

A Wakeup Call

God — let me be aware.
Let me not stumble blindly down the ways,
Just getting somehow safely through the days,
Not even groping for another hand,
Not even wondering why it all was planned,
Eyes to the ground unseeking for the light,
Soul never aching for a wild-winged flight,
Please, keep me eager just to do my share.
God — let me be aware.

God — let me be aware.
Stab my soul fiercely with others' pain,
Let me walk seeing horror and stain.
Let my hands, groping, find other hands.
Give me the heart that divines, understands.
Give me the courage, wounded, to fight.
Flood me with knowledge, drench me in light.
Please — keep me eager just to do my share.
God — let me be aware.

—Miriam Teichner



The Church Corner

April 2024

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**Two things to
remember in life.
Take care of your
thoughts when you are
alone, and take care of
your words when you
are with people.**



First Mennonite Church

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www.firstmennonitehalstead.org
Steve Wilcox, Pastor

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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.

Good Lessons

During Lent this year, Pastor Steve led us on the Israelites' journey to the Promised Land, in parallel with Christ's journey to the cross.

As he drew lessons from the wilderness along the way, I enjoyed hiding something for each Children's Story in a bean-box "wilderness." So many children and youth joined in on Palm Sunday that a full third of the gathered congregation was there digging!

It reminded me of a story just prior to the wilderness journey—a prequel, if you will. It's from the moment when the recently freed Israelites were paused at the Red Sea.

God highly valued these people: sheltering them from ten plagues that devastated the Egyptians; miraculously inspiring the Egyptian slave-drivers to generously escort them out of the country, showering them with silver, gold and cloth; and guiding them as a visible pillar, day and night, to their freedom.

But that was abruptly forgotten when the formidable Egyptian army suddenly came to their senses and decided to get their slaves back. Pinned between the army and the sea, the Israelites feared their imminent demise and wished loudly that they had stayed enslaved instead of following God out here to the wilderness! I might have wished that, too! But God did not grant their wish.

In Exodus 14:13-14, Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you

see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent." Then, the Lord directed Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea and divide it so that the Israelites walked across on dry ground and the Egyptian army was stopped in their tracks.

That word "silent" catches me. God was telling these people again how very important they were, and they almost missed the message! I miss those messages when I'm fearing and worrying, too.

I want to remember the kids digging in the bean-box "wilderness" this Lenten season, looking for the good lesson they came to know would always be in there. Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord—the Lord who thinks I'm worth fighting for.

-Casey Jacob



Camp Mennoscah

- ⇒ Nurses needed for the weeks of First Camp, June 20-22; Junior High 2, July 7-12; and Junior 2, July 14-19. Nurses must be an RN and can receive a stipend or a parent discount. You are needed to make summer youth camps healthy and successful!
- ⇒ There are openings for the Spring Scrapbook and Crafts Retreat, April 19-21! Lodging will be in the bunkhouses and activities will be in the Dining Hall. Bunkhouses are heated and space heaters will be available for the Dining Hall, if the weather is cool. This retreat is later than usual, so we're hoping for balmy spring weather for good walks and beautiful nature.
- ⇒ Registration for 2024 Summer Youth Camps is open! The theme for the summer is *Linked By Love* and looks at the many ways we experience God's love through relationships.
- ⇒ Kitchen staff are also needed for almost every week of camp! Parents can receive a discount up to full camp fees. No great skill is needed. The head cook will direct you in what needs to be done to make yummy meals for campers and staff.
- ⇒ More volunteer fun than just the Retreat Center project! Many volunteers are still needed for the Retreat Center project, but volunteers are also needed for other camp tasks--mowing, clearing trails, weeding the flower beds.
- ⇒

Contact camp or register:
(620) 297-3290

www.campmennoscah.org
office@campmennoscah.org


Blessed are You

The Beatitudes receive little attention, lamented novelist Kurt Vonnegut. "But, often with tears in their eyes, [Christians] demand that the Ten Commandments be posted in public buildings. And, of course, that's Moses, not Jesus. I haven't heard [anyone] demand that the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes, be posted anywhere."

