

# The Osler Mennonite Church

## February 2025 Newsletter

*& God is love*

### 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*

Osler Mennonite Church  
[oslermcoffice@sasktel.net](mailto:oslermcoffice@sasktel.net)  
<http://www.oslermennonitechurch.org>

2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. P.O. Box 129  
Osler, SK S0K 3A0  
306-239-2133

Volume XVIII Second Edition

A WELCOMING COMMUNITY FOR PEACE

Following Jesus on the Path of Reconciliation

## Pastor Patty's *Last Ponderings...*

I'm Proud to Be a Mennonite (tune: Doxology)  
By Patty Friesen

I'm proud to be a Mennonite  
I try for peace and not to fight.  
I'm proud of my simplicity  
But mostly my humility!

Felix, Michael and Marguerite  
Were Anabaptists who were neat.  
They boldly resisted complicity  
And formed a faithful community.

From persecution and isolation  
To witness in every nation;  
Anabaptism has grown to be  
A thriving global community.

I'm proud to be a Mennonite  
Even if I'm not always right.  
A kind person I will try to be  
On our 500th anniversary.

### **Night Sky Meditation**

Go to a quiet spot, under the night sky.

**Pray with Psalm 8.** *When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are humans that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?*

**Ponder:** How am I invited to wait in darkness for what only God can give? What are the good tidings that I long to hear?

*-Biff Weidman, Spiritual Director, South Bend, IN in Canadian Mennonite December 2024*

## **The Anabaptist Community Bible** from Christian Century interview with John D. Roth

The Anabaptism at 500 project has, as its centerpiece, the Anabaptist Community Bible. But we also have been hard at work on three children's books and two devotionals—one that features art commissioned for the Bible and one that features the voices of 40 global Anabaptist leaders. And we have a photo book that includes vignettes of the creative expression of contemporary Anabaptist witness. Our motto for this project is “Looking back but living forward.”

Mennonite World Conference will be hosting a major gathering in Zurich on May 29. (Going from MC SK are Marianne Siemens, Shenyce Buhler, Henry Funk)

In writing the Anabaptist Study Bible, the really complicated but beautiful part of this Bible was an invitation to ordinary laypeople to gather around passages of scripture. We wanted 500 Bible study groups and we ended up with 597—each with six to ten people—across a spectrum of 18 Anabaptist faith communities. (One of which was Osler Mennonite Church, led by Luke Bushman). We translated the discussion group guide into German, Spanish, French, Amharic, and Bahasa Indonesian. And we received commentary in those languages, so one challenge—just a pragmatic one—was making sure that we had those translated in ways that honored the contributors.

We did work with 18 communities, but that doesn't mean that they were represented proportionally. For example, I think we had one Old Order Amish study group, and that was an unusual group because the Old Order Amish, by and large, don't do this kind of biblical study.

We had groups from [conservative communities such as] LMC—the former Lancaster Mennonite Conference—from Evana, and from the Mennonite Brethren, even though all three were hesitant to give a full-throated endorsement to the project because MennoMedia equals Mennonite Church USA which equals—well, fill in the blank, but it's not good.

I've worked for 20 years now in ecumenical conversations with Catholics, with Pentecostals, with Lutherans, Seventh-day Adventists, and now with the World Council of Reformed Churches. And I have encountered over and over again people of deep faith who read the Bible with a zealous earnestness, who want to follow Jesus in their daily life, and who care about community. All of the markers that Mennonites sometimes jealously guard as our contribution. So, the Anabaptist tradition might be distinct, but it is not unique. And there is an idolatry of uniqueness that we need to repent of.

The Anabaptist tradition has given a lot of thought—sometimes in our failure—to how community can celebrate freedom but also recognize the gift that goes with the burden of accountability. And then, reconciliation and peacemaking. Is there any question more relevant to our polarized culture, families, countries than that? All of those things have been deeply anchored in this 500-year-old tradition. And they're relevant to the world we live in. Even if our churches are emptying out.

Get The Anabaptist Study Bible for the art alone. The artwork is amazing. (Copy in church library)

### **How MCC saved my EV and me** *by Patty Friesen*

I've been an electric vehicle owner for two years now and despite naysayers, the experience has been em-“powering”. I've connected with other EV owners. I've put up solar panels on my garage, so basically have been operating my vehicle for free this past year. I've even gotten used to the challenges of “range anxiety,” of running out of battery energy while desperately looking for a charger.

On the coldest weekend of the year, I had forgotten to top-up in my garage before driving to Osler for church. I knew it would be close getting home - even after “trickle” (110Volt) charging at church. Sure enough, as soon as I hit the north end of Saskatoon, I was down to 1% and then 0%. In my time of trouble, I knew MCC had plug-ins in their parking lot and would welcome a traveller in distress. I plugged in and called my husband to pick me up. The nighttime temps dropped to -50 degrees so it wouldn't start the next day either but during a warm-up the

following day, it started and I happily drove home and made a donation to MCC!

