



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

January 4, 2023

From Pastor Tom

Flipping to a New Page

First, an update on things at the Harder house. This year's Christmas tree is undecorated, down, and lying in the front yard, waiting for transport to the local recycle spot. The living room has been "restored" to its pre-holiday state (meaning our dog Bruno can once again sleep atop the love seat directly in front of the picture window). And, the house is once again "quiet" and "empty" (note the scare quotes to clarify that our house is never completely empty, nor completely quiet!)—Hillary and Micah returned to Elkhart yesterday (Monday), and brother John is enroute to Ontario as I type on Tuesday.

I confess it feels good to have the holidays over and done for another year. There is definitely something to be said for a return to routine. And even more for a turning of the calendar to a new year. (While I am not yet completely accustomed to writing or typing 2023, I'm getting there!) A fresh start (or restart) is always good. While for me that means significant change and uncertainty in the not-too-distant future, for the present it feels good to be keeping my regular (and occasionally "normal") office hours, and to be making to-do lists for the coming days, weeks, and months. One significant difference resulting from my resignation is that long-term visioning for this church is no longer part of my to-do list. It is now part of yours! (Although it always has been to some extent. 😊)

Beside this significant transition and change at church, what does the new year look like for you? What are your hopes, dreams, and goals? What feels exciting? What feels worrisome or scary? There is always going to be some of both, of course. Flipping to a new page inevitably includes a certain amount of uncertainty. Maybe most importantly, where do you particularly desire or need God's guidance and direction?

It is not too early (or too late!) to begin asking for it—both as individuals, and as a church. Something (actually, my faith) tells me that God is ready, waiting, and eager to respond!

Tom

Verse of the Week: Hebrews 1:3 *“He (Jesus) is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”*

Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- ☞ Continue praying through our directory.
- ☞ Remember **Pastor Tom and our church family** as we seek direction in this time of transition.
- ☞ **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

- ☞ **Youth Group** tonight has been moved to Friday at 7pm at Sue’s house.
- ☞ **2nd Sunday Special Offering:** Our tradition of taking a special offering on the second Sunday of each month will continue this year again to focus on the many needs around us. This coming week our special offering will be for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Relief Sale.
- ☞ **“Faspa” Fellowship this Sunday!** The Sunday School class will be hosting a 4:00 pm “faspa” at Mark and Sandy Hiebert’s home. This will include zwieback and other tasty snacks along with the special Christmas episode of “The Chosen” video series. Following tradition, Mark and Sandy will be prepared for “unexpected guests”, so consider being one of those if you don’t attend Sunday School.
- ☞ **NEXT WEEK, Wednesday, 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 plan, 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.
- ☞ **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. We will have 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.
- ☞ **Carry In Lunch and Annual Congregational Meeting – January 22.**

Other Announcements

- ☞ **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 know in the church office 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!** Starting next week, quilting work for MCC will resume on Monday and Wednesday afternoons starting at around 1 pm both days. Come join in the fun in the Fellowship Hall.