

THIS WEEK @ FMC -- December 17-23, 2025

Kate Bowler, in her 2025 Advent series (which you can read and subscribe to on [Substack](#)), has some great reflections on JOY this week that resonate with where I was trying to go with my sermon this past Sunday. Below are a few excerpts from her posts of the last couple days. May God provide the moments of 'great joy' you most need this Advent season, meeting you right where you are! ...*Pastor Tonya*

"This is the week the church hands us the rose-colored candle—Gaudete, "rejoice"—and honestly, it feels a little audacious. Joy? Now? In the middle of waiting and worry and the endless parade of tragedies? Joy while we're juggling grief and gift lists? But here's what Advent keeps teaching me: joy is not something we engineer. It is something God gives. It is Christ drawing near in the middle of our wildly unfinished, aching ordinary lives. Sometimes joy knocks politely. Sometimes it barges in with its shoes still on. Either way, it stays long enough to remind us that the story isn't over yet—and all is not lost."

--- Kate Bowler ([Advent Week 3: JOY – When joy barges in and reminds us we're still here](#))

And, a prayer to close her [December 15 reflection on the hymn Joy to the World](#):

*"Blessed are we whose hearts feel crowded and tired,
who hear an old song and dare to hum along.
Blessed are we who make a little room anyway—
in sinkful kitchens, in traffic, in grief—
and find that Joy has already arrived,
ringing the doorbell with both hands."* (Kate Bowler)

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, DECEMBER 21, 2025 – ADVENT 4 .. THE WILL TO DREAM: MERCIFUL LOVE

Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Luke 1:57-80 and Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Worship Leader: Maggie Pounds

Scripture Readings presented by our college and graduate students

The story of prophecy and of Jesus' birth sung by the choir and congregation

Organist and choir director: Pauline Buller

Pianist: Tonya Ramer Wenger

Soloists: Hannah Nisly, Magdalena Wenger, Bryan Kehr, Maggie Pounds

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

Ushers: Shane Miller & Russell Goering

Nursery Attendant: Julie Goering

Sound Tech: Earl Ediger & Allen Yoder

Livestream Tech: Reuben Wenger

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

December 21 – Lessons and Carols worship service

+ Longest Night @5:00pm, Soup Supper @ 5:45pm, Caroling @ 6:30pm

December 24 – Christmas Eve Service (family friendly) at 7:00pm – bring sweet or savory finger food for fellowship after the service!

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 (11:00am-Noon – NOTE NEW TIME!) 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.

Upcoming gatherings are:

Tues December 16 at 1:30pm & Tues January 13 at 1:30pm

Wednesday January 14 at 6:30pm

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: 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.*

December 21: Fourth Sunday of Advent – The Will to Dream: *Merciful Love* – Lessons and Carols

December 24: 7:00pm Christmas Eve – The Will to Dream: *Embodied Promise*

December 28: First Sunday After Christmas – The Will to Dream: *Generational Praise* – Pastor Tonya

January 4: Epiphany – The Will to Dream: *Courageous Defiance (+ Star Words)* – Pastor Tonya preaching

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE & SOUP MEAL + CAROLING in church neighborhood ... December 21

5:00pm: On December 21, the longest night of the year, you are invited to a quiet service called ***Longest Night: Christmas in a Time of Loss*** beginning at 5pm in the church sanctuary (and on livestream). This gathering is especially for those who are finding it hard to navigate the holidays. There are many reasons this season can feel heavier – grief or illness, anxiety or estrangement, financial stress, or simply the exhaustion of trying to hold it all together. Sometimes the brightness of the season makes the ache even deeper. If that's where you find yourself, you are not alone. Come for a gentle time of worship ... a quiet place held within the peace of the Christmas story and the deep hope it still offers.

5:45pm: Following the service, we'll share a **soup supper together beginning around 5:45pm. *Thanks for all the volunteers to bring soup!***

6:30pm: After dinner, **beginning around 6:30pm, those who wish will go Christmas caroling** in the church neighborhood. We'll then ***return to the church for dessert – please bring finger food desserts to share!***

You are invited to one or all of the evening events!!

