

# The Osler Mennonite Church

## Jan/Feb 2024 Newsletter



### Our Statement of Purpose

The purpose of Osler Mennonite Church is to be a supportive community in which people can meet God through worship and fellowship.

We seek to teach  
an Anabaptist understanding of scripture,  
led by the Spirit to imitate Christ in word and deed.

We strive to nurture faith and discipleship,  
committing ourselves individually and corporately  
to respond to the needs of others.

*We gather on Treaty Six Lands, Nehiyaw Territory,  
and the Homeland of the Métis*

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Volume XVII First Edition

A WELCOMING COMMUNITY FOR PEACE

Following Jesus on the Path of Reconciliation

## Pastor Patty's Ponderings

2024 begins a year of change and discernment for us as we discuss long-term rentals, smaller budget, leadership needs, etc. Inspired by my fall Canadian Mennonite University class on Reimagining Anabaptism with Karl Koop, I will start off the new year with a sermon series on Reimagining Anabaptism. Our history lays the ground work for our own OMC Purpose Statement that is in every newsletter. The Purpose Statement was formed 20 years ago and impressively still holds. But as Anabaptist Confessions of Faith change with every generation, it may be that we'd like to tweak our purpose statement a bit.

The most important thing we will learn from Anabaptist history is that there has never been one golden era of Anabaptism. There was never a perfect Anabaptist! That's a relief if we think we have to measure up to perfection. From the beginning, the movement was violent and led by righteous ego-maniacs like Claus Epp who we will hear about with **Audrey Kampen leading The White Mosque: Mennonites and Muslims in Central Asia on Weds. Jan. 24, 6:00 p.m. Faspas and Conversation.**

Mennonite historian Aileen Friesen says, "If we were challenged with the same dilemmas as our ancestors, we wouldn't emerge morally unscathed either." Historian Arnold Snyder says when we recall the realities of the Anabaptist past, we must include the bad and the ugly." Vision Spring 2024. "Can we call ourselves a historic peach church when in matters related to domestic and sexual violence, Mennonites are no better than any other Christians," writes Mennonite historian Rachel Waltner Goossen in her essay, *Defanging the Beast (MQR Jan 2015)*.

There is no rosy picture of Anabaptism. Historians are now writing about Mennonites and our collaboration with Nazis in WWII and about Mennonites and colonialism, in Ukraine and in North America. Now Mennonite historians don't just look to European historical sources for Anabaptist identity but to a global modern Anabaptist identity in the

Ethiopian Meserete Kristos Church and the Indonesian Anabaptists. More female historians are including women's perspectives and stories. We are listening to our Indigenous neighbours and trying to reconcile our participation in colonialism. These are the most interesting days of evolving Anabaptist history and OMC identity. Stay tuned as we explore more in 2024!

## **Pastor Patty's Picks**

*What are your favourite books from 2023?*

**Pilgrims on the Silk Road** by *Walter Ratliff* is the fascinating historical story of Claus Epp's journey to Central Asia.

**The White Mosque** by *Sophia Samatar* is the fascinating memoir of Samatar's encounter with Claus Epp's journey to Central Asia.

Ever since my fall trip to Churchill, Manitoba and seeing Lady Franklin's memorial window to her husband Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin in the Anglican Church there, I've been intrigued by the Franklin expedition. Here are some books I've enjoyed about it if anyone else is interested.

**Trapped in Terror Bay: Solving the Mystery of the Lost Franklin Expedition** by *Sigmund Brouwer* is a fascinating read with photos and forensics to solve the mystery of the Franklin Expedition disaster. While probably geared to school age children - I found it helpful as an adult.

**Finding John Rae**, written by *Alice Jane Hamilton* who is a descendent of the Scottish explorer John Rae who was the first to listen to Inuit testimony of the lost ships on the Franklin Expedition.

## Good news by Joan Kohler

Who owns today, and every day?  
Influencers? Pundits? Disrupters?  
Purveyors of catastrophe and doom?

Or You, God?

Divine Love, encircling one and all,  
Divine Life, animating good,  
I trust myself, I trust us all,  
To Your living Word.

Your Word of the day, Your Word every day Is good - the Gospel's  
good news of liberation, of restoration.

