



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

April 12, 2023

From Pastor Tom

Saying Goodbye, Part Two

This past January 25 I wrote an article for the e-newsletter entitled “Saying Goodbye (Part One).” The implication of that title being that there would be at least a “Part Two,” if not “Part Three,” sometime in the weeks to come before my final Sunday on April 16th. Well, here it is, the last Wednesday of my writing for the FMC E-newsletter. And I guess I kinda committed myself! 😊 So here is my “Part Two.”

The truth is, I don’t like to say goodbye, especially when it’s more than merely a casual “see you later.” Last Friday I said goodbye to daughter Hillary, as she set off for the long drive back to her home in Elkhart. And while things at home felt a bit empty for the first day or so without her, I know I will see her again this summer, and so the goodbye didn’t feel particularly difficult. But what about those times you don’t know when (or even if) you will see that person once again? For example, saying goodbye to our exchange student from Spain, Itsaso, in May 2014, was particularly sad, because we didn’t know if we would see her again. And sure enough, we haven’t. In the years since, the sadness has long worn off (“time heals all hurts”), and I am content with the good memories from that year, and from trusting that she is doing well.

So, what kind of a goodbye is it when a pastor steps down from his role? Like most denominations, MCUSA has some clear guidelines for how to do this in the most healthy and helpful of ways. Yesterday Doug Bartel and I both signed an “Exit Agreement for a Departing Pastor,” which said (among other things) that I would “not attend worship services or other events at FMC for at least one year into the tenure of the settled pastor” (who is not the interim pastor, but the one who next steps into that role, following the interim). Also, I may “not officiate at funerals, weddings or public events.” In other words, once I am no longer your pastor, I must cease to function as your pastor, in part to allow for the next pastor (whether interim or settled) to step fully into that role. There needs to be a clear and clean separation; there needs to be boundaries.

But this does not mean we won’t ever see each other again! We will, whether at Dale’s, or other public venues or events. It doesn’t even mean we can’t get together for coffee. I will always be interested in your lives, and trust you will be in mine. It will just, well, need to be

different. For example, and probably most importantly, there should be nothing more than casual conversation about things at FMC. I must allow you, and encourage you, to move on.

And so yes, it will be sad and hard in some ways. But I will leave you with two thoughts. 1) Sad goodbyes are evidence that something meaningful and memorable has taken place. And 2) we will always be and continue to be friends. Indeed, brothers and sisters in Christ! Thanks be to God for his gracious gifts!

The future is always at least partially uncertain. But in faith, we can rest and rejoice in the knowledge that we will indeed see each other again—at some point, and in some form or fashion. And so perhaps the best thing to say—the healthiest, most helpful, and indeed most truthful thing to say—is “goodbye for now!” Or perhaps simply, “See you again.”

Tom

Verse of the Week:

I Peter 1:3 – “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!”

Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- **Pray for God’s wisdom for Ministries Council** as they meet tomorrow night, looking at how to organize our leadership for more efficiency and other steps for our future.
- Pray for the time of fellowship and sale for the **Mennonite Central Committee** this weekend. May many be reached with the love of Jesus!
- Pray for our brothers and sisters from **Trinity Mennonite Church** as they seek God’s leading for where to join in the body of Christ.
- **Pray for WDC congregations** seeking faithful ways to care for God’s creation and practice environmental stewardship.
- **Nadine Friesen writes:** Many thanks for the surprise faspas, Sunday, April 2 where I received very meaningful expressions of thanks for the various roles I’ve had in 18 years of participation at FMC. The years have been good experiences in spiritual growth for me and I have come to love this church family. I will miss you as I move to worship in Hesston in coming weeks and will keep you in my prayers as you seek God’s direction for ways God continues to use and bless you. Nadine

Upcoming Events

- **Concerts on Friday at KMRS** at the state fairgrounds: Pastor Tom and Lois will be singing folk, bluegrass, gospel and jazz as the first group to perform for the evening at 4:00pm in the Sunflower Building. Tom will also be playing bass and guitar with the Tabor Music Theater group who performs at 6pm.
- **Sunday evening:** The Vision Council has arranged for a light fasha and brief farewell service for Pastor Tom Sunday evening in fellowship hall at 5:30. Please join in expressing appreciation for his ministry among us. *The Vision Council*
- **Kansas Mennonite Relief Sale (KMRS)** this weekend! April 14 & 15. Volunteer at the website – www.kansas.mccsale.org or go and support the event.
 - Zwiebach:Baking today at 1:00 pm in the church kitchen.
 - Pies should be brought to the church by 7:30 am on Saturday, April 15.
- **Open House on Sunday, April 16:** Drop by **Main Street Ministries** between 2 and 4 pm and see the extensive renovations to some of their apartments due in large part to the faithful giving of the body of believers of which we are a part. There will be a time of worship and prayer at 4 pm. MSM is located at 415 S. Main.
- **Kansas Mennonite Men's Chorus:** Two concerts are coming! April 16 - 7pm at Tabor College and April 23 - 7pm at Bethel College. See the flyer on the bulletin board.
- The Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Tabor College is leading a **Mennonite Heritage Tour** Sat. Apr.22, 11:45 to 5, beginning at the Historic Church on campus with fasha, including multiple historic sites at Brunk cemetery, Gnadenau village and orphanage sites, Ebenfeld MB church and Cornelsen marker, Peabody train station and P.O.W. building and Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church. Cost \$35.

