

THIS WEEK @ FMC

November 12-25, 2025

On this Veteran's Day (Nov 11, 2025) I have learned something new! Diana Butler Bass, a Christian historian and author who I follow, shared a deeply insightful post this morning on the history of this day, taking us all the way back to the 4th century. She writes in ["What to a Christian is the Eleventh of November: How a holy day for a conscientious objector became a holiday for soldiers and the state"](#):

Across Europe, November 11 was an important festival on the Christian calendar — St. Martin's Day, or Martinmas, in memory of a pious bishop of the early church, Martin of Tours.

Martin of Tours (ca. 316-397) was born into a pagan family, but as a young man expressed interest in Christianity. His father, a soldier, was appalled by the religion and forced Martin to join the Roman army. While a soldier, Martin's curiosity about Christianity grew and he became a catechumen, a "learner" of the faith.

According to legend, Martin was on patrol when he saw a naked beggar on the road. Moved with compassion, he dismounted his horse, took off his military cloak, tore it in half, and covered the man. In a dream that night, Jesus appeared to Martin and said, "Martin, a simple catechumen, covered me with this garment." Martin decided to be baptized and asked to be released from the army. "I am Christ's soldier," he maintained, "I am not allowed to fight." He refused to wield the sword for Caesar.

Martin didn't invent this position. He stated what most early Christians believed. Before theologians made a case for just war, Christians were primarily pacifists. Indeed, no record exists that Christians served in the Roman army before 170. The overwhelming consensus of the early church was that war was killing in service to the empire, killing was murder, and murder was wrong. Martin left the army and became a monk, a priest, and finally, a bishop. He was known for peacemaking and his generosity toward the poor, especially children.

After his death, he was made a saint. His festival coincided with the harvest — and the day came to celebrate gratitude, abundance, and gift giving. It always focused on the poor in memory of St. Martin's good deeds. Martinmas was one of the most popular of all Christian holy days through the Middle Ages and into early modern Europe.

Martin's story lent itself to another tradition — the practice of signing peace treaties on his feast day. Several wars ended with peace made in honor of St. Martin, including signings in 1500, 1606, 1648, 1865, and 1918. The ancient celebration of this Roman soldier turned conscientious objector was the reason why Armistice Day wound up on November 11.

This is just the beginning of her post – I'd encourage you to click [here](#) to read the entire post! I am inspired, challenged and encouraged by this deep dive into history to meet St Martin! And, if you're up for more reading, I'd also highly recommend Brian Kaylor's (of A Public Witness) post today titled [Ending Wars](#) which draws connections between the end of the "Great War" on Nov 11, 1919 and current political realities, especially the shift away from positioning our military as defense and toward active preparation for war.

Pastor Tonya

NOTE: Our next THIS WEEK will post on November 25.

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP at 9:30am

The link to join is on our website: www.hutchfmc.org Join 5 minutes early for announcements. The bulletin can be found under the BULLETINS tab on our home page.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2025 – ISAIAH: A Child is Born

Isaiah 9:1-7; (John 8:12)

Preacher: Tonya Ramer Wenger

Worship Leader: Anita Kehr

Pianist: Peggy Stucky

Song Leader: Shane Miller

Children's Time: Heidi Unruh

Scripture Reader: Jean Gaeddert

Prayers of the People: send prayer concerns to Pastor Tonya 620-513-2828

Ushers: Russ & Jean Gaeddert, Sadie Pritchett

Nursery Attendant: Magdalena Wenger

Sound Tech: Earl Ediger & Allen Yoder

Livestream Tech: Jonathan Wenger

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2025 – JEREMIAH'S LETTER TO EXILES

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-14; (John 14:27)

Preacher: Tonya Ramer Wenger

Worship Leader: Santalena Caudillo

Organist: Pauline Buller

Song Leader: Bryan Kehr & Matthew Yoder

Children's Time: TBD

Scripture Reader: Randy Rempel

Prayers of the People: send prayer concerns to Pastor Tonya 620-513-2828

Ushers: Cheryl Warkentin & Russell Goering

Nursery Attendant: Joel & Hilda Iwashige

Sound Tech: Shane Miller

Livestream Tech: Jay Goering

SHARING JOYS & CONCERNS

During each worship service, you are invited to text your prayer joys and concerns – usually to Pastor Tonya. You are also invited to send prayer joys & concerns during the week. The recording of our worship service is public, so let us know if you'd prefer your request to only be shared via email during the week.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements are scrolled Sunday mornings before and after worship. There will be no spoken announcements unless there are pressing announcements that did not make it into the PowerPoint. Please send any announcements you'd like to have included to the church office by Thursday each week.

