



# First Mennonite Church

## Midweek E-Newsletter

November 22, 2023

### To All Brothers and Sisters In Christ:

#### **Next Steps in our Journey** - *Latest leadership plans and decisions*

Hi friends,

I play games, mostly puzzles and things I can study to figure out how to proceed. I often need to return to a spot in the game where I didn't take the opportunity to try something new or unexpected. My brain loves these challenges, and it helps me practice what I do as a transition pastor: understand the situation, the set of stories in a church, and spot the opportunities to try something new that will open our way to the next step.

In a game, though, I haven't noticed any overarching principle, any root rule or guidance that carries through all the steps. In games, I can't tell. But there is one big rule in congregational life! Jesus mentioned it and this conversation appears in Matthew 22, Mark 12, and Luke 10: 'The greatest commandment, to Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

This is the root principle of the Colossian Forum, which trains church leaders in addressing internal conflict. They call it their North Star. It turns out that more than Mennonites have internal conflict! They sent us a mailing which Sue put on the bulletin board, if you'd like to see more; it tells of one of their client experiences. Good stuff. ~Pastor Kristine

- **Ministries Council:** Our Annual Meeting will be January 14.
- **Worship/Nurture/Vision:**
  - Nov. 26 – Our Thanksgiving theme will include Norma Duerksen preaching.
  - Fellowship time is this Sunday at 9:30 am in the Fellowship Hall! Come visit and cast your vote for how to spend our Arts & Crafts Fair proceeds.
  - Special opportunity to participate in a webinar by an MCC educator! Wednesday, November 29 at 6 pm. See details below!

- Four weeks of advent will be celebrated in December beginning on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Blue Christmas – Dec. 20 at 6:30 pm. A time to acknowledge griefs, hurts and disappointments.
- Christmas Eve is on a Sunday! We will have one worship service at 4:00 pm.

## Verse for Pondering: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

*“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*

## Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- Pray for one another through our directory!
- Pray that God will provide His abundance for the **Food4Kids** fundraiser coming up Dec.2.
- Pray for those with **health issues**.
- **Pastor Kristine** shared: Going forward, my schedule will be Tuesday and Wednesday (in addition to Sunday) in the church office. This seems to be settling out as workable. Other times can be worked out, of course, and text me anytime to set something up.
- Pray for chaplains and other ministers in **WDC congregations** who offer pastoral care for members of our communities experiencing pain, loneliness, loss or grief, particularly during this holiday season.

## Upcoming Events

- **No Wednesday activities** at the church building tonight.
- **The church office is closed Thursday and Friday** for the Thanksgiving holiday. Sue will be in Arkansas visiting her daughter but can still be reached by email or phone.
- **Music lovers:** If singing is your prayer language or favorite worship mode, join the group who are preparing special music during advent. We will sing on Dec. 3, 17, and 24. Practices will be Wed.11/29 at 7:30 pm and Sun. 12/3 at 9 am, to sing on Dec. 3 during worship; Wed. 12/13 at 7:30 pm and 12/17 at 9 am to sing on Dec. 17 during worship. Practice for the 24 will be announced. That service is at 4 pm. Come for any or all!

- **Improve your thinking skills!** Join in for a webinar through Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary on Wednesday, November 29 from 6 – 7:30pm right here in our own building! “Creating a Healthy Congregational Culture” will be taught by Jes Stoltzfus Buller.
- **Sign up to help at the Food4Kids booth at Down Home Christmas,** December 2 between 10 am & 3 pm. to support this important ministry. If you have crafts or goodies to contribute, bring them by 8 am that morning. A sign-up sheet will be on the white board by Sunday. We will also be selling 1 pound peppernuts from our kitchen.
- **Tabor Christmas Concerts:** all are free and at the Shari Flaming Center for the Arts.
  - Nov. 28 @7pm – Night of Christmas Worship
  - Dec. 1 @ 7pm – Christmas Concert w/ Concert Choir and Symphonic Band.
  - Dec. 3 @ 4pm – Handel’s Messiah
- **Bethel College Events:**
  - Friday Dec. 1 – student-directed one-act plays, 7:30 pm.
  - Sat. Dec. 2 – Five Places of Christmas, 10 am – 4 pm.
- **Blue Christmas:** We offer Blue Christmas as a time to acknowledge the griefs, hurts, and disappointments that aren't easily compatible with the world's expectation that we're supposed to be happy at Christmas. If you're grieving a hurt or a loss, come. There will be music, but no singing expected. There will be scripture and poetry and blessings that name the pain of loss. If I can manage it, there will be candles to light, or some other way to participate without speaking. Please come and invite anyone else.

## Other Announcements

- **Care Boxes for College Students:** Be sure to bring items this coming Sunday for 6 boxes to encourage our college students as they face finals for their first semester and sign the cards to them. The thought is to each bring small, simple items that together would bring them our love and joy. They appreciate everything we send, and it must fit in the box, so for example, 2-3 cookies is enough. Need ideas? Consider personal items, (small boxes of Kleenex, lotion...) office supplies, (mechanical pencils, gel pens, sticky notes...) snacks, (trail mix, popcorn, crackers, nuts, chewy fruit snacks, holiday candies...) and drink packets, (cocoa, cider...) Enjoy being creative! We will also have a card for our 2 grad student, so you might consider gift cards them since they won't get a box like we send to undergraduates.

- **Main Street Ministry Need:** There are 2 moms who each have 2 children in size 5 diapers at this time. Anyone interested in donating size 5 diapers and baby wipes? They would be appreciated!
- **MCC Material Resources Center in North Newton critically low on inventory:** An MCC kit cannot be distributed until each item for the kit is assembled, but some supplies in the Material Resources Center are so low that kits cannot be processed for shipping. You can help by filling the following needs: *new* infant onesies and sleepers (6-12 month sizes); *new* bath towels (dark colored, light to medium weight); *new* hand towels (dark colored). Locally, MCC distributes prisoner care and returning citizen care kits, for those kits we currently need: men's shirts (sizes XL, 2XL, 3XL -- any color) and men's underwear (sizes 2XL, 3XL -- any color). Buy online and ship it to MCC or bring items to MCC in North Newton (121 E. 30<sup>th</sup> St, North Newton, KS 67117). Questions are always welcome, please contact [brociamueller@mcc.org](mailto:brociamueller@mcc.org) or 316.283.2720. A full list of MCC kit contents can be found at [mcc.org/kits](http://mcc.org/kits).
- **An Evening of Service at MCC!** Nov. 28 from 6:30-8 p.m. at MCC in North Newton, KS. Bring *new dark colored* hand towels with you to pack hygiene kits (the more towels you bring, the more kits we can pack!). MCC partner Offender Victim Ministries will be here with supplies to write holiday greetings to prisoners, we'll have comforters to tie and delicious snacks to enjoy. What a great way to give on Giving Tuesday!
- **"Giving Tuesday" is coming!** I have received emails from many of our partners that would like us to consider giving to their ministries. I have gotten correspondence recently from
  - Camp Mennoscah
  - Herald Press
  - Mennonite Mission Network
  - Anabaptist World
  - MCC (noted above)
  - Mennonite Disaster Service
  - Western District Conference

It is great to be reminded of all the wonderful ministries we have connection with. May we pray for God's blessings for them and help where God leads.