Jesus' Beatitudes have much to teach about selflessness, mourning, peacemaking and more. Jim Berger, author of *Being Sermon on the Mount Christians*, explains that those teachings were once "viewed as a mandate for the faithful." Post-Reformation, they became less law-like and more of a "liberating directive." Berger writes, "For Jesus, being and doing are inseparable. The Sermon is at once theory and praxis. It is not enough to read it or hear it. Jesus intends it to be how we live."



"Blessed are you
WHEN PEOPLE HATE YOU ...
BECAUSE OF THE
SON OF MAN.
Rejoice in that day ...
BECAUSE
GREAT IS YOUR
REWARD IN
HEAVEN."
LUKE 6:22-23, NIV







PUZZLE


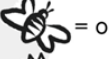
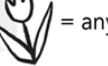
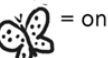
PLANT, WATER, GROW

Building a faith community takes work. How did the church in Corinth come to be?

Directions: Use the code to fill in the words and complete a teaching of the apostle Paul.

KEY

 = God
 = seed
 = planted
 = watered

 = grow
 = one
 = anything
 = only

I _____ the _____, Apollos _____ it,
but _____ has been making it _____.

So neither the _____ who plants nor the _____
_____ who waters is _____.

but _____, who makes things _____.

1 Corinthians 3:6-7, NIV

Answer: planted, seed, watered, God, grow, one, one, anything, only, God, grow



Church Announcements

- The Neighbors Store pantry needs cereal and peanut butter.
- The deadline for the May newsletter is April 22.
- Offering schedule for April:
April 7: MC USA
April 14: Western District Conference
April 21: Church Budget
April 28: Pine Village
- The link for our church online library is librarything.com/catalog/FMCHalstead.

Treasurer's Report

Budget balance @ 01/01/24	8,613.26
January receipts	7,246.21
January expenses	(13,059.80)
Budget balance @ 01/31/24	2,799.67
February receipts	11,238.96
February expenses	(10,614.32)
Budget balance @ 02/29/24	3,424.31

Women's Mission Society

The Women's Mission Society will meet on Monday, April 8 at 9:30 am for a work day at Linda's downtown studio. All women are welcome to attend!

April Calendar

April 2	7:45 am	Early Birds Breakfast
April 4	6:30 pm	Girl Scouts
April 6	8:00 am	KMRS Bohne Beroggi & Verenike Making Day
April 7	2:00 pm 4:00 pm	Mennonite Men's Practice Mennonite Men's Concert at Bethel College
April 8	9:30 am 7:00 pm	Women's Mission Society VBS Meeting
April 12-13		KS Mennonite Relief Sale
April 14	6:00 pm 6:00 pm	Mom's Group Jr. & Sr. High Youth
April 16	7:45 am 9:00 am	Early Birds Breakfast Prayer Team Meeting
April 21	2:00 pm 4:00 pm	Mennonite Men's Practice Mennonite Men's Concert at Tabor College
April 22	6:00 pm 7:00 pm	Nurture & Mission Church Council
April 27	5-7 pm	Neighbors Taco Supper
April 28	6:00 pm 6:00 pm	Mom's Group Jr. & Sr. High Youth
April 30	7:45 am	Early Birds Breakfast

Looking Ahead:

- May 4-5 Church Camp-out
- May 28-31 VBS

Beyond our Church:

August 2-4 - Western District Conference
Annual Assembly at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice, NE.