OFFERINGS

We welcome, and are grateful for, your financial donations to our ministry here in Hutchinson. Instead of collecting an offering during worship (except on special occasions), an offering box is placed at the back of the sanctuary for your Sunday morning donations. You can also now make a donation directly from our website (www.hutchfmc.org) using a credit card or your banking account. You are also welcome to send a check to 52 Rambler Rd Hutchinson KS 67502.

CALENDAR – LOOKING AHEAD

November 12 – 6:30-8:00pm – practicing Confessional Bible Study with Pastor Tonya (all are welcome)
November 15 – Mennonite Friendship Communities Christmas Bazaar, 9am-noon, Sunnydell Dining area
November 16 – Second Annual Blessing of the Pets – 4:30pm, columbarium area
November 19 – *We'll Leave Our Lights On* drive for Food Bank, 5:00-7:00pm at participating churches
November 21 – Bethel College and Hutchinson Community College Choirs joint concert, 7:00pm at FMC
December 7 – FMC Annual Congregational Meeting (+ lunch and silent auction fundraisers for sr youth)
December 8 – Craft Night 6:30-8:00 in Fellowship Hall
December 10 – Choir rehearsal (5:15-6:15pm) in preparation for Lessons & Carols Service
December 14 – FMC leads worship at Mennonite Friendship Communities
December 21 – Lessons and Carols worship service (+ evening Longest Night/Soup Supper/Caroling)

REMINDER: If you are last one out of the church building, be SURE the doors lock behind you.

DEEPENING in Christ...

PRAYER GROUPS & OPPORTUNITIES

If you would like to join with others at FMC for prayer, please let the church office know.

Tuesday (11:30am-12:30pm) ecumenical Centering Prayer group is meeting weekly this fall. For more details, contact Pastor Tonya.

LPC: Listening-Prayer-Conversation Groups

These groups meet for an hour once/month in the Common Grounds room and are facilitated by Pastor Tonya. The format allows for time in prayer by yourself and also with the group. Any are welcome to join, or to just come and check it out! It's also possible to join on Zoom if you prefer.

Our December gatherings are: Tuesday December 9 at 1:00pm
 Wednesday December 10 at 6:30pm

OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE CONFESSIONAL BIBLE STUDY WITH PASTOR TONYA

Last spring Pastor Tonya was trained at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in a specific method of Bible Study being used in their Orienting with the World program for churches. You are invited to come Wednesday evening November 12 from 6:30-8:00pm to experience this style of study, and to help Pastor Tonya have a chance to practice leading it!

FALL WORSHIP @ FMC – LIVING INTO GOD'S STORY

We continue this fall exploring the story of God in the Hebrew scriptures which will lead us up to Advent (beginning Nov 30 this year). Remaining services include...

November 16 - Isaiah: A Child Is Born (*Isaiah 9:1-7*) Pastor Tonya preaching

November 23 - Jeremiah's Letter to Exiles (*Jeremiah 29:1, 4-14*) Pastor Tonya preaching

MISSION FESTIVAL – Sunday November 9

You can still make a donation toward our Mission Festival offering which will be given to the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery. If you missed this service, its worth watching online [HERE!](#)

ADVENT-CHRISTMAS-EPIPHANY 2025 – *THE WILL TO DREAM*

Our worship series this Advent-Christmas-Epiphany comes from Illustrated Ministry, focusing on the theme *The Will to Dream: In this time of upheaval, we find trust is fragile, truth contested, and spaces between us feel harder to cross. Divisions stretch far and wide. The constant churn of political tension leaves many feeling anxious and uncertain. Community feels strained, and connection is harder to come by. Hearts are*

weary, and souls unsettled, and people of all perspectives are searching—not just for answers, but for understanding, healing, and hope. This ache is not weakness; it is a holy longing—a sacred desire for a world made whole. From this longing comes the will to dream—a persistent courage to imagine, resist, and rebuild a better world.

