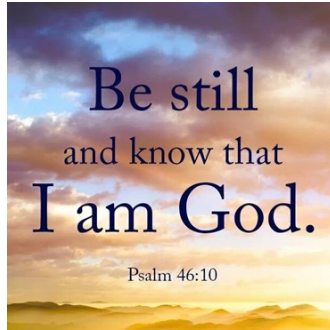


Just Be—and Be Still



Various versions of the following sentiment are posted online: “I am a human being, not a human doing. It’s okay to just *be* sometimes.”

Many of us get anxious if we think we’re not *doing* enough, but peace activist Thich Nhat Hanh insists it’s not a waste of time to just be: “To be alive, to be peaceful, to be joyful, to be loving ... is what the world needs most.”

During the pandemic, when people were urged to stay home to slow the virus’ spread, we had to think hard about how to continue being the church while limited in what we could go out and “do.” Yet church leaders reminded us that we were actually loving our neighbors by staying home — by being less active.

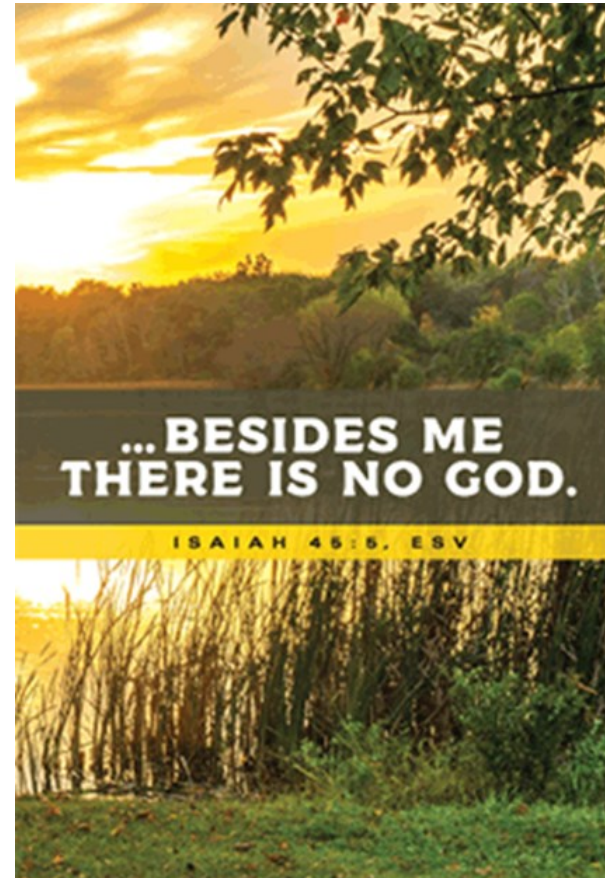
It’s sometimes okay — ideal, even — to just be. In quieting our bodies, minds and hearts, we may find ourselves more often in prayer, more aware of God’s presence and more nourished for when the time is right to again take up more active forms of ministry, peacemaking and love. “In quietness and trust is your strength” (Isaiah 30:15, NIV).

—Heidi Mann

The Church Corner

October 2020

Volume 44, Number 10



First Mennonite Church

427 West Fourth
Halstead, KS 67056
www.firstmennonitehalstead.org
Steve Wilcox, Pastor

Office Phone (316) 835-2282
Steve’s Cell (316) 322-5651
rskw13@gmail.com

Sunday School at 9:15 am
Worship at 10:30 am and
Live Streaming at 10:30 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.

Promises of God

What is a promise? The dictionary defines it as “a declaration or assurance that one will do a particular thing or that a particular thing will happen.” Some synonyms for it include pledge, word of honor, vow, guarantee, commitment and covenant. That’s a lot of assurance in a small word! As the Nurture Ministry began planning for this most unusual ministry year, the theme of *God’s Promises* became something I found particularly interesting to pursue. Because of the pandemic, our usual way of kicking off a new ministry year was different. No Christian Education Sunday with the theme being introduced, no potluck, no fun games, few Sunday school classes meeting and no Wednesday night Bible study for adults with supper. There are some classes meeting, Mom’s group began again and Kids Club is working. However, it all looks very different and not necessarily in a way we had anticipated. So, is God still working? Are God’s promises still guaranteed? Are we still committed to the call God has on our lives?

