

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

Eden Mennonite Church invites you to their production of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* by Barbara Robinson. In this hilarious Christmas play, a couple struggling to put on a Christmas pageant is faced with casting the Herdman kids—probably the most inventively awful kids in history. Admission is free for this funny and heart-warming telling of the Christmas Story on Saturday, December 13, at 7:00 p.m. (doors open at 6:30 p.m.) and Sunday, December 14, at 2:00 p.m. (doors open at 1:30 p.m.). Eden Mennonite Church is located at 401 18th Ave. Moundridge.



December 2025
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The Church Corner



First Mennonite Church
427 W. 4th Street
Halstead, KS 67056
www.firstmennonitehalstead.org
Pastor Steve Wilcox

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Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.
Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.
****The service is livestreamed on the church's 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 and
- Embrace new people in the love of Christ.

Thoughts About Outreach

I was chatting recently with someone about our Kids Club program, and they mentioned how different it looks now compared to when it first started years ago. Before I even started here, Kids Club was mostly our own church kids gathering for singing, Bible lessons, and activities. Fast forward to today, and it looks a little different.

We now have a higher number of kids from the community than kids from our own congregation with many of their families sticking around for dinner and fellowship afterward. These families, who likely would never have set foot in our church, are now sitting around tables with us, sharing a meal, and getting to know us. It's become a wonderful opportunity to connect with our broader community. I have run into many of these families around town, and I now have a basis for starting a conversation.

This reminds me that Jesus had this habit of welcoming people, all kinds of people, and often around food. And when the disciples tried to shoo away the children, he stopped them and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14). That's a good thing to keep in mind when we see those kids running around our building. Every single child who walks through our doors matters to Jesus. Every. Single. One.

Someone might ask, would Kids Club still be worth doing if not a single kid from

our church attended? I would say yes, and the more I think about it, the more convinced I am. Of course, having our own kids here to teach about Jesus is important. But our calling doesn't stop at our own doorstep. We're told to be "the light of the world" and that "a city on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5:14). That's a call to action! We're meant to shine outward, to be visible, to make a difference in the places we live.

Kids Club has become a natural bridge to our community, and it works because it's not complicated. We love kids. We teach them about Jesus. We share food. We build relationships. It's not a slick marketing campaign; it's just the church being the church, loving people the way Jesus did. So it just makes me wonder, are there other ways we can just be the church doing church that lets us find ways to connect with our neighbors, to serve our community, to demonstrate the love of Christ in practical, everyday ways? I'm not saying we need to launch ten new programs. That's not the point. Outreach isn't really about programs at all. It's about people. It's about seeing our community the way Jesus sees it, not as outsiders to be tolerated, but as neighbors to be loved, friends to be made, and souls who matter deeply to God.

The point is keeping our eyes open, our hearts ready, and our hands willing. The point is remembering that Jesus came "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10), and He invites us to be part of that mission right where we are.

Blessings,
Pastor Steve



- 1 Mette Davis
- 2 Lois Loflin
- 3 (A) Steven & Virginia Koehn
- 4 Jim Gundy
- 4 Aaron Koop
- 5 Ethan Wilcox
- 6 John Keller
- 7 Kristine Regier
- 8 Jim Loflin
- 8 Dwight Lohrenz
- 9 Bill Schowalter
- 9 Quinlan Kaufman
- 10 Mike Bollinger
- 10 Tom Rose Jr.
- 11 Melody Robinson
- 12 Lydia Regier
- 12 Sandy Lewis
- 14 Dwight Mueller
- 14 Julie Lee
- 14 Brianna Oneth
- 15 Michaela Forkenbrock
- 15 Joe Duerksen
- 15 (A) Shaun & Amanda Evanoff
- 15 (A) Tom and Bea Rose
- 16 Sara Dick
- 17 Manon Lee
- 17 Alan Franz
- 19 Duncan Haury
- 20 Thomas Koehn
- 21 Sandy Allen

- 21 James Nightingale
- 23 Josh Allen
- 24 Hannah Keiser
- 24 Scott Chandler
- 25 Larry Regier
- 26 Kirby Stucky
- 26 (A) Shaun & Sandra Whitesell
- 30 (A) John & Nancy Back
- 31 Barry Unruh
- 31 Marj Matula
- 31 Sharon Finley

