

Patient Attention



For many people, the coronavirus pandemic has been a test of patience — or worse. Medically vulnerable people face an anxious time of hypervigilance. Furloughed workers wait on hold or in lines for assistance. Special events have been canceled or rescheduled.

Those not impacted directly deal with assorted frustrations and inconveniences. Many people are learning the benefit of slowing down, being present (even virtually) to others and practicing patient attention.

Interestingly, scientist Isaac Newton did some of his best work when the plague forced Cambridge University to close. At home, the inquisitive student invented calculus and developed groundbreaking theories of gravity and optics. Later Newton called 1666 his *annus mirabilis* (“year of wonders”) and reportedly said, “If I have made any valuable discoveries, it [owes] more to patient attention than to any other talent.”

What have you discovered during the Covid-19 crisis? What appreciations have you developed for aspects of life you may have previously taken for granted? What has social distancing taught you about the value of neighbors, church, community, volunteering?

During the pandemic, what have you learned about persistence and God’s presence? What empathy do you now feel for writers of words such as *“I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope”* (Psalm 130:5, NIV)?

The Church Corner

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First Mennonite Church

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Worship at 10 am
Live Streaming at 10 am on the church Facebook page

“We are a community of believers who follow Jesus Christ as we receive and share God’s love.”

We, of First Mennonite Church,
Valuing the convictions
of our faith,
Endeavor to:
Engage our members in ministry,
Expand community outreach,
Embrace new people,
In the love of Christ.

Lamenting

I don't think many of us would say that we love the way things are right now in the midst of this pandemic. I certainly miss the way things were. I miss the frequency with which I interacted with everyone. I miss everyone here on Sunday, I miss Wednesday gatherings, potlucks, other church activities and much more. All of this has had me thinking of the biblical tradition of Lamenting. This is not just crying, pouting, or complaining about something. The Bible is filled with these heart songs of sorrow over things that have gone wrong. The book of Lamentations weeps over the destruction of Jerusalem.

But lamenting is different from crying because lamenting is a form of prayer. It is more than just the expression of our sorrow or the venting of our emotions. Biblical Lament talks to God about our pain and what we go through. And it has a unique purpose of bringing us around to trusting God.

Most laments have four elements. They turn toward God by calling out to Him. "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?" (Psalm 13:1). They then bring their complaint before the Lord. "How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?" (Psalm 13:2). The next step is to ask boldly for God's help! "Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, lest my ene-

my say, 'I have prevailed over him,' lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken" (Psalm 13:3-4). Finally this brings us to a place of trusting in the Lord despite what may be going on in our lives. "But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me" (Psalm 13:5-6).

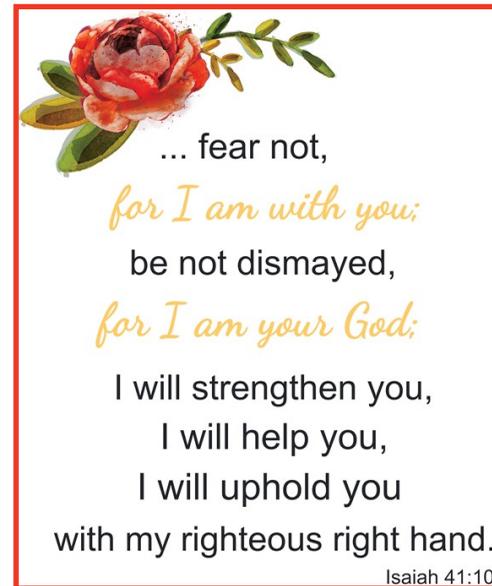
So if you are feeling some of the effects of how things have changed, I invite you to embark on a journey of prayerful lament. Turn to God, bring Him your complaint, ask boldly for His help, and then choose to trust Him!

I have enjoyed listening to a song done by some friends called Lament. You may also enjoy listening to it. Here is the YouTube link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8LysFGpBk0>

If that does not work you can find it by searching for "Walking Roots Band lament"

-Blessings, Pastor Steve



Camp Mennoscah

You are welcome to visit! Camp Mennoscah is open to families, individuals, and groups for days and overnights. The number of groups on campgrounds is limited and each family/group will have their own bathroom. Canoes are available for use; paddles and lifejackets are checked out and disinfected after use. Contact us at 620-297-3290 or office@campmennoscah.org. Spend some time at the river, on the trails, or simply enjoying this sacred space!

WDC Reference Council

All members of WDC Executive Board, the four Commissions, Gifts Discernment Committee and staff are invited to WDC Reference Council scheduled for Saturday, September 26, 2020. (The format - electronic and/or in-person will be determined closer to the date). This will be a time for introductions, orientation and review of WDC's work, and collaboration to implement WDC's mission and ministry together. Watch for more information in the future!