Advent begins on **November 30**. Be sure to pick up an *Advent Calendar* before then – for any who wish to use them (they will be available soon)! Our traditional *Lighting of the Christmas Tree during worship and our church's Annual Meeting* are both on **December 7** (including lunch and silent auction as fundraisers for the youth group). *Lessons and Carols* will be on **December 21**. Also on **December 21**, in the evening, we'll hold our *Longest Night Service, a soup supper, and Christmas caroling*. And you might want to start reflecting now on how your 2025 *Star Word* has guided you this year, in preparation for sharing on **January 4** (Epiphany) when we will receive new Star Words for 2026. Watch here for more details about upcoming worship services!

FALL SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES for all ages @ 11am!

Children (age 2-5th grade) and Junior Youth (6th-8th) use Shine Curriculum from MennoMedia. This fall's theme is: ***Fall of a Kingdom***, focusing on "*Calling On God – Psalms*" and "*Exile and Restoration – 1 & 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Ezra*".

Senior Youth (9th-12th grade) meet with Jonathan Wenger, Tanya Martin Nisly, and various other teachers (including Pastor Tonya) through the year to build community, support each other, study the Bible, theology, and Anabaptist history. We also consider baptism, discuss current events and faith, and more.

The Adult Class studying the Salt and Light Bible Study this fall with the theme, "*Their Story, Our Story, and God's Message*," written by Osheta Moore. The study will include scripture texts from Genesis, Jeremiah and John's epistles. They are meeting in the fellowship hall and a Zoom option will be available.

A "**Conversation & Connection**" adult group also meets informally during the Sunday School hour. Contact Maggie Pounds for more information or with questions about this group!

Sunday School classes meet at 11:00am throughout the church building. We do not have Sunday School on the 5th Sundays and on some major holidays.

WDC's KIDS MEET CHRIST worship initiative . . . November 15 @ Hope Mennonite 10am-4pm

Preparing the Way for Children in Worship Event is a day of fellowship and learning about how to prepare the way for children in worship. Contact Joy Miller, Children's Faith Formation Coordinator, if you would like to participate.

UPPER ROOM and REJOICE! devotional magazines - available above the mailboxes

- *UPPER ROOM* .. November, December
- *Rejoice!* .. September, October, November

STRENGTHENING Community Connections...

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

- Tuesday and Thursday 9:00am – 2:00pm
- Wednesday 12 noon – 3:00pm

PASTOR TONYA'S HOURS/SCHEDULE

Office hours:

- Monday: Day Off
- Tuesday-Friday: generally working 8:00am-5:30pm
- "In Office" Hours: 9-2 Tuesday and Thursday; noon-3pm Wednesdays
- Available other times by appointment.
- Available evenings and weekends (cell phone is most reliable)

Tonya has completed the Transforming Community experience, which gave shape to her sabbatical time spread out over 2 ½ years. She will be continuing a quarterly retreat rhythm (closer to home, beginning in January!) and will be observing a 'Day Apart' in the months she is not taking a retreat. Her day apart in November will be November 26 (Wednesday).

CHOIR for LESSONS & CAROLS SERVICE . . . December 21

Singers – whether you have sung with us before or you would like to join us for the first time – you are invited to join us for two rehearsals – December 10 and 17 at 5:15pm. If you plan to sing, would you please text or email Pauline or leave a message in the church office 620-662-9385.

WINTER/SPRING 2026 BOOK GROUP . . . CHERISHED BELONGING, Gregory Boyle

The Wednesday book group has chosen their next read - to begin sometime in February 2026. We'll be reading Cherished Belonging by Gregory Boyle. A summary of the book is at the very end of this newsletter. Having read one of Boyle's other books and having heard him speak, I can attest to his gift of storytelling with an eye out for the power of God's grace and compassion showing up in unexpected ways, places and people. The group typically meets Wednesdays at 1:00pm and all are welcome to join. If you need help getting a copy, let me know. – Pastor Tonya

NOTE of APPRECIATION from RUSS GEHRING

To Whom it May Concern,

I just want to thank you for those who have gone to visit my mother (Gloria) in the Waldron Place Assisted Living. She very much appreciates those who have come to see her. I think it helps brighten up her day. May the Lord bless each and every one of you that have taken the time out of your daily schedules to go see her. Glory to God! - Russ Gehring