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- Stewardship Ministry – Treasurer's report – Larry reported a budget balance of \$5552.50 at the end of September. James reported that we will be receiving an insurance check of \$25,500 for damages to the roof and glass from the hail storm. He is also working on getting rid of the bats in our church.
- Worship Ministry – Gregg reported that November 30 will be tree decorating and the Bell Choir will do the Christmas Eve Service.
- Items raised in ministry reports – Membership was discussed and what is required to be a member of the Council. A motion was made by Larry to create an appendix of the Constitution defining membership to include Covenant members, seconded by Sandy. A vote will be taken by the congregation before the end of November. *Revised 11-23-25 - No vote was taken. The Council will continue discussion about this in the November meeting.*

Council Meeting Minutes

from Oct. 27, 2025

- Pastor Steve opened the meeting with prayer. September minutes were approved as written.
- Discernment Team – Ruth reported that Sara Smoker will be taking the chairperson role for the Gifts Discernment Team. We are in search of a different church treasurer (Larry will resign at the end of January) and a Church Council secretary (Marilyn is resigning). Ruth brought up the question of whether membership is required and discussion followed. Additional notes in the items raised in ministry reports bullet point.
- Vision Team – Chuck reported that they prepared the Council pastor review. There was continued conversation on what membership looks like. They are meeting with the different ministries, checking in and making sure people are not feeling stuck in a position and whether they are needing any assistance to improve the function of the ministry.
- Care Ministry – Ron reported that we have a number of health needs in our congregation, and they are also working to get the Prayer Chain updated so that those who don't have email know about changes/cancellations.
- Hospitality Ministry – Kaitlen/Brocia reported that the last Sunday potlucks have had good attendance. There will be no potlucks in November and December due to other activities. They are working on men's and

women's activities for the near future. Mick Bean will be joining the ministry. Care packages will be sent to college students in December and March before finals. They are planning a nursing home fellowship at Kidron on December 7 and purchasing 200 pens with the church name on them. Jason Smoker and Sandy Allen from the Vision Team met with them to discuss purpose and vision.

- Mission Ministry – Sandy reported that 533 rolls of toilet paper were taken to the Neighbors Store (goal was 500). The Mission Supper is November 15 with proceeds going to Neighbors Store and our Mission Partners - the Givens. Dwight reported via email that we hosted a Mission Sunday on September 21 with Weldon Martens as the guest speaker. The church hog roast was October 26 and was held indoors due to inclement weather. Approximately 150 were served and *Prairie Highway* provided music. Proceeds are not available yet.
- Nurture Ministry – Debbie reported that the winter mission is for backpacks starting in December. Marilyn Mueller will substitute for Ruth Mueller in the Little Blessings SS class during the month of November while she is gone. Kaitlen Ortman and Casey Jacob will be attending the WDC Kids Meet Christ workshop on November 15. 32 kids attended Kids Club this Fall. The winter session of Kids Club will start January 14 and go through March 4. Adult study will start January 21 or 28. The Children's Christmas program - *No Small Parts* - will be December 14.

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December Calendar

			Dec. 17	6:30 p.m.	Adult Bells practice
Dec. 3	6:00 p.m.	Children/Youth program practice.	Dec. 18	9:00 a.m.	Prayer Team meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Adult Bells practice		1:00 p.m.	Care Team meeting
Dec. 6	10:00 a.m.	Women & Girls Brunch	Dec. 23	7:00 p.m.	Adult Bells practice
Dec. 7	10:30 a.m.	Preschool-2 nd grade bells play during worship	Dec. 24	7:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Service
Dec. 10	6:00 p.m.	Children/Youth program practice.	Dec. 28	6:00 p.m.	Sr. High Youth Group
	7:00 p.m.	Adult Bells practice	Dec. 31	7:00 p.m.	New Year's Eve party
Dec. 14	10:30 a.m.	Children/Youth Christmas Program. Joyful Noise plays during worship			
	6:00 p.m.	Jr. & Sr. High Youth Groups			
	6:00 p.m.	Women's Bible Study			
Dec. 15	7:00 p.m.	Church Council meeting			
Dec. 16	7:30 p.m.	Vision Team meeting			

Looking Ahead

Jan. 14	Kids Club resumes
Jan. 25	Covenanting & Anointing Service
Jan. 25	Youth Group Fundraiser Lunch & Annual Meeting



Upcoming Church Events



Christmas Service Schedule

Sunday, Dec. 7

- Preschool - 2nd grade bells play during the worship service.