WDC Annual Assembly

The Annual Assembly is August 1-2. You may join via Zoom during live webinars and during the 3:30 pm Zoom conversation with Danny Carroll on August 1 at

<https://mennowdc.org/2020-wdc-annual-assembly/>

WDC Women in Mission

Looking forward to the Women and Girls Retreat at Camp Mennoscah? The Annual Spring Supper? Help make these events possible by joining the Western District Women in Mission Executive Council! There are nine open positions including: vice president, secretary, treasurer, one position on the Women and Girls Retreat Committee, two positions on the Communications Team, and three positions on the Nominating Committee. A wide variety of openings means we have a place for you and your unique talents and interests. You can help ensure the future of WDWM programming by volunteering for one of these positions. If you are interested in supporting the mission of WDWM by filling one of these roles, please email westerndistrictwomen@gmail.com.

Trust in the LORD
with all your heart,
and do not lean
on your own
understanding.

Proverbs 3:5

Church Council Notes

Meeting on July 20, 2020

- ⇒ The Discernment Team (David Mueller) reported that Carol Rose is stepping down from her position as blood mobile coordinator. Sara Dick will fill this position. Council approved paying the Catholic Church a fee for the use of their facilities for the blood drive when it is our turn to host.
- ⇒ The Vision Team (Jason Smoker) met with Marv Zehr to discuss Pastoral/Congregational review. Council had discussion regarding who will participate.
- ⇒ The Care Ministry (Ron Dick) continues to discuss how/when to serve communion. Council discussed the possibility of delaying communion until after the COVID risk is reduced.
- ⇒ The Mission Ministry (Dwight Mueller) has not met.
- ⇒ The Nurture Ministry (Debbie Nightingale) continues to distribute the children's curriculum to families until it is safe to resume meeting in the park. Sunday school teachers are being secured for when we can resume. Bibles for our third graders have been purchased. Discussed how to encourage adult Sunday school classes to meet remotely or outdoors if possible and desired by the class.
- ⇒ The Church Treasurer (Larry Regier) shared the budget balance at the end of June was over \$18,000.
- ⇒ Stewardship Ministry (James Nightingale) reported that he is building poly shields for the praise team members. He is also building stands for two automatic hand sanitizer dispensers. The Equus Bed group has requested use of our facility for their annual meeting at the end of August. The council approved their use of Stauffer Hall.

- ⇒ The Worship Ministry (Denice Klassen) continues to be creative in planning meaningful worship services. They are exploring a small (5-6) person bell choir. Considering a "virtual hymn sing" prior to each Sunday morning video stream. A new camera was purchased for the video stream. Council approved the purchase and it has streamlined the Sunday morning process.
- ⇒ Pastor Steve shared that McClellan Sound repaired the monitor jacks at the front of the sanctuary and worked with the direct feed to the camera. Both seemed to enhance our live streaming. Council had discussion about a member related need.
- ⇒ Other: The slate of officers has not been approved by vote. All officers are willing to continue in their roles until the annual meeting in January 2021. Council decided to delay the vote until the annual meeting to facilitate the voting process due to the pandemic.

Next meeting: August 17 at 7 pm.



Church Announcements

1. The Neighbors Store is in need of cereal.
2. The deadline for the September newsletter is **August 24**.
3. Offering schedule for August:
Aug. 2: MC USA
Aug. 9: Western District Conference
Aug. 16: Church Budget
Aug. 23: Scholarship Fund
Aug. 30: MC USA

Treasurer's News

The offering schedule for August is listed above. Your offerings may be sent directly to James Nightingale at 2819 N. Spring Lake Rd., Burrton, KS 67020, placed in James' church mailbox or in the offering box. Don't forget about purchasing the new hymnals (\$25 each) in honor or memory of your loved ones. We are anticipating their arrival later this year.

Prayer Meeting

The prayer group that meets on Wednesday nights will continue to meet through August. The group will meet on August 5, 12, 19 & 26. Please feel free to join. There is space for a few more!

Treasurer's Report

Budget balance @ 01/01/20	9,960.80
January–May receipts	51,713.15
January–May expenses	(47,420.88)
Budget balance @ 05/31/20	14,253.07
June receipts	13,890.91
June expenses	(9,992.93)
Budget balance @ 06/30/20	18,151.05

Prayers & Praises

- * Pray for Elaine Mohler as she recovers from hip replacement surgery.
- * Continue to pray for Dick VanWye as he adjusts to a pacemaker.
- * Praise God for the recovery of Debbie Nightingale from back surgery.
- * Praise God that Maeanna Regier is recovering from surgery and there was no cancer found!
- * Continue to pray for the response to the virus and the decisions those in leadership continue to deal with.
- * Pray for our country's and our own personal responses to the various forms of inequality we see and experience in our world.

