



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

January 13, 2021

From Pastor Tom

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Next Monday is the national holiday known as “Martin Luther King Day.” Or more accurately “Martin Luther King Jr. Day,” since he was given the same complete name as his father. But why was he given his own national holiday? Is it somehow akin to, say, Memorial Day, or Labor Day, or Independence Day? Is his importance on par with someone like Christopher Columbus and George Washington, who also have national holidays recognizing their birth? Does Martin Luther King Jr. Day have the same religious significance as Christmas?

Perhaps we could say that no single individual in U.S. history has done more for more people than MLK. Or that more individuals in the U.S. today would list him as one of their “heroes.”

I would list him as one of my heroes—if for no other reason than that he exemplifies what it means to live a truly Christ-like life. Someone who sought to live according to God’s will, rather than his own will (as we say every time we pray the Lord’s Prayer). Someone who was willing to give up his own life in the process.

Country singer Kathy Mattea recorded a stunningly beautiful song she wrote called “Beautiful Fool.” Here are the lyrics:

Verse 1

Martin Luther, who did you think that you were?
Appointed by some higher up
Merely mortal, your plans were unaffordable
No one wants to pay for love

Refrain

Oh, you beautiful fool
Swimming upstream, kicking up waves
Dreams weren't meant to come true
That's why they call 'em dreams
Oh, you beautiful fool

Verse 2

Walter Cronkite preempted Disney one night
And all us kids were so upset
We thought that you were a trouble instigator
Marching through our TV set [Refrain]

Bridge

To fight a fight without a fist
All human instinct puzzles this
How dare you threaten our existence?
Mahatma Gandhi, Jesus Christ
History repeats itself so nice
Consistently we are resistant to love

Verse 3

Saw you on the black and white
With blacks and whites applauding you
Saw you on another time
Without a sign of life in you [Refrain]

Here at First Mennonite Church, along with many, many other Christian churches in the U.S., we are recognizing this Sunday as “Martin Luther King Jr.” Sunday. Chris Williams, who teaches courses on Criminal Justice at Tabor College, will be our guest speaker. An African American, Chris has served as a police officer on the Wichita Police Department. He has a lot he could tell us about such challenging themes as law enforcement, fighting guns with guns, racial injustice, and perhaps most simply, what it is like being a black person, family man, and Christian in a predominantly white America. Let’s listen. And then, let’s discuss!

Ways to Help

- ☞ **MCC Comforter Blitz update:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 Kansas Friends of MCC Comforter Blitz in Yoder, KS has been canceled. However, the Blitz committee still has a goal of collecting at least 300 comforters between February and April. We need your help to meet this goal! Fabric kits and comforter sets to tie (top, back, and batting) are available to check out from MCC in North Newton. For contactless drop-off of completed comforters the 24-hour donation room is always available. To arrange drop-off or checkout materials, contact Kate at katemast@mcc.org, or 316.804.8432

Upcoming Events

- ☞ **The FMC annual meeting** is coming soon. Since the announcement Sunday, Ministries Council has agreed that it would be better to hold the meeting on **January 24** (rather than January 17 as announced). We hope to keep the meeting short but still valuable and important. Postponing a week will allow us to put the annual reports in mailboxes to give us at least a week to read them prior to the meeting, allowing us to slim that portion of our time together. In addition to approving the budget and slate of leaders for 2021, we hope to allow for some feedback and

comment on life together during the pandemic. Your prayers and comments are appreciated as we plan this event to include as many of us as possible. Doug Miller, FMC Moderator

- ☞ **Kauffman Museum at Bethel College** is partnering with Humanities Kansas to host the Smithsonian traveling exhibit “Crossroads: Change in Rural America” through Jan. 17. Accompanying it is a local companion exhibit, “Of Land and People: Our Community at the Crossroads,” created from the museum’s permanent exhibit “Of Land and People.” The museum is open 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Tues.-Fri (early close at 1 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 24, and Thursday, Dec. 31); 1:30-4:30 p.m., Sat.-Sunday; and closed Mondays and major holidays (Friday, Dec. 25, Friday, Jan. 1). Admission to the “Crossroads” exhibit is free on Saturdays.

- ☞ **Mon., Jan. 18, 6:30 p.m. – Bethel College’s annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration will feature spoken word artist M’Vyonne Payne and former pro athlete and motivational speaker Chris Singleton.** The event will be held in *Krehbiel Auditorium in Luyken Fine Arts Center*, with COVID protocols in place, and will also be live-streamed via YouTube at bit.ly/bethelks-mlk2021. Sponsors are the Bethel College Diversity Council, Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Student Life Office, with support from the Bethel College Women’s Association.

- ☞ **Join MCC for a series of “MCC and me” webinars to hear more about service opportunities.** Are you ready to step out and into service? To gain new skills and experiences while working for relief, development and peace in the name of Christ? MCC is working to adapt our programming as the situation with COVID-19 develops. All sessions relate to anticipated service needs, though timing and some other details may be subject to change. For more information and to register: mcc.org/mcc-me-webinar-series-service-opportunities.
 - January 13 at 3 p.m. EST: Summer Service leadership program
 - February 25 at 10 a.m. EST: Sharing With Appalachian People (SWAP) summer staff
 - February 25 at 8 p.m. EST: International service worker
 - March 6 at 12 p.m. EST: International service worker
 - March TBD: Mobile Meat Canner

- ☞ **Join MCC for a free webinar: The Spiritual Cost of Doctrine of Discovery.** Mark Charles, a Navajo activist, speaker, and author will be presenting on The Spiritual Cost of Doctrine of Discovery. Along with Soong-Chan Rah, Mark is the author of *Unsettling Truths: The ongoing, dehumanizing legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery*, Intervarsity Press (2019). The free webinar will take place on **Thursday, January 21, from 10-11:30 CST**. Please register by January 20 at mcc.org/webinar-registration-dod to receive the webinar link.

Other Announcements

- ☞ **Area Director for Central Southern Asia:** MCC is seeking applicants for the position of [Area Director for Central Southern Asia](#). The Area Director will be responsible to coordinate MCC’s resources in impactful and mutually transformative programming. For more information and/or to apply, please visit serve.mcc.org.

- ☞ **MCC Representative for Haiti:** Are you looking for opportunities to use your leadership skills? The [MCC Representative for Haiti](#) provides programmatic direction to the work of MCC in Haiti within the MCC Latin America/Caribbean region. This position provides team leadership and support for all MCC workers in Haiti. For more information and/or to apply, please visit service.mcc.org.

- ☞ **Canner Operator :** MCC is looking for new canner operators! This two-year service term is unique and offers the opportunity to travel around the U.S. and Canada, working as a team while meeting new people! Check out mcc.org/canning for details!

- ☞ **Applications for Camp Mennoscah Summer Staff** positions are now being accepted! Although there is a chance positions will change to meet the needs of pandemic-impacted summer youth camps, the current summer staff leadership positions are naturalist, crafts leader, lifeguard, grounds/maintenance, music leader, office, and all-round/media. For those 21 years old or older, there is also a Director of Support opening. Find the application and information online at www.campmennoscah.org under Summer Youth Camps!

- ☞ **Youth Venture** is accepting applications for summer 2021! Discover and experience the work that God is doing in the world with a team of other young people as you serve, learn, worship, and build relationships. Visit MennoniteMission.net/YouthVenture to learn more!

Weekly Inspirational/Encouraging Bible Verse

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! -2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT