



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

January 18, 2023

From Pastor Tom

A Funny Thing Happened...

. . . yesterday (Tuesday). I was sitting in my office. I had just returned from having lunch at home. The east (alley) door of the church had been locked while I was gone, so I took out my key and opened it. Then I wondered, should I use the hex key to completely unlock the door for the afternoon? And I thought, might as well; you never know who might come by.

I was sitting at my computer, doing some work on this coming Sunday's worship service, when I saw a man walk by my outside window. Hmm. I wonder who that is? Probably Lloyd; he occasionally stops by. I heard the alley door open. I returned to what I was doing on my computer.

My office door opened. I look up and see a young-ish man standing there, whom I had never seen before. We begin visiting. He said he is hitchhiking across the country. Someone had paid for the previous night in the Country Inn, and the kind people at Sonic gave him breakfast. Now he was wondering if I knew anyone who was going to Marion today. That's where he wanted to go next. I'm thinking, what else is he going to ask me for? Money, for sure. What will I tell him when he does?

I'll take you to Marion, I said spontaneously. Why not? It's not that far. And I still have some time before my 3:30 appointment. Do you have any bags, or anything? I asked. No, just my coat. Heading east on D street, I purposely didn't point out where I lived. But I did ask him if he wanted something to eat at Wendy's. Oh! That's very kind of you. Well, sure. Thank you very much! Warm Wendy's bag in hand, he very politely asked me if it would be okay if he ate in the car. Absolutely, I said.

He told me he had read the entire Bible, cover to cover, six times. KJV was his favorite. We recited Psalm 23 together in KJV (it's still imprinted on my brain! I said). He told me he's from Michigan, the Detroit area. He doesn't have a good relationship with his parents. I bet! I thought. He told me he's traveling around so he can tell people about the Bible. One time he received the idea from God about doing a 40-day fast. But I need a sign, he said. I'll do it if I get a plane ticket to Hawaii. Days later, he looked up a former high school teacher. He told me that the teacher ended up buying him a plane ticket to Hawaii. Uh ...!!

One time, when he was walking along some highway, he laid down in the shoulder to get some sleep. A concerned police officer stopped to warn him of the risk of getting run over. Brian said to me, I think an angel saved my life that day.

He politely asked to be dropped off in the town of Marion somewhere, rather than, say, at the 56/77/150 interchange. We drove by the United Methodist church, and Brian politely said, I saw two cars in the parking lot. Would it be okay if you dropped me off there? Absolutely, I said. I waited to make sure the doors of the church were open before I drove away. They were.

On my drive back to Hillsboro, I just shook my head as I replayed everything. Surely he has a mental illness! I thought. Except, it didn't seem like it. An angel? I wondered. God, is that how much I'm supposed to trust during the uncertain months to come? No money, no bags, nothing but the clothes and coat on my back, meal to meal, town to town? Is that how much you all at FMC are supposed to trust during the uncertain months to come?

One thing at least seems certain. Funny things happen.

Tom

Verse of the Week:

Colossians 4:2 – “*Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.*”

Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- ☞ Pray for Brian, as he travels across the country, town to town.
- ☞ Pray for the faith we need to give things over to God.
- ☞ Pray for those dealing with illness, especially life-threatening ones.
- ☞ Pray for healing, of all kinds.
- ☞ Pray for FMC.
- ☞ And please, say a prayer for me. (Pastor Tom)
- ☞ **WDC Request:** Pray for WDC Gifts Discernment Committee as it begins work to prepare nominations of conference leaders for election at WDC annual assembly in 2023.

Upcoming Events

- ☞ **This coming Sunday:** Bring some food and share together at our carry-in lunch and Annual Congregational Meeting.
- ☞ **Saturday, January 21: 9am-2pm. “Close Out Sale” at Trinity Mennonite church.** Lots of items for sale! Come find all kinds of treasures such as: Library books, toys, folding chairs, desks, couches, beds, recliners, banners, hymnbooks, flower arrangements, choir folders, dishes, arts & crafts supplies, Christmas decorations, artificial trees, pianos, pulpits, communion tables, pews, crosses, candles, wall décor, chalkboard, volleyball standards, ping pong table, foosball game, treadmill, pool noodles, electric guitar with amplifier, etc. All purchases are by donation to the Hillsboro Community Childcare Center. Pay what your treasure is worth to you.
- ☞ **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 Tabor College Alumni Office at 620-947-3121 ext 1708 or alumni@tabor.edu.
- ☞ **Tuesday, January 24** – We will be hosting the Et Cetera Shop Volunteer Appreciation Banquet. A few servers are still needed. Let Doug Bartel know if you can help.
- ☞ **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

- ☞ **Hosting Goshen College Chamber Choir:** Thanks to your wonderful support, we will be blessed to enjoy a concert on Sunday night, February 26th with this 38-voice choir. Invite your friends and neighbors! More details will be coming soon.
- ☞ **WANTED** — Cars, Trucks, Motorcycles, RVs, Campers, Tractors, Modern Farm Equipment, etc. for the Kansas MCC Sale. Items you no longer need can help Feed and

Clothe thousands in desperate living conditions. ALL donations are Tax Deductible. Call Jerry Toews for info: 620 367 8257. Help make a difference.

☞ **SAVE THE DATE!** Come join the fun at 15th annual MCC Comforter Blitz on March 6, 7 and 8 on the Journey Yoder Campus, one mile north of Yoder, KS. Times are Monday and Tuesday 9-5 and Wednesday 9-4. No sewing skills are required, we will teach you. Lunch is available by donation each day, or you may bring your own sack lunch. Bring snacks to share during the workday. This event is hosted by Kansas Friends of MCC to make comforters for relief to be sent to refugees or places after natural disasters. Please contact the MCC Central States office with questions at #316-283-2720, or check the Comforter Blitz Facebook Page, "Kansas MCC Comforter Blitz".