I believe the answer is a resounding “Yes!” The Bible lists hundred’s of promises that God gave to his people and they are still relevant today. But, have you become discouraged because this most unusual year continues to drag out? Are you frustrated because you are home more and things aren’t like “they used to be”? I know there are days when discouragement, frustration and this “new normal” drives me crazy. I’ve been in a season of prayer drought, doubting the very God who PROMISES good things, who NEVER CHANGES, who CALLS ME BY NAME! What about you? Are God’s promises something you know in your head, but they haven’t reached your heart right now?

This month, a Bible study I participate in began meeting again after the summer break. It is on Zoom. Not ideal, hard to participate with sometimes, and definitely not the way I’d like to meet. However, as we began the study of the

book of Genesis, it occurred to me that the very word genesis means the origin or mode of formation of something; the beginning, start, outset, commencement. God, who has always been, started creation with a void, formless mass. God turned this mass into what we know today as the universe, the earth, plants, animals and people. God promised it was all GOOD.

If you’ve been attending FMC for any length of time, you might remember when our former pastor, Cleo Koop, used the scripture from Ephesians 3:20-21 regularly: “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” As a church, we were anticipating a drought of membership. Very few young families with children, most of the youth graduating and moving on. What to do? Did God have a purpose for this new season? What “immeasurably more” work could God be up to? Look at us now...adding a new children’s class this year (we are up to six classes), middle school youth began meeting again last year, mom’s group is flourishing again, we utilize a nursery as needed, kids club is thriving! Just this **one** example of God’s “immeasurably more” gives me hope! It gives me assurance that God’s promises are still alive and active, that God’s Spirit is still working in and through “those who love Him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28). God’s promises are seen in each new genesis, each new beginning, whether it’s a way we anticipated or a new way we would never have thought of...even through a pandemic that is not welcome. So, hang in there! Reach for God’s Word, find those promises and “...cling to what is good.” (Romans 12:9). Together, because God promised, we can anticipate and look forward to “immeasurably more.”

-Thanks for reading! Debbie Nightingale



Camp Mennoscah

- ◆ Camp Mennoscah's Scrapbook and Crafts Retreat on October 30-Nov. 1 has up to five spaces available. (Nov. 6-8 is waitlist only.) Participants will stay in the Retreat Center with their own bathroom and scrapbook/crafts tables will be set up in the dining hall to provide more space and better ventilation. Register at campmennoscah.org! Call 620-297-3290 for more information.
- ◆ Work and Play Day! Camp Mennoscah invites volunteers to sign up for a day of service and fun on October 10. The day begins at 8:30am and ends approximately 2:30pm. Contact staff at 620-297-3290 or office@campmennoscah.org for details. Please bring a mask!
- ◆ Escape to the prairie! Pastors and ministry workers are welcome to come to Camp Mennoscah for a day or overnight retreat. No charge for the first day/night, but reservations are required. Spend time on the trails, have a campfire cook-out, and enjoy the open spaces of the tallgrass prairie and the Ninnescah River! Contact Camp Mennoscah at 620-297-3290 to make a reservation.



Holy Mysteries...Dwell in the wonder of these two gifts of God: that God made us in his very image (Genesis 1:26), and then — “much more”! — that Christ came to earth as a human being (Philippians 2:7). Ponder and savor how poet John Donne (1572-1631) describes these mysteries: “’Twas much, that man was made like God before, but, that God should be made like man, much more.”

MC USA News

Celebrate with us! Mennonite Central Committee invites you join **Celebration 2020: MCC at 100**, a livestreamed event commemorating a century of MCC’s ministry on Saturday, Oct. 17, starting at 6:50 p.m. (EDT). The event will feature photos, videos and storytelling that highlight MCC’s work over the years. Former MCC leader and pastor Leonard Dow of Philadelphia will inspire participants to walk boldly into the next century of MCC’s ministry while talented musicians will lead in prayer and thanksgiving. You can find more information about MCC’s centennial and log in for the livestreamed event at mcc.org/celebration-2020.

How has 2020 strengthened, challenged or reshaped your Anabaptist faith and the way you live your life? Share your stories, photos, videos and artwork at *Anabaptist History Today*, a collaborative, online, Anabaptist storytelling platform. <https://aht.libraryhost.com/s/archive/page/Welcome>

Joel Miller, pastor of Columbus Mennonite Church, a sanctuary church in Ohio, talks about putting a face on immigration and reminds us that we have choices to make that impact our own humanity. Read more in his blog, “These are my people!” <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/menno-snapshots/these-are-people/>

