



# First Mennonite Church

## Midweek E-Newsletter

April 27, 2022

### From Pastor Tom

#### Singing the Story of God's Creation

One of the headings in the table of contents of our hymnal *Voices Together* is "Telling God's Story." This section of the hymnal includes such sub-headings as "Covenant," "Prophets," "Jesus' Advent," "Birth of Jesus," "Jesus's Death," "Jesus' Resurrection," etc. In other words, hymns in this section all tell a part of the larger story in which God revealed himself to the world and the people God created.

The very first subheading in this section is "Creation." I have been thinking a lot about God's Creation the last couple of days, in which we've had exceptionally nice, spring weather. And so this morning I turned to the section in our hymnal called "TELLING GOD'S STORY: Creation." The first hymn in this section is "Planets Humming as They Wander" (#175). This is one of the relatively new hymns in *Voices Together*, its text having been written in 2010. Here it is:

*Planets humming as they wander, stars aflame with silent song:  
Galaxies that spin on, endless, melodies afar but strong.  
God's creation tunes its carol, far beyond our mortal gaze.  
Heavenly bodies help us listen to the boundless song of praise.*

*Atoms quivering deep inside us, cells abuzz with energy.  
Particles are chanting psalms in tiny, holy synergy.  
All these molecules provide us patterns of the craft of God,  
Offering up melodic first-fruit, grateful hymns which leave us awed.*

*Human voices praise our Maker, part of the created choir:  
Rumbling tones of space below us, neutron's descant ever higher.  
Hymns arise from all around us, thankful praise our whole life long,  
To the One who made us, knows us, Author of the endless song!*

In such beautiful language, the hymn writer turns the singer's gaze first to heaven, where the incredible expansiveness of God's Creation is described. Who of us can look upward in the day or night sky and not feel awed by what we see? Who of us cannot hear, amidst the seeming silence of the heavens, a "boundless song of praise?" And who is not moved to sing our own praise in response?

Turn our gaze inward, and we see the equally stunning miracle of creation at the microscopic level. “Atoms quivering,” “cells abuzz”; “Particles are chanting psalms in tiny, holy synergy.” And then, finally, we realize that we too are “part of the created choir”—“human voices” who feel moved to “praise our maker.”

May we all, in the beautiful spring days now upon us, turn our gaze outward, inward, and all around us. May we listen carefully and attentively, so as to be able to hear the beautiful music written into all of creation. And may we feel moved to sing our own favorite songs that extol God’s Creation (see #s 166 through 189 for more great possibilities)!

## Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- ☞ Pray for farmers, as they transfer their livestock to newly lush pastures, as they prepare the soil for the planting of summer and fall crops, and as they excitedly watch the green shoots of wheat grow taller.
- ☞ Pray for gardeners, as they enjoy spring’s first flowers, as they plant new ones to add color to the months of late spring and summer, and as they plant vegetables in the promise of their future fruitfulness to be enjoyed.
- ☞ And let us pray that we all—wherever we are on the exquisitely beautiful globe we call “planet earth”—may do our part to help care for God’s creation! Including, of course, one another!

## Upcoming Events

- ☞ **National Day of Prayer!** Thursday, May 5<sup>th</sup> A couple of options for your day-
  1. **Our sanctuary will be open as a “place of prayer” from 9am to 5pm.** Come enjoy the beauty and quiet for your time with Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
  2. **A service of prayer will be led by our community pastors (HAMA) at Trinity Mennonite church building.** At 7am donuts and coffee will be available. The 30-minute prayer service will begin at 7:15 so you can still get to work by 8:00!
- ☞ **Summer Food 4 Kids needs cookies!** Start your ovens! Dust off those cookie recipes! We will need approximately 150 every day! Choose your favorite variety. Deliver them to Trinity Mennonite Church, 211 S Elm, Monday thru Friday from 10:00-3:00. Thanks again for your help.
- ☞ **Western District Conference Resource Library Book Sale** Saturday, April 30 from 8am -12pm outside in front of the WDC building in North Newton. There will be a large variety of donated books and books removed from circulation. Donations will be accepted for your selections.
- ☞ **2022 WDC Annual Assembly** - “United in Purpose, Together in Love” is our WDC Annual Assembly theme for our July 29-31, 2022 gathering at Camp Copass, Denton, TX. There will be time to pray, serve, discern the ministry of the church, and play together.