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP – 7PM ON DECEMBER 24

You (and your family and friends) are all invited to our intergenerational Christmas Eve service, beginning at 7pm. The service includes opportunities for participation of all ages through scripture reading, acting out the Christmas Story (come a bit early to get your costume – no rehearsal required!), singing, playing the Kristal Bells, lighting candles, and more. The service will include dedication of the Baby Bundles and offering to cover the cost and the shipping of the bundles. The service is followed by a Christmas fellowship time in the basement – bring sweet or savory finger foods to share in this time of celebration.

FALL SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES for all ages @ 11am -- NO Sunday School on Dec 28 AND Jan 4
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) meets weekly for Sunday School in the youth room upstairs with Jonathan Wenger and Tanya Martin Nisly.

The Adult Class studying the Salt and Light Bible Study this fall with the theme, *"Living God's Abundant Life,"* by Jo-Ann A. Brant. The study will include scripture texts from John, 1 Thessalonians and Lamentations. 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.

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

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

STRENGTHENING Community Connections...

CHURCH OFFICE REGULAR HOURS

- Tuesday and Thursday 9:00am – 2:00pm
- Wednesday 12 noon – 3:00pm
- Church office will be closed between Christmas and New Year's Day. Pastor Tonya will be available by cell phone (620-513-2828).

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's next day apart in December is TBD.

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

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 December: Pasta

January: Peanut Butter

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.

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.

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 new toiletry items (especially gender neutral deodorant). We are also looking for **adults to mentor high school youth**. This involves meeting with them once/week for 30-45 minutes to be a supportive and encouraging presence. Talk to Pastor Tonya if interested in exploring this. **AND, put January 31, 2026 on your calendar for the next "The Men Cook" fundraiser for Salthawk Community Support, held at the Art Center from 7:00-8:30pm.** Tickets are \$45 and can be purchased from Pastor Tonya or at the door.

BABY BUNDLES for MCC

Anytime before December 24, donate \$25 to cover the cost of an Infant Care Kit (also known as Baby Bundles!) for *Mennonite Central Committee*. We will dedicate these bundles during our Christmas Eve service and then deliver them to MCC to be sent to families around the world who need some extra support and love for their babies. A basket on the table in the foyer displays the contents of a kit for a baby girl and a kit for a baby boy. An offering will be received on Christmas Eve to cover the cost of the bundles and shipping to their destinations.

OTHER GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

MCC Christmas Giving - Choose gifts that honor your loved ones and change lives across the globe. MCC has 20 alternative gift options for you to choose from this Christmas season starting at just \$12. Cards and e-cards are available to accompany your gift. Start here mcc.org/christmas and if you have any questions please contact the MCC Central States office at centralstates@mcc.org or 316.283.2720.

Western District Conference is an extension of and support for the work of our member congregations, with resources such as:

- Transitional ministers and hands-on support for churches navigating pastoral transitions.
- Resource Library – the oldest and largest Mennonite church resource center in the US, with an expanding selection of digital resources.
- *New Kids Meet Christ* program – supporting congregations to reimagine worship to better engage children.
- Coaching for leaders of emerging faith communities and scholarships for seminary students.
- Consulting with churches for pastor-congregation reviews, updating policies, safe0church training, and more.

We work to build a conference sustained by a consistent rhythm of regular giving. Give here:

<https://forms.ministryforms.net/embed.aspx?formId=c50eb5b3-a9b7-4431-ba3c-bcb6744f74f1>

Mennonite Church USA invites you to take two minutes to watch this inspiring video:

(<https://youtu.be/Rp3QoXAnnOQ>) highlighting how Mennonite Church USA staff, Mennonite Mission Network and MennoMedia are working together to share Christ's hope in tangible ways. As you watch, we hope you'll consider joining us in ***The Great Menno Give***. Your generosity helps create accessible faith resources, support mission workers and strengthen congregations across our church family. We are deeply grateful for the faithful, caring community that makes this work possible year after year.