Sun. Apr.23, 6:30 **Annual CMBS dinner** in Franz Family Heritage Lobby, Shari Flaming Center for the Arts with **Dr. Christopher Dick**, Tabor College professor of English, speaking on "**(In)active Activist: The Remarkable Life of J.G. Ewert**". Ewert was Tabor College faculty member, writer, editor, and active relief worker for South Russia despite crippling disabilities. Cost \$20. RSV April 14.

Contact Peggy Goertzen at peggyg@tabor.edu or 620-947-3121 (ext. 1211/1212)

Other Announcements

- **FYI:** after April 16, Pastor Tom but will take the next few days to clean up and move out of the church office as he begins his retirement from ministry with us.

- **FMC Treasurer's Report:**

- First Quarter (Jan. – Mar.) FMC Ministry Fund Income for this year (2023):
\$17,785.00
- First Quarter (Jan. – Mar.) FMC Ministry Fund Income past four year average:
\$29,545.00
- Second Sunday Offerings:
January – MCC Sale \$695.01
February – Food-4-Kids \$450.00
March – Care Portal, Circles, Main St. Ministries: \$300.00

- **Camp Mennoscah** has been offered a gift of \$100,000 dollars. The money comes to Camp as a matching gift. We have been invited to raise money that will be matched, dollar for dollar, up to \$100,000!

In response to this generous gift, Camp Mennoscah has launched the M&M Project! M&M stands for Mission and Maintenance. We know you will want to be in on this opportunity to continue our Mission at Camp - to be a place where all can renew themselves, their relationships, and their connection with God through Jesus Christ. Here's how that can happen!

We are planning **two major ways** for people to give to the M&M project. First, we would ask churches who are supporters of Camp Mennoscah to put together a **fundraising event** this year that would specifically benefit the M&M Project. And, the second way Camp Mennoscah would like to raise money for the M&M project is through **monthly pledges**. We would like to see 100 "giving units" give \$1000 each by the end of 2023. A "giving unit" - we'll call them "Fire Keepers" - could be any individual or group who would pledge money to make sure this generous gift is honored by matching the funds.

For more information, check out the Camp Mennoscah Website, or contact Tammy at the addresses below

Tammy Duvanel Unruh
Development Director, Camp Mennoscah
tammy.d.unruh@campmennoscah.org
316-207-3472

or

Camp Mennoscah
PO Box 65
Murdock, KS 67114
620-297-3290

- **Everence® April workshop: Social Security and retirement income**

Everence® will hold an informative Social Security and retirement income workshop on Thursday, April 20, starting at 6:30 p.m. Specifics will include, Social Security strategies,

including when to begin taking benefits, risks that can impact your retirement savings plus strategies to help your income last throughout retirement. There will also be plenty of time for questions. The in-person workshop will take place at the Everence office: 3179 N. Main St. Suite 1B, North Newton.

Information will be presented by staff from the Everence offices in Central Kansas.

To register contact Everence at 316-283-3800, 877-467-7294
or central.kansas@everence.com.

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- **Main Street Ministries:**

Looking for a way to help your community? Consider volunteering at Main Street Ministries! We have many ways you can help.

1. Transportation: appointments -elementary school drop off and pick up -Walmart donation pick up -Church participation
2. Child Care: -Sundays (4:15pm-6pm) -Tuesday Bible Study (5pm-7pm) -Friday Celebrate Recovery (4:15pm-6pm) -Overnight while mom works (6pm-8am)
3. Maintenance: -light fixtures -replacing ceiling tiles -bathroom repairs

Please email volunteersm@gmail.com for more information or to offer assistance. Thank you!

- **A Webinar presented by Eastern Mennonite Seminary** at Eastern Mennonite University on **Tuesday, April 25 at 6 pm EST** as we hear Dr. Amy Oden share insights from church history and scripture on "**Welcoming the Stranger.**" In this session, Dr. Oden will share principles on hospitality from scripture. Then, in a discussion led by seminary professor Dr. David Evans, we will discuss the grace and welcoming embrace the scriptures encourage communities to both receive and give
- **WDC Mustard Seed Grant** - Spring is here! Now is an ideal time to plan for ways to connect with your community through fellowship, food, service, or some other creative idea. Remember that the WDC Resource Commission is offering Mustard Seed Grants for up to \$500 to WDC congregations who are seeking to share the good news of Jesus in their communities. This is seed money for connecting with neighbors, so relationships can be strengthened, and the reconciling love of God can be shared. The grants are available through January 31, 2024.