Sunday, Dec. 14

- Joyful Noise instrumental group performs during the worship service
- Children's/Youth Christmas Program during the worship service.

Wednesday, Dec. 24

- Christmas Eve program at 7:00 p.m.

Bloodmobile

Our church will host the bloodmobile on December 8 from noon – 6 p.m. at the Catholic Parish Center. Please sign up on the bulletin board if you can help work a shift or provide some cookies. Talk with Sara Dick if you have any questions.

Christmas Brunch

All women and girls, along with their guests, are invited to a Christmas Brunch on Saturday, Dec. 6, at 10 a.m. We will spend some time finding joy through fellowship and conversation with those at our table. Please RSVP on the bulletin board by November 30, or to Kaitlen by Wednesday, Dec. 3. If you'd like to help decorate a table or provide food, please add your name to those areas on the sign up sheet.

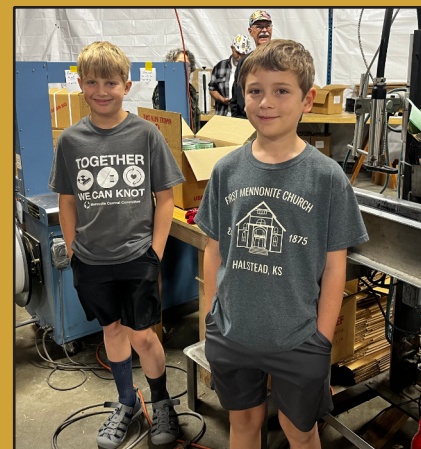


New Year's Eve Party

Everyone is invited to celebrate the New Year with us at church on Wednesday, Dec. 31, starting at 7 pm. Bring snacks and games to share and a white elephant gift if you want to participate in the gift exchange. Join us for a fun evening!



Clockwise from top left: Kalyn Ortman helps label cans; Casey Jacob works on the canner; Liara Dunn and Cindy Siemens dry cans; Ewan Jacob and Isaiah Haspels stamp and pack the cans; Mary Kay Bean, Dale and Janet Ortman and Cindy Siemens work to label cans; Chuck



Mueller and James Nightingale work on the canner.



FMC has a great showing at MCC Meat Canning

MCC now has 15,000 more cans of meat to provide relief to people in need in the name of Christ! First Mennonite was one of nine churches and three student groups that packed almost 22,000 pounds of chicken from Nov. 5-7. The need is so great this year that MCC is shipping out meat as fast as we can it, so thank you very much for sharing your time and your energy and your financial donations!

Across the three days of canning, I got to see 38 members of our church family come in to serve. When the beautiful, long-awaited rhythm of meat canning was stymied by a stuck water pump on the first day, you were all happy to enjoy the harmony of fellowship in the breakroom while you waited. And when extra shifts were needed to catch up, you showed up after work, came out after chores, and jogged in from cross-country practice. Your humble service honored our congregation and magnified our God. It's wonderful to serve with you!

Casey Jacob, Meat Canning Representative

Clockwise from right: Pastor Steve and Gio take cans out to be dried and labeled; Kaitlen and Lakyn Ortman label cans; Dwight Mueller, Ron Dick, Bret Jacob, Larry Regier and Leon Schmidt fill cans with chicken before they are canned.



Church Announcements

1. The church calendar is now online! It can be found on the homepage of the church's website (firstmennonitehalstead.org).
2. The deadline for the January newsletter is Monday, Dec. 22.
3. The Neighbors Store pantry requests mac & cheese and boxed potatoes (scalloped or au gratin) for the month of December.
4. Offering Schedule for December:
Dec. 7: Western District Conf.
Dec. 14: Mutual Aid Fund
Dec. 21: Church Budget
Dec. 28: MC USA
5. The link for our church online library is librarything.com catalog/FMCHalstead.