Blood Mobile

The Halstead Community Blood Mobile will be Monday, August 10 beginning at 12:30 pm at the Catholic Parish Center. It will be hosted by our church. Sara Dick is our church coordinator, taking over from Carol Rose who served for many years. **Thank you Carol for your dedication to this project!** Please talk with Sara if you can help on August 10.

What's up at First Mennonite

Sunday Worship

The worship discernment team continues to meet regularly to discuss the best options for worship during the pandemic. It was decided to begin meeting again in person for those interested on August 2. Face masks will be required of all attending. There are new hand sanitizer stations to use at each entrance and social distancing will be maintained. Live streaming on Facebook will continue for those more comfortable worshipping at home.

The team continues to work to make our church building as safe as possible. We also continue to monitor our state, surrounding areas, county and our city. We know this is a difficult time and any decision we make will not make everyone happy. Your feedback and ideas are welcome, and most of all your prayers.

Usher Duty... It's human nature to sometimes slip into judgmentalism and arrogance: "I'd *never* do what *she* did!" we think or say. Or "People who [fill in the blank] shouldn't call themselves Christians. They don't belong in the church." Jesus clearly said, "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matthew 7:1, ESV) and, memorably, made his point with the image of a speck in someone else's eye and a log in one's own.

In *Love Does* (Thomas Nelson), Bob Goff reflects further on what Jesus' response would be when we put ourselves in positions of authority over others: "[Jesus] said people who followed him should think of themselves more like ushers rather than the bouncers, and it would be God who decides who gets in. We're the ones who simply show people to their seats that someone else paid for."



Love. Grow. Serve.

Sunday School

The Nurture Ministry has chosen **MCC Meat Canning** as our summer quarter Sunday school mission offering project. You may continue to mail your donations to our treasurer, Kent Dick, at 8715 NW 36th Street, Halstead, KS 67056, or place your offerings in Kent's church mailbox. The children are continuing to receive their Sunday school lessons for use at their homes. A class for the children will meet in the park when church meets in person. If you have ideas for the adult Sunday school, please let a Nurture member know.

We are in need of some comfortable furniture (couch, chairs, etc.) for the newly completed youth area. If you have something appropriate to donate, please contact Kaitlen Ortman or Debbie Nightingale!

August Celebrations

- 1 Jerry Keller
- 1 (A) John & Pamela Keller
- 2 (A) David & Brocia Mueller
- 2 Randi Schaff
- 2 Rheannah Unruh
- 3 (A) Abram & Emily Rodenberg
- 4 Derek Keller
- 5 Virginia Berger
- 6 Roberta Warren
- 6 Crescent Haury
- 6 (A) David & Monica Flask
- 8 (A) Michael & Roberta Warren
- 9 Doug Auernheimer
- 9 Taylor Nemeth
- 10 (A) Harley & Elaine Mohler (63 years)
- 11 (A) Jim & Lois Loflin (57 years)
- 13 Jennifer Penner
- 13 (A) Larry & Sharon Finley
- 15 (A) Rick & Sandy Allen
- 15 Rachel Klassen Gadue
- 16 (A) Larry & Virginia Berger (57 years)
- 18 Ruby Buller
- 19 Korbin Black
- 19 Tim Lewis
- 21 Larry Berger
- 21 Abram Rodenberg
- 24 Betty Schowalter
- 25 Deb Castillo
- 26 Marj VanWye
- 26 Monica Flask
- 27 Lloyd Voth
- 28 Allison Smoker
- 28 Jaren Smoker
- 28 Richard Schmidling
- 29 Marisa Schaff
- 29 Haylee Ewert
- 30 (A) Kenneth & Dee Ann Lintz
- 31 Ashlee Stucky



God Amid Pandemic

Last spring, life changed as we became familiar with terms such as social distancing, flattening the curve and self-quarantining. We could hardly believe the closed schools, businesses and especially churches — just as Holy Week and Easter drew near! The coronavirus ran rampant in the world. Where was God?

But as the spread continued, many civic leaders stepped up, calmly informing us of the facts, of actions being taken to mitigate the crisis and of how we could help. Healthcare professionals risked their lives and endured separation from families; teachers drew on astounding stores of creativity to teach online; pastors delivered sermons and lessons to empty sanctuaries as members listened and prayed while living in lockdown. Surely God was present — through them!

Then I remembered how God assures us through Isaiah, "Fear not! When you pass through the waters, the fires, yes, even the pandemics of this world, I will be with you" (43:1-2, paraphrased). And Jesus echoes, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20).

—Sandy Hyland

