



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

April 7, 2021

From Pastor Tom

When a Health Crisis Strikes

A number of us are amidst health crises right now (those mentioned below granted permission to do so). We tend to take good health for granted, living day after day as if we have no health-related concerns. Of course, many of us are currently being treated for one or more health concerns, but as long as the medication or treatment plan seems to be working, we feel like we can safely set it aside, and live our lives freely and fully.

But when the medication seems to have stopped working, or the health concern is not improving (or is worsening), it can feel like our life has been hijacked. What do we need at such times? What can others do to help? And what does it mean to be the church to one another in times like this?

I've observed how crucial family is. _____ has been absolutely loyal to _____, driving her to appointments, checking in on her at home. _____ has made many phone calls to doctors on her parents' behalf. _____ have literally taken them in. As a pastor, I always feel very grateful when family is so actively involved in the care of a loved one in our church. For one thing, it gives me someone I can call—in addition to the parishioner themselves—as a way of checking in and staying current.

And I've also observed how church "family" can be hugely helpful. I received a call from one of you this past week, just to let me know you had checked in with another, and attentively listened as the other shared her health-related discouragement. The value of a caring, listening ear can hardly be overemphasized. And then the brief phone call to me was like activating a network of care—both figuratively and literally. Within FMC's leadership structure is the "Care Committee," and it is one of its tasks to be attentive to health concerns of the members within each Care Group. The Care Committee's monthly meeting is tonight—and we always have plenty to talk about. We covet your prayers for God's guidance and wisdom.

I am reminded of the hymn "Will You Let Me Be Your Servant," number 307 in the beloved blue hymnal, and now number 778 in *Voices Together*. Every verse seems pertinent to this conversation about health crises, and what it means to be church.

Will you let me be your servant—let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey; we are travelers on the road.
We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night-time of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony,
Born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.

Quite simply, this is what church is all about.

Upcoming Events

- ☞ **All women and girls are invited** to the Western District Women in Mission 2021 Spring Soiree **tomorrow, Thursday, April 8 at 7 p.m.** In lieu of attending our annual Spring Supper, gather with us for a **virtual night of worship, music and a reflection** on "Faith in Turbulent Times" offered by special guest speaker and freelance minister, Georgia Metz, M. Div. Special music will be provided by Erin Regier Graber and Addie Regier Kauffman. Email WDWM2021SpringSoiree@gmail.com to register ASAP. A zoom link will be sent to registered participants prior to the event.
- ☞ **Explore FMC!** This Sunday, April 11, Pastor Tom will lead an "Explore FMC" class for those who might have interest in becoming an official member of our church or are simply interested in learning more about our church and faith tradition. It will begin with lunch and last until approximately 3 p.m.
- ☞ **Men and Boys Retreat, April 16-18, at Camp Mennoscah!** Come to Camp Mennoscah for time for fishing, canoeing, worshipping, 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.
- ☞ **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.

Other Announcements

- ☞ **Eager to Celebrate the Season? Get your Covid Vaccination** and Step out in Confidence! It's as easy as 1-2-3....
 1. Log onto the Marion County website: www.Marioncoks.net. Scroll down until you see the Covid emblem, with links underneath it.
 2. Click on a "Vaccine Appointment Calendar" for the type of vaccine you wish, and you can set your own appointment for the vaccine.
 3. Show up at your appointment with your consent form (you can get that from the same website).
- ☞ **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>

Verse of the Week

“...and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” –Galatians 2:20 (NRSV)