



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

April 28, 2021

From Pastor Tom

Love—fine, okay, great! But what IS it??

Love is the centerpiece of Scripture. The word appears in the Bible (in the NRSV translation) 701 times, in 613 verses. 419 of these are in the Old Testament (in 392 verses); the other 282 are in the New Testament (in 221 verses). That's twice as many in the OT than in the NT. But then, the OT is roughly four times as long as the NT. Which means that love is even more concentrated in the NT than in the OT. Hmm. Why might that be? ☺

It so happens that one of the lectionary passages for this Sunday is 1 John 4:7-21. In this passage, comprised of fifteen verses, the word "love" appears twenty-six times. Which is 1.7 times per verse, compared to 0.03 times per verse in the Bible as a whole. Which is 56.7 times more often! Clearly, the word "love" is highly important in 1 John 4:7-21!

Interestingly, it appears both as a verb and as a noun. Which means that love is both something we do and something we can talk about, describe, see. Another passage in the Bible famous for the use of the word love is 1 Corinthians 13, which has an even higher density—11 times in 6 verses, or 1.8 times per verse. But all of those appearances are nouns! Whereas in 1 John 4:7-21, over half of the twenty-six appearances are as a verb (15, as compared to 11)! Clearly, in this passage, love is more important as something we do than something we talk about. Or to put it slightly differently, the essence of love (how we talk about it) is less important than the actual doing of love. A good reminder to us, as the theme for the MC-USA convention held in Orlando, FL in 2017 emphasized (and even put on its t-shirts), "Love is a verb."

I've decided that 1 John 4:7-21 is, in this case at least, too large of a passage for one sermon. So I'm going to divide it into two: 1 John 4:7-12 and 4:13-21. I'll leave it up to you to figure the relative density of the word "love" in those two passages; as of this writing, I haven't calculated it yet. But suffice it to say that this Sunday's sermon is going to focus on love, both what it is and what it does, at least according to writer of 1 John. And, what that writer might be wanting to say to us at First Mennonite Church. My title will be "Love One Another." Hope you can come! Or at least, tune in. ☺)

Upcoming Events

- ☞ Help set up camp! Volunteers are needed to help set up the HUGE tents used for this summer's youth camps at Camp Mennoscah. Setup will happen May 28 and 29. Sign up by May 15 by contacting 620-297-3290 or olivia.bartel@campmennoscah.org.
- ☞ After a year of virtual and on-campus concerts, **Hesston College's Bel Canto Singers** are hitting the road to perform a program entitled "Lift Every Voice" at locations across Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota and South Dakota. The concerts will feature choral numbers as well as

special music by soloists and small groups. All performances will be held outdoors, and concert attendees are asked to bring their own lawn chairs for socially distanced seating. The concert will be broadcasted over FM radio for those choosing drive-in parking. Up-to-date concert information—including locations—can be found at www.hesston.edu/everyvoice. The itinerary and host churches are:

- Monday, May 3, 7 pm – Dyck Arboretum of the Plains with Marie Engle, Hesston, Kan.
- Tuesday, May 4, 7 pm – First Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, Kan.
- Thursday, May 6, 7 pm – Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church, Harper, Kan.
- Friday, May 7, 7 pm – Heartland Community High School, Henderson, Neb.
- Sunday, May 9, 4 pm – Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman S.D.
- Monday, May 10, 7 pm – Bethel Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.
- Thursday, May 13, 7 pm – Banman Residence, 8538 Mette Street, Lenexa, Kan.
- Friday, May 14, 7 pm – Tabor Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan.

Other Announcements

- ☞ **Serve with MDS!** Throughout the summer there will be multiple opportunities in Pine Ridge, SD to complete the Volunteer Center. Tasks are 1 to 2 weeks long and include: drywall, painting, hanging doors, trimming, floor epoxy coating, kitchen cabinet install, mini-split A/C units. Each of the tasks could take 2 or more people. The tasks being scheduled right now are drywall, painting and door hanging. **Contact:** Jeff Koller – (717) 823-7415 – jkoller@mds.org
- ☞ Camp Mennoscah is seeking to fill a part-time custodian/housekeeper position. Hours average 10 per week and are flexible, dependent upon the camp schedule. For more information, contact Camp Mennoscah at 620-297-3290 or olivia.bartel@campmennoscah.org
- ☞ Nurses needed for summer youth camps! Camp Mennoscah needs nurses for June 17-19 (First Camp), June 20-26 (Junior I) and July 25-30 (Senior High). Nurses receive a stipend or a discount up to full camp fees for their camper (camper does not have to attend the same camp week). Contact us at 620-297-3290 or olivia.bartel@campmennoscah.org for more information.
- ☞ **Seeking a Chaplain:** Bethesda Home, in Goessel, KS, is looking for a part-time chaplain. Interested parties may apply on the Bethesda website: www.bethesdahome.org. Please contact Marci Heidebrecht in Human Resources for additional information at 620-367-2291 x 229 or mheidebrecht@bethesdahome.org.
- ☞ Are you a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle or other close friend or relative to a precious little one who is *12 months or younger*? If so.....do you know if you have been vaccinated against whooping cough? By receiving the Tdap vaccine, you can provide protection for infants whose immune systems are most vulnerable and may not be old enough to receive or complete the vaccine series yet. Marion County Health Department has a special, reserved stock of Tdap vaccine for individuals who meet the criteria at a cost of only \$20. Call us today at **(620) 382-2550** to make your appointment to receive your vaccination to provide the precious ones in your life with possible life-saving protection.

Verse of the Week

“Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” –1 Peter 1:13-16 (NRSV)