



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

January 11, 2023

From Pastor Tom

We Walk by Faith

I discovered a new hymn this morning! That is, new to me. It's *Voices Together* #588, "We Walk by Faith."

Turns out it was written way back in 1983 by Marty Haugen, who was first introduced to Mennonites in the previous hymnal (*Hymnal: a Worship Book*), in which six of his hymns were included, perhaps most notably #6, "Here in this place." ("10 in *Voices Together*) His hymns in *HWB* combined a contemporary, folk-like sound with texts that resonated within Anabaptist theology. And in so doing, they met an important need (I would even say, a void) in Mennonite worship practice. Granted, there had long been lots of so-called "Contemporary Christian" songs out there. But no songs that addressed the Anabaptist-Mennonite themes that Marty addressed in such hymns as "Here in this Place" (HWB 6, about "gathering in" the church), "We give thanks unto you" (HWB 161, about the never-ending love of God), "You are salt for the earth" (HWB 226, an amazingly energizing hymn focused on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount), "Healer of our every ill" (377, a profoundly moving hymn, and one of my all-time favorites), "Shepherd me, O God" (519, a beautiful anthem based on Psalm 23,) and finally—drum roll please! ☺—"We walk by faith" (588)! Somehow, I missed that one the first time around!

The text was written over a century earlier (1844) by the British writer Henry Alford, and Haugen provided his own, gorgeous musical setting. In *Voices Together*, the hymn has been placed in the section called "SHARING OUR STORIES: Doubt and Faith." And indeed, the text poetically expresses how doubt and faith sometimes go hand in hand. Who of us can't relate to that?! I so appreciate that a hymn text can give voice to such an honest, human struggle. And I equally appreciate that our hymnals (both previous and current) make space for such expressions. Here are the first three verses (you can check out the other two on your own; and also be sure to check out Haugen's thirteen other hymns in *Voices Together*!).

*We walk by faith, and not by sight; no gracious words we hear
From one who spoke as none e'er spoke, but we believe him near.
We may not touch his hands and side, nor follow where he trod,
Yet in his promise we rejoice, and cry, "My Lord and God!"*

*Help then, O Lord, our unbelief, and may our faith abound
To call on you when you are near, and seek where you are found.*

Tom

Verse of the Week:

John 13:34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- ☞ Continue praying through our directory.
- ☞ Remember **Pastor Tom and our church family** as we seek direction.
- ☞ **James (“Jim”) Schrag**, Mennonite pastor and leader passed on Saturday, Jan 7. A funeral service is planned for 11 am on Friday, January 13 at First Mennonite Church, Newton.
- ☞ **WDC Request:** Pray for generous contributions to WDC as the fiscal year ends in January, to support conference ministries of equipping ministers, resourcing congregations, and networking church planting partnerships.

Upcoming Events

- ☞ **TONIGHT - January 11** – A church family supper will be provided in the Fellowship Hall at 6:15pm and then move to the chapel for a time of congregational reflection at 7pm. All are invited to come together to share your feelings and questions about Pastor Tom’s resignation as well as ponder, share information and vision for the future of our church family. Ministry and Vision Councils will be leading this time. They are encouraging all active participants at FMC to come and let your voice be heard.
- ☞ **This Saturday** – January 14, Trinity Mennonite is in need of strong people to help with moving heavy items from their basement for their sale which is the follow Saturday. Show up at their building at 10 am or pray that others who are able will come.

- ☞ **Bethel College** will have a celebration of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday on Monday, January 16 at 7 p.m. in Memorial Hall. It will feature Marche Fleming-Randle, on “Together We Can Be the Dream.”
- ☞ **Tabor College’s Church Spirit Night:** Enjoy TC basketball action versus Sterling College on Saturday, January 21, 2023. Admission is **FREE** when you sign in at the door. The women’s varsity game starts at 5:00 p.m. followed by the men’s varsity game at 7:00 p.m. Door prizes, contests, and refreshments will be served in the Tabor cafeteria following the games. If you have any questions, please call or email the Taor College Alumni Office at 620-947-3121 ext 1708 or alumni@tabor.edu.
- ☞ **Saturday, January 21: 9am-2pm. Sale at Trinity Mennonite church.** Lots of items for sale!
- ☞ **Carry In Lunch and Annual Congregational Meeting** – January 22 after worship service.
- ☞ **February 6 – Sunflower Performing Arts: Our Song, Our Story at Hesston College.** Come at 7 p.m. to Hesston Mennonite Church for a great performance, Our Song, Our Story: The New Generation of Black Voices. Performing opera, art song, spirituals, and jazz, these world class black artists will pay homage to Marian Anderson and Jessye Norman who were at the vanguard of black classical singers. Tickets can be purchased online at hesston.edu/sunflower-performing-arts/ or by calling 620-327-8158.

Other Announcements

- ☞ **Attention Ministries Council:** Our annual report will be sent to the printer this Friday. Any MTL who has additions or changes to their reports, please let me know ASAP!
- ☞ **Hosting Opportunity:** Goshen College Chamber Choir has reached out and asked for the opportunity to us to be the venue for their concert on Sunday night, February 26. We would provide an evening meal on Sunday night and give lodging for the group that night. Please let Sue or Doug know of your interest ASAP if you would like to help host this group in any way. We need to let them know if we are available.
- ☞ **Service Opportunity:** We will be hosting the Et Cetera Shop Volunteer Appreciation Banquet on Tuesday evening January 24. This will be a buffet, but a few people will be needed to help prep things and serve drinks. If you are available and willing to help in the kitchen that night, please let Doug Bartel know.
- ☞ **Time to get back to quilting!** Quilting work for MCC has resumed on Monday and Wednesday afternoons starting at around 1 pm both days. Come join in the fun in the Fellowship Hall.

- ☞ **MCC Comforter Blitz** – Mark your calendar now for March 6,7,& 8 from 9am to 5pm on Monday and Tuesday, 4pm on Wednesday. If you can tie a knot, you can help make a difference! Check the bulletin board for more details.

- ☞ **New magazines have arrived.** We just got the latest issue of The Marketplace from MEDA and A Common Place from Mennonite Central Committee. Stop by our rack in the hallway and get the news!

- ☞ **MennoCon23 is coming this July 3-8 in Kansas City, Missouri.** This is Mennonite Church USA's leading faith formation event. They are looking for seminar ideas and presenters. Share your ideas by January 31st.