



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

January 27, 2021

From Pastor Tom

“Explore FMC!”

A year ago, before Covid hit, I was planning on offering an “Inquiry Class” for all those who were possibly interested in joining First Mennonite Church as members, or who simply wanted to learn more about our church. Nearly twenty of you were interested! But then the Coronavirus postponed it, and postponed it, and . . . put it indefinitely on hold.

I’m ready to try it again, this time under a different name: “Explore FMC!” The group will most likely meet by Zoom sometime sooner or later this spring (or we may explore meeting in person once it is safe to do so). If you are interested, send me an email at pastor@fmchillsboro.com.

And now, a wonderful word from Treasurer Glen:

“There’s Something Happening Here”

Over the past several months I’ve fallen into the role of live streaming our Sunday morning worship services on Facebook. As I sit in the balcony streaming the morning’s service on my cell phone, rubber banded to a tripod, I see people’s names show up on my phone screen as they join the live stream event. Typically, there’s 15-20 people who appear to be watching the Facebook live stream on any given Sunday. As you’d expect, most of the viewers are persons who are, or were, regular attenders before the pandemic and don’t attend in person due to COVID.

In addition to those you’d expect to be watching, are often people I’ve not seen here in many years or people I don’t know at all. Several weeks ago, as one of those names popped up on my phone, the first line of a 60’s protest song, written by Stephen Stills, leapt to my mind. “There’s something happening here. But what it is ain’t exactly clear”. For the remainder of that service, I sat in the balcony watching my phone and wondering: what’s happening here to draw folks to our worship services? Why would someone who moved away, or is no longer attending FMC, watch a live stream of our worship service?

Obviously, these people have a connection to this Church, which I imagine is different for each. Perhaps they felt the activities of this congregation nurtured their walk with God, or perhaps they saw their children being nurtured into a life with Christ. Perhaps they fondly remember the hospitality lived out by this congregation. It’s possible they had a time of real spiritual, emotional, health, or financial need and felt well cared for, or maybe they didn’t have any extra ordinary need and felt cared for anyway. Perhaps the elements, style, themes, and thoughtfulness of our Worship services are meaningful and comfortable and allow their worship focus to be on God. Perhaps they saw a focus on Kingdom work outside these walls and appreciate the way this congregation supports the work of the wider Church. (meat canning and comforters to name just a few.) Perhaps Pastor Tom’s sermons speak to their walk with Jesus and their desire to grow in Christ, or maybe they tune in just to see what shenanigans Hank and his youth will be up to. The beauty of this space may also be a draw.

So, yes, there is “something happening here”. Most of the remainder of the protest song, which I previously mentioned, doesn’t fit a Church setting except for its chorus which repeats in several different forms:

We better stop, hey, what’s that sound
Everybody look what’s going down ...
Stop Children, what’s that sound
Everybody look what’s going down

It’s probably safe to say attending a congregational annual meeting is not on most people’s bucket list. But, as the song suggests, we need to stop, children, listen and look at what’s happening or going down. This is exactly why we gather as a congregation, at least annually, to stop, listen, and look at what’s going down and to acknowledge the faithful service of so many of us who work to bring the message of Jesus to life.

In addition to the view on my phone from the balcony, as your treasurer, I have the inside track and a firsthand view of the many ways your financial gifts make the various functions of this church possible. Trust me, that’s a humbling view. So, children, as we are stopped and listening, listen to me! On behalf of those who tune in on Facebook and the staff and leadership of FMC, I want to thank you for your generosity and the sacrifices you and your families make to fund the work and mission of this organization. Again, thank you so much for your contributions to the mission and ministries of FMC; they make it possible for the “There’s something happening here”!

There’s Going to Be a Wedding!

After years of living together in a committed, loving relationship, and co-parenting their wonderful mix of children, Larry Pawloski and Angela Leiker have finally decided to get married! And, they want to do it at FMC, with Pastor Tom officiating!!

Unfortunately, due to Covid, attendance will be limited to a small number of family and friends. But you are encouraged to send them your congratulations, well-wishes, and of course, advice. ☺
Cards may also be left in their church mailbox.

Ways to Help

- ☞ **MCC Comforter Blitz: At Home** The annual MCC Comforter Blitz is happening virtually this year from now through March! The Kansas Friends of MCC committee is challenging congregations and individuals to complete 300 comforters for MCC by the end of March! Read all the details and information on getting comforter making supplies from MCC at mcc.org/blitz-at-home. Share pictures of your work on the [MCC Comforter Blitz](https://www.facebook.com/MCCComforterBlitz) Facebook page. Contact katemast@mcc.org or 316.804.8432 with questions.

Upcoming Events

- ☞ **Sat., Jan. 30 – Kauffman Museum annual Kansas Day** event, “Our Stories, Our Foods.” **Starting at 11 a.m.** – food trucks, local producer booths and take-it-home crafts, *museum parking lot and grounds*; **11 a.m. via Zoom: Glen Ediger**, North Newton: stories about Mennonite ethnic foods; **2 p.m. via Zoom: Jenny Masias**, Newton: “The Immigrants Who Built Newton: One Spike at a Time”; **walking tour** to the eight “Stories Along the Trail” sites in North Newton. *Please note that face coverings must be worn, and distancing guidelines followed on Kauffman Museum and all Bethel College property.* **To get Zoom links**, go to the Kauffman Museum Facebook page or kauffmanmuseum.org

- ☞ Registration is open for the **Spring Scrapbook and Crafts Retreats at Camp Mennoscah** on March 5-7 and March 19-21! Once the retreats are full, sign up on the waitlist. Register at www.campmennoscah.org!
- ☞ **The KIPCOR Film Series at Bethel College is serving up a second helping of *Cooked: Survival by Zip Code***, which focuses on the deadly 1995 Chicago heat wave to illustrate how Black, Indigenous and People of Color and low-income citizens suffer the most negative impact from natural disasters. The film is an indictment of U.S. disaster preparedness, and connects extreme weather, extreme disparity (income and other) and extreme racism. Go to kipcor.org, “Film Series,” for a link to watch *Cooked* for free and a link to register for the **Feb. 7 virtual discussion; advance registration is required to participate in the discussion**, which will be held in break-out rooms, with leaders who include Chicagoans who experienced the 1995 heat disaster.
- ☞ **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.
 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

Other Announcements

- ☞ Nothing's better than a summer at camp! [Watch this video](#) created by Mennonite Camping Association about why you should work at camp. [Applications for Camp Mennoscah Summer Staff](#) positions are now being accepted!
- ☞ Mennonite Education Agency has initiated a search for an executive director. To learn more and for a complete agency profile and position description, see: <https://www.mennoniteeducation.org/Resources/News/Pages/default.aspx>.
- ☞ MC USA's annual Lent at Home guide is now available for download at: <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/resource-portal/resource/lent-at-home/>.
- ☞ Camp Mennoscah is a wonderful space for families and groups needing space to spread out! Facilities for differently sized groups are available with a variety of gathering areas. Trails and fields are waiting to be hiked and used for fun activities, too! Contact Camp Mennoscah at 620-297-3290 or office@campmennoscah.org to reserve. You are invited to enjoy this sacred space!
- ☞ **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

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. -Philippians 4:8 (NRSV)