past month we've dressed up as the Scooby Doo gang to hand out candy to kids at a Trunk-or-Treat event, attended the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire, carved pumpkins, picked apples, and made as much applesauce as our freezer could hold. As part of the Shalom Project program, we attend seminars together every Friday. The subjects of these seminars have varied from the geological history of Lancaster County to enneagram self-assessment to trauma awareness training. We also have a one-on-one each month with Nathan Grieser, the program director, which gives us a chance to discuss our daily joys and challenges while eating free food. Nathan has also helped connect us to the many local Mennonite congregations. As we're still exploring, I have yet to go to the same church two Sundays in a row.

I've enjoyed getting to know the downtown area beyond my daily walks to and from the bus station, particularly its many cafés. On first Fridays, the downtown galleries open up to the public. There is also free music on third Fridays. Every Saturday, we go to the downtown market to buy local eggs, seasonal vegetables, and milk in reusable glass jars. The market also has other fun things to try, from falafel wraps and lavender goat cheese to fresh apple cider and whoopie pies.



While I love exploring Lancaster and fellowshiping with the other Shalomies, the biggest surprise of my year has been how much I enjoy my internship. Serving the patrons of the Bookmobile has reminded me of how much I love helping people, especially when it's helping people gain free access to something that has made my life so much better—books! I am incredibly grateful that God has given me this opportunity to serve in a field that I am passionate about and thankful to all of you at FMC for supporting me. Blessings and shalom to you all!

## Happy Birthday

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

Stephanie Weaver—11/1  
Isaac Koehn—11/3  
Arlen Wiens—11/3  
Logan Hamm—11/5  
Ronald Ratzlaff—11/7  
Alisa Krehbiel—11/8  
Clint Litsey—11/8  
Mary Lou Schmidt—11/8

Evelyn Gaertner—11/9  
Kathryn Penner—11/10  
Jordan Schroeder—11/10  
Harland Unruh—11/12  
Gene Jost—11/13  
Janice Good—11/14  
Charlie Regier—11/14  
Joan Ensz—11/17  
Tracy Kerr—11/18  
Hope Ewy—11/19  
Justen Schroeder—11/19  
Kenneth Fast—11/20

Frances Schrag—11/20  
Lori Shelly—11/20  
Ethan Black—11/21  
Andrew Simmons—11/22  
Shirley Dietzel—11/23  
Chad Frey—11/23  
Jim Schrag—11/24  
Barb Walker—11/25  
Reid Graber—11/27  
Virginia Bestvater—11/28  
Helen Ortman—11/28  
Marissa Murphy—11/29

Linda Connor—11/30  
Joan Entz—11/30  
Mary Janzen—11/30



## Happy Anniversary

Paul & Fern Koehn—11/3  
Michael & Pamela Garcia—11/6  
Daryl & Cindy Unruh—11/8  
Kelson & Kenna Graber—11/16  
Joel & Kay Schroeder—11/19

Paul & Beverly Buller—11/23  
Jerry & Delora Decker—11/24  
Stan & Esther Epp—11/26  
Lewis & Geraldine Wiebe—11/26



## You are invited to The Annual Youth Group Turkey Dinner

Wednesday, November 7, 2018  
5:30-7:00 PM

First Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall

Menu: Turkey, Mashed Potatoes and  
Gravy, Vegetable, Cranberry Salad,  
Dinner Rolls, Pumpkin Dessert.

Donations accepted. Most proceeds will go towards  
the MENNOCON19 (Mennonite Convention in  
Kansas City; July 2-6)

# November 2018

Sun

Mon

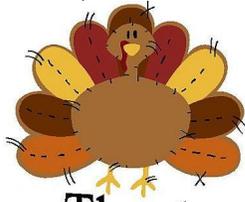
Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat



Happy Thanksgiving

				1	2	3 Love Newton:OVM Community Service 9:00-11 AM
4 Casa Betania Service 4:00 PM	5 Rm 225 reserved 6:15 PM	6 Prayer Room reserved 7PM  Church Board 7PM  FH/Kitchen reserved-evening	7 YG Turkey Dinner 5:30-7:00 PM  Choir 6:45 PM Bible Study 6:45 PM  	8 Nurture Commission 7PM	9	10 FH/Kitchen reserved 1-4PM
11 Casa Betania Service 4:00 PM  Potluck/ Congregational Meeting-12 Noon	12 Rm 225 reserved 6:15 PM	13 Caregiving 7:00 PM	14 CFN Meal 5:30 PM Bible Study 6:45 PM YG 6:45 PM Choir 6:45	15	16	17
<b>MCC Meat Canning</b>						
18 Casa Betania Service 4:00 PM	19 Rm 225 reserved 6:15 PM  Property 7:00 PM	20	21	22 Church Office closed	23 Church Office closed	24
						
