



# First Mennonite Church

## Midweek E-Newsletter

March 22, 2023

### From Pastor Tom

#### Good to Be Home

If there is one thing a 2900-mile road trip will do for you, even (make that especially) a trip to Disney World, it makes you glad to be home. After dropping our delightful grandkids off at their parents' house in Wichita on Saturday afternoon (they had arrived home a half a day earlier, having traveled through the night with their students on the bus), and driving the remaining 50 miles north to Hillsboro, we were greeted by the plaintive yowls of our cat Abigail, whom we had relegated to the garage while we were gone. (Maybe that was mean, but we didn't want her peeing in our lovely home while we were gone.) And she kept yowling. For several more days. It wasn't until I picked up our dog Bruno at the vets' on Monday afternoon (where we had boarded him while we were gone) and brought him home, that Abigail finally quit yowling. And I finally figured out that while she had undoubtedly missed Lois and me, she had missed Bruno as much, if not even more! All was right with the world once again.

Yes, it is good to get away every once in a while. But it is always good to be home. Of course, we don't know yet how long this particular house and community will be our home. Our plan is to get our house at 502 S. Lincoln ready to put up for sale. But if we don't get the offer we feel we need, we may very well just stay there for the indefinite future. This is the first house we have ever purchased, and we truly love it! From the fireplace to the fish pond to all the friends we have hosted there.

Thank you, God, for our homes. Thank you for dwelling there with us. And thank you for the eternal home we have with you. Amen!

*Tom*

### From Sister Sue

It is good to be home after being away in Oregon for 30 days. I was blessed with time with my only sister, Linda, (only sibling) as she ended her earthly life and passed into eternity. It was wonderful to have that much time to be with her, share memories and then to witness to family and friends of her faith and life at her memorial service. Now if you ask how I am, about the only thing I can think of to tell you is "exhausted" – both physically and mentally! Please don't always expect coherent conversation!!!

But right now, two things stand out:

First: I Thessalonians 4:13 – 14. (I like it in the Common English Bible now that I have learned about it from the Anabaptist 500 study.)

**“<sup>13</sup> Brothers and sisters, we want you to know about people who have died<sup>[d]</sup> so that you won’t mourn like others who don’t have any hope. <sup>14</sup> Since we believe that Jesus died and rose, so we also believe that God will bring with him those who have died in Jesus.”**

*At the viewing of Linda’s body, after a time of tears and meditation, this thought became so clear. I broke the long silence with the 6 of us who were together and said, “because Jesus conquered death, Linda, is not here, she has risen!” Beautiful moments like this I’m sure will give me encouragement during the coming lonely days.*

Second: It is good to get home and know I have more family, both sisters and brothers here as a part of Jesus’ church!

**<sup>19</sup> So now you are no longer strangers and aliens. Rather, you are fellow citizens with God’s people, and you belong to God’s household.**

Your love and support is such a huge help to me. Thank you for being my sisters and brothers!!!

*Sue*

PS: Good to know Pastor Tom and I are still on the same page even after being gone so long.

We both started with the same phrase, not seeing each other’s articles!



## **Verse of the Week:**

*(See above!)*

## **Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers**

- Pray for the **Anabaptist Community Bible**, a project of MennoMedia that is in progress among Anabaptist study groups. In 2025, the global Anabaptist church will commemorate the 500th anniversary of Anabaptist beginnings as they seek renewal of the Anabaptist movement. May The Truth be made clear and hearts be turned toward Jesus!
- **Pastor Tom** – Pray for present peace and future work.

- Pray for **our future** as a church and the leadership God has for us as well as all interim and transitional pastors in WDC, as they accompany congregations navigating change and discerning future pastoral leadership.

## Upcoming Events

- **Tonight:** Session 3 of the Bible Study for our “Anabaptist at 500” contribution, led by Doug Miller. The study will be on Matthew 26: 69-75; 27:1-10. Come prepared at 7:00pm in the chapel.
- **Next Sunday, March 26th:** Spirit’N’Celebration ensemble from Hillsboro High School will be sharing three musical selections during our worship service. All are invited to stay for lunch when we will provide sloppy joes for everyone. Please bring large salad/sides and desserts to share as we expect 60 extra people!
- **Come to our next “faspa”** gathering on April 2nd at 4pm. Park on the north side of Salem and enter on the north door as we will gather in the activity room there. Plenty of food is planned, but if you want to contribute, fruit or veggies would be best.
- **Holy Week:**
  - Maundy Thursday Worship - 7:00pm in the sanctuary April 6th.
  - Sunrise Service @ Hiebert’s - 6:30am April 9th.
  - Easter Brunch @ FMC Fellowship Hall - 9:00am, April 9th.
  - Easter Worship - 10:30am in the sanctuary, April 9th.

## Other Announcements

- **Ministry Council** has decided that we should begin looking for a transitional pastor 1/2 to 3/4 time. Kathy at WDC has been notified and will begin looking for us.
- **Camp Mennoscah:** March 31 – April 2, **Men and Boys Retreat!** Don’t miss this great opportunity to build relationships! Brochures are on our bulletin board or contact Kevin Neufeld at 310-322-5515 for more information.
- **Know Before You Go! What To Expect During MennoCon 23.** An informational webinar hosted by Glen Guyton with Iris De Leon-Hartshorn, Lisa Lehman and Christie Hain will be held on March 30 at 7pm ET on Zoom. MennoCon is Mennonite Church USA’s leading

faith formation event. It's a time to worship, learn and connect with our Anabaptist faith values and each other. Register online at the Mennonite Church USA website.

- **Mennonite Mission Network:** Did you know that **more than 600 pastors and church leaders** in Anabaptist-affiliated churches have participated in at least one service program through Mennonite Mission Network? Consider your own congregation. Have any leaders in your community experienced a similar opportunity that opened them to new perspectives? How have those experiences helped them grow in their love for God, others and themselves? While God works in many ways, we can see how “service” and joining in God’s mission in the world with intentionality has kept people engaged in local churches. As you think about the future of your church, give thought to how people in **your congregation can intentionally take part in the work of God in the world, through one of the programs offered by Mission Network.** Let us continue in the good work that God has started among us and grow into the vibrant faith communities that declare the reign of God in our world.
- All Western District Conference women are invited to join **a virtual event sponsored by Western District Women in Mission** on Tuesday, April 25. Jenny Gehman, spiritual director, retreat speaker, and writer, will present on "Holy Host: the Hospitality of God." Join us in person or virtually. Our in-person gathering will be at First Mennonite Church in Newton, Kansas, beginning with a salad potluck at 6 p.m. followed by Jenny joining virtually from Pennsylvania at 6:45 p.m. There is no cost to this event, but please register by April 23 by emailing [westerndistrictwomen@gmail.com](mailto:westerndistrictwomen@gmail.com) so you can receive a Zoom link if joining virtually. Please email your RSVP if attending in person and bring a salad to share. Church groups can consider gathering together to watch the Zoom. For more information, contact Wendy Schrag at 316-841-5245.