My husband asked if I was ready to sell my EV but I'm still committed, despite the challenges. Just like I am to him!

## **CANADAIAN MENNONITE Magazine**

I was interested to attend the annual Bechtel Lecture about Anabaptist beginnings at Conrad Grebel University College delivered by Karl Koop, professor of theology and history at Canadian Mennonite University last Friday.

He discussed the widespread social upheaval of 1524-25 which surrounded and informed our forebears, noting that the Schleitheim confession that Anabaptists adopted in 1527 was not that different from The Twelve Articles, a 1525 list of peasant demands for basic human rights. It makes me wonder if Mennonites might not be as distinctive as we think

On the way home, we discussed the lecture. Are we throwing the baby out with the bathwater, pulling apart stories that have been so important to our church? Or is it helpful to bring in new elements to the story, to learn a broader context?

What helped me fight the urge to be defensive was Josh Martin's review of Stuart Murray's book *Post-Christendom* in our January issue. Martin writes: "Murray recognizes the complexities of history, acknowledging that this is not a story of 'good guys versus bad guys.' He encourages readers to do the honest, hard work of acknowledging the evils and corruptions of Christendom, while sorting through the mess to find the elements of Christendom that have been good, nurturing and in line with the gospel of Jesus. Likewise, he says, we must take a similarly critical approach to Anabaptism, sorting the good from the bad, the helpful from the unhelpful."

That was my task on Friday night. I think it's what we will all be doing in this year commemorating the 500th anniversary of the beginnings of Anabaptist faith.

Tobi Thiessen, Publisher

[publisher@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:publisher@canadianmennonite.org)

Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524

## Luke's Little Life Lessons

This month Anabaptism celebrated 500 years. There are a lot of exciting things happening this year to commemorate this milestone. One of the exciting things happening this year is the release of the Anabaptist Community Bible, a project that started in 2023. I had the opportunity participate with a group of Bible readers here at OMC, and Patty recently asked me to reflect on that time for an article she is writing. I think that reflection fits well into this month's Newsletter.

"I had the opportunity to help lead one the Anabaptism at 500 Community Bible groups in May of 2023. I work primarily with the youth in our church, and because I was still relatively new at the church it was a great chance to meet congregants, outside of the youth I spend most of my time with. We were given three passages. A list of Numbers and organization instructions from the book of Numbers, a tale of miracles and persecution in the book of Acts, and a Psalm. We had varying levels of connection with the three passages. The discussion based on the Acts passage was free flowing and easy, while discussing the book of Numbers can be a tedious task for almost anyone. However, for all three weeks that we gathered together it was a wonderful experience. The early Anabaptists were big on interpreting scripture in community. I learned in Anabaptist history that this was largely based on a commitment to early church practices, and a desire to not see scripture used as a means of gaining power by leadership.

After participating in this community Bible project, I wonder if their dedication to read scripture in community was also born out of wanting to spend time together. I found myself getting to know the others in the group in a unique way, and our conversations were a blessing in my life. It was interesting to practice reading scripture in community in a more direct way than usual for this project. I know it is part of our Anabaptist values, and has a historical precedent. But I also wonder if they made community interpretation a core value, so they could eat snacks and spend time with their friends.

**Album Recommendation:** Bright Future *by Adrienne Lenker* is relaxing album I have listened to lots lately!

## MDS NEWS

Hi Church,

If you've ever read the book of Chronicles, you know it has a lot of lists. It doesn't make for the most interesting reading. This fact makes an obscure verse 1 Chronicles 12:32 all the more interesting. The chapter has a list of all the men "armed for battle" that are joining David—even as David is still hiding from King Saul. In the middle of this list is this verse:

*"from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do—200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command;"*

What I am most curious about is why the chronicler chose to include this fact about these men: that they understood the times and know what to do. Was the writer of the tribe of Issachar and wanted to boast? Was there something about this clan's way of living that tended to nurture an understanding of the times? I can only speculate.

Last week, our annual MDS Canada Board Executive gathering took place in Winnipeg. Each year in January, our board executive gathers to do some big picture thinking, talking, dreaming and planning. It is a time when we also dig deeper into any challenges and obstacles that may need to be worked on. It is a time when we seek to "understand the times" as it relates to helping homeowners recover from disaster.

I, once again, come away from this annual meeting deeply thankful for the leadership that God has gifted us in the MDS Canada Board. Each of the executive members comes from a different "tribe." But each of them humbly seeks to discern together so that we will know what MDS Canada should do.

