



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

May 4, 2022

From Pastor Tom

When have you had a Damascus Road experience?

One of the most powerful times Christ appeared to me was on the Jerusalem Seminar in 2011. To be literally walking where Jesus walked was powerful, particularly while we were in Galilee, including along the Sea of Galilee. But I also feel I met him in the many people working for peace with justice in Israel-Palestine. And right before the end of the trip, as I sat on the ancient steps on the south side of the temple (yes, the temple, where Jesus walked and talked and taught) I recommitted my life to following him and serving him. "Take O take me as I am. Summon out what I shall be. Set your seal upon my heart and live in me" (VT 748, which we sang just this past Sunday)

Thanks For Asking! (From FMC Staff)

I was excited about the questions that Pastor Tom posed in his sermon on Sunday. I wanted to answer them as he was talking but didn't want to disrupt.

The questions all came together in a recent, fresh experience of God, or Jesus, or the Holy Spirit. Or maybe it was all three? But first I think I should tell you about a time of total surrender I had about 25 years ago. I couldn't survive in a very difficult teaching job I had taken and so I didn't know what I might be holding back. I kept praying that God would take my WHOLE heart. After some time of that, one day I experienced an amazing joy, when the whole world looked different and I realized the truth of scripture where Jesus says He will set you free. I found that freedom! While it took a while to make sense of it, I knew I had been given a gift to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:5). I was no longer living in my own strength, but in God's power.

Over time, the joy, the spiritual warfare, the struggles of life..., got quite confusing. I lost that joy and couldn't make sense of it all. I once again became so "thirsty" for God!

So, you might imagine how overjoyed I am now to have experienced Him again this past year after many years (13?) of seeking, knocking, asking, wondering, listening – I've experienced a fresh bit of the power of the Holy Spirit. It's part of why I'm sure God wants me here at this church. Though many outward signs looked grim, inwardly, Christ was renewing my spirit. As I studied through the "Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective" with Pastor Tom, so many statements jumped to life. And he so kindly discussed it all including my dying husband! I am so thrilled to find like-minded people who desire to relate to one another and "continue to work out (our) salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).

So much I have learned. Now God has taught me the 2nd commandment – “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31). [I have to chuckle. At retirement age, I’ve finally got to the 2nd commandment. I think I’m on the slow learning track! God is SO PATIENT!] It is such a messy, complicated story, but I’ll save some for another day. Thanks for asking, Pastor Tom!
Sue Buchholz

While I was growing up, I had a mind of my own. I was taught about the Lord, but I didn’t think I needed to follow Him. My self-sufficient attitude continued as I became a teenager and even after I got married. We had our first baby, (Stuart) and he was such a blessing. My interest in the Lord came and went as the joys and sorrows of life came and went.

Then our second child was born, Galen, but he passed away in only three days. My sister-in-laws were both pregnant at the same time and their children lived. I was heart broken and mad at God. Why did I have to lose my baby and they could keep theirs?

Time passed and we had two other healthy children, Rochelle and Nichole. I loved being a mother and my heart began to soften toward God once again. I had cancer and survived. I tried to follow God now but found I would inevitably stray away again.

One day, our oldest daughter invited me to go to a women’s retreat in Texas. My experience there was fantastic! I was in awe hearing beautiful words spoken in “unknown tongues” and seeing others praying together and even some being healed. By the second day, I really experienced God’s power, and told Him that if He would help me, I would follow Him for the rest of my life. I had finally accepted the Lord as my Savior.

Life continues to have ups and downs, but now I’m praying that the Lord will use me to help others see what a marvelous life we have when we accept Him as our personal Lord and Savior. He helped me through my difficult times and I know I can trust Him.
Donna Funk

Upcoming Events

☛ **TOMORROW - National Day of Prayer!** Thursday, May 5th A couple of options for your day-

1. **Our sanctuary will be open as a “place of prayer” from 9am to 2pm.** 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!

☛ **Andover Tornado Response:** The Kansas Mennonite Disaster Service Unit is responding to the recent Andover tornado. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Cleo Koop, Kansas Unit Chair at cleohkoop@gmail.com or 316-282-0797.