This is the truest "news cycle" - morning, noon, and night - And Yours  
is the only voice.

Your infinitely stable self-containment knows No uncontained violence,  
no overspill of flood, Unquenchable flame, or jarring quake.  
Vicious warring over whose way should sin Concedes the one true way -  
Your good-for-all way, God - Not one, but all of us, are Your elect,  
Spiritual and responsive to Your law.

Your glorious, endless day sees good alone unfolded, Not life and hope  
imploded; Your economy of love yields glad prosperity, never bleak  
austerity; The harvest of Your good that feeds and keeps us never fails;  
Revelation and progress are the order of Your day.

With fearless expectation we tune in to Your news And Your views, as  
reported by Your Christ, Announcing Truth's always equitable rulings,  
Celebrating the all-inclusiveness of Your love And how Your  
measureless resources supply all needs.

And with this good news, we find peace in Your day.

*(Christian Science Monitor, Dec. 11/23)*

## **Luke's Little Lessons (*Lies?*)**

As we come out of Christmas and into some of the shortest days of the year, I am often reminded how mentally tiring the winter can be. I have always had a hard time feeling restless and cooped up in the winter months, and it has always exacerbated my mental health struggles. Thankfully I had a cool Mom who let me play soccer in the house growing up. I remember going crazy from not being able to go running or play sports whenever I wanted during the winter months. Now I have a little less energy to burn, but the dark months are still not my favourite. I try to lean into my hobbies that do not require me to be outdoors like playing piano, or reading a book. The gym and indoor soccer are also blessings from God. While the excitement of Christmas seems to give us life to make it to the new year, the next months can be hard. One of the things that my Mom does to get through the dark part of the year is hang onto Christmas a little longer. While a lot of people take down their Christmas lights on the 26th or at least within a week, my Mom intentionally leaves hers up a little longer. She says that the lights make her happy and brighten up her day in the dark cold winter. I think this a beautiful metaphor. Christmas is all about celebrating Jesus, and often to get through darker times, we rely on the love of our Saviour. Whatever you do to get through the dark, cold months, I hope you can find ways of remembering the love of God. Whether that is appreciating the winter landscape, or leaving bright lights up. Album Recommendation: Rumours by Fleetwood Mac is a classic most people have heard. But if you haven't, I recommend listening to it- perfect music for a road trip.

### **Upcoming Youth Calendar:**

JAN 12TH NEW YEARS PARTY AT WILF AND RUTH'S

JAN 19TH-21ST SHEKINAH YOUTH RETREAT

JAN 26TH YOUTH @ CHURCH NIGHT

FEB 2ND GAMES IN THE SNOW (IF THERE IS ANY)

FEB 9TH MOVIE NIGHT

## MDS NEWS

Hello Church,

*“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.” James 1:5*

*“For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom.” 1 Corinthians 1:25*

Serving in pastoral leadership for many years has reinforced for me how important it is to ask God for wisdom.

Occasionally, what may seem the wise course of action, turns out to be something different than what God has in mind. This is why, when I am asked to pray before a meeting, I ask for God’s wisdom in the discerning and decisions we make.

Last spring, we were rounding up equipment for our response in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. The Ontario Unit had an older 15-passenger van, and they were asked if they would be willing to let that van be used for the spring and summer. The important question was whether the van was safe and reliable enough that it should be sent that distance and used for that long.

An estimate of repairs and maintenance for it to be reliable reached several thousand dollars. I know unit members debated whether this investment was worth it.

Vans and pickups are in high demand, and they are often not available for rent or purchase. In the end, the unit decided to repair it. The van received heavy use on project and was tremendously helpful for the length of the project. When it was time to send it back to Ontario, we hooked up a trailer, and Keith (a volunteer driver) began the journey back to Ontario. An hour later, Keith called.

The transmission was finished—and so was the van—at the same time our project was finished. We arranged for a tow truck driver to take it to a wrecker. He said he would tow it for the salvage value of the van. That seemed reasonable. The next day the tow truck driver showed up and gave us a cheque for the salvage value. He donated the towing fee.

Is it possible that God gives us the wisdom to know when to repair a vehicle and when to let it go? If you don't know the answer to that yet, then you should know the rest of this story. In spring, the Ontario Unit was asked by the Ontario government to apply for an emergency preparedness grant. We wrote a request for costs for training and several items of equipment. Our grant was approved in its entirety.

