



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

August 25, 2021

From Pastor Tom

Hooray for Our Fellowship Hall!

It was a sight for sore eyes. People sitting at tables and eating. Lots of people. And not just eating, but talking, laughing. We needed this!

The memorial service for Clark Wiebe was exactly the reason we needed to break through the Covid barrier and host a meal in Fellowship Hall. We've been trying to do the right thing, trying to be appropriately careful, trying to do our part to not be super spreaders of Covid 19. To that end we even enlisted the help of three knowledgeable, careful people to serve as a Covid Task Force, to follow developments in the city, county, state, and country, and then to advise our church to the best of their ability. They recently recommended we go back to asking everyone to wear masks whenever inside the church, and we followed their advice. They also recommended a return to social distancing and setting an attendance limit at 50% of capacity.

But they did not categorically rule out gatherings—and eating—in the Fellowship Hall. And so after Clark Wiebe died, and the family requested some kind of social gathering (with food!) in the fellowship hall following Clark's memorial service, we were able (this time!) to say "yes." It took a lot of effort, and we are woefully out of practice, but it worked! First thank-yous go to the "kitchen ladies" (Verda Albrecht, Eydie Graber, Deanne Duerksen, Pam Bartel, and Doug Bartel (who has now become an honorary kitchen lady) for making the meal happen. (Lots of others helped—but I think it was these five who helped with the planning from the very beginning.) A big thank you to all others who helped as well. It was definitely a group effort.

We don't know of course what the future holds regarding the coronavirus. Will things keep getting worse, necessitating that we "shut down" even further? We can only hope not. We need to have fellowship with one another! We need to eat together! I'm tempted to conclude that it is the life blood of our church (even more than Sunday morning worship!). And with the wise counsel and suggested protocol of the Covid Task Force, the wonderful volunteerism of many in our congregation, and with the willing compliance of everyone in attendance, we made it happen! Hooray for our fellowship hall! And hooray for us!!

Among Our Friends/In Our Prayers

Upcoming Events

☞ **Congregational Meeting Announcement:** After deliberations by the Ministries and Vision Councils, and consulting with KIPCOR, **the date for our facilitated congregational**

meeting has been set for Wednesday, September 8. All FMC members and those who attend regularly are welcome and encouraged to attend. More information about the structure and process of the meeting will be forthcoming. Currently we are planning a pizza meal to begin at 6 p.m. that evening in the fellowship hall, with seating also on the patio (weather permitting). We want to make childcare available for anyone who needs it. If that is you, please communicate this to Kara at the church office or someone on Ministries Council so that this can be arranged. If you have any questions about the meeting, you may contact Doug Miller or Nadine Friesen.

-Doug Miller, FMC Moderator

- ☞ **The Kansas Mennonite Relief Sale Annual Meeting** will be Thursday, August 26, 6 p.m. at First Mennonite Church, McPherson. The cost of the meal is \$20.00. Please RSVP to Barb BJ Reeves at bj.reeves@live.com or 620-543-6863 by August 22. We will be checking with health information sources regarding group meetings closer to the date for everyone's protection. The funds will go to the McPherson Housing Coalition for the construction of Oak Harbor Cottages for low income/homeless families.
- ☞ **Please join us for the final summer concert of the Tabor College Music on the Plaza series Friday, August 27 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. The Tom and Lois Harder Folk Duo** will perform a bit of folk, a bit of gospel and a nod to the '60s! Bring your lawn chair; Starbucks will be open.
- ☞ **Offender Victim Ministries is hosting a "Just Desserts" fundraiser** Sunday, August 29 from 6-8 p.m. at Carriage Factory Art Gallery Park (126 E. 6th St.) in Newton. Join them for an evening of fellowship with the local restorative justice community, sweet treats, and live music! Tickets are required: Adults (\$20), Ages 5-17 (\$10), Under 5 (Free). Find more information and reserve your tickets at www.offendervictimministries.org.
- ☞ **Saturday, Sept. 4** – Kauffman Museum's monthly bird walk will be a special event in cooperation with the Kansas Humanities Council: a **book and poetry walk with Megan Kaminski and Molly Zahn from the University of Kansas. Start time: 9:30 a.m.** at the museum's front door. For more information, call 316-283-1612 or e-mail kauffman@bethelks.edu.
- ☞ **Sunday, Sept. 12** – **KIPCOR Film Series** resumes *live*, with *The Prison Within*, **2 p.m.**, Krehbiel Auditorium in Luyken Fine Arts Center at Bethel College. Individuals incarcerated in San Quentin Prison and charged with murder take a journey of redemption through participation in a restorative justice program. Talk-back to follow. *Bethel's COVID-19 protocols require physical distancing and mask-wearing indoors regardless of vaccination status.*

Other Announcements

- ☞ We live in a culture that seeks to blind our children to the reality of God's love for them. **Join other moms as we pray for our kids, their teachers and their schools** (Elementary, Middle and High School). We gather every Tuesday at 9 a.m. starting August 24 at 609 S. Main, Hillsboro. Childcare provided.
- ☞ **Join MCC in prayer and support for those suffering in our world.** MCC has prepositioned relief materials in Haiti for immediate use. Earlier this month an additional shipment of supplies was sent to Haiti and is expected to arrive in September. MCC continues to respond to needs around the world in Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Congo and other crisis areas. We greatly appreciate your [monetary donations](#) to keep current projects going and to help with extra expenses due to recent disasters; and we could use your help in replenishing our supplies of [relief kits and hygiene kits](#). Questions can be directed to 316.283.2720 or centralstates@mcc.org.
- ☞ **COVID-19 protocols:** The FMC Covid response team is urging the following regarding the Covid virus: 1. Masks are required when we gather indoors, 2. FMC should reduce capacity in the sanctuary and fellowship hall to 50% 3. Inside dining & public restroom use is tentatively cancelled for Arts & Crafts Fair.
- ☞ **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. Cost is estimated at \$4700 per person.

☞ **Kansas MDS Unit is sponsoring two Learning and Service Trips to McAllen, Texas October 30–November 6 and February 19–26.** Participants will leave Kansas Saturday morning traveling to San Antonio, TX to stay overnight. They will visit San Antonio Mennonite Church on Sunday morning and later travel to McAllen, TX for the MDS project. **Costs:** Lodging and meals on the two traveling weekends. MDS will cover the remainder of the expenses. **Reservations: To make your reservations or for more information contact Cleo Koop at cleohkoop@gmail.com or call 316-282-0797.** If you are interested in volunteering at McAllen, TX on different weeks than what is in this announcement, please call the volunteer coordinator at 800-241-8111.

Verse of the Week

“I love the LORD, because he has heard my voice and my supplications. Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.” –Psalm 116:1-2 (NRSV)