



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

January 3, 2024

To All Brothers and Sisters In Christ:

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

Good day, friends!

When cold winds hinder us from enjoying the outdoors, it's a good time to be indoors together and **be** church. We've been talking about distinguishing between going **TO** church and **BEING** church. What? Yes, we mean that **church is the people**, not the building or the event. So, attending worship is a way of saying "I'm in! – I'm here, with these people, to practice following Jesus and **be** the church together." And a Peace Party (January 28th) will be just that!

What can you expect on January 28th? FUN!

- Worship will be shorter than usual; announcements and sharing will happen at the Peace Party
- We launch a season of church focusing on community, peace, and communication in the spirit of Jesus
- Fun food and activities, beginning our exploration of peaceful practices
- Chances to get to know one another better, and to laugh together

As I suggested last week, transition season is actually a very good time to get involved in First Mennonite – sharing who we are and getting to know others, following Jesus together, acknowledging that we've stepped beyond being onlookers to being participants – this is a rich, meaningful time and not to be missed!

Blessings—Pastor Kristine

Verse for Pondering: Isaiah 60:1 (NRSV)

**“Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.”**

Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- Pray for one another through our directory!
- Pray for those recovering from illness.
- **WDC Request:** Pray for WDC and all its congregations as we begin a new year, remembering that the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, and God's mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning!

Upcoming Events

- January 7 – We are excited to welcome new members this Sunday.
- January 9 – 1:00 pm Worship, Nurture, Vision Team meeting.
- January 10 – 6:30 pm Ministries Council meeting.
- January 14 – Carry-In Lunch and Annual Meeting following worship.
- January 28 – Peace Party!

Other Announcements

- Pastor Kristine will be gone on vacation January 18-24.
- MCC News: Our quilt ministry here completed and given **151 quilts** in 2023! Praise God!!!
The giving trends for MCC in 2023 were:
 - #1 Syria earthquake response
 - #2 Ukraine conflict response
 - #3 Drilling wells in DR Congo
 - #4 Gaza crisis response
 - #5 Clean energy projects in Zimbabwe
- Safe Church, Mennonite Church USA's newly formed abuse prevention ministry, now has a webpage available on the MC USA website. The webpage offers resources, including the updated Circle of Grace curriculum, to help faith communities keep children, youth and vulnerable adults safe from all abuse. Read more here: mennoniteusa.org/safechurch
- **MEN:** Here is a vision for you to consider.

Mennonite Men: A Men's Organization for God's Shalom

The Board of Mennonite Men recently adopted a new vision to guide their expanding work. In short, it reads:

Our vision is of men enjoying and extending God's abundant life by...

- Respecting themselves and all people as beloved children of God
- Following Jesus, the image of God and model human
- Becoming strong, loving, and wise in the Spirit
- Practicing love across the range of our relationships
- Using power with and for rather than over and against others
- Sharing resources with generosity to meet human needs
- Standing with marginalized people for diversity and inclusion
- Transforming oppressive systems for freedom and justice
- Relating to all creatures as kin in the community of creation
- Caring for Earth to sustain its beauty, biodiversity, and abundance.

All to live into God's shalom so abundant life flourishes throughout creation from generation to generation. You can read more at their website: mennonitemen.org

- From Weldon Martens, the pastor of Grace Hill Mennonite Church, a WDC sister congregation, comes this announcement.

Footsteps of Paul in Greece + 3-Night Cruise May 27 – June 6, 2024. Led by Pastor Weldon Martens, Grace Hill Mennonite Church; Whitewater, KS. This is a 11-Day Tour & Cruise to Athens, Thessalonica, Philippi, Corinth, Crete, Patmos, Ephesus, Mykonos & Santorini. Cost: \$3,219 + flights. Registration: Due by January 18, 2024. Contact Pastor Weldon Martens at: weldon.martens@gmail.com / 402-202-9276. Complete tour information & registration at www.tourwithweldon.com