



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

November 30, 2022

From the Pastor

What Are We Waiting For?

Advent, we all know, is a time of waiting. Which begs the question: what are we waiting for? The answer depends on whom you ask. Some are simply waiting for December (only one more day to go!). Others are waiting for their next paycheck. Some are waiting for winter (only twenty-one more days to go! At least officially!). Others are waiting for spring already (too many days to count). Some are waiting for Christmas (that's easy—only twenty-five more days to go). While others are waiting for “a shoot [that] shall come out from the stump of Jesse.” (Isaiah 11:1a).

I love the Old Testament prophets. Especially Isaiah. He is so hopeful (sometimes)! And his language so beautiful. It was common in ancient Hebrew poetry to say something . . . and then say the same thing again, just in a slightly different way (this is called “synonymous parallelism”). Like the second half of Isaiah 11:1, where he says “and a branch shall grow out of his roots.” Who was Jesse? Well, he was the father of David—that's right, “King” David. And everyone knows David was the greatest king of all time (?!). So apparently, Isaiah's people were waiting for a descendant of David to come as king.

But why, then, didn't he just say “A shoot shall come out from the stump of David, and a branch shall grow out of his roots?” I love it that Isaiah picked Jesse. Because Jesse himself was not a king. He was just a herder of sheep. He wasn't the shoot or branch; he was only the root. And then, the stump—the dead, decapitated stump. But the promise lay in that stump. Maybe it wasn't so dead after all?

Isaiah goes on to describe that new king, and what things will be like under his reign. “The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him . . . His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord . . . with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth [did you catch that synthetic parallelism?] . . . righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins [there's some more!] . . . the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them . . . They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

That's what I'm waiting for! It's so beautiful! Yet, so mysterious. Counter-intuitive, even. Or downright impossible. But Isaiah says repeatedly the word “shall” with his verbs—his guarantee that these things will come to pass. We just don't know when.

What are you waiting for? I would encourage you to read all of Isaiah 11:1-10. It's one of the most beautiful, most hopeful passages in the entire Bible (and that's saying a lot!). You'll find a lot of poetic parallelism in it, to make "doubly" sure you don't miss what the prophet is saying. Here's how it ends: "On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious" (a beautiful example of not "synonymous" but "synthetic" parallelism this time). Yes! Bring it!!.

Tom

Verse of the Week:

John 8:12

Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- ☞ Continue praying for our brothers and sisters through our directory.
- ☞ Pastor Tom reports: Yesterday I took communion to our residents at Parkside who are unable to come to church. I visited them one at a time, and after we had shared the bread and cup together, I asked each one if that prompted any thoughts for them. We have so much to learn from our elders!

Upcoming Events

- ☞ **Tabor College Festival of Christmas: Dec. 2-4** Christmas Festival of Carols: Friday @ 7pm, Christmas Concert: Saturday @ 7:30pm and Messiah: Sunday, @ 7pm.
- ☞ **This Sunday, Dec. 4, Christmas Giving Gala!** Our youth group is hosting a sit-down lunch by donations to raise funds for local needs for Christmas. Come enjoy the food and festivities after worship. Donations will go to help families at Main Street Ministries. RSVP a text to 620-947-3734 or call the church office.
- ☞ **We are in the first week of Advent.** Blue sheets are still available on the table in the foyer if you would like to join your FMC brothers and sisters in daily unified worship and prayer. Week 2 (yellow) is also out if you want to pick it up in advance for starting next Sunday, the 4th.

- ☞ **Dec. 3rd**, we are pleased to host a portion of our Hillsboro “**Down Home Christmas**” community event in our Fellowship Hall. Enjoy the vendors who will be here from 9 to 3 and share your friendly hospitality if you come. That evening, our building will also host the Et Cetera Shop volunteers Christmas celebration. Praise God for providing these events!
- ☞ **Dec. 3rd, Parkside Assisted Living** is having a **Holiday Open House** from 9am – 3pm. Tour the facility, visit with staff and residents and enjoy treats and shopping at a silent auction.
- ☞ Our **special offering this month** will be for our Local Budget on December 13th. Please prayerfully consider what God would have you give.

Other Announcements

☞ **Ministry Team Happenings:**

- *An opportunity has been presented to consider hosting the Food 4 Kids Ministry in our building which a special team has been working on.*
- *Ministry Team Leaders (MLTs) – don't forget to submit your annual reports to the office as soon as possible.*

- ☞ **Sunday, December 11th Jeff Wintermote will be preaching** on "Redeemed, Restored, and Encouraged." In preparation you may read the following scriptures: Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146; James 5:7-10; and Matthew 11:2-11.

During the worship service (on the 11th) there will be an opportunity for you to **bring an offering of an ingredient for a vegetable soup**. Possible ingredients are: diced potatoes, diced carrots, diced onion, chopped cabbage, diced tomatoes, salt, pepper, thyme or whatever other ingredient you would put into a vegetable soup. You may want to bring an ingredient that has special meaning to you or something you have grown in your own garden. The ingredients should be prepared to be put directly into the soup as part of the offering. We would like for each person to bring something to contribute. There will be extra vegetables available if you are unable to bring something.

Those who would like to gift some soup to a friend, neighbor, or community member as an encouragement to them, please bring a container with you. During the sharing time, there will be an opportunity for you to share how you have been encouraged by others or a time when you encouraged someone else that was particularly meaningful to you.

- ☞ **Shine Families:** The greatest influence on a young person's faith is that of their parents and caregivers—not their peers, teachers, social media, or even the church. How can you and the leaders in your church resource your parents and caregivers for their important role? Shine is here to help! They've developed a companion website, www.ShineFamilies.org, as a resource hub for families seeking fun and meaningful

activities for sharing faith at home. At www.ShineFamilies.org parents and caregivers can access the Shine at Home weekly activities, browse family fun ideas, and download Bible activity sheets.

☞ **Save the Date:** Annual Congregational meeting - January 22.

☞ Kathy Goering is seeking contacts from many churches to assist communications about the **150th celebration of Mennonites coming to the United States** around 1874. A planning group is meeting now to determine how to make this event happen and has set a date of **August 23-25, 2024**, at Eden Mennonite Church near Moundridge, Kansas. At this time we are calling this event "Schweitzers and Friends." If you would be willing to be a contact person for our church or region, contact -Kathy Goering, 316-371-6189, 1906 Carnation Vlg, Moundridge KS 67107 kigo@mtelco.net

☞ **January 11 to May 8 - Missional Leadership Class**

The "M" word - you've heard it, you're intrigued, but what does it really mean? Join Michele Hershberger to learn what "missional" means and how a proper understanding of this concept can transform your congregation. As part of the class you will see the Bible through a missional lens and learn great tips for starting your church on a journey of spiritual renewal and growth. You can join the class in person on Hesston's campus or online via Zoom on Monday evenings starting January 16 through May 8, 6:30 to 8:45 p.m. CST. Contact Michele Hershberger at michele.hershberger@hesston.edu for more information. Register online by January 9, 2023.