25 Casa Betania Service 4:00 PM	26 Rm 225 reserved 6:15 PM	27	28 Congregational Gathering 7:00- 9:00 PM	29	30	

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 Library Information



A recent statistic suggests approximately 22 percent of people in the United States still read for pleasure. Would you be included in this group? Whether you read for enjoyment, research, lesson planning, Bible study, or some other purpose, there might be times when you wish there were more new books in the church library collection. The Library Committee has two new opportunities to make that happen.

First, there is now a “First Mennonite Church Library Book Wish List” included on the Faith and Life Bookstore website. The wish list includes a number of book titles the Committee would like to see added to the church library collection. Church attenders are asked to consider purchasing a book on the list. This is how the process works:

1. Go to the Faith and Life Bookstore website and the FMC wish list.
2. Look through the titles to see if any interest you.
3. To make a purchase, simply click on the title and you will be taken directly to the page on the bookstore website where you can purchase the book.
4. Be sure to choose the “pick

up in store” option for no shipping costs.

5. The bookstore staff will re move the links as the books are purchased.
6. Read the book.
7. Let one of the Library Committee members know you are donating the book and whether you would, or would not like a donation sticker placed inside the book with your name on it.
8. You might consider purchasing a book that interests you or selecting one a child or grandchild would enjoy reading.
9. Bulletin announcements will be used to notify you when additional wish list items are added.

If regular readers in our congregation consider this option; our library shelves will quickly fill with new books for all to read. The Library Committee is excited about this new collaboration with the local Christian bookstore.

Another way to make your preferences known is by sharing book recommendations with the Committee. There is a box designated for that purpose in the library. Write a book title, series, or author suggestion on a piece of paper and place it in the box in the library. Library Committee

members will frequently review suggestions and take them into consideration when new books are ordered.

Books have recently been added to the “new books” section. Some of them are listed below.

- *Everybody Always* by Bob Goff
- *936 Pennies* by Eryn Lynum
- *Uninvited* by Lysa Terkeurst
- *Imperfect Courage* by Jessica Honegger
- *The Solace of Water* by Elizabeth Younts
- *A Breath of Hope* by Lauraine Snelling
- *Fifteen Minutes* by Karen Kingsbury
- *The Promise of Dawn* by Lauraine Snelling
- *The Lucky Few* by Heather Avis
- *Always on My Mind* by Susan Warren
- *The Wonder of You* by Susan Warren
- *Hurricane Season* by Lauren Denton
- *Caroline* by Sarah Miller

# Church Board Report

The board met on October 11, 2018. Marsha Schmidt led devotions by reading from a book by Max Lucado with reflections on weathering the storms of life, and Isaiah 43.

We grounded our discussion in the vision and mission statements.

The board spent much of the meeting reflecting on the progress toward the 2018 goals from each committee and commission. It was a great time of seeing how God is working in First Mennonite.

The board reviewed and approved the 2019 budget that will be presented to the congregation at our Fall meeting.

The board also finalized the agenda for the Fall congregational meeting.

We closed by reading the FMC vision prayer.

Ryan Koehn  
Chairman, Church Board



## Caregiving Corner

### Harvest of Love

Fall is here! Fall brings so many wonderful things: cooler weather, pumpkins, colorful trees, and the annual Harvey County Harvest of Love campaign. Harvest of Love is co-sponsored by the Salvation Army and the Newton Ministerial Alliance. The campaign begins in November and continues through December. This is an opportunity for all of us to help families in our community who

are in need of food. Boxes will be available in the court area for your contributions. Food items contributed should be non-perishable with long expiration dates. The following is a list of popular food items



needed but any non-perishable item will be accepted: tuna, macaroni and cheese, hamburger helper, canned vegetables, spaghetti, spaghetti sauce, peanut butter, jelly, dried beans, rice, flour, sugar, cereal, canned soup, Jell-O. The Salvation Army will also accept monetary donations.

Let's celebrate fall by giving freely of our resources to this worthy community campaign!

## FMC Connections

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



**NOVEMBER 2018**



*Happy  
Thanksgiving*

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his  
love endures forever. Psalm 107:1