FMC's ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING . . . October 26 . . . meeting notes

- Minutes of two congregational meetings were approved: December 8, 2024 and June 1, 2025.
- Proposed 2025-26 budget was presented and approved.
- Martha Miller was affirmed as a new member of the Faith Formation Coordination Team, replacing Joy Miller, who has now become our Children's Faith Formation Coordinator.
- Allen Yoder shared on behalf of the Trustees, about building/grounds maintenance and updates.
- Pastor Tonya shared opportunities for volunteers in several of FMC's initiatives: (1) helping with set up and clean up for Sunday morning fellowship time; (2) Be part of a team to put together a new pictorial directory for FMC; (3) Take charge of posting pictures to our website, including getting permission from individuals to do so; (4) Plan and lead the 10am Sunday morning worship service our church is responsible for at Mennonite Friendship Communities on December 14.

ARMS WIDE OPEN – FMC's history book

The amazing story of First Mennonite Church's 100 years is told in the history book prepared for our centennial celebration. Copies of the book are available for \$25.00 (cash or check). You can also purchase a

book online at a price that includes the cost of shipping (click on the “DONATE” button on our website to find this option). Check with the church office to pick up a book.

STRETCHING to Serve as Christ Served...

RENO COUNTY FOOD BANK

Sunday morning donations in November: Canned Fruit

Personal care/hygiene items such as these are appreciated anytime: toilet paper, laundry detergent, bath soap, Kleenex, deodorant, disposable razors, paper towels, shampoo, dish soap, hand/body lotion, toothpaste and toothbrushes. Travel size – new & unopened – are desirable.

Food bank report on FMC’s donations in 2025. Food items were collected at the back of the sanctuary for the first 35 weeks of 2025 with an average total of 13.97 pounds per week. Food items placed in the aisles and brought to the front of the sanctuary during children's time for the 10 weeks ending November 2 averaged 24.2 pounds per week. (The donations have increased with more of a visual presence.) The pounds dropped off on November 3 was the most for a single week this year. A worker at the Food Bank said to be sure to thank the congregation.

Nourishing Our Future Capital Campaign

The Reno County Food Bank will be moving to a new location at 4th and Severence. Their capital campaign will fund the necessary renovations and the purchase of equipment at this location. Contributions may be made online at: <https://www.foodbankofrenocounty.org/campaign> or by sending a check to the Food Bank at this address: Food Bank Capital Campaign, 800 N Walnut, Hutchinson KS 67501. Brochures are available on the table in the foyer or talk with Donna Davis for more information.

FRIENDSHIP MEALS OF RENO COUNTY – Noon Meal offered Monday-Friday

South Central Kansas Area Agency on Aging at 700 N. Walnut, inside the Salvation Army Building.

Social Hour: 11:00-11:45 with **Meals Served:** Beginning at 11:30am; last meals served at 12:15pm

Special Events for Holiday Meals. Prizes for those bringing guests.

Monthly raffle (no purchase or donation necessary)

Age Requirement: 60+ **Cost:** Suggested donation per person is \$4.00. NO ONE 60 or over will be denied a meal. Under 60 cost is \$7.08.

Home delivery can be arranged for those not able to travel.

Questions/Concerns: Lander at 620-663-7491. Donations are tax deductible.

SALTHAWK COMMUNITY SUPPORT (SCS)

Salthawk Community Support is a local nonprofit housed under the umbrella of Trinity UMC that FMC has been involved with from its beginning through Pastor Tonya’s involvement on the board and donations of time, finances, and items from many of you in the congregation. There is a basket in the foyer under the table designated for donations of gently used clothing (appropriate for teens) as well as toiletry items.

Right now, specific requests are for men’s tennis shoes (size 7-10 in neutral colors), deodorant, and individually packaged snacks for students attending tutoring.

MENNONITE FRIENDSHIP COMMUNITIES . . ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR . . November 15

Mennonite Friendship Communities invites you to be part of our annual Christmas Bazaar. Saturday, November 15th. Come to the Independent Living common area to find treasures. Most of the vendors are our residents and staff and family members who are offering everything from baked goods, candies, party

mix and bread to jewelry, Scentsy, wreaths and so much more. Come between 9 am – noon and enjoy interacting with MFC residents and staff while you find goodies for yourself!