Church Council Notes

from September 21, 2020

- ⇒ The Discernment Team (David Mueller) has been talking with others about the tech coordinator position. It will most likely need to incorporate more than one person to fill this position and cover the responsibilities.
- ⇒ The Vision Team (Jason Smoker) met with Marv Zehr on Sept. 22 to discuss the pastoral evaluation.
- ⇒ The Care Ministry (Ron Dick) ordered pre-packaged communion kits and communion will be shared on Oct. 4. Dick VanWye retired as our Everence rep and will be replaced by Jesse Mueller.
- ⇒ The Hospitality Ministry (Kaitlen Ortman) reported that the picnic on Aug. 30 went well. P&M Pumpkin Ranch is reserved for Oct. 4. Cindy Siemens put together a tool bucket kit for the Pine Village auction.
- ⇒ The Mission Ministry (Dwight Mueller) has not met recently.
- ⇒ The Nurture Ministry (Kaitlen Ortman) reported that the children will continue meeting outside, weather permitting. The adult classes will resume in their regular classes once the DVD series is completed. Kids Club is going well. Casey & Raquel are packaging food for the to-go meals on Wednesdays. There is no nursery during worship right now. Safe Sanctuary volunteer forms will be distributed soon.

- ⇒ The Church Treasurer (Larry Regier) shared the budget balance at the end of August was \$15,327.
- ⇒ Stewardship Ministry (Dwight Mueller) reported that two painting proposals have been received. Quotes are \$23,800 (from Koehn Painting of Newton) and \$21,600 (from Aaron & Page of Wichita). A third quote will be received soon. The painters that we used last time (Yoder Painting) measured the church and decided it was too large of a job for them. Some plumbing issues occurred in the kitchen and have been addressed.
- ⇒ The Worship Ministry (Denice Klassen) reported that Ruth Mueller has stepped down from Praise Team. Worship will be looking at Thanksgiving and Christmas plans soon.
- ⇒ Pastor Steve talked about anticipating the next round of changes that are sure to come. He would like to meet with the COVID-19 group again to navigate these things. He would like to resume the pre-baptism meetings again soon.

*Next meeting: **October 19 at 7:30 pm.***

KIPCOR

Save the date: KIPCOR will kick off its 2020-21 Peace Lecture series with journalist and best-selling author Sarah Smarsh, Thursday, Nov. 5, 7 p.m., in an online format. This is a fundraiser for KIPCOR. More details to follow!



Church Announcements

1. The Neighbors Store is in need of catsup, mustard, mayonnaise and cereal.
2. The deadline for the November newsletter is **October 26.**
3. Offering schedule for October:
 - Oct. 4:** MC USA
 - Oct. 11:** Church Budget
 - Oct. 18:** Hog Roast Mission
 - Oct. 25:** Western District Conference

Treasurer's News

The offering schedule for October is above. Your offerings may be sent directly to James Nightingale, 2819 N. Spring Lake, Burrton, KS 67020, placed in James' church mailbox or in the offering box on the usher's table. Thank you for your faithful giving.

Treasurer's Report

Budget balance @ 01/01/20	9,960.80
January–July receipts	72,863.00
January–July expenses	<u>(67,394.98)</u>
Budget balance @ 07/31/20	15,428.82
August receipts	10,317.42
August expenses	<u>(10,419.04)</u>
Budget balance @ 08/31/20	15,327.20

October Calendar

Oct. 4	10:30 am	Communion
	3-7 pm	P&M Pumpkin Ranch
Oct. 7	5:00 pm	Kids Club
	6:00 pm	Grab & Go Meal
	6:30 pm	Prayer Meeting
Oct. 11	6:00 pm	Mom's Group
Oct. 12	9:3 am	WMS
Oct. 13	7:45 am	Early Birds Breakfast
Oct. 14	5:00 pm	Kids Club
	6:00 pm	Grab & Go Meal
	6:30 pm	Prayer Meeting
Oct. 19	6:00 pm	Nurture Meeting
	7:30 pm	Church Council
Oct. 21	5:00 pm	Kids Club
	6:00 pm	Grab & Go Meal
	6:30 pm	Prayer Meeting
Oct. 25	6:00 pm	Mom's Group
Oct. 27	7:45 am	Early Birds Breakfast
Oct. 28	5:00 pm	Kids Club
	6:00 pm	Grab & Go Meal
	6:30 pm	Prayer Meeting



Prayers & Praises

- * Keep Duane and Pauline Regier in prayer as Duane has been diagnosed with blood cancer and is receiving treatment. Continue to pray for healing and strength for Duane and wisdom for the doctors.
- * Praise God for the announcement of a baby girl due in January to Abram & Emily Rodenberg.
- * Keep Jo Pjesky in prayer as she had a pacemaker put in on September 21.
- * Pray for John Will who will have hip surgery on October 13.

