



# First Mennonite Church

## Midweek E-Newsletter

September 15, 2021

### From Pastor Tom

#### The Joy of Music

Joy is both profound and ethereal. On one hand, it is truly “deep” and foundational, within us and beneath us, a rock on which to stand. On the other hand, it is “of or relating to the regions beyond the earth . . . celestial, heavenly; unworldly, spiritual . . . immaterial, intangible; marked by unusual delicacy or refinement” (*Merriam-Websters Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition, “ethereal”*).

Not coincidentally, these are the very realms accessible to music. Over my lifetime as a musician, I’ve said many times to many people that music can express things in ways that words alone cannot. Take, for example, the music of J. S. Bach. He composed a work for orchestra and chorus entitled “Magnificat.” The words, perhaps needless to say, are based on Luke 1:46-55, a section often called “the Magnificat.” They are Mary’s “Song of Praise” upon visiting her cousin Elizabeth, her own expression of joy after the baby in Elizabeth’s womb “leaped for joy” at her presence (Luke 1:44). Her words, you could say, hardly need music, for they are themselves music. And yet you could also say the sublime music of Bach’s Magnificat hardly needs words! It goes that deep. It reaches that high.

This is a big week for music in the Harder household. Late yesterday afternoon, my brother, a friend, Lois, and I headed to Kansas City to attend a special concert (a Christmas gift to us from John). And who was performing? A group called the Doobie Brothers. One of my all-time favorite rock bands! Talk about joy! “Sublime” is not a word that comes to mind when I describe their music. But deep? Oh yeah! We could literally feel the music in our bones. Ethereal? Definitely. Band leader Tom Johnston announced that their goal was to bring some “joy and spirit” to the crowd at the Starlight Theater. The Doobie Brothers should definitely not be categorized as a “Christian rock band.” But one of their most famous songs is called “Jesus Is Just Alright With Me!” With a rockin’, declamatory chorus, and a slow, passionate middle section in which Pat Simmons sings “Jesus, he’s my friend. Took me by the hand. Led me far, far from this land.” After which the lead guitar solo—without words—veritably soared heavenward!

And then, on Thursday and Friday, John and I will attend the annual Walnut Valley Bluegrass Festival in Winfield, where we will be joined by Anna and Alex, Madeline, and eventually Lois. If you haven’t been there, you don’t know what you’re missing. And I’m not sure how to explain it to you. You hear lots of gospel music. Some of the best bluegrass songs ever are those categorized as “Bluegrass Gospel.” Many of which literally tell the story of Jesus’ gift to the world. But you also hear secular, spiritual, slower songs, ballads. You hear songs sung in other languages, and certainly music influenced by many nations. You hear songs of prophetic justice. Songs of lament (I expect we’ll hear at least one song written in commemoration of 9/11/2001). Songs of grief. Songs of hope. Songs that hold your hand and take you to the deepest depths, and to the highest heights. And it’s all an expression of sheer joy. Yes, even the sad songs.

As it happens, this coming Sunday’s worship service (yes, I’ll be here, and Saturday as well!) will be another “hymn sing” comprised of songs from our hymnal *Voices Together*, structured in the sequence of

a worship service. It will be called “A Service of Psalm and Song.” As the title implies, all of the hymns and spoken worship resources are from the Psalms. Otherwise known as the “hymn book” of the Jewish people. Some of the hymns will go low, others high. But they will all be expressions of joy! See you then!