☛ **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 meeting here at FMC, on May 15 @ 12:30pm.** All are welcome to join in as we meet with Kathy Newfeld-Dunn and Heidi Regier-Kreider from the Western District office. This will be a time of

listening and sharing regarding trust concerns voiced at the KIPCOR meeting last Fall. If you had not signed up earlier and wish to attend, please let Doug Bartel know. There will be a light lunch provided after the worship for those attending.

☞ Join the **WDC Church Planting Commission at 11am on May 11th for a zoom conversation** that considers how we can share our faith stories with our neighbors.

- 1) How can we begin to have meaningful conversations with our neighbors?
- 2) How do we talk about our experiences with Jesus?
- 3) What unique perspectives might our faith community have to share?
- 4) After sharing the story, how can we invite others into the story?

Join the conversation with the following Zoom link on May

11th: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84792614360?pwd=V050eTluY2dzcFpmbUQyRjhEWHN4QT09>

☞ **MC USA's upcoming Special Session of the Delegate Assembly**, May 17-30, in Kansas City, Missouri. Housing deadline is TODAY, May 4. Registration deadline is May 16 for delegates and guests.

☞ **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.

***Sun., May 8** – Concert Choir: “The Good Samaritan” 3pm

***Sat. May 14** – Spring Instrumental Concert 7pm *[Pastor Tom will be a part of this one!]*

☞ **Bethel college:**

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

***Sat., May 7** – **Kauffman Museum first-Saturday bird walk, 7 a.m. start time** in the museum parking lot at the corner of Main and 27th streets in North Newton. Experienced birders lead a walk of 1-1.5 hours in Chisholm Park and on Sand Creek Trail (terrain is mostly wood-chip path and sometimes uneven/sloping).

***Sun., May 8** – **Woven and Open Road joint Mother’s Day concert, 7 p.m., Memorial Hall**

***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

☞ **Creativity Camp!** Students completing grades 1 – 6 are invited to select a skill that they would like to learn – painting, sewing, or cooking – and join us here at FMC. Please pray, talk to Jan Amstutz or Sue Buchholz, and consider if God would want you to join in any way with this ministry. You can help for any or all of the days - June 7, 9, 14, and 16. No thought or gift of time is too small!

☞ **Special Offering this coming Sunday:** Bring your gifts for Hesston and Bethel Colleges on May 8th.

☞ **MCC:**

*Soon you will notice changes at the MCC building in North Newton, Kansas. Construction will address necessary repairs and updates to make the space more welcoming and safer for everyone as we strive to be good stewards of the MCC building and land. We ask for your patience and your prayers as we navigate continuing to do the work of MCC even during this construction process. If you have questions please email centralstates@mcc.org or call 316.283.2720.

*Join the MCC Central States team! We currently have the following openings. Please contact krystalklaassen@mcc.org with any questions.

Young Adult Program Coordinator – Plan, facilitate and recruit for young adult programming in the MCC Central States region. This includes the International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP), Summer Service Worker (SSW) program, the Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program, Seed, and other expanding opportunities for young adults to join with the work of MCC. [Check out all the details and apply today!](#)

Material Resources Center (MRC) Volunteer Coordinator – The MRC in North Newton, Kansas hosts volunteers of all ages working together to support the mission of MCC. Primarily, the part time Volunteer Coordinator will welcome, host, educate, assist and supervise the daily volunteers as well as receive donations in the MRC. Please visit mcc.org/get-involved/serve/openings for more information and to apply.

- ☞ From “In Touch”, MCC monthly newsletter: **Hope is still standing in Ukraine!** When rockets began to fall on Kharkiv, Ukraine, Pavel and a group from his church stepped outside, raised their hands and prayed for the protection of a senior’s home called House of Hope. The residence is in a village close to Kharkiv, where Pavel has been providing relief for people fleeing the conflict. And after more than a month of the continued destruction in Kharkiv, House of Hope is still standing.

- ☞ **Mennonite Church USA** has unveiled a new video that explains who we are and what we believe as a denomination. Titled "We are better together," the video features different voices from across the denomination discussing what it means to live in community, love and peace through Jesus. We encourage you to watch it and share it with your community of followers. Use this link: mennoniteusa.org/better-together.

- ☞ **Everence® to hold Medicare and retirement income workshops this May and June**
The Medicare workshop (Tuesday, May 10 at 6:30 p.m.) 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.

Verse of the Week: Colossians 1:27

“God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”