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Recycling opportunities at MCC in North Newton, KS! MCC accepts the following materials for recycling, cardboard, books, and paper. We also recycle soft plastics (any plastic packaging that you can stretch with your finger, including Amazon mailers and bubble wrap). We also accept and process wearable clothing, shoes and purses/bags. However, it is best to donate those items to an Et Cetera Shop first, if possible. When you arrive at MCC, follow the signs toward the warehouse and you'll find bins outside under the covered roof for each recyclable item. MCC is located at 121 E. 30th Street in North Newton, questions can be directed to duaneunruh@mcc.org or 316.283.2720.

WE'LL LEAVE OUR LIGHTS ON

Ending hunger in Reno County isn't a job for one church or one organization. It takes a group...a group of friends who believe that together we make a difference. This is our eighth year for our countywide Thanksgiving food drive, "We'll Leave Our Lights On". *The Food Bank of Reno County suggests these items: pasta, peanut butter, mac & cheese, cereal, canned meats, vegetables, fruits, and canned soups.* On Wednesday, November 19, from 5 – 7 p.m., food donations may be taken to ANY participating churches – including FMC.

BETHEL COLLEGE announcements

Tues., Nov. 18 – Guest recital: Seraph Brass, 7 p.m., Krehbiel Auditorium in Luyken Fine Arts Center at Bethel College

Dr. Russell Adrian, Professor Chris Miertschin and **the Bethel College Concert Choir and Wind Ensemble will be doing a short fall tour in central Kansas**, "The Heavens Are Telling," with concerts at the following: **Fri., Nov. 21, 7 p.m.**, First Mennonite Church (52 Rambler Rd., Hutchinson); **Sat., Nov. 22, 1 p.m.**, informal destination concert, St. Fidelis Cathedral on the Plains (900 Cathedral Ave., Victoria); **Sat., Nov. 22, 7 p.m.**, Manhattan Mennonite Church (1000 Fremont St., Manhattan); **Sun., Nov. 23, 10:30 a.m.**, morning worship at Southern Hills Mennonite Church (511 SE 37th St., Topeka). Friday evening's concert, titled "Light," is a collaboration with the Hutchinson Community College Choir and will feature an original composition by Judson Lee, director of choral activities at HCC.

Now in the Regier Art Gallery in Luyken Fine Arts Center at Bethel College: "Between Earth and Sky," multimedia ceramic works by Merrill Krabill, through Nov. 21. Gallery hours are Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Sun. 2-4 p.m.

Calling all bakers and craft makers! You are invited to make items for **5 Places of Christmas** happening on Saturday, December 6, from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm at Goerz House on the Bethel College campus. Bethel College Women's Association will again be selling baked goods, candy, craft items and poinsettias. Your homemade cookies, zweibach, cinnamon rolls, peppernuts and poppyseed rolls are always great sellers. This year we are especially asking for homemade candies such as fudge, peanut clusters, peanut butter balls and peanut brittle, as well as other non-chocolate candies. **We are also looking for Christmas craft items to sell. Please bring your items to Goerz House (2512 College Ave., North Newton, KS) on Friday, December 5, between 2:00 - 5:00 pm or on Saturday, December 6, from 9:30 - 10:00 am.** Thank you for your support of Bethel College.

The 2025 issue of *Mennonite Life*, Bethel College's annual online journal, is now live at ml.bethelks.edu, with articles and reviews by Susan Fish, Ardie Goering, Don Goertzen, Peter Goerzen, Jeff Gundy, Michele

Hershberger, Melanie Howard, Melanie Springer Mock, Justina Neufeld, Ken Rodgers, Mary Schertz and John D. Thiesen.

HESSTON COLLEGE announcements

Hesston College Masterworks Concert

The Hesston College Music Department invites the community to their fall Masterworks Concert featuring the piece, “Song of Wisdom from Old Turtle” on Saturday, November 22, at 7 p.m. in Hesston Mennonite Church. The piece is based on a favorite children’s book. The message and music are beautiful and also deeply meaningful and timely in today’s world.

