



# First Mennonite Church

## Midweek E-Newsletter

January 31, 2024

### To All Brothers and Sisters In Christ:

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

Hello friends,

Near the end of our meeting on Sunday, I asked everyone to write down some things they care about regarding church. **Which area of church life do you have a passion for, and want it to go well?** I collected signed slips from 25 people, and (oops!!) several unsigned ones. If you didn't put your name on the slip of paper, I can't invite you to the focus group for that interest area. Stay alert: I will ask you what you wrote.

The **first focus group** on one of those areas of church life is likely to occur in the 2nd or 3rd week of February. There will be two options each time: choose an afternoon session or an evening session. The questions start with "Tell about a time when this went well." To be clear, the questions will not be about what your personal preference is, but about the values and needs of the many who participate. We are somewhat diverse, even in our sameness! Long-term members to visitors, those comfortable with people and those who prefer solitude, those who focus on words or music or art or communal silence. The only person it's all about is the triune God: Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer— God, Jesus, Holy Spirit. When we take the needs of others into consideration, along with naming what we need individually and requesting it, the First Mennonite body of Christ grows closer together and we find our way to a closer relationship with God. Let's go there!

Blessings—Pastor Kristine

#### **Ministry Council News:**

- Thanks to all who participated in our annual meeting/Peace Party. (Ask how people won a bag of peppernuts!)
- Glen Diener shared his thanks with us on Sunday for the past fiscal year (FY), and it was so well said that we wanted to ponder it and also thought you who missed our gathering would enjoy it!

## **Thank You for FY 2023**

This past summer and fall I participated in FMC's Sunday School which examined the entire book of Mark one chapter a week. While that approach didn't allow for a deep dive into individual verses, words, characters, stories and/or parables it did provide a way to see the arc of the Jesus story, how those stories fit together and some important themes.

One theme observed throughout the book of Mark is that Jesus sees peoples' hearts. We observed this with the recurring interactions Jesus had with the disciples who are unable to recognize and comprehend the nature of his mission and ministry, with the souls Jesus encountered in need of healing, how Jesus saw the hard hearts of the religious leaders who were trying to ensnare him and in many other ways as well.

This heart view Jesus has is seen in other Gospels as well and confirmed by pastor Kristine who in a recent sermon said, "Jesus reads hearts".

Within the ministry of this organization, we all see the hearts of others revealed in various ways. It's not unusual to hear one of us comment that so-and-so has a real heart for a specific ministry area.

As your treasurer I have a unique view. While your many gifts of time and talent are central to the vitality, life, and ministries of FMC your financial contributions provide the underlying funding for those ministries. A large part of my job as treasurer is to collect, tabulate and distribute funds. Within these routine tasks, I see, in each of you, a heart of generosity.

With the variety of regular financial commitments each of us has and the unexpected expenses which blow up our budgets and devour our resources, I recognize how difficult it can be to consistently support any ministry or cause financially.

Considering these stresses, your contributions demonstrate a true heart of generosity and that you're also vested, in your heart, in this Church's ministries within our community and in the Kingdom.

I hope your hearts receive this simple thank you for your generosity because it comes from the grateful hearts of myself and the staff and leadership of FMC. Thank you! Thank you so much!

## **Worship/Nurture/Vision News:**

- Sunday our story in the Gospel of Luke will take a turn as Jesus now begins his journey to Jerusalem. Lessons will be taken from Luke 9:51 – 12:48.
- We will begin the Lenten season with an Ash Wednesday short time of worship on February 14 at 6 pm with the first Sunday of lent being February 18.

- Looking forward to having a Peace Party every 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month! These will be times to work on relationship building, communication and congregational life.

## Verse for Pondering: Luke 9:35 (NIV)

*On a mountain when Jesus was praying and his face changed and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning... “A voice came from the cloud, saying, This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.”*

## Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- Pray for one another through our directory!
- PTL for those gaining strength in recover from illness and surgery.
- Pray for our pastor and worship leaders for the coming week.