Treasurer's Report

Budget Balance @1-1-25	239.32
Jan.-Sept. Receipts	111,412.94
Jan.-Sept. Expenses	(106,099.76)
Budget Balance @9-30-25	5,552.50
October Receipts	9,647.07
October Expenses	(13,177.07)
Budget Balance @10-31-25	2,022.50



- Pray for all the activities of the Christmas season—the programs, the musical performances, and the gatherings—that they would be sources of encouragement, hope and joy to those that participate and those that attend.
- Pray for those who have lost a loved one, whether recently or a number of years ago, as they face the holiday season without them. Pray for God's peace and comfort to surround and encourage them.
- Pray for the Stewardship Committee as they oversee the financial aspects of the church and maintain the upkeep on our building. Pray for wisdom and discernment in their decisions and the necessary time needed to accomplish all that needs to be done.
- Pray that our focus will be on giving and serving others during this Christmas season.
- Pray for good health for all in our congregation through the winter.
- Pray for our children and youth, that they will grow in their relationship with Jesus.
- Pray for those for whom life is physically challenging. Pray that their strength and endurance continue as they run their race.



This month features Dale and Dorothy Dick, two of the three longest-attending, current members of First Mennonite Church, the third being John Will. At a time when things are easily discarded and loyalties frequently shift, their lifelong commitment to this church and community is rare and truly something to be treasured.

How long have you attended FMC? Dale has attended FMC his entire life. His parents were part of the church when he was born, and he has been part of the congregation for 90 years and counting. Dorothy, 96, began attending when she was two years old, currently giving her 94 years at FMC. For the first two years of her life, her family attended another church. After a visit from the pastor of FMC at that time, Dorothy's mother decided she and all nine of her children would begin attending First Mennonite.



Dale and Dorothy Dick

How did the two of you get together? Although Dale and Dorothy both grew up at FMC, the age difference between them meant they didn't really know each other, even though they each knew of the other's existence. When Roland Goering was pastor from 1954-1961, he started a group called the Earnest Endeavor Society. The group was for singles who hadn't gone to college, and Dale and Dorothy were both part of it. Goering decided the group would perform a play each year. During the fourth or fifth play, Dale played the part of a minister and Dorothy played the part of his daughter. "And that's when we became acquainted," Dorothy said. The couple married in June 1958 and have been married for 67 years. According to Dorothy, John and Marge Will were another couple who married because of the Earnest Endeavor Society.

What ways have you served or been involved at FMC over the years? Dale has served FMC as an usher, treasurer, trustee and head trustee. It was during his time as trustee that the ramp was installed outside

the church. Dorothy sang in the choir and the sextet, played bells and piano, and played the organ once she taught herself how to play. She also served five pastors during her 25 years as church secretary.

What about FMC means the most to you? The relationships at FMC have been important to them. "Other than the people in the church we didn't know too many people," Dick said.

What's a special memory you have connected to FMC? The golf outings and the basketball team the church had for a couple of years are enjoyable memories for Dick. For Dorothy, the Earnest Endeavor group and the sextet hold a special place in her heart. "The sextet was a special thing," Dorothy said. "We made a record, sang at a lot of funerals and even sang on TV one time."

What's something people might be surprised to learn about you? Dorothy only took piano lessons for one winter. She taught herself how to play the organ by practicing several times a week at the Presbyterian Church on her way to work at an insurance office in Halstead. This was before she and Dale moved to the country. She has eleven hymns she still plays every day.

For the first three years of their marriage, Dick worked at the school in Halstead driving a bus and doing janitorial work. In 1961, they moved to their current property in the country, and Dale began farming with his uncle. After they moved, Dorothy sold car tags and played piano for a country school before the couple's children—Kent, Gregg and Deann—were born. The couple also has four grandsons.

Though they are unable to attend in person anymore, they still watch online when they can. Their roots run deep, forming an important part of FMC's foundation and heritage of faith. While much has changed at FMC during their lifetime and they've seen many people come and go, Dorothy noted, "It's really strange when you look at all the people in church and they've all moved in," adding, "it's neat to meet all these new people."

MCC Event on Giving Tuesday

Give back on Giving Tuesday, December 2, at MCC, from 6:30 - 8 p.m. Bring your family and friends to this casual, come-and-go, all-ages event. Pack hygiene kits, tie comforters, make a cardboard comforter block craft, and enjoy snacks. You can also kick off your holiday shopping by picking gifts for your friends and family from the MCC Christmas Giving Guide. The MCC Center is located at 121 E. 30th in North Newton.