<https://www.mennoniteusa.org/give/>

OVM (Offender Victim Ministries)

Holiday Greetings, First Mennonite Church! We'd like to wish you a safe, meaningful, and inspired holiday season. We are grateful you are part of the local Restorative Justice community. We are grateful you understand the challenges of walking with all involved when harm has happened between two (or more) parties. We'd like to share a brief newsletter with you - you can find it [HERE](#) - of positive impacts by OVM volunteers and staff. We'd like to ask you to consider a tax-deductible financial gift to OVM as 2025 winds down. We need support from individuals, churches, and granting bodies - but especially individuals. Would you consider a gift of \$100? If that's too high, we appreciate the amount you are able to give. If \$100 is too low, we appreciate any additional amount you are able to give. If you're able to support OVM financially, options include cash, check, electronic gift via [Venmo](#) or [Paypal](#) (credit card one-time or monthly recurring), DAF or QCD contributions, other charitable gifts and estate gifts. All qualified gifts are tax deductible. Thank you! If you know someone who is like-minded and would be excited about the [Mission](#) of OVM, please feel free to forward this to them.

Peace – Todd Lehman, Executive Director

INTERFAITH HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Earn a 75% Kansas Income Tax Credit. Invest in Kansas. Empower Lives. Get Rewarded.

Your donation not only changes lives — it rewards you, too.

Here's how it works:

- Donate to the IDA program administered by Interfaith Housing & Community Services.
- Receive a 75% Kansas income tax credit.
- Credits are refundable, meaning if your credit exceeds your tax liability, you'll receive the difference as a refund.

When you support individual Development Accounts (IDAs) through Interfaith Housing & Community Services, your donation helps hardworking Kansans achieve dreams like:

- Buying their first home
- Paying for essential home repairs
- Starting or expanding a small business
- Pursuing college or vocational training

For every dollar participants save, their contributions are matched 2:1, helping them build assets and long-term financial stability. To claim your IDA tax credit or learn more, contact Lacy Stauffacher 620-259-9919.

BETHEL COLLEGE announcements

Kauffman Museum at Bethel College invites you to visit during the holidays. There is currently a recently restored 17th-century Bible from the Jake T. Friesen family on display, only through the end of December. The museum is closed Mondays, Christmas Day and New Year's Day and open 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve; Regular hours are 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. weekdays, 1:30-4:30 p.m. weekends. The current special exhibit is "Voices of Conscience: Peace Witness in the Great War." Permanent exhibits are "Of Land and People," "Mirror of the Martyrs" and "Mennonite Immigrant Furniture." The museum store is also open during those hours, with books, games, art and other gift items for sale (see <https://www.kauffmanmuseum.org/museum-store>).

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

CAMP MENNOSCAH announcements

Summer staff applications for the 2026 Summer Camps are open. The application and further information can be found [here](#) or at the link at the end of this announcement. Summer staff need to be 18 or older, preferably with one year of college, work or volunteering. Contact Olivia at 316-293-7313 or olivia.bartel@campmennoscah.org with questions. <https://www.campmennoscah.org/vnews/display.v/SEC/Programs%7CSummer%20Youth%20Camps%3E%3ESummer%20Youth%20Camp%20Staff%20Application>

Camp Mennoscah is looking for a volunteer to work with the camp website. This would include regularly updating information and potentially a complete overhaul of the website itself. The details of the work would depend on the skills of the volunteer and time they have available. Please contact office@campmennoscah.org or call 620-297-3290 to start the conversation.

