

Three Questions

There's a tale of a traveling priest who was confronted by a soldier in pre-revolutionary Russia. Rifle in hand, the soldier barked, "Who are you? Where are you going? Why are you going there?"

Instead of answering, the priest asked how much the soldier was paid — and offered double if the soldier would challenge him with those three questions each day as he passed by.

Those three important questions can guide us on our journey through the brand-new year ahead. For Christians, thankfully, the answers are clear:

- Who are you? "I'm a child of God!"
- Where are you going? "I'm going out into the world!"
- Why are you going there? "I'm going out of love for Jesus, who died for me!"

Place these questions and answers in a spot where you can see them each day. Then go forward confidently, knowing "whose" you are and what your purpose is.



The Church Corner

January 2018

Volume 42, Number 1



“The Book our Mother’s Read”

We search the world for truth; we cull the good, the pure, the beautiful, from graven stone and written scroll, from all old flower-fields of the soul;

And, weary seekers of the best, we come back laden from the quest, to find that all the sages said is in the Book our mothers read.

—John Greenleaf Whittier



First Mennonite Church

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Sunday School—9:30 a.m.
Worship Service—10:45 a.m.

“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.



New Year, New Things

A new year has come and with it the invitation to consider what the last year held and the next has to offer. It's interesting, new often has the assumption of being better than the old or used. However, I imagine that many of us could conjure images and memories of years gone past that might seem sweeter than the prospect of this new year. Sometimes it is simply comforting to rest in the security of what has been known rather than risk the prospect of change in what is new. Other times we face a new year having lost things that gave us stability in life; a spouse, a job, or health. The idea then of tackling a new year, having lost that stability, can be disorienting or disheartening. Others may have had a terribly hard year and are ready to grasp at the prospect of a shiny new year, a fresh start with hope on the horizon. While still others arrive at the start of this new year having had the best year of their life! Filled with energy, they consider how to keep the ball rolling.

However it is that you approach this new year, it's worth pausing to consider where you have been and what the new year might hold. Whether you are facing a new year with new challenges, or coming off the best year of your life, it's worth considering where challenges

and difficulties might lay, and how they can best be approached. A time to be honest with yourself about these things can be difficult, it's all too easy to say "things will be fine", or "we'll cross that bridge when we get there". However, God encourages us to consider our inmost being and to seek wisdom. Psalm 51:6 "Surely you desire truth in the inner parts: you teach me wisdom in the inmost place." So consider the hard or difficult places you may encounter this year and who or what may help you through those places.

We do well also to remember that we do not journey into this new year alone, we are a family, and as such we are there for each other. It can be difficult to ask others for help (trust me I know), however, perhaps we are looking at it the wrong way. What if asking for help was really giving something to someone else. Galatians 6:2, "Carry one another's burdens and in this way you fulfill the law of Christ." Perhaps we should all invite others to help us carry burdens more often so we can offer them the opportunity to fulfill the law of Christ. Don't we want to "give" that opportunity to those we care about?

A new year has come and new things with it, some will be good, some will be hard, others will be sad. There will be tears, frustrations, laughter and great joy as the year rolls along. However, because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. His mercies are new every morning; great is your faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22-23). To God be the glory forever!

Have a blessed and happy New Year!

-Pastor Steve

Camp Mennoscah

Happy New Year to all! Camp Mennoscah sends hope, joy and peace to all this holiday season. We have been thoroughly blessed by your gifts and prayers throughout the year and pray you have been blessed by Camp Mennoscah's ministry, too. Check out our webpage at campmennosach.org or our Facebook page to see the many things you have made possible. Thank you for sharing generously with the many campers and people who experience God's love and creation at Camp Mennoscah!

Bethel College

Registration is now open for the academic conference "Mennonites and the Holocaust," to be held on the Bethel College campus March 16-17, 2018, with speakers and scholars from Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Ukraine and the United States. See mla.bethelks.edu/MennosandHolocaust for more information or to register online.

Kauffman Museum

Andrew Bolton will present, "Is the Community of Christ Becoming Anabaptist?" on Sunday, January 7 at 3pm at Kauffman Museum in North Newton. Bolton has served for a number of years in administrative positions with the Community of Christ (formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) and was an organizer of the October 2017 symposium at the National World War I Museum and Memorial on conscientious objection to the Great War.