One of the capital items we applied for was a brand new 15-passenger van. We are currently shopping for that Christmas present.

*“Magi from the east came to Jerusalem saying, ‘Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship Him.’”*

During this Christmas season, may you, too, receive God's Great Wisdom.

**Executive Director  
Mennonite Disaster Service Canada**

## **Canadian Foodgrains Bank**

Greetings Friend!

This is our final newsletter of 2023, and with it we close the chapter on the Foodgrains Bank's 40th anniversary year. If you can zoom in on the graphic, you'll note some interesting statistics from 1983, including a world population of 4.7 billion, an official adoption of the metric system by the Government of Canada, a minimum wage of \$3.50 per hour, and the first release of Microsoft Word!

In 1983 Jacquie and I were just children in our respective homes in SK and BC...reflecting on this **I'm struck by how the mission of an organization lives on – like an iceberg at sea there is so much more to its size and presence than what can be seen.** We often take note of (and communicate through this newsletter) the tangibles such as community events and growing projects, advocacy efforts, and indeed stories of change from our international partners.

But for a moment, let's consider that which lies beneath: An unwavering faith in our Creator and Triune God, the redemptive work of Christ the Son, and the guiding light of the Holy Spirit. Upon this, our values and

identity as a Christian response to hunger are cast giving direction to our work in the years ahead.

### **Making a significant impact around the world!**

One of the joys of our job is the opportunity to engage with supporters whether that be in-person or via a phone conversation. Often when I ask supporters why they donate to the Foodgrains Bank I get this type of response:

*“We believe in what you are doing, and we think you are a good organization.”*

While we know our donors agree with the impact we are making, we are also thankful that for the sixth year straight, Canadian Foodgrains Bank has been awarded Top 10 Impact Charity status by Charity Intelligence.

Thanks for continuing to work together with us in our mission to end global hunger.

### **40th Anniversary Celebrations**

In mid-November (during our 3rd fall season of 2023!) two colleagues – executive director Andy Harrington, and supporter relations manager Julie Derksen – spent a few days with us in three locations across southern SK gathering with supporters to celebrate the Foodgrains Bank’s 40th anniversary. We held a traditional fall banquet in Swift Current on November 14 with approximately 100 guests, and convened a smaller event at a restaurant in Regina on November 15 with a group of about 20 urban and rural supporters. Along the way, we were delighted to spend time with families from the Wiwa Growing Project, including a visit to the Bell family farm near Shamrock. In these moments of community and connection, Andy provided keen insight into the various factors that exacerbate hunger, as well as those that alleviate hunger and help build food security for the longer term. Julie provided insight into the various ways Canadians from across the country lend support to our mission through a wide array of projects, events, and other activities that raise awareness and financial resources for the work to end global hunger. Jacquie and I enjoyed acting as ‘host’ and seeing so many generous people coming together!

### **Responding to the crisis in Gaza**



The Foodgrains Bank along with its member organizations continue to hope and work for peace in Gaza. The Humanitarian Coalition's Gaza Emergency appeal was successful in raising \$13.7 million, which was matched by the Government of Canada. The Foodgrains Bank along with our members raised \$1.145 million in match eligible donations.

As an organization we encourage you to give, but we also encourage you to advocate. So, along with the emergency appeal, The Humanitarian Coalition, which represents 12 of Canada's largest international aid agencies, also joined with partners around the world in calling for a ceasefire and immediate, unconditional humanitarian access to Gaza.

At least two Foodgrains Bank members are working to provide humanitarian aid to the region through local partners in Gaza. These partner agencies are mobilizing aid into the conflict-affected areas despite many challenges. Granting access into Gaza to humanitarian organizations is one of the primary objectives of peace talks.

We invite you to continue to pray for peace in Gaza and in many other regions in the world affected by conflict. We are so grateful for the incredible generosity and support of everyone who contributed to the Gaza Humanitarian Emergency.

### **And finally...Season's Greetings**

It's been a joy to keep connecting with you all in 2023, thank you for your faithful support for the Foodgrains Bank. We wish you all a sense of "peace on earth" this Christmas!