“Art From the Hearth” exhibit opens at Hesston College

An exhibit titled, “Art From the Hearth” will be featured in the Regier-Friesen Gallery located in Hesston College’s Laban Peachey Center (325 S. College Dr., Hesston) November 3 through 28. The exhibit includes various artists’ created bowls, cups, plates, teapots, etc. and includes recipes in which to fill them. A reception with the artists will take place Wednesday, November 12, 4 to 5:30 p.m. Normal exhibit hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, and admission is free.

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE Training to Protect Our Communities

Churches are called to be places of peace, welcome, and safety for all. Yet, with recent changes to immigration enforcement policies, faith communities are facing new challenges in protecting and accompanying immigrant neighbors. Join MCC’s Immigration Network for a special two-hour virtual training designed to help your church understand immigration enforcement, know your legal rights as a faith community, and develop a plan of action in case immigration agents show up at or near your congregation. Just like we make a fire drill plan for our church, our churches can make an ICE response plan to keep our neighbors safe.

Through this training, participants will:

- Learn what “sensitive locations” are and how immigration enforcement policies have changed.
- Explore how to create a church response plan and understand your rights under the law.
- Learn how community-led Rapid Response Networks operate to support families and document ICE activity.
- Reflect on how our faith calls us to respond with courage, hospitality, and solidarity.

English session on November 25, 6:00–8:00 PM (Central Time); online via Zoom

- Register here: mcc.org/protecting-our-communities

EVERENCE @ NOVEMBER WORKSHOP: Make Medicare an Easy Step

Everence will hold its popular Medicare workshop at its office in North Newton on Tuesday, Nov. 18 at 6:30 p.m. Topics will include, when and where to sign up for Medicare, what Medicare covers, plus an explanation of Medicare Parts A, B, C, and D. Attendance is recommended for those approaching retirement or those ready to sign up for Medicare. The in-person workshop will be held at the Everence office: 3179 N. Main St. Suite 1B, North Newton. Those interested in attending should contact the Everence office at 316-283-3800, 877-467-7294 or central.kansas@everence.com.

WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE announcements

“**Repeal to Heal: Death Penalty Repeal Advances the Culture of Life**”, is the theme for the 2025 *Kansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty* Conference to be held on November 22, at Hudson Auditorium in the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art at Johnson County Community College. A virtual option is available as well. For more information, email info@ksabolition.org or call 785-235-2237.

The decision to sentence someone to death is a statement that the defendant's life is disposable. It is a societal judgment that more violence is the answer to the act of homicide. So instead of stopping the cycle of violence and asking how there can be accountability and healing, we replicate the original act. More pain and trauma result. People are increasingly exploring how the death penalty harms a culture of life. This conference will offer an opportunity to explore this theme further through the lenses of faith and politics.

Speakers include the following: Krisanne Vallaincourt Murphy of Catholic Mobilizing Network, Nan Tolson of Texas Conservatives Concerned and Kansas Representative Bill Sutton, R-District 43. This conference speaks to **A Resolution: The Death Penalty** affirmed by Mennonite Church USA delegates in 2001.

CAMP MENNOSCAH announcements

Volunteers are needed for grounds work. This could be mowing, trail maintenance, string trimming, poison ivy and sticker plant control, or likely any number of other things. Contact us at 620-297-3290 to discuss opportunities!

50,000 MEALS IN 2025! . . . Buhler Mennonite Church & IdeaTek on December 6

We need your help! On Saturday, December 6, 2025 we need your help to package 50,000 meals. There is a job for all ages 7-147 years of age. You can work one shift or both shifts. Job orientation is provided and no previous experience is needed! 1st shift (arrive 8:45am for the 9-11am); 2nd shift (arrive 10:45 for the 11:00am-1pm). Sand Hills Event Center, 4601 N. Plum Street, Hutchinson. For information: 620-543-2733 or email: bmcpastor@gmail.com.

MENNONITE CHURCH USA announcements

Executive Director Glen Guyton urges MC USA to face challenges with faith, reimagine its structure, and engage congregations in shaping a hopeful, Christ-centered future together. Read his Menno Snapshots here: <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/the-future-of-mennonite-church/>

The MC USA Archives is seeking a volunteer to manage and update MennObits, the online searchable public database of Anabaptist/Mennonite related obituaries. The primary task is entering information into the database. The volunteer would also review newspapers and funeral home websites in regions of concentrated Anabaptist/Mennonite populations to find related obituaries to enter. Managing MennObits requires your own computer and about 12 to 16 hours of time per month working from your own home. An Archives staff person will provide training and orientation. If interested, please contact Devon Miller at DevonM@MennoniteUSA.org.