## Upcoming Events

- ☞ **FMC this Wednesday night (TONIGHT!):** Come at 6 p.m. for chicken noodle soup, fresh rolls, and frozen fruit bars and ice cream bars! Children’s activities will not begin this week. Hank Unruh will conduct Safe Sanctuary training at 6 p.m.; those interested may get their food and follow Hank to a separate room. At 7 p.m. in the chapel, Pastor Tom will lead a sermon discussion study on the book of James.
- ☞ **Get ready for the Arts & Crafts Fair fun this Saturday!!!** If you are able to help with setup Friday evening or running the booth Saturday, please let Hank know at [youthpastor@fmchillsboro.com](mailto:youthpastor@fmchillsboro.com) ASAP! Please note that there will be no inside dining or public restrooms available Saturday.
- ☞ **Central Kansas Community Foundation is holding their “Rural Matters” CKCF Summit 2021 Thursday, Sept. 23 from 4-6 p.m. at the Wild Prairie Event Center**, 1610 SE 3rd St, Newton, KS 67114. This free event is hosted by CKCF Board of Directors. Annually we gather to bring like-minded individuals together to share experiences, contemplate opportunities and celebrate local and regional successes. Marci Penner, Kansas Sampler Foundation, will be our keynote speaker. Also hear from Carol Duerksen about her and Donley’s reasonings behind a planned gift to their community through Goessel Community Foundation. We will have individually wrapped snacks and be in a facility that will allow for social distancing. Table talks will be also be facilitated throughout our time together. Plus for those in attendance, there are two chances for a \$100 Operating Fund grant and two drawings for the Kansas Guidebook.
- ☞ **Marion County Core Community** invites you to its graduation Thursday, September 30 at 6:30 p.m. at Trinity Mennonite Church of Hillsboro. Please join the celebration to congratulate the graduates! A reception will follow the ceremony.
- ☞ **Bethel College’s Fall Festival is Sept. 30-Oct. 3, with most activities taking place Saturday, Oct. 2, on campus.** Features include music, food, class reunions, football, the comedy *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*, and the STEM Symposium honoring Professor Emeritus of Chemistry Richard Zerger. See <https://www.bethelks.edu/alumni/events/fall-festival> for the complete schedule.
- ☞ **Bakers and Crafters Needed!** Help support Bethel College Women’s Association by donating pies for BCWA’s Pie-By-The-Slice booth or any baked item or craft item for the Market in the Round at Fall Fest 2021. Peppernuts, zwieback, cinnamon rolls, and coffee cakes are popular items! Bring your pies (no refrigerated or custard pies please) to Seminar A in Schultz Student Center 4-6:30 p.m. Friday, October 1 or 8-11a.m. on Saturday, October 2. Baked goods and craft items can be dropped off at the Luyken Fine Arts Center Rm 140 on Friday 1:30-4:30pm or Saturday 7-8 a.m. All proceed go to support Bethel College.

## Other Announcements

### ☞ Christian Education at FMC this fall

#### **Children’s Nurture:**

- For now, no children’s Sunday school is being planned for this fall.
- Wednesday evening children’s activities are being planned to begin Wednesday, September 22.

### **Adult Christian Education:**

- On Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m., Pastor Tom will lead a sermon discussion study (currently on the book of James), and possibly a future study/discussion of the book *Beliefs*, by John Roth.
- This Sunday morning, September 19, at 9:30 a.m. in the chapel, anyone who is interested in Sunday morning adult Sunday school for this fall is welcome to come and discuss options. We can form more than one group if there are different topics of interest. Bring your ideas!

- ☞ **Camp Mennoscah needs help mowing!** The grass that is usually cut short is doing its best to compete with the tallgrass prairie in height. Volunteer to mow (with a riding lawn mower) for whatever length of time you can offer or grab a string trimmer to chase back those wily weeds. Contact Camp Mennoscah at [office@campmennoscah.org](mailto:office@campmennoscah.org) or 620-297-3290.
- ☞ **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 cancelled for Arts & Crafts Fair.
- ☞ **MDS volunteers needed:** Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) calls for volunteers with a heart for service and an attitude of flexibility. Volunteers are needed in Paradise, California; Jennings, Louisiana; McAllen, Texas as well as other work sites organized by local Units. MDS is seeking volunteers who, while eager to get back out there, must be ready to roll with both safety precautions and schedule changes as COVID-19 cases fluctuate. Call 1-800-241-8111 or go to [www.mds.org](http://www.mds.org) to learn more.  
As these projects prepare to open, MDS wants volunteers to know that we are working to make sure that they have a meaningful experience and that it is as safe as possible.

## **Verse of the Week**

“If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” Philippians 2:1-2 (NRSV)