Prayer & Praises

- * Praise God for the birth of Walker Joel Watts, son to Jordan and Logan Watts, born on Feb. 21. Walker is the great-grandson of Bill & Anna Lee Ewert.
- * Praise God for the birth of Marah Joyce Gundy, daughter to Garrison & Erin Gundy, born on March 15. Marah is the granddaughter of Ron & Teresa Gundy and the great-granddaughter of Jim & Marge Gundy.
- * Praise God that Dorothy Rodenberg is recovering well from her broken hip.
- * Praise God for healing and progress for Robin Hoss, Pauline Regier's daughter.
- * Praise God for progress made for Cindy, Sara Dick's sister-in-law.
- * Pray for Bill & Anna Lee's granddaughter, Megan, who is dealing with issues with her kidney transplant.
- * Pray for health and strength for Cody Dyck's Uncle Gerald who has cancer.
- * Sympathy is extended to Kaitlen Ortman and family in the death of her grandmother.
- * Pray for Mary Bean's brother Tom, who is undergoing his second round of chemotherapy.
- * Continue praying for Cameron Nightingale as he is now receiving in-patient rehab care and has a long road to recovery.
- * Pray for health and recovery for Denice Klassen's father as well as decisions for his future care.
- * Praise God for the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday and for the hope it brings to all of us!

Superimposed Love

Maybe you've heard how salvation is like a total solar eclipse: God doesn't see our sins because Jesus' holiness covers them completely. Or maybe you've heard how trials can cause an "eclipse of faith."

At WorldChallenge.org, Pastor Gary Wilkerson explains that in Greek, *eclipse* means "I am absent" or "I cease to exist," because people once thought the gods temporarily extinguished the sun. "For Christians, a 'spiritual eclipse' is a dark hour when God seems to be absent from our lives," Wilkerson writes.

Wilkerson points to Peter being sifted like wheat, Elijah and Jeremiah facing extreme discouragement, and David collapsing morally. Amid Satan's attacks, "God seems completely absent," writes the pastor. "In that dark moment of eclipse, the devil has created such chaos we can't possibly see a way out." During times of testing, Christians must cry out to God and trust his faithfulness.

Completing the eclipse analogy, Wilkerson shares Titus 3:4, the "love of God our Savior appeared" (NIV). The Greek meaning of *appeared* here is *superimposed*, he writes. God looks on our fraught-filled times of eclipse and "superimposes his divine love over us."



The **Kansas Mennonite Relief** is April 12-13 at the Hutchinson Fairgrounds! Our contact representatives are Alan & Marilyn Mueller. Please talk with them if you have questions. Get involved and join in the fun! Here are some opportunities:

- ♦ Verenike Making Day is April 6 at Parkview MB Church, 610 S. Main St., Hillsboro and Bohne Beroggi Baking is April 6 at Moundridge High School, 530 Cole Street. Sign-up to help either day at kansas.mccsale.org/volunteer/
- ♦ The Children's Auction needs new, in-the-package items. Hot Wheels, Barbie, board games, Lego, sets, art kits, and sports equipment are always a big hit!
- ♦ Our church is responsible for 15 pies and 20 dozen zwieback. Pie tins and plastic bags are available at the church. Please bring to church by 3:30 pm on Friday, April 12 for delivery.
- ♦ Service opportunities are available as a volunteer. Over 1000 volunteers are needed over the two days. ***Volunteers are needed to help at Feeding the Multitude, New Year's cookies, frying, general auction help, selling, etc.***
- ♦ The Run-for-Relief sign-up sheets are available at the sale's website or scan the QR code on the bulletin board flyer. Sign-up to run or walk and gather your friends and their money to support you!
- ♦ Stay up-to-date or sign-up to help at www.kansas.mccsale.org.

MCC Material Resources Center in North Newton is critically low on inventory for Relief Kits. **YOU CAN HELP by bringing supplies to the MCC Sale.** There will be carts in the Meadowlark (Quilt Building) to collect your supplies. These are the **needed supplies** to complete kits: new infant sleepers (6-12 month sizes); bath towels (dark colored, light to medium weight); laundry bar soap (such as Fels Naptha or Zote brands); shampoo (20 oz min) and spiral notebooks (70 sheets).