MCC U.S. NATIONAL PEACE & JUSTICE MINISTRIES

Puerto Rico has experienced various ups and downs, including hurricanes, earthquakes and a system of governance that seems to keep communities in constant crisis. What does it mean to work for peace in this context? Join us in beautiful Puerto Rico to learn how the life and teachings of Jesus inform our peacebuilding. For one week we will participate in a process of learning and collective transformation, exploring how to live in solidarity with each other and build a community of peace with biblical foundations. *Participants must have at least an intermediate level of listening and speaking Spanish.*

- **When:** February 15-21, 2026
- **Where:** Rio Grande, Puerto Rico
- **Who:** Young adults, ages 18-30; understanding and speaking Spanish is necessary
- **How:** Register [here](#) by January 12
- **Cost:** \$250.00 (Includes flight to Puerto Rico) guarantees your place at the camp

MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE (MDS)

Our October edition of *On the Level* is now available. In this edition, Executive Director Kevin King shares what gives him goosebumps, learn how MDS volunteers are changing lives in a remote Alaska village and read how volunteering with MDS during Katrina impacted so many lives. Click on this link to read more: <https://conta.cc/4n50530>

Hope amid hardship: MDS works in remote Alaska village. Robert Pitka thinks of MDS volunteers as good workers—and good listeners, too. The tribal administrator for Toksook Bay, home to about 700 people in western Alaska, Pitka recalled when the tribal council first considered inviting MDS to help repair homes in the Nunakauuariut community, who maintain a predominately traditional diet from fishing, and hunting caribou and moose. [Click here to read more](#)

MENNONITE HISTORY TOUR TO POLAND . . . BETHEL COLLEGE tour July 10-21, 2026

Poland was the refuge and homeland for generations of Mennonites during years of intolerance after the Protestant Reformation. As a result, the history of Poland is part of the history of many Mennonites around the world. As early as the 1530s, Anabaptists from Holland and the lowlands of the Rhine and North Germany found a sanctuary in the Polish Commonwealth. Unlike Switzerland and the Holy Roman Empire, Poland rejected the brutal religious persecutions plaguing Western Europe. As a result, along with others seeking religious freedom and economic opportunity, many Dutch and German Mennonites settled in Poland, and remained there until later migrations took some to Ukraine and others to the American Midwest and southern Manitoba. This tour is designed to reacquaint persons of Mennonite descent, and others, with the country that provided their ancestors a safe and secure homeland for so many years from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries.

Information here: <https://mla.bethelks.edu/information/mpsa.php>

Wednesday book group read for Winter/Spring 2026 . . . Cherished Belonging by Gregory

Boyle. Book summary: Over the past thirty years, (Jesuit priest) Gregory Boyle has transformed tens of thousands of lives through his work as the founder of Homeboy Industries, the largest gang-intervention program in the world. The program runs on two unwavering principles: 1) We are all inherently good (no exceptions), and 2) we belong to each other (no exceptions).

Boyle believes that these two ideas allow all of us to cultivate a new way of seeing the world. Rather than the tribalism that excludes and punishes, this new narrative proposes a village that cherishes. Pooka, a former gang member, puts it plainly: “Here, love is our lens. It is how we see things.”

In *Cherished Belonging*, Boyle calls back to Christianity’s origins as a spiritual movement of equality, emancipation, and peace. Early Christianity was a way of life—not a set of beliefs. Boyle’s vision of community is a space for people to join together and heal one another in a new collective living, a world dedicated to kindness as a constant and radical act of defiance. As one homie, Marcus, told a classroom filled with inner-city teenagers, “If love was a place, it would be Homeboy.”

Cherished Belonging invites us to nurture the connections that are all around us and live with kindness. Boyle believes that “the answer to every question is, indeed, compassion.” Through colorful and profound stories brimming with wisdom, humor, and inspiration, we understand that love is the light inside everything.