WDC Gifts

As Western District Conference concludes its 125th anniversary year, we invite members and friends of WDC to send in an extra gift of \$125 (or more!) to help WDC meet its 2017 budget (fiscal year ending Jan 31, 2018). Your contributions allow WDC to equip pastors, encourage church planters, resource congregations, energize ministries of peace, justice and evangelism, and connect to God's work in the wider church and world. Thank you for your generous support!

The Mennonite

The Mennonite, Inc. welcomes your original submissions and contributions for our March 2018 print magazine issue and corresponding online content focusing on Spiritual resilience. Submissions are due by January 20 to Editor@TheMennonite.org. You can read a full description of the March 2018 theme here: <https://themennonite.org/march-2018-call-submissions-spiritual-resilience/>

Save the Date!
Sunday, February 11—12:30 pm
Safe Sanctuary Training
For all involved with children!

Prayer & Praises

Prayer needs for December:

- Praise God for the celebration of Christmas and the amazing gift of Jesus!
- Pray for the continued recovery of Rachel Lohrenz.
- Continue your prayers for healing for Laurie, Larry & Carrol Flickinger's daughter, who is recovering from breast cancer surgery.
- Praise God for the successful heart surgery for Phil Aylward.
- Praise God for the adoption of Jaxon Smoker on November 30 to Jason & Sara Smoker and for his dedication on December 3.



Prayer for a New Beginning

Dear Lord,

Touch me with your Spirit of truth so I may be honest about my sins and failures. Forgive me for treating your covenant lightly and at times ignoring it completely. Help me truly seek and know forgiveness for all the hurts I've caused, for harboring ill will and for any hardness of heart I may have. Please renew a right spirit within me that I may become more Christ-like and that my life may daily reveal your love and light. In your name. Amen.

A Penguin "Parable"

During storms, emperor penguins huddle for warmth, taking turns at the center and on the perimeter of the group. While incubating eggs, up to 6,000 male penguins have been observed clustering for shelter against the harsh Antarctic winter. Partially grown chicks gather in protective "crèches" (French for "cribs"); often surrounded by a colony of adults, these groupings ward off predators and cold.

In stormy times, humans also need supportive groups; we can't survive alone. A church family allows us to take turns giving and receiving care. Amid social upheaval, injustice, illness, natural disaster and any loss or crisis, God invites us to gather for protection and warmth. In the church community, we support and strengthen one another and are empowered to go out again into the less-sheltered world.

"For
I KNOW
the plans
I have for you,"
declares the LORD,
"... plans to give you
HOPE and a
FUTURE."

Jeremiah 29:11, NIV



Church Announcements



1. The monthly collection for Neighbors is **January 21**. Neighbors needs are boxed cereal.
2. The deadline for the February newsletter will be **January 29**.
3. Offering schedule for January:
Jan. 7: MC USA
Jan. 14: Church Budget
Jan. 21: Western District Conference
Jan. 28: Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Treasurer's Report

Budget balance @ 01/01/17	9,606.95
Jan.-Oct. receipts	100,348.53
Jan.-Oct. expenses	<u>(100,003.51)</u>
Budget balance @ 10/31/17	9,951.97
November receipts	6,344.74
November expenses	<u>(9,352.91)</u>
Budget balance @ 11/30/17	6,943.80

**"Darkness cannot drive out darkness;
 only light can do that. Hate cannot drive
 out hate; only love can do that."**

-Martin Luther King Jr.

January Calendar

Dec. 31	7:00 pm	New Year's Eve Party
Jan. 2	9:30 am	Women's Bible Study
Jan. 3	6:00 pm	Zumba
	6:30 pm	Prayer Meeting
Jan. 6	9:00 am	Verenike Making Day
Jan. 7	10:45 am	Communion
Jan. 8	9:30 am	WMS
Jan. 9	7:45 am	Early Birds Breakfast
Jan. 10	6:00 pm	Zumba
	6:30 pm	Prayer Meeting
	7:00 pm	Praise Team
Jan. 11	9:30 am	Moms Group
Jan. 14	12:00 pm	Carry-in/Annual Mtg.
Jan. 16	9:30 am	Women's Bible study
Jan. 17	6:00 pm	Zumba
	6:30 pm	Prayer Meeting
	7:00 pm	Praise Team
Jan. 19-20		Year of Evangelism Workshops
Jan. 23	7:45 am	Early Birds Breakfast
Jan. 24	5:00 pm	Kids Club
	6:00 pm	Supper
	7:00 pm	Adult Study
Jan. 25	9:30 am	Mom's Group
Jan. 28	5:30 pm	Dutch Blitz
Jan. 29	6:00 pm	Nurture & Mission
	7:00 pm	Church Council
Jan. 30	9:30 am	Women's Bible Study
Jan. 31	5:00 pm	Kids Club
	6:00 pm	Supper
	7:00 pm	Adult Study
	8:00 pm	Men's Ensemble

