



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

June 2, 2021

From Pastor Tom

Happy Anniversary!

Today is Lois' and my . . . umm, let me think . . . 37th wedding anniversary! Thirty-seven years ago today we were gathered together with a group of family and friends at Camp Friedenswald, near Cassopolis, MI. The beginning of June is always a crazy time for Mennonite camps, as they're busy gearing up for the summer program, including orienting their summer staff for the weeks ahead. But Camp Friedenswald was willing to squeeze us in. We wanted to get married there for a host of reasons: we had met there two years previously (when both of us were on the summer staff); we had also both grown up going to that camp (Lois from central Illinois, me from nearby Elkhart, Indiana); our families all had significant connections there; and furthermore, what a beautiful place to have a wedding! We were married outdoors, in front of the Dining Hall, from where one can see Lake Shavehead through the trees.

Whenever Lois and I remember our wedding weekend, several features or aspects always stand out. I played a round of frisbee golf with my brother and friends the morning of the wedding. (I don't know what Lois did during that time, but I'm sure it involved visiting.) It hailed in the afternoon, just after our ceremony, while we were trying to open our wedding gifts (yes, outside). The weather during the wedding itself was beautiful; the tape recording is full of birdsong, along with the sounds of our fathers speaking words of exhortation, our friends playing and leading some music, and Lois and I actually telling a Frog and Toad story ("Alone"—it's our favorite; "I'm sorry for all the dumb things I do; I'm sorry for all the silly things I say; please be my friend again!") For our wedding night, our good friend Curt, who was the Executive Director, loaned us his apartment bedroom. We were late getting up there (we were both off visiting separately with friends), and once we did, we didn't sleep very well—Curt had just set up his waterbed, and it was ice cold. Then the next morning, my mom and dad had agreed to prepare their famous "pancake breakfast" for everyone. But not knowing the camp kitchen, my dad tried to use what he thought was a blender but was actually an appliance for mixing bread dough. The pancake batter ended up all over the walls! I am told there was some "blue smoke" in the kitchen that morning, but which of my parents had used the "fiery language," I'm not certain.

Anniversaries of all kinds are important to celebrate. Some are somber (the anniversary of a loved one's death being just one example of many). Some are happy and celebrative (birthdays and weddings being the most common). And some simply help us mark the passing of time in important, needed ways. For example, what were you all doing one year ago today? Umm . . . let me think. It was a Tuesday. We were in the midst of the pandemic, each of us doing our best to adjust to the strict restrictions and safety protocols that still felt very strange and new. "Church" was little more than a video posted on YouTube, and meetings held on Zoom. Summer "vacation" was, to say the least, anticlimactic, graduation ceremonies and other end of school celebrations having been canceled outright; the same for family trips and other eagerly anticipated adventures.

But a year has passed (or thirty-seven years!), and life often looks clearer—even happier—in hindsight. Or at least, profoundly meaningful. So let's celebrate the day, grateful for lessons learned, and for God's presence and many blessings. Let's turn our eyes to the future for just a moment, to the

days, months, or years ahead. Who knows what they will bring, what adventures, what hardships? One thing at least is assured—make that two: God’s never-ending presence, and continuous blessings. And now let’s come back to the present. Covid-19 may still be around, but life is good! Right?

Upcoming Events

- ☞ Please mark Saturday, June 5 on your calendars and join us for the Amstutz Family Benefit from 4:30-7:30p.m. at Hillsboro MB Church.

We are serving a BBQ Pork dinner (dine-in and carryout available) with proceeds to benefit the Nathan & Larinda Amstutz family. On Tuesday, March 30, 2021, Larinda, wife and mother of three beautiful children, was involved in a horrific accident that could have taken her life. However, God had other plans. He knew that her family and the people she serves at SafeHope needed her more. While sparing her life, the accident did cause extensive damage to her right leg and will require multiple surgeries and many months of no weight on that leg for healing to take place.

The cost for the meal of BBQ Pork sandwiches (hot dogs available for the kiddos), beans, chips and water will be by donation.

Please make checks payable to: Hillsboro MB Church / Amstutz Family. Please note that donations will not be tax deductible.

Join us to help support the Amstutz family during this time of healing and recovery. We very much appreciate your donations, kind words and prayer!

