



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

February 14, 2024

To All Brothers and Sisters In Christ:

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

Hi friends and Happy Ash Valentine's Day! Oh, it is strange for me to try to consider both of these:

- a Catholic saint's day usurped by business to profit from human relationships, and
- a much less profitable start to the holy season of Lent: Ash Wednesday.

Ah well. To enter Lent with your church family, **come to our Ash Wednesday service tonight at 6:30 in the chapel.** Wear red for Valentine's or purple for Ashes, or some other color. A few scriptures and a few songs, a thought or two, and ashes. If you care to stay past 7:00, I'll sit down at the piano to try out some of the hymnal section on Lent.

I'm planning our first full **Peace Party for February 25th after worship.** We'll have "breakfast for lunch" (don't bring anything unless you want to bring your own plate and flatware). Menu: waffles, breakfast casserole, and fruit salad. A few trivia questions, conversation-starting questions for the round tables, and activities. Some parts of the party invite us to be self-reflective; others ask us to listen to others. So all may feel safe and included, the activities that have us get up and move will have the option to sit still and tell someone where you would move to. I expect this day to be fun and the Fellowship Hall to be full!

Blessings—Pastor Kristine

Ministry Council News:

- **Mission giving for this month** will be designated to Mennonite Central Committee's Kansas Relief Sale. Write the designation on your checks or use the "mission gift" envelopes any time this month!
- Next council meeting – Thursday, February 22 @ 5:30 pm.

Worship/Nurture/Vision News:

- This Sunday Norma Duerksen will continue our story in the Gospel of Luke taken from Luke 14:1 – 15:32. Shirley Baltzer will lead our music on the organ.
- TONIGHT - Ash Wednesday worship and meditation time at 6 pm.
- Our next WNV Team meeting will be Thursday, February 22 @ 1 pm. Please Share ideas or concerns with any team member before that – Alleen Ratzlaff, Deryll Amstutz, Jan Amstutz, Norma Duerksen and Sue Buchholz.

Verse for Pondering: Luke 15:9-10 (NIV)

“And when she finds (the lost coin) she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, “Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.” In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- Pray for one another through our directory!
- Guide your thoughts and prayers with a **Daily Lenten Worship Guide and calendar**. These are available in the church office or available as a PDF at this link.
<https://www.mennoniteeducation.org/resources/lent-at-home/>
Draw near to God through this season and he will draw near to you!
- Pray for Pastor Kristine and one another as we share during **focus groups** and consider how to follow God’s leading through these interactions.
- **WDC:** Pray for youth pastors, leaders and sponsors in WDC congregations, as they accompany and encourage young people growing as followers of Jesus in today’s world.

Our Upcoming Events

- **Today - 6 pm in our chapel. Ash Wednesday** meditative worship service with music, scripture and ashes.

- **Wednesday evenings starting February 21 –**

- **“PRAYER & SONG CIRCLE”**

- 6:30-7:00pm - prayer for one another and for seeking God’s guidance for our church body.
 - 7:00 – 7:45pm – a time to enjoy singing our praise to God together. It is **not** focused 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 welcome!
 - Leadership of these times will be shared as we are a priesthood of all believers. Look through your Bible for scripture to pray and your hymnal for songs to share and learn together!
- **Peace Party!** Our first full peace party will be February 25. Do I smell waffles?

Other Announcements

- **Upcoming concerts at Tabor College!**

- Winter Band Concert – Saturday, Feb. 17 @ 7 pm in Shari Flaming Center Richert Auditorium. Featuring the Tabor College Symphonic Band with Special Guests: Marion High School Band.
 - Jazz in the Atrium – Thursday, Feb 22 @ 7pm. Tabor Jazz Band will be playing and Adrienne’s/Starbucks will be open.
- **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 sleepers (6-12 month sizes)
 - bath towels (dark colored, light to medium weight)
 - wide-toothed combs
 - laundry soap (such as Fels Naptha or Zote brands)
 - shampoo (20 oz min)
 - fingernail clippers (good quality)
 - hand towels (dark colored).

Locally, MCC distributes prisoner care and returning citizen care kits, for those kits we currently need:

- men's T-shirts (sizes L, XL, 2XL, 3XL -- any color)
 - men's underwear (sizes L, XL, 2XL, 3XL -- any color)
 - men's crew socks
 - lotion (12 oz min)
 - adult backpacks.

Buy online and ship it to MCC or bring items to MCC in North Newton (121 E. 30th St, North Newton, KS 67117). Questions are always welcome, please contact brociamueller@mcc.org or 316.283.2720. A full list of MCC kit contents can be found at mcc.org/kits.

- Mark your calendar now for the 16th 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 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.
- **Spring Cleaning at Camp Mennoscah** sponsored by Western District Women in Mission (WDWM) will be held on Saturday, March 23 from 10 am – 4 p.m. Come for part or all of the time. Women, men, kids, youth groups, Sunday school groups are all invited. If children younger than high school attend, they need to be supervised by their parents (no child care or children's activities will be provided). Dress warm, bring a full water bottle, \$5 to cover the cost of lunch, and the following cleaning supplies if you have them: rakes, long handled brooms for cobweb reaching. Other cleaning supplies will be provided. **Register by March 18 by e-mailing westerndistrictwomen@gmail.com**. Space is capped at this event to manage the jobs, so don't delay in registering. Thanks!
- **Global Voices Tour, MCC and the Anabaptist Climate Collaborative bring you Climate Action for Peace!** Join us to hear MCC partners Caroline Pugen from Zimbabwe and Victor Odinda from Cambodia share about how their work supports people in adapting to the challenges of climate change. You have several opportunities to engage with our guests! **They will share at: Showalter Villa (in the chapel), Feb. 24 at 10:30 a.m., Shalom Mennonite Church, Feb. 25 at 9:30 a.m., Bethel College convocation, Feb. 26 at 11 a.m. and at Kidron Bethel Village (in Kidron Hall) in North Newton on Feb. 26 at 2 p.m.** Learn more at <https://mcc.org/events/global-voices-tour-climate-action-peace>.
- **Salem and Parkside Homes** are requesting people who would be willing to lead worship with the residents on Sundays. Pre-Covid, churches would visit Parkside at 3 and Salem at 4. Would we be willing to hold a service or two? Please pray about this and let the office know your thoughts.
- **Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage**
The WDC Israel-Palestine Task Force invites you to make a Lenten pilgrimage. Walk in prayerful solidarity with other Christians around the globe who are calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Raise money for relief work before you go. Walk 25 miles (in small stretches or in one day). This is the length of Gaza. Pray as you walk. For more details and to look for a pilgrimage in your area, go to: <https://www.gazaceasefirepilgrimage.com/>.