

# First Mennonite Church

## Midweek E-Newsletter

July 28, 2021

### From Pastor Tom

#### “Para- . . . what??”

When you think about it, a lot of words in the English language begin with the prefix “para.” Parallel. Parachute. Paranormal. The prefix para actually comes from the Greek language. One of its meanings, is “beside” or “alongside of.” As we know from the Olympics, the parallel bars is an event in gymnastics featuring two bars, 6.5 feet high and exactly parallel, 16.5 inches across. A parachute is something a skydiver wears on his back, “alongside” him, to break his fall and lower him safely to the ground when he pulls the rip cord. Paranormal refers to circumstances or realities that are a bit bizarre or that defy our understanding, appearing “alongside” what we usually think of as “normal.”

There’s another “para-word” that appears five times in the Gospel of John: the word “paraclete.” Para-what? We already know what “para” means. “Clete” is from the Greek word *klytos*, which means “called.” Giving us the noun *paraklytos*, “one called alongside of.” In the Gospel of John, paraclete is another word, a special word, for the Holy Spirit. In John 14:16, Jesus says to his anxious disciples, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.” Other definitions for paraclete include: comforter, encourager, exhorter, helper, mediator, intercessor, helper, advocate.

The phrase “another paraclete” implies that Jesus himself had been a paraclete for his disciples, called alongside to comfort them, encourage them, exhort them, help them, intercede for them. But the time is soon coming, he says, when he must leave them, to return to the Father. But Jesus promises that he will not leave them “orphaned” (John 14:18). He will send them another paraclete, to come alongside them, to comfort, exhort, help, and intercede. Namely, the Holy Spirit.

One of my favorite translations for the Greek noun *paraklytos* is “advocate.” Someone who advocates for. Speaks for. Intercedes for. Kind of like a lawyer does. An attorney who takes our case, walking and working alongside us, every step of the way. Breaking our fall. Bringing us safely back to solid ground. Not quite “normal.” The world cannot see the Holy Spirit. We can’t necessarily see her. But she is there. With us and within us forever. Isn’t it wonderful to know that because of Christ, we each now have our own personal “attorney” on retainer, someone to look out for us, advocate for us and speak for us whenever we need it?

### Upcoming Events

- ☞ **Gather for the Grand Open House for the new Kauffman Museum exhibit, “Vapes: Marketing an Addiction,” Thursday, July 29 from 2-6 p.m.** This new exhibit examines what is known about e-cigarettes, and includes selections from a previous Kauffman Museum exhibit, “Better Choose Me: Collecting and Creating with Tobacco Fabric Novelties, 1880-1920.” “Vapes” has been on display at NMC Health in Newton since the beginning of June and moves to Kauffman Museum July 29-Jan. 9, 2022.

- ☞ **Remember to register for the WDC Annual Assembly at: [mennowdc.org/2021](http://mennowdc.org/2021).** Friday worship, July 30 at 7 p.m. followed by snocones outside at 8 p.m. Enjoy storytelling under the tent with fresh popcorn Saturday, July 31 from 7-8 p.m. Invite your friends to Faith Mennonite Church, 2100 N Anderson Ave, Newton, KS, for some summer fun. Storytelling also inside and online!
- ☞ **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/>.
- ☞ **Parkview Church invites you to Worship & Watermelon Friday, July 30 on the church lawn!** Watermelon, crullers, and fellowship begins at 7 p.m. with worship at 7:30. Please bring your own lawn chairs or blankets!
- ☞ **Colorado Peaches are coming to MCC in North Newton!** Get your Colorado Peaches this summer and support MCC at the same time. Beth-El Mennonite Church in Colorado Springs is organizing a fundraiser to cover expenses related to the annual Rocky Mountain Relief Sale, which is being planned for October 15-16 in Rocky Ford, Colorado. Peaches are available in 10lb boxes for \$25 and 18lb boxes for \$35. **Deadline for orders/payment is Monday, August 2 (payment must be made before the end of day on August 2 or your order will be canceled).** Checks or cash are accepted, checks are made payable to Beth-El Mennonite Church with "Peaches" in the memo line. Please contact Patsy Dirksen at MCC Central States Office for orders/payments at [patsydirksen@mcc.org](mailto:patsydirksen@mcc.org) or 316.283.2720. Pick-up date for peaches is tentatively scheduled for Monday, August 23 at the MCC Central States in North Newton.
- ☞ **Next Care Meeting is August 4 at 7 p.m.**
- ☞ **The Hillsboro Senior Center is holding a fundraiser Friday, August 6 from 6:30-8 p.m.** Stop by for homemade pie and ice cream plus music by Bob and the Boys! Donations are welcomed and appreciated.

## Other Announcements

- ☞ **Peppernuts at FMC!** Our peppernuts project is coming up soon! We will begin on Friday, Aug. 6. **Note that our dates have changed. They will now be Fri Aug 6, Sat Aug 7, Fri Aug 13, and Sat Aug 14.** A whole variety of tasks are involved, some that take good arm strength and others that involve a more relaxing arranging of dough on a cookie sheet. There is something for everyone! Please notify Kara at [secretary@fmchillsboro.com](mailto:secretary@fmchillsboro.com) or 620.947.5662 of dates you would like to help!
- ☞ **Some of you may have been expecting the June-July-August Rejoice! devotional** and have found what looks like the previous months' issue. To clarify, the issue on the magazine rack IS correct; a print error occurred, but just peek inside for the latest devotionals!
- ☞ **The family of Chuck Abrahams sent a note to share with the church family this week.** You may find it posted on the bulletin board in the hallway.
- ☞ **REQUESTS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS.** FMC desires to support FMC members and members' children who attend a Mennonite college or who choose to receive a seminary education. If you are interested in applying for such financial support (tuition) for the 2021-2022 academic year, contact Doug Miller.
- ☞ **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!

☞ **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 trip will be led by Dr. Doug Miller and will include two dozen biblical sites, such as Jerusalem, Nazareth, Bethlehem, the Jordan River, Sea of Galilee, Jericho, ancient ruins, Dead Sea and Dead Sea Scrolls, Masada, Mt. Nebo, Petra, museums, and much more. There is currently room for additional persons to participate. If interested, contact Dr. Miller immediately at 620.947.2439 or [dougm@tabor.edu](mailto:dougm@tabor.edu). Cost is estimated at \$4700 per person.

## **Verse of the Week**

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.”

–Hebrews 12:1 (NRSV)