☞ **Tabor College:**

**\*Voices of Conscience Exhibit**, Peace Witness during World War I. This is a nationally recognized touring exhibit hosted by Ebel Gallery on display April 30 – May 30.

☞ **Bethel college:**

**\*Sun., May 1 – Masterworks concert at Bethel College, 3 p.m.**, featuring the Bethel College Oratorio Chorus, orchestra and soloists performing *Requiem* by Mozart, and *Gloria* and *For the Beauty of the Earth* by John Rutter, directed by Dr. William Eash; *Memorial Hall*

**\*Tues., May 3 – Bethel College Steel Drum Band concert, directed by Brad Shores, 7 p.m.**, *Krehbiel*

**\*Weds., May 4 – Jazz on the Green at Bethel College, 8 p.m.** (*Memorial Hall in case of rain*)

**\*Sat., May 14 – Spring choral concert, including pre-Europe tour program by the Bethel College Concert Choir, 4 p.m.**, *Memorial Hall*. **Please note that this is a change in date and time.**

## Other Announcements

☞ **Mail slot reminder!** There are still a few letters to be picked up of the summary and informational letters on Western District Conference matters. Please check your mail!

☞ **Creativity Camp!** June Nurture committee is listening and seeking to discern where God would lead us to minister to children this summer. Thinking to combine introducing life skills such as sewing, cooking, art, and/or something else combined with the idea that we are all made in God's image – therefore creative! Please pray, talk to Jan Amstutz or Sue Buchholz, and consider if God would want you to join in this ministry. It will target older children, small groups to nurture, and 3-5 days in June depending on who is interested and available.

☞ **A thank you** arrived from Kate Mast from the MCC Central States office. Appreciation was shared “for all the time, effort, love, detail, care, and energy” that we have given in making comforters. Check the bulletin board for the complete letter and a flyer which details the comforter ministry. It shows that the majority of MCC comforters go Jordan, Lebanon, Ukraine and Syria. **The total comforters for the year are 45,787!!!**

☞ **One devotional books on I John is still available** in the church office. Come pick up a copy and join in on studying along with the youth. In *This Is How We Know*, J.D. Walt invites us on a forty-four day devotional journey to explore what he refers to as “the second half of the gospel” as presented in I John. Just as the Big Dipper points us to true north, John 3:16 points us to the much less commonly recited I John 3:16: “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.” The journey of awakening is the Spirit-empowered, hard-fought movement of John 3:16 to I John 3:16. This is how we know.

☞ **Planning to update the bulletin board with our family photos!** Thanks to those of you who have sent in photos. It is not too late to join in! Photos will be arranged as -those in Hillsboro, -those scattered abroad, and -those “among the great cloud of witnesses”. (Heb. 12:1) If you have a newer photo of yourself or your family that you would like to use, please bring it by or email it to the church office.

☞ **Everence® to hold Medicare and retirement income workshops this May and June**

This May and June Everence will hold Medicare and Social Security workshops at its office in North Newton. The Medicare workshop (Tuesday, May 10 at 6:30 p.m.) will include, when and where to sign up for Medicare, what Medicare covers, plus an explanation of Medicare Parts A, B, C, and D.

The retirement income workshop (Tuesday, June 7 at 6:30 p.m.) will cover, Social Security strategies including when to begin taking benefits, strategies to help your income last throughout retirement, and risks that can impact your retirement savings.

The in-person workshops will be held at the Everence office: 3179 N. Main St. Suite 1B, North Newton. Those interested in attending should contact the Everence office at 316-283-3800, 877-467-7294 or [central.kansas@everence.com](mailto:central.kansas@everence.com).

**Verse of the Week:**

**I Peter 4:8**

***“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.”***