Masterworks Concert

All interested singers are invited to participate in Bethel College’s annual Masterworks concert on April 28, featuring Benjamin Britten’s *Rejoice in the Lamb* and Ralph Vaughan Williams’ *Dona Nobis Pacem*. Scores are available now and rehearsals begin Tuesday, April 2. Sign up online at <https://forms.gle/Auu4FaYBcaLwKDuf6> so that your contact information is available for digital rehearsal materials, etc., or come to the first rehearsal April 2, 6 p.m., *Choir Room in Luyken Fine Arts Center at Bethel College*.

Rehearsal Schedule:

(Of note, scores and rehearsal tracks will be provided and are available now. Also, if you are unable to make it to all rehearsals that is just fine! That is where the rehearsal tracks can assist.)

Tues., April 2 (6-8 PM in choir room of FAC)

Tues., April 9 (6-8 PM)

Tues., April 16 (6-8 PM)

Tues., April 23 (6-8 PM)

Fri., April 26 (6-8 PM in Memorial Hall)

Sat., April 27 (3-6 in Mem Hall; pizza to follow)

Performance:

Sunday, April 28 at 4 PM (call time 3 PM in Mem Hall)

CASA A Voice for Children

CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate and currently is in need of volunteers to partner with them to advocate for children in the foster care system.

When children are removed from their homes due to evidence of abuse or neglect, they are placed in the care of the state. Foster care serves as a temporary placement but they are often stuck moving from placement to placement with little hope of reunification. CASA volunteers play a critical role in these children’s lives by building a trusting relationship with these children, determining what is in their best interest and acting as a voice for them in court. CASA volunteers are often the one constant in children’s lives as they go through the child welfare system.

Regrettably, 64 percent of the children in the welfare system in our community do not have a CASA volunteer. Children without a CASA tend to stay in foster care longer and don’t get the help and services they need.

Ways to help and more information is posted on www.9thcasa.org or www.kansascasa.org. You can also participate in blue Sunday, April 28, 2024. Wear blue in honor of child abuse awareness month and take the time to learn more about how you can advocate for children in need.

Edimental Gardening

Women & Girls Save the Date!

Edimental Gardening for Every Growing Space, featuring Renata Goossen will be sponsored by Western District Women in Mission at Faith Mennonite Church, Newton KS on Friday, April 19. The schedule is: 5 - 6 p.m. Browse and purchase plants from Renata's Plant Bus. Bring a salad to share for supper to start at 6 p.m. Plates, cups, utensils, etc. will be provided. The evening program, 6:30 - 7:30, will feature music by Prairie Highway and Renata speaking on her topic of edimental gardening, plants that are both edible and ornamental. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for more details about the evening schedule and our other WDWM activities.

MCC—Supplies Needed

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); laundry soap (such as Fels Naptha or Zote brands); shampoo (20 oz min) and spiral notebooks (70 sheets). 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.

Following the ‘Perfect Fool’



Theologian Frederick Buechner, who died at age 96 in 2022, explored how the “foolishness of God” (see 1 Corinthians 1:25) compares to human wisdom. He pondered the safety stickers that warn, “The life you save may be your own.”

“That is the wisdom of [humans] in a nutshell,” wrote Buechner. “What God says, on the other hand, is ‘The life you save is the life you lose.’ In other words, the life you clutch, hoard, guard and play safe with is in the end a life worth little to anybody, including yourself, and only a life given away for love’s sake is a life worth living.”

Buechner continued, “To bring his point home, God shows us a man who gave his life away to the extent of dying a national disgrace without a penny in the bank or a friend to his name. In terms of [human] wisdom, he was a Perfect Fool, and anybody who thinks [they] can follow him without [being] something like the same kind of a fool ... is laboring under not a cross but a delusion.”

He is Risen

SCUBA VBS 2024



Be a VBS Volunteer!

Save the Dates!

The Halstead Community VBS will be held May 28-31, 2024 from 9-11:30 am in our church. At SCUBA VBS, kids and adults will go deep into an amazing under-sea adventure where they'll experience the ever-flowing, never-ending love of God. Kids will be immersed in the Word and discover what living water is really all about! Volunteers are needed to help guide the 100+ kids during the week.