- ☞ **Sat., June 5 – The public is invited to Walk Sand Creek Trail Day**, part of National Trails Day®. Water will be available for people and dogs at the trailhead at Memorial Grove on the Bethel College campus, dawn to dusk (**6 a.m.-8 p.m.**), courtesy of the Sand Creek Trail Committee.
- ☞ **Sat., June 5, 7 a.m. – Kauffman Museum first-Saturday bird walk.** Meet in the museum parking lot (corner of Main and 27th streets in North Newton) to join experienced birders for a walk of 1-1.5 hours in Chisholm Park and on Sand Creek Trail. Trails are mostly unpaved and sometimes steep or sloping.
- ☞ **Everence to hold *Basics of Investing* webinar:**
Everence will host a free, online webinar, *Basics of investing*, on Tuesday, June 8 at 6:30 p.m. Register for this webinar to learn about:
 - The fundamentals of investing.
 - Different types of investments available.
 - How faith values can play a role in your investment decisions.

To register, or learn more about this webinar event, please visit our webpage at everence.com/kansas.

Other Announcements

- ☞ **Vacation Bible School!** Nurture Committee is exploring whether we will have Vacation Bible School this summer. We are partnering this year with the Hillsboro United Methodist church. Do you feel a sense of interest and excitement about providing children with a VBS experience this

summer? If so, please contact Doug Miller or Pastor Hank and let them know! dougmilller4@outlook.com youthpastor@fmchillsboro.com

- ☞ **The sewing group is making Dignity kits for MCC.** We are sewing the basic kits but need help collecting the other items to fill them. We will need ladies' cotton briefs (sm, med, lg), hand towels, washcloths, bars of bath soap, bars of laundry soap, wide tooth combs, nail clippers, wooden or plastic clothespins. Please put any of the above donations in the storage cart in the narthex. Thank you for your help!
- ☞ **WDC Administrative Assistant Nancy Funk has announced her plans to retire August 31, 2021.** She writes, *"I am so grateful for the opportunity that I've had to work at WDC for the last 17+ years. My decision to retire at this time comes with mixed feelings of excitement for what's ahead and sadness for what will be left behind. I have enjoyed my work very much and felt valued in my role. Working with the various staff members over the years and learning to know many pastors and others has indeed been a blessing to me. I also look forward to a new chapter of life and the possibilities that it brings."* We are grateful for Nancy's faithful service to WDC and will be making plans to recognize Nancy and prepare for this transition on the WDC staff. More information will be announced later.
- ☞ **CORE is now up and running. Hallelujah!** We need Sunday school classes or groups within our community to take on the ministry of feeding the 30 people who come! Please let your organizations know we need help cooking a meal and serving it on Thursdays at 5:30 at Trinity Mennonite Church (211 Elm). You can use the Trinity kitchen to cook and serve. Please call Norma Duerksen at 620-381-0949 to sign up for a Thursday that suits you. (BTW: CORE is the new name for the Circles program. It helps people facing poverty to find resources and learn skills to survive and thrive.)
- ☞ **Camp Mennoscah campers and parents!** If your camper is fully vaccinated (2 weeks after the final shot) for COVID-19 before they come to camp, they will not have to quarantine (go home) if they are a close contact unless they have symptoms. Preventative measures are being taken, but that virus can be sneaky. Completed vaccination cards can be uploaded to the camper's account.
- ☞ **The Kansas Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (KIPCOR)** at Bethel College is offering its core mediation training (Practical Skills for Managing Interpersonal Conflict) via Zoom June 14-18. There is a fee discount if you register before May 28. Visit kipcor.org for more information.
- ☞ **Join Jerusalem Seminar this winter!** Bethel College and Tabor College are again sponsoring a trip to Jordan, Palestine, and Israel, from December 26, 2021, to January 15, 2022. The four emphases of the trip are to (1) understand the Bible in its context, (2) learn about the three major religions of the area (Judaism, Islam, Eastern Christianity), (3) understand the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and (4) take time for reflection, worship, and prayer together. There is currently room for additional persons to participate. If interested, contact Peter Goerzen (pgoerzen@bethelks.edu) immediately. Cost is estimated at \$4700-\$4900 per person.

Verse of the Week

"And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." – Revelation 21:2-4 (NRSV)