Looking Ahead:

February 11	Safe Sanctuary Training
February 14	Ash Wednesday
February 24	Verenike Supper

January Celebrations



- 1 (A) Dick & Marj VanWye
- 1 Kenneth Schmidling
- 2 Denice Klassen
- 3 Mark Berger
- 3 Isaiah Haspels
- 4 Shelby Wilson
- 6 Vivian Snell
- 7 Eric Mueller
- 7 Nathan Allen
- 8 Debbie Nightingale
- 9 Karolyn Unruh
- 9 David Haspels
- 10 Brenna Kaufman
- 11 Rosetta Auernheimer (92 years)
- 11 Kathleen Koehn
- 12 Thomas Finley
- 13 Sara Smoker
- 14 Grayson Chandler
- 16 Elaine Mohler
- 17 John Pjesky
- 18 Andrea Gundy
- 18 Brendan Gundy
- 18 Kaleb Black
- 19 (A) T.J. & Stacey Hackler
- 22 Julie Parker
- 23 Julie Dalke
- 23 Ann Lintz
- 25 (A) Jerry & Carol Linn
- 27 Bettye Hiebert
- 28 Rick Lee
- 28 Leah Kawanguzi
- 30 Kenneth R. Stucky
- 31 Trae Regier

Year of Evangelism

Anabaptist Witness, the Year of Evangelism kick-off event, sponsored by the WDC Resource Commission, will be **January 19-20, 2018** at the Alexanderwohl Church in Goessel, KS. We'll gather for this two-day event starting Friday evening for vibrant worship, inspiring teaching from Marvin Lorenzana and Heidi Roland Unruh, and practical workshops meant to equip your congregation for outreach. On Saturday, congregational leaders will have a chance to brainstorm outreach ideas with a coach so that they can return to their mission fields with a practical plan for sharing the good news. All of this great resourcing is only \$30/person (\$25/person for groups of 4 or more from the same congregation). To register, go to: <http://mennowdc.org/year-of-evangelism/>. Join us as we're equipped to spread God's healing and hope in the world!

Our church will pay the registration for those in our congregation who want to attend. All church council members are encouraged to attend as well as any others who are interested. Let Gregg Dick know if you plan to attend.

Save the Dates!
Feb. 23-25, 2018
Hesston College
Anabaptist Vision &
Discipleship Series presents:
*"Before the Unthinkable Happens:
Confronting our Role in Injustice"*

What's up at First Mennonite?

Annual Meeting

The church Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 14 following a carry-in meal. Please bring a dish or two to share and your own table service. The meeting will begin promptly at 12:45 (or earlier). If you are responsible for a report, please submit those to Debbie no later than January 9.

Dutch Blitz

An evening of Dutch Blitz is planned for Sunday, January 28 beginning at 5:30 pm. Please bring snacks to share. It will be a fun evening of fellowship! Invite your friends.

Sunday School Mission Offering

The Nurture Ministry has chosen our local Neighbors Store as the winter quarter Sunday school mission offering. Thank you for your generosity in supporting our Sunday school program and this local project.

Women's Bible Study

A women's daytime Bible study by Pricilla Shirer, *The Armor of God*, will begin January 2 at 9:30 am. If interested, please contact Ruth Mueller for information.

The Armor of God

Sir MennoKnight encourages you to continue your Armor of God study challenge by memorizing Ephesians 6:10-20. The devotion cards have the current verse highlighted and have a pondering question and a devotion to use. Check out the display in the foyer of the sanctuary and join in this challenge. You don't want to go around in this world naked. Suit up!

New Year's Eve Party

You don't want to miss the New Year's Eve Party, held on Dec. 31 at 7:00 pm! Invite your friends and bring a snack to share, games to play and a white elephant gift for the exchange.