Volunteer jobs include:

- Preschool Adult and Tween/Teen Helpers
- Registration Helpers
- Elementary Crew Leaders
- Jr. Crew Leaders (kids entering 6th & 7th grade)
- Snack Helpers
- Nursery Workers

Participant and Volunteer Registration is at <https://firstmennonitehalstead.org/vbs>.

Help VBS Build a Reef!

We will be building coral reef displays in May (date TBD) and need some help collecting items. You can help by saving these items and placing them in the boxes under the coat rack.

- Medium and large cardboard boxes (Amazon, Walmart, Sam's delivery); odd shaped boxes are also welcome!
- Cardboard egg cartons
- Paper towel and toilet paper tubes
- Plastic bottle caps (please rinse)
- Packing peanuts
- Brown paper that comes as filler in shipments



Loving Kindness

A Vacation Bible School teacher asked her class, "What do you think the Bible means when it speaks of loving kindness?" "Well," answered a young boy, "If I was hungry and someone gave me bread with butter on it, that would be kindness. And then if they put a spoonful of jam on it, that would be loving kindness."

April Celebrations

- | | |
|--------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Morgan Haury |
| 2 | Mattaniah Kawanguzi |
| 3 | Lu Siemens |
| 3 | Laryssa Stahl |
| 4 | Marilyn Mueller |
| 5 | Kristy Mueller |
| 6 | Marylin Balzer (90 yrs.) |
| 7 | Jim Sutcliffe |
| 7 | Cathleen Frost |
| 10 (A) | Kevin & Heather Finley |
| 11 | Sage Rose |
| 13 | Raquel Wilcox |
| 14 | Tom Koehn |
| 14 (A) | Jim & Joyce Koehn (68 yrs.) |
| 16 | Harley Mohler |
| 16 | Melissa Vogt |
| 18 | Eli Wilcox |
| 18 | David Friesen |
| 19 | Pauline Regier |
| 19 (A) | Richard & Robyn Schmidling |
| 20 | Alan Mueller |
| 20 | Joyce Rodenberg |
| 21 | Pamela Keller |
| 21 | Amanda Keiser |
| 21 | Maeanna Regier |
| 22 | Matthew Regier |
| 22 (A) | Kenneth & Audra Black |
| 23 | Jim Koehn |
| 23 | Dee Ann Lintz |
| 24 (A) | Steve & Raquel Wilcox |
| 24 | Elizabeth Robinson |
| 24 | Hannah Finley |
| 24 | Arnita Haury |
| 25 (A) | Bill & Betty Schowalter (55 yrs.) |
| 25 (A) | Dan & Wilma Mueller |
| 26 | Leon Schmidt |
| 27 | Mick Bean |
| 27 (A) | Elvin & Sue Conard (56 yrs.) |

- | | |
|--------|----------------------------|
| 28 | Elijah Mueller |
| 28 | Mark Rodenberg |
| 28 | Robyn Schmidling |
| 28 | Katie Penner |
| 29 | Addilyn Smoker |
| 30 (A) | Bruce & Larisa Nightingale |

Hooray for VBS!

For many churches, Vacation Bible School is a summer highlight. The event leads to lasting memories and changed hearts. It also sparks laughter. Maybe you've seen VBS humor online, such as the quote, "I'm tired, I mean like ... vacation Bible school kind of tired!" Another post reads, "You know you're obsessed with VBS when ... you're excited about cardboard on the side of the road." And anyone with an earworm at week's end can relate to this meme: "My parents hid my VBS CD. It's for the best."

For hungry young learners, snacks make an especially big impression. One excited preschooler shared that she enjoyed "juice and Billy Graham crackers" at VBS. Another boy raved about the first day, saying, "We heard stories and drew pictures. Then we went to play, and when we came inside, God had juice and cookies waiting for us!"