## Our Upcoming Events

- February 8 – We are providing an **evening meal for CORE ministry**. There is still room for a couple of people to help serve the meal if you would like to see what this ministry is all about and help at the same time! Contact Norma Duerksen.
- **Western District Conference** invites you to a come-and-go **Open House** on Saturday, February 10, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm at the WDC office, 2517 North Main Street, North Newton, KS. This is in addition to the WDC Library Open House and Book Sale already announced. Check out what's new in the Resource Library, browse the used-book sale, enjoy refreshments, chat with staff, and celebrate WDC's newly renovated office spaces!
- February 14 – **Ash Wednesday** service at 6 pm..
- **Wednesday evenings starting February 21** – “**PRAY & SING**” begins for the season of lent. Ephesians 5:19-20 encourages us to pray and sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
  - 6:30-7:00pm - prayer for one another and for guidance for our body.
  - 7:00 – 7:45pm - singing praise and thanks to God mainly through our hymnal. This is not a focus on being a choir. The only planned time to share a song will be for Easter. You do not have to perform to be a part of this group.

- All are invited to come one or both times any week that works for you.
- Only qualification is to love Jesus and singing! No auditions 😊
- February 25 – **Peace Party!**

## Other Announcements

- **Everence® February workshop: Make Medicare an Easy Step**

Everence will hold its popular Medicare workshop at its office in North Newton on Thursday, February 15 at 6:30 p.m. Topics will include, when and where to sign up for Medicare, what Medicare covers, plus an explanation of Medicare Parts A, B, C, and D. Attendance is recommended for those approaching retirement or those ready to sign up for Medicare.

The in-person workshop will be held at the Everence office: 3179 N. Main St. Suite 1B, North Newton. Those interested in attending should contact the Everence office at 316-283-3800, 877-467-7294 or [central.kansas@everence.com](mailto:central.kansas@everence.com).

- This message is affirmed by the director of Mennonite Disaster Service:

**Navigating Storm Season:** Faith and community leaders are early responders to crises within their communities. The Trauma-Informed Faith Communities project of Crisis Care Ministries can help you be more trauma-informed and prepared in 2024.

**Register [here](#) for the live webinar series, *Navigating Storm Season*.** Prepare for spring storm season with brief webinars provided by experienced partners from Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. The series goes live on **February 6 through 27, Tuesdays, at 10:00 to 11:00 AM Central Time**. Register only once to sign up for all *Navigating Storm Season* sessions, attending as you are able.

Topics include:

**February 6, 2024** - Individual and Family Disaster Preparedness

**February 13, 2024** - From Disaster Preparedness Through Long-Term Recovery

**February 20, 2024** - Faith Community Disaster Preparedness

**February 27, 2024** - First Things to Know About Disaster Emotional and Spiritual Care

The Trauma-Informed Faith Communities project is designed to strengthen the capacity of faith and community leaders to better respond to individuals and communities affected by and at risk for experiencing numerous crises and disasters. For the project home page, click [here](#).

For questions about the *Navigating Storm Season* webinar series, email [crisiscare@earthlink.net](mailto:crisiscare@earthlink.net) or call 405-530-2071.

- **MCC Central States annual meeting, Saturday, March 2 at 10 a.m.** You are invited to join the meeting in-person or virtually to hear MCC U.S. Executive Director Ann Graber Hershberger share an MCC update. Please email [centralstates@mcc.org](mailto:centralstates@mcc.org) if you would like the Zoom link to join virtually. Otherwise, join us at MCC Central States, 121 E. 30<sup>th</sup> St in North Newton, Kansas.
- Mark your calendar now for the 16<sup>th</sup> annual **MCC Comforter Blitz, March 4-6** just outside of Yoder, Kansas. If you can tie a knot, you can make a difference! Curious to find out more? Please check [mcc.org/comforter-blitz](http://mcc.org/comforter-blitz) or the Kansas MCC Comforter Blitz page on Facebook. The blitz takes place on Monday, March 4 from 9am-5pm, Tuesday, March 5 from 9am-9pm and Wednesday, March 6 from 9am-4pm at the 3605 East Longview Rd. Haven, KS. Questions? Please contact [brociamueller@mcc.org](mailto:brociamueller@mcc.org).