



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

June 23, 2021

From Pastor Tom

Sing!!!

My friend Greg Zielke, who happens to be both the director of the Shari Flaming Center for the Arts and Director of Choirs at Tabor College, signs off on every email with that word, complete with three exclamation points. I asked him why he does this. He replied that he believes “singing is an imperative for Christians,” and cited Ephesians 5:19: “be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts.”

Singing has long been important to Mennonites. I have even heard it referred to as one of our “sacraments.” According to my *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, a sacrament is “a Christian rite (as baptism or the Eucharist) that is believed to have been ordained by Christ and that is held to be a means of divine grace or to be a sign or symbol of a spiritual reality” (or, the dictionary adds, “a religious rite or observance comparable to a Christian sacrament”). Technically, Mennonites have just two sacraments: baptism, and the Lord’s Supper (See *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, p. 47). And it is very significant that both of those are formative for the Church—in fact literally so. They “form” the church, give shape to the church, signify what it means to become part of the Church, to be part of the church, to be the church.

Singing is formative for the Mennonite church. It literally forms us into one body, singing and indeed breathing together. And when we sing in harmony (what musicians call “SATB,” for “Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass”) it indeed exemplifies what the Apostle Paul was trying to get at in 1 Corinthians 12: there are many gifts, but the same Spirit, and all are needed in the church. Be you S, A, T, or B, be you a trained singer or one who usually sings only in the shower. “All God’s Critters Got a Place in the Choir,” as the song reminds us.

Until recently, because of the coronavirus pandemic, we haven’t been able to sing at First Mennonite Church! For over a year! And boy have we missed it! (Three more exclamation points. ☐). We made up for it, at least in part, at our annual Sunday School Picnic with Trinity Mennonite at the park this past Sunday. In fact, we sang fifteen songs from *Voices Together*, our shiny new hymnal! However, I consider our real re-start to be this coming Sunday. That’s because we at FMC are gifted with a sanctuary that is ideal for singing! (Another exclamation point. ☐). Its acoustics literally can make as few as ten or twenty of us sound like a choir! And when accompanied by our awesome pipe organ, look out! We might just raise the roof off!! (Another three. ☐)

We won’t sing as many as fifteen songs this Sunday, but we’ll sing at least four (and maybe even five, if I dare to squeeze an extra one in). Singing tells the story of God’s redeeming love. It proclaims our theology. It expresses our praise. And, it binds us together, in beautiful harmony, as the Body of Christ, God’s church. Are you ready? Set? Sing!!!

Upcoming Events

- ☞ **Ministries Council will meet 7 p.m. July 1 at the church.**
- ☞ **The MCC Alumni Gathering is July 9-11**, and all MCC alumni and their families are invited to join us at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp. [Please sign up by June 25!](#)
- ☞ **Join in this special Annual Assembly storytelling opportunity!** WDC's Assembly theme July 30-August 1 is "Woven into God's Story." StoryCorps has invited WDC to partner with their storytelling project, *One Small Step*, to share and record our own stories within WDC. *One Small Step* is an initiative to facilitate conversations across differences. (Facilitators are bilingual in Spanish and English.) It's a chance to spend time virtually with someone different than you and discover the stories behind each other's beliefs. To join another WDC member for an online conversation, sign up at <https://onesmallstep.storycorps.org/wdc/>. **The registration deadline is June 25** and virtual recordings will be scheduled July 28-30.
- ☞ **Family Weekend at Camp Mennoscah on July 17-18!** If you're looking for a weekend to escape, this retreat offers a smorgasbord of camp activities for you to choose from and plenty of time to be with your family and friends. Register at campmennoscah.org and contact 620-2973290 with questions!

Other Announcements

- ☞ **Stay connected and don't miss a thing at this year's MCC Relief Sale!** Get live updates and other up-to-the-minute information via Facebook, Instagram & Twitter. Go to @kansas.mccsale on Facebook and @ksmccsale on both Instagram and Twitter to like and follow.
- ☞ Have you noticed **WDC's website** has a new look? Check it out at <https://mennowdc.org>. While it is still a work in progress, the refreshed website is now THE place to go for all things WDC! Beginning in July, the *WDC Sprouts* weekly newsletter email will be discontinued. WDC articles, announcements, and other information will be posted exclusively on the website. Email alerts will be sent to let you know when new content has been posted.
- ☞ **Current openings at MCC** can be found at mcc.org. Current open positions include Canning & Trucking Manager, Multimedia Producer, Meat Canner and many international service opportunities.
- ☞ **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!
- ☞ **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

"The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore." –Psalm 121:7-8 (NRSV)