



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

February 8, 2023

From WDC

Lessons Learned – Lesson One: Let's Re-Imagine Who Is Part of Us!

(from a 2/6/23 posting on WDC website)

The pandemic taught us some lessons. Some of these, we may have already been pondering, but we hadn't planned for or implemented them yet in our congregations. Other lessons took us totally by surprise. For my next several blogs, I'll be exploring some of these lessons and inviting you to do the same.

Some of us have been wondering for a while "Who are our church members?" There's an easy, technical answer: The people who are listed on our membership rolls. Accurate membership rolls are important for historical purposes, but do not answer the real questions beneath the question: Who considers us their church home, whether they are on our membership list or not? And who should we consider as "part of us," whether they are official members or not? What about a member's grandchild who comes to Sunday School and worship with Grandma at least once every other month? What about the non-active spouse of an active member? What about people who are on our membership rolls, but have not been in contact with us for years? What about those geographically distant members who send us a donation at least once a year? Now we would add, "What about people living in another state or country who regularly join us for worship and bible study virtually?" It is time to have courageous congregational conversations about what commitments we expect of those who are part of us today. To put it simply, what does it look and sound like to be a committed part of our faith community today? Things have changed that impact church membership. It's time for us to talk about it together!

-Kathy Neufeld Dunn, WDC Associate Conference Minister (KS-Based)

(Kathy will be here tonight with our Ministry Council, helping lead the way for our transition. Please be in prayer for this time.)

Verse of the Week: Colossians 3:16 – ***“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.”***

Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- ☞ Thank God for **Pastor Tom's faithfulness** to God's call to ministry and pray for him as he continues to wait upon God for His next directions.
- ☞ Pray for **our whole "body"** (FMC) as we listen to the Holy Spirit and communicate together.
- ☞ **Ministry Council meeting tonight with Western District leadership.**
- ☞ **WDC Request:** Pray for God's Guidance and blessing for **WDC youth** and their sponsors, pastors and families, in their journey of growing faith and discipleship.

Upcoming Events

- ☞ **February 19th at 4 pm** – Stop by Kay Scharping's home for a time of "**faspa**" fellowship. It will add a lovely part to your sabbath celebration that day! (others are teaming up with her to have the zwieback and other goodies ready!)
- ☞ **February 22nd – Ash Wednesday** Service in the sanctuary.
- ☞ **February 26th at 7 pm** – Goshen College Chamber Choir **Concert, "Lead With Love"**. Invite your friends and neighbors to join our 42 guests that are coming to delight us with songs!
- ☞ First Mennonite Church of Halstead invites you to their annual **Verenike Supper Fundraiser** on February 25 at their church building 427 W 4th. The menu will be verenike, ham gravy, zweiback, green beans, sausage, and the pie. There is a Drive-thru option from 5-7pm in the fellowship hall. Proceeds will go towards local missions projects.
- ☞ With Ash Wednesday and the **season of lent** coming soon, wanted to give you a heads up on the shape of our journey together should you want to do the "at home" component. **Resources** can be found at the following website. Let the office know if you would be interested in a Lent at Home calendar to follow. We will be printing some.
<https://www.mennoniteeducation.org/Resources/Pages/Lent-at-Home.aspx>

Other Announcements

- ☞ **Mennonite Central Committee NEWS:**
Comforter Blitz – March 6-8, Yoder, Kansas
Kansas Mennonite Relief Sale - April 14 – 15 in Hutchinson, Kansas.

[Go to https://mcc.org](https://mcc.org) for the MCC monthly newsletter

- ✎ Extra copies of the **annual report** are available in the church office if you missed out.
- ✎ Sue Buchholz will be participating in an online seminar entitled “**How to Pray (and Fast) for Awakening**” for three Monday evenings, March 6, 13, and 20, from 6:00 - 7:30 pm. She would welcome others joining her. Let her know if you are interested.