



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

September 14, 2022

From Pastor Tom

The Significance of Food

This past Monday morning I attended the “Exaudio” lecture series at Tabor College that focuses on vocation and service. This year’s speaker was Dr. Cynthia Toms, Professor of Global Studies and Kinesiology at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California. The title of her morning talk was “Faith and the Global Food System: Eating as an Act of Worship.” But more broadly, she talked about the significance of food.

Why did God assign his creation with a need for ongoing sustenance? Think about it: every living thing, plant or animal, needs at least something to grow and thrive, even if it is just water. And every animal needs to eat. It needs food. And who, in God’s plan, provides the food his creatures need?

The biblical story provides that answer: it is God who provides. God’s creatures need. And God fills that need. Psalm 104 tells this story with beautiful, worshipful words:

*You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use,
To bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the human heart,
oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart [104:14-15, NRSV].*

But consider also the role of a mother in God’s providential plan. For virtually every living creature, it is their mother who provides. From bird to beast to human being, the impulse to provide comes pre-installed. Within 30 minutes of my baby grandson’s birth, his mother was nursing him. Madeline and Eric will continue to provide for him and 4-year-old Rosie until the time comes where they are ready to leave the nest. And then, within God’s plan, they begin to provide for themselves. It’s all part of the cycle of life.

But how deeply is that impulse to provide installed within us? What happens when entire families can’t provide the food they need? What about entire nations? Does the time come in God’s providence where God’s creatures are called to provide not just for their own offspring, but for one another? Once again, the biblical story provides the answer.

Dr. Toms had bowls of cherry tomatoes placed at the end of each row of seats in Richert Auditorium. At a certain point in her lecture she invited the audience to share these with one another, and first, just to hold it, feel it, notice its “belly-button” (think about that: tomatoes have belly buttons!). And then she invited us to each eat our cherry tomato. The sweet-tangy juice

burst onto our taste buds, as its nutrients began to flow through our veins. Pleasure and providence, all in one small cherry tomato.

I didn't make it to Dr. Toms' evening lecture. Its title was "Health for the Nations" (as the title for her overall two-part series was "Health for Human Flourishing." But I will never again eat a cherry tomato without thinking of Psalm 104. Not to mention God.

In her morning lecture, Dr. Toms planted one more "seed of insight" within us. Virtually everything we use for food has to die before it can be eaten. I will never again think about food, not to mention birth, death, and the entire cycle of life, without thinking about Psalm 104. And our Creator.

*These all look to you to give them their food in due season;
When you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled good things.
When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust.
When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground
[104:27-30].*

Verse of the Week: Hebrews 13:8 (NRSV)

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

Among Our Friends and in Our Prayers

☞ Continue praying through the directory this week

☞ Pray that God will prepare us to join His ministry at the **Arts & Crafts Fair**. Come Friday evening at **5:30pm** to pray together.

☞ *Through your prayers, well wishes, and by God's wondrous grace, I was able to run 100 miles last week for MCC. On a crisp Sunday morning, I ran 5 miles to complete my goal. I feel tired and also exhilarated by the experience. I don't know how much we raised for MCC, but this was one small way to celebrate their 100 years of service and raise awareness as well. Thank you again for all the ways you have given to this ministry throughout the years and thank you again for shaping and nurturing me as a pastor.
In Christ's Love,
Corey Miller*

Upcoming Events

☞ **Grocery Shower** this coming Sunday, September 18 for newlyweds. Pick something up for them as you shop this week or bring a donation to put in a card we have in the office for all to sign.

☞ **Diane Mason** will be preaching this Sunday.

- ☞ Sunday School – 9:30 am adult class will be wrestling with the issue of **Simple, Just Living** using a video series by Tony Campolo and Shane Claiborne. This week we will be talking about the issue of food.
- ☞ **Arts & Crafts Fair involvement!** Please come 15 minutes before your shift.
 - Parking – 7 am
 - Peppernuts – 9 am
 - Food service – 10 am
- ☞ **Now in the Regier Gallery in Luyken Fine Arts Center at Bethel College** – “One and a Half Acres: Images from America’s Decommissioned Missile Silos,” photographs by Nate Hofer, through Thurs., Sept. 22 (closing reception Sept. 22). Gallery hours are Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. 2-4 p.m.

Other Announcements

- ☞ **Thanks** to all who took meals in the past weeks and served at the celebration service on Saturday. You have lived “to enjoy that day when the Lord may say to us, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant!’”
- ☞ **What are you thinking about when we continue to ask for your favorite hymns?** In the book, [Singing - A Mennonite Voice](#), Marlene Kropf and Kenneth Nafziger set out to determine the importance of congregational singing in our worship. “What became abundantly apparent is that in the absence of a weekly eucharistic tradition, singing functions for Mennonites as sacraments do in liturgical churches. Singing is the moment when we encounter God most directly. We taste God, we touch God when we sing. It is an occasion of profound spiritual experience, and we would be bereft without it.”

Pastor Tom longs to make your worship time as meaningful as possible. If your hymn is not in our present hymnal, please let us know so we can reprint it and continue to sing what brings you near to God!

- ☞ **Ministries council** met last Thursday evening and approved the Vision Council’s Priority Plan for Pastor Tom’s second term based on the results and feedback from the pastoral review in spring of 2021. Copies will be in your mailboxes next week.
- ☞ **The Gospel Echoes Teams** will be holding their annual prison ministry banquet on Tuesday, Sept. 27, 2022, at 6:30 pm at the Journey @Yoder Activity Center, one mile North of Yoder at 3605 E. Long View Rd, Haven, KS. The evening will include a Home-style Dinner, Music, and a Prison ministry presentation. For tickets contact: Dale & Miriam Lehman at 620-694-9823. (poster on the bulletin board)
- ☞ **Thanks** to all our leadership who were involved in getting help on our office computer. We now have a refurbished computer with all our data back!
- ☞ The Spanish and English versions of the 2022 Delegate Session Minutes from the **2022 WDC Annual Assembly** are now posted on the WDC Assembly website under delegate information. Here is the link.

<https://mennowdc.org/2022-assembly-delegate-information/>

- ☞ **Debbie Oelke**, mom to one of our creativity camp participants sent an email about her nonfiction book which just came out on Amazon. She wrote, “You may or may not know that I now use a wheelchair due to a disability from multiple sclerosis. Because of this four-year progression into disability, I have written a memoir chronicling the experience, including many lessons the Lord has taught me.” Debbie will be at the Arts & Crafts Fair with her book or it is now available at the link below, paperback or kindle, if you are interested. [Still Standing: Hope Beyond Disability: Oelke, Debbie: 9798986367606: Amazon.com: Books](#)

- ☞ The board of county commissioners for Marion County declared September National Preparedness Month for our County. Info on the bulletin board!

- ☞ **Newsletter from the work of the Mennonite Family Centre**, Zaporizhzhya, Ukraine. “Beacon of Hope” posted on the Peace and Service bulletin board.

- ☞ **Excuse our mess!** The work of making necessary repairs and reconfiguring spaces at the MCC building in North Newton continues to move forward, but if you’ve seen the building lately you can see the mess is getting bigger! Parking space is limited, but we are thankful for the donors and volunteers who continue to graciously adapt to the current challenges. Soon the new sewing room will be added, and we cannot wait to host more volunteers at MCC! We ask for your prayers and patience during this construction process so the important work of MCC can continue without undue interruption.