



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

February 28, 2024

Brothers and Sisters In Christ:

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

Hi friends,

Well, that was fun! Our introductory peace party ... you had to be there. Utterly indescribable.

We'll carry this forward from that day: **what makes good listening:**

- Eye contact
- No interrupting
- Repeat what you heard
- Lean forward (body language indicates whether you're welcoming your listener or not)
- Wait until the person speaking finishes before thinking of what you will say
- Allow room for silence

Peace parties will continue to feature fun and laughter, helping us love ourselves and our neighbors. The next one is March 24th, Palm Sunday.

Meanwhile, Focus Groups continue! Yesterday two groups met for conversation about congregational care. The candle was lit, voices heard, flip chart pages filled. The next group, next Thursday, March 7, will be about what we've called Nurture and has also been called "Christian Education" or "Faith Formation." Here's a thought: **We are all teachers of our faith.** I say this because everything we do or say, if there is a witness of it, conveys something about us and how (or if) our Christian journey has formed us. **This focus group is an invitation to name the faith/spiritual topics we'd like to pursue and the formats that suit our personalities.**

"It works if you work it!" is a chorus I heard many times as a church secretary in Minnesota. The sound came every Thursday noon from a women's AA group meeting in our building. True for us too: Our faith is more successful for us and those around us if we keep moving on the road.

Blessings—Pastor Kristine

Worship/Nurture/Vision News:

- Pray for this coming's **Sunday leadership**: Aleen Ratzlaff will continue our focus from a portion of Luke 18: 31 – 19:44. Leaders will include Darrel Knoll, Lena Knoll, Sue Buchholz so far.
- Our faithful **accompanists** are unavailable for the next 6 weeks. If you have any skills at playing an instrument that could help our worship time, please pray about your involvement and let us know if you would like to join in for a Sunday or two!
- **TONIGHT**– Remember our prayer time at 6:30 pm in the chapel followed by singing/choir from 7 – 7:45. We are calling this a “song circle” in hopes of it sounding inviting for all who enjoy praising God in song! We will be preparing an amazing song to share on Easter Sunday morning. (# 260 in the older blue Hymnal – “They Crucified my Savior”) Come and join us!

Verse for Pondering: Luke 6:27(CEB)

“But I say to you who are willing to hear:
Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you.”

Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- Pray for one another through our directory!
- **Thank you** to all who prayed, brought food, sent cards and showed acts of kindness and well wishes to us during my recent surgery. Your prayers were felt and answered! **Bob & Judy Jantz**
- Pray for Pastor Kristine and one another as we ponder and share during **focus groups**.
- **WDC**: Give thanks for those who serve on WDC's four commissions as they meet this week to nurture church planting, sustain healthy ministerial leadership, resource congregations and guide stewardship of resources for our conference ministries.

FMC Upcoming Events

- **Tonight** - 6:30 pm in our chapel – Prayer time!
7:00 pm – 7:45 pm - Song Circle
Choir prep for Easter Sunday will be done at the end so if you are not available to sing on Easter, you may leave before this time. We would love to have everyone stay of course!
These Wednesday evenings will continue through March 27.

- **Pastor Kristine** will work in Hillsboro next week March 6 and 7 afternoon and evening. (Monday is her day off)
- Mark you calendars for our next **Peace Party!** A fellowship/learning event, carry-in lunch on Sunday, March 24. In the meantime – keep listening!!! (If you were here last Sunday at our Peace Party we enjoyed listening to each other about what we do on our time off!)
- **Easter Sunday:**
 - Sunrise Service at 6:45 am at Mark and Sandy Hiebert's place.
 - Light Brunch in Fellowship Hall at 9:00 am
 - Worship in the Sanctuary at 10:30 am.

Community News:

Marion County Emergency Management is hosting **Storm Fury on the Plains**, a presentation by the National Weather Service – Wichita, on Thursday, March 14 at 6:30 pm at Shari Flaming Center for the Arts, Tabor College, Hillsboro. Questions? Contact Marcy Hostetler at 620-382-2144 or mhostetler@marioncoks.net. It is to learn about safe storm spotting and storm identification.

- **Tabor College Theater** presents “**Night Sky**” March 1, and 2 at 7:00 pm and March 3 at 2 pm. in the Black Box theater. Tickets are on sale on their website for \$10 for adults and \$5 for students.

Mennonite News:

- **Winter Coats and Jackets** sharing opportunity. Begin to clean out your closets with this in mind. We would like to have coats and jackets to lay in our sanctuary on Palm Sunday as Jesus' followers did when he entered Jerusalem.

Then we can partner with MCC Central States Immigration Team in a unique opportunity to share with a ministry in Brownsville, TX on the U.S./Mexico border called Team Brownsville. They have been welcoming asylum seekers since 2018 and are looking for gently used winter coats and jackets to give to people as they prepare for the final leg of their journey heading to U.S. destinations with colder climates. If you are interested in packaging them for Texas, please let us know in the office as we need to let the planners know.

- **Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage – anyone interested?**

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/>. There is a group in Wichita doing this. Does anyone want to plan a local pilgrimage?

- “An insiders view of the 100 year celebration of the coming of the Swiss Mennonites to America” is the focus of the **presentation given by Frank Stucky** at the annual meeting of the **Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association**. Frank is a lifelong resident of Newton, Kansas. He is the middle son of Harley J Stucky and Ruby Stucky, formally of North Newton. Frank graduated from Newton high school and Bethel College where he played football and basketball and had double majors in history and English and a minor in political science. He spent time with MCC in the Congo before going to graduate school at the University of Kansas. He has been an active real estate broker for over 46 years. Frank enjoys golf, watching Bethel College sports, travel, and spending time with his six grandchildren. He is married to Kathy (Jackson) and has two sons and a daughter. The annual meeting will be held March 10, 2024, at 2:30 at the Wellness Center at Pine Village in Moundridge, Kansas. Refreshments will follow the meeting.

Nancy Stucky, SMCHA secretary

- WDC retired minister, **Elizabeth Raid**, passed away on Feb. 21, 2024. The memorial service is planned for March 23 at 11 am at Bethel College Mennonite Church in North Newton. Her obituary can be found at the website: broadwaycolonialfh.com.
- Hesston College News: March 17 - **Prairie Window Concert: The Arcadian Wild**
Join Dyck Arboretum March 17 at 4 p.m. to hear The Arcadian Wild. With roots in formal vocal music and influences from progressive bluegrass and folk, The Arcadian Wild offer up songs of invitation; calls to come and see, to find refuge and rest, or to journey and wonder. Crust & Crumb will be serving during intermission. Learn more at dyckarboretum.org/events.
- Sun., March 17 & Mon., March 18 – **Hartzler Bible Lectures at Bethel College** with César Garcia, general secretary of Mennonite World Conference, and Sandra Baez. Sunday: 7 p.m., *Administration Building chapel*; Monday: 11 a.m., *Krehbiel Auditorium in Luyken Fine Arts Center*
- Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) will have their annual celebration, Ready...Set...Grow... in Fresno, California Feb 23-23. You can join online via live-stream Friday night, Feb. 23 at 9:30 p.m. Eastern Time and Sat. morning, Feb. 24 at 11:30 a.m. Eastern Time. Go to their website to read more.