What's up at First Mennonite

Voices Together Hymnals

The new Mennonite hymnal, *Voices Together*, will be shipped starting in November! If you are still wanting to purchase a hymnal and would like to designate it in memory or honor of a loved one, please do so soon. Hymnals are \$25 each and your check and designation sheet (available on the literature table) can be returned to James or put in the offering box. Thank you!

Kauffman Museum

At Kauffman Museum (through Nov. 29) – “Sorting Out Race: Examining Racial Identity and Stereotypes in Thrift Store Donations.” *To see in person:* with ever-changing COVID-19 protocols, check the museum website, kauffmanmuseum.org, or Facebook page or call 316-283-1612 before planning a visit (normal hours are Tues.-Fri. 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Sat.-Sun. 1:30-4:30 p.m., closed Mondays and major holidays). *Face masks must be worn on the Bethel College campus.* You can also interact with the exhibit virtually at any time! Go to <https://kauffmanmuseum.org/exhibitions/special/sortingoutrace/> (This is not a tour of the exhibit, but examines many of the issues it covers, using artifacts featured in the exhibit.)

Nurture Ministry

Sunday school is back in session for those comfortable attending! The adults will finish up a DVD series in Stauffer Hall and then begin meeting in their own classrooms. The children will continue to meet outside as the weather permits and then will also meet in their classrooms.

The daily Promises of God emails continue Monday-Saturday to keep us in the Word and focused on how God's promises are never ending and always valuable! If you are not receiving these emails please let Debbie know at debnight78@gmail.com (new email address).

Our fall mission offering is for Angel Tree/Neighbors Store. The Nurture Ministry would like to thank everyone for their faithful giving during this challenging time! Please continue to send your donations to Kent Dick or place in Kent's mailbox at church.

There were approximately 57 school kits donated this year along with some other miscellaneous items. Thanks to Jim Loflin for delivering those to the MCC Center.

Kids Club will continue through October either outside or in Stauffer Hall depending on the weather. A grab and go meal is available for Kids Club families and others who sign-up. At this time there will not be a Wednesday night study option for adults.

October Celebrations



- 1 Jake Nightingale
- 1 Deanna Sutcliffe
- 1 Kristen Linn
- 2 Linda Aylward
- 3 (A) Andrew & Melisa Kaldenbach
- 3 Kenneth Holzrichter
- 4 Lynda Schroeder
- 4 Brian Keller
- 5 John Vogt
- 7 Orville Voth
- 7 (A) Charlie & Melody Robinson
- 7 Dennis Holzrichter
- 8 Jim Ellis
- 8 (A) Joel & Barb Ewert
- 8 Julia Kaufman
- 9 (A) Bill & Anna Lee Ewert (66 years)
- 10 Sue Conard
- 10 Autumn Schowalter
- 11 (A) Don & Arnita Haury (54 years)
- 11 Julianne Ramsey
- 12 Dale Ortman
- 12 Breanna Miller
- 12 (A) Mark & Kim Brandt
- 13 Allen Unruh
- 13 Audra Black
- 13 Dustin Jones
- 14 Dan Mueller
- 15 Ryan Stucky
- 16 Traci Dumond
- 18 (A) Jim & Rachel Ellis
- 18 Kody Keiser
- 19 Duane Regier
- 20 Michael Regier
- 22 Lorraine Siemens (93 years)
- 22 Katie Holub

- 23 Kristen Finley
- 23 Emma Rose Allen
- 25 Richard Stucky
- 27 Mike Westerman
- 27 (A) Quinn & Katie Holub
- 31 Audrey Snell

Truth + Love



Ravi Zacharias, who recently died at 74, was a religious skeptic until age 17, after a suicide attempt landed him in the hospital. A visitor brought a Bible to Zacharias, who eventually became a vigorous defender of the faith.

When asked about his work, he told the Christian Post, “Truth must always be undergirded by love. My [parents] used to say, ‘If you cut off someone’s nose, there is no use in giving him a rose to smell.’ If Christian apologetics cuts off the listener’s nose, there is no use in giving them the sweet aroma of the Christian message. You have to do it undergirded by love. You learn this as a parent. You can hammer something into your child’s head, and when they leave they extract it and fling it away. But if you sow it with seeds of love, it will remain in their hearts permanently. So the truth of Christ is both true and relevant undergirded by love.”