Thank you to everyone who has gifted us wish list items! We would be happy to receive kitchen knives, "restaurant style" hot pads (example: <https://www.webstaurantstore.com/choice-10-x-11-terry-cloth-pan-grabber-bakers-pad/160TPH1011WH.html>), replacement ping pong table net with clamps, and plastic cutting boards (no smaller than 12"X18", larger is fine). Office-related items include copier paper, postage stamps, and sticky notes. Toilet paper and kitchen/white paper towels are always welcome! Contact office@campmennoscah.org with questions

MENNONITE MISSION NETWORK announcements

Mennonite Voluntary Service is accepting applications now for August 2026–July 2027. Adults 20+ are invited to serve for one year (renewable up to three) alongside nonprofits tackling poverty, immigration, education, health, and more. Live intentionally with other MVSers in a unit house, be supported by a local Mennonite church, and join a worldwide movement for peace and justice. Visit MennoniteMission.net/MVS

Just Peace Pilgrimage Calais, France . . . April 6–18, 2026

Walk with migrants, listen to their stories, and serve alongside organizations bringing hope at the edge of Europe. This 13-day pilgrimage will forever change how you see borders, justice, and the gospel call to welcome the stranger. Registration deadline: February 15, 2026, Only a few spots remain! Contact Stephanie Weaver at StephanieW@MennoniteMission.net or visit www.mennonitemission.net/JustPeace

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE announcements

Across the U.S.–Mexico borderlands — and in communities far beyond them — people of courage and compassion are responding daily to the realities of migration. MCC believes that listening to these stories helps us live more deeply into our values of peace, hospitality, and justice. Join us for **Borderlands & Beyond Monthly Charlas**, a new conversation series led by the MCC U.S. Immigration Network featuring MCC partners, community leaders, and borderlands practitioners who will share their work, struggles, insights, and hopes. Each *charla* provides a welcoming space to learn, ask questions, and explore how we can participate in faithful advocacy and accompaniment. Find out more and register for the Zoom link: mcc.org/events/borderlands-and-beyond-monthly-charlas-mcc.

Date: Every 3rd Thursday of the month (January to December 2026)

Time: 4:00 PM PT / 5:00 PM MT / 6:00 PM CT / 7:00 PM ET

Location: Online via Zoom

MCC's high school essay contest is now open! The annual MCC U.S. National Peace & Justice Ministries essay contest highlights the perspectives of youth on significant public policy issues and promotes the involvement of young people in faithful witness to government authorities. Submissions may be in English or Spanish. (*A continuación véase la información en español.*) The contest is open to Mennonite, Brethren in Christ and other Anabaptist youth of high school age and to all youth who attend Mennonite high schools within the United States, including Puerto Rico. Regional prizes will be awarded, with the top three essays being submitted to the national competition. Regional top prize is \$200 and the national contest grand prize is \$1000. Contest topics, rules and resources can be found at mcc.org/events/high-school-essay-contest. The deadline for submitting entries is February 27, 2026. Essays should be submitted to centralstates@mcc.org, questions can be directed to beckyteiwes@mcc.org.

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.

MENNONITE CHURCH USA announcements

MC USA invites you to an interactive online (Zoom) meeting on **coping with and processing grief**. Sponsored by The Corinthian Plan, MC USA's healthcare plan for pastors and church workers, this webinar will encourage and equip attendees with practices that lead toward resilience and peace. All are welcome to attend. Register here: <https://bit.ly/48d6TGo>

MC USA's Safe Church ministry recently presented an online training webinar based on Part 1 of the denomination's new **Prevention and Accountability Resource**. Designed for pastors, church leaders and congregational teams, this session provides practical guidance to help congregations create safer spaces and stronger systems of accountability. Watch it here in English <https://bit.ly/44uyi5q> or Spanish <https://bit.ly/48nXw6T>.

Jamaica Mennonite Church has been hard hit by Hurricane Melissa, a Category 5 storm that caused widespread destruction in the Caribbean. Please remember those affected in prayer, and consider making a donation to help our sister churches recover from this devastating storm. 100% of donations will go directly to Jamaica Mennonite Church. Donations can be made online here <https://bit.ly/4pwk648> (temporarily under Climate Justice), noting "JAMAICA" in the note field.

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 is \$250.00 (Includes flight to Puerto Rico)