I (Jacquie) enjoy the abundance of reading material available during these days leading up to Christmas, especially those that remind us of the gift of hope.

Here is one favorite quote from Vaclav Havel (Czech Republic):

*Hope is a state of mind, not of the world...Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well; nor as a willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for success, but rather an ability to work for something because it is good.*

Peace to you,

Rick & Jacquie Sask Representatives, Canadian Foodgrains Bank

## From MC Sask Newsletter

### Indigenous Relations

Looking for a new Podcast series to help you think through questions about Settler Indigenous Relations? Check out these options for your holiday or travel listening. <https://www.brokenlands.org/>

### Climate Action

MC Canada recently announced that Emissions Reduction Grants (ERG) totaling \$23,021 were given to help one rural and eight urban congregations reduce their carbon footprint. Fourteen additional congregations expressed interest in the program. Read full story <https://www.mennonitechurch.ca/article/31821deliver/>

### Commonword

**Merry Christmas from CommonWord.** Our store will be closed Dec 23 – Jan 1. We look forward to serving you in the new year. (new)

**Scripts** for two brand new monologues that feature Joseph – in Advent and in Epiphany. A performance video will be coming soon. <https://www.commonword.ca/go/3760> (new)

### MC Canada's Palestine-Israel Network -

<https://mennonitechurch.ca/pin> and CommonWord's resource collection - <https://www.commonword.ca/go/3301>

**Epiphany Resources** - <https://www.commonword.ca/go/2212>

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"My real estate agent found me this place. I said I wanted a home that requires no yard work, no painting, no snow shoveling. A place where the weather is perfect and neighbors never complain about my music..."

# LECTIONARY PASSAGES FOR JANUARY

## **New Year's Day - January 1, 2024**

- Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
- Psalm 8
- Revelation 21:1-6a
- Matthew 25:31-46

## **Epiphany of the Lord - January 6, 2024**

- Isaiah 60:1-6
- Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
- Ephesians 3:1-12
- Matthew 2:1-12

## **Baptism of the Lord - January 7, 2024**

- Genesis 1:1-5
- Psalm 29
- Acts 19:1-7
- Mark 1:4-11

## **Second Sunday after the Epiphany - January 14, 2024**

- 1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)
- Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
- 1 Corinthians 6:12-20
- John 1:43-51

## **Third Sunday after the Epiphany - January 21, 2024**

- Jonah 3:1-5, 10
- Psalm 62:5-12
- 1 Corinthians 7:29-31
- Mark 1:14-20

## **Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany - January 28, 2024**

- Deuteronomy 18:15-20
- Psalm 111
- 1 Corinthians 8:1-13
- Mark 1:21-28

## **Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany - February 4, 2024**

- Isaiah 40:21-31
- Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
- 1 Corinthians 9:16-23
- Mark 1:29-39

## **Transfiguration Sunday - February 11, 2024**

- 2 Kings 2:1-12
- Psalm 50:1-6
- 2 Corinthians 4:3-6
- Mark 9:2-9

## **Ash Wednesday - February 14, 2024**

- Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12
- Psalm 51:1-17
- 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
- Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

## **First Sunday in Lent - February 18, 2024**

- Genesis 9:8-17
- Psalm 25:1-10
- 1 Peter 3:18-22
- Mark 1:9-15

## **Second Sunday in Lent - February 25, 2024**

- Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
- Psalm 22:23-31
- Romans 4:13-25
- Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9

## **Worship Schedule for January**

- Sunday, January 7, Epiphany: The Light of Christ by Luke Bushman
- Sunday, January 14, Alex Tiessen preaching
- Sunday, January 21, Reimagining Anabaptism 1 by Patty Friesen
- Sunday, January 28, Reimagining Anabaptism 2 by Patty Friesen
- Sunday, February 4 Licensing Service for Luke Bushman and Potluck

## **January Birthdates**

### **January**

- 4 – Brandee Borne
- 11- Candice Buhler
- 14 – Scott Buhler
- 18 – Kevin Boldt
- 20 – Garry Harms

### **February**

- 5 – Anna Rehan
- 14 – Walter Tataryn
- 14 – Isa Boldt
- 16 – Nora Bergen-Braun
- 19 – Junko Friesen (87)
- 25 – Simon Clark
- 27 – Bruce Sawatzky