



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

April 14, 2021

From Pastor Tom

It's Good to Be Back!

Palm Sunday was just awesome! I loved seeing our kids processing in, carrying purple cloths and palm branches to honor the coming of the king. (Jesus Christ, not Eric Bartel—although he played the part well. ☺) And Easter was, well, simply amazing. A good group gathered out at the Mark and Sandy (and David and Stephanie) Hiebert's farm, where they welcomed us with a nice wood fire and where we watched the sun rise as we first watched Sarah Diener dance while Holly sang "Was It a Morning Like This," and then we all sang Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia! (Voices Together #341). Everyone was then invited to arrive at the church thirty minutes before our main Easter service started to enjoy fellowship and an "Easter brunch box," prepared and organized by Cheryl Bartel. With our regular Wednesday suppers having been suspended for the year due to Covid, it was wonderful to finally eat and visit together in the fellowship hall!

It was so unfortunate that our regular organist Shirley Balzer broke her femur, which makes it a bit hard to play a pipe organ! Fortunately, Marcia Brubaker of Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church was able to fill in, first with some lovely and celebrative prelude music. By 10:30 we had over 60 people in the sanctuary, the most we've had in more than a year! Some of those, of course, were guests and extended family of church members, but it was also good to see faces we haven't seen in a while. The "boys" (only some of whom were Bartels ☺) treated the congregation to the sound of handbells, both at the beginning of the service and again at the end, as we sang—yes, we finally sang together as a congregation!—two beloved Easter hymns: Christ, the Lord Is Risen Today, and Low in the Grave He Lay. Truly a fitting way to conclude our Easter Sunday service!

Whether everyone is ready to get back into the habit of coming to Sunday morning worship, or whether that will take some time after getting used to more leisurely Sunday mornings at home, time will tell. The lifting of Covid-related precautions and protocol will probably be a bit of a process, based in part on what agencies like the CDC and Kansas Health Department are saying. Some in our congregation are eager to be done with masks! And, some aren't, due to the ongoing risk. But based on the attendance the last three Sundays, there is already a good core group who is saying "it's good to be back!"

Upcoming Events

- ☞ **Through Friday, April 16** – Student Art Exhibit in the Regier Gallery in Luyken Fine Arts Center at Bethel College. The 2020 exhibit had to be canceled because of COVID shutdowns, so this one covers two school years and 55 different student artists, including two graduates. Gallery hours are 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Mon.-Fri. *Please note that face coverings must be worn and physical distancing observed on the Bethel campus.*

- ☞ **Men and Boys Retreat, April 16-18, at Camp Mennoscah!** Come to Camp Mennoscah for time for fishing, canoeing, worshiping, sitting by the fire, or visiting with friends in fellowship. No pre-registration. Registration and payment will take place upon arrival. For more information contact Kevin Neufeld at 316-322-5515.
- ☞ **MCC dignity kit informational webinar, April 20 at 7 p.m.** MCC has a new kit that has been in development for years and now we're ready to teach you how to help us bring dignity to young women around the world! The dignity kit includes hygiene items and a reusable menstruation pad system. Join Kate Mast for this webinar to learn about the kit and how to sew the base units for the reusable system. Email katemast@mcc.org for the Zoom link.
- ☞ **Tabor College** is excited to bring **The Triumphant Quartet** to campus Sunday, April 25 at 7 p.m. in the Shari Flaming Center for the Arts. This quartet has been singing quality gospel music since 2003, quickly gaining national attention and several #1 songs. The group received a Dove award in 2019 for their album YES, voted southern gospel album of the year. Please join them April 25 for a wonderful evening of beautiful music. Tickets may be purchased at www.tabor.edu/tickets or by phone at 620-947-3121 ext. 1401.
- ☞ **Kauffman Museum's spring fundraiser is FaspBox – *faspa* in a box.** *Faspa* is a light evening meal traditional among Low German-heritage Mennonites. Each box serves one and costs \$50. Reservations must be made by Monday, April 26 (for pickup or delivery on May 2) at www.kauffmanmuseum.org/faspbox or by contacting the museum with credit card information at kauffman@bethelks.edu or 316-283-1612.

Other Announcements

- ☞ **Bethel College Women's Association** invites donations to help purchase two earth-friendly water refill stations for the Bethel campus. The stations will accommodate water bottles, and cost \$890 each. Donate at bcwamarketonline.com by April 30, 2021. Thank you for your support!
- ☞ Read Mennonite Church USA's convention newsletter to meet the worship team for MennoCon21 and get the latest updates on Mennonite Church USA's first hybrid convention to be held in Cincinnati, Ohio, and online on July 6-10. <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/mennocon21-march-letter>
- ☞ Come build communities of peace with the Colombia Youth Venture experience. Youth participants in both countries come together (virtually) to collaboratively explore that which makes for peace in their own, respective contexts. Visit MennoniteMission.net/YouthVenture to learn more. **Deadline is May 1!**
- ☞ In her blog, "Let us lay down our economic weapons," Katerina Parsons explains the impact that U.S. economic sanctions have on the people in the countries that have experienced these sanctions. Parsons calls us to advocate against these sanctions, in order put our love for people around the world into action. <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/economic-weapons>

Verse of the Week

"...since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," –Romans 3:23-24 (NRSV)