I am so grateful for each of the leaders—people like you—who work together to bring hope and healing in our broken world

Ross Penner  
Executive Director  
MDS Canada

# CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

Greetings Friends!

As we complete the final edits of this newsletter, it's nearing the end of January already...which begs the question, can we still offer a Happy New Year to our readers? 😊 We hope you were able to have a blessed time with family and friends through Christmas and to welcome 2025. This winter has had a lot of up-and-down temperatures, and it sure seems our current political climate is also in flux. In terms of work and family life, January brings the long-standing Bedford Road High School basketball tournament (55 years), as well as the Western Canadian Crop Production Show (41 years).

While at the Crop Production Show, Jacquie and I enjoyed connecting with many farm-family and agri-business supporters from SK at the Foodgrains Bank booth, as well as a few teachers, international students, and various media outlets. And though it is great to be part of these well-established events (good community, familiarity, etc.) the biblical words from James chapter 1 offer a true and lasting anchor to hold us steady amidst the turbulent change around us, *“Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, **who does not change like shifting shadows.**”* God’s offer of mercy, grace, love, and fellowship are indeed perfect gifts (in their completeness) that we now have been empowered to share with others. Let's be intentional to live into that invitation.

## **Thanks Saskatchewan!**

We give thanks to everyone who gave their resources, time, energy, voices, and prayers to the Foodgrains Bank’s global effort to end world hunger in 2024. We celebrate the over 520 contacts from Saskatchewan—organizations, growing projects, businesses, churches, households, farms, and estates - who gave a monetary donation this past year. While donations in 2024 did not reach that of the recent years, we remain amazed at the faithfulness and generosity of so many of you.

At the Foodgrains Bank, our fiscal year continues until March of 2025, so we appreciate the donors who already have responded in this New Year, as they were able. We invite you to keep watch for the various



Foodgrains Bank appeals that come your way as you continue to consider when it seems good for you to give, pray, learn, or advocate. If you have any interest in a community event to raise awareness or resources, we would love to offer support for your efforts. And it's not too early to pray for a good harvest season for all our growing projects and partners!

### **Government of Canada extends 2024 charitable donations deadline**

In an effort to be helpful to organizations like the Foodgrains Bank, the Government of Canada, has announced that you can use the tax receipt for any donations made in January or February 2025 for your 2024 or 2025 tax return.

### **Upcoming events**

**February 6** – Seniors Lunch & Learn at Forest Grove Community Church, Saskatoon.

**February 11** - Legacy Giving Webinar, hosted by the Foodgrains Bank. Join us at 3:00 p.m. CST for a webinar on legacy giving, presented by Maynard Wiersma from Christian Stewardship Services (CSS). In this webinar you will learn about the different types of planned or legacy gifts and some considerations you might have when contemplating such a gift. Topics will include gifts of stock, RRSPs, as well as estate gifts. We will also include a time for questions. [Click here to register.](#)

**February 12** – Helping to End Hunger, Near and Far: A film night and youth panel presentation at St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon.

**February 13** - A conversation on COP29 with Citizens for Public Justice. Join us on February 13 at 5:30 p.m. CST for a joint webinar we're hosting alongside Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ). We'll share insights from COP29 and discuss the critical decisions Canada must make to fulfill its climate responsibilities and support vulnerable communities around the world. Don't miss this opportunity to engage with community, faith leaders, and advocates shaping the dialogue on climate justice. [Click here to register and learn more.](#)

**February 16** – SOAR Saskatchewan advocacy workshop, West Portal Church, Saskatoon.

**March 2 to 5** – Missions Conference, Trailview Alliance Church, Swift Current.

**March 9** – Emmanuel Anglican Church, Saskatoon.

Contact Rick at 306-222-8977 or saskatchewan@foodgrainsbank.ca for more information.

### **Closing Prayer**

An Epiphany Blessing, as taken from Church Calendar (Lectionary Year B) Prayer Resource

“He is my chosen one, and I am pleased with him. I have put my Spirit upon him. He will reveal justice to the nations.” Isaiah 42:1

May the path that Christ walks  
to bring justice upon the earth,  
to bring light to those who sit in darkness,  
to bring out those who live in bondage,  
to bring new things to all creation:  
may this path run through our life.  
May we be the road Christ takes.

~ written by Jan L. Richardson, and posted on The Painted Prayerbook

Grace and peace to you,

Rick & Jacquie  
Saskatchewan Representatives,  
Canadian Foodgrains Bank

To read the complete Newsletter go to <https://www.foodgrainsbank.ca>

### **Praying with the Anabaptists: Five Hundred Years Later**

*by Carol Penner*

Reforming Spirit,  
you blew through the lives  
of common folk in Switzerland in 1525.  
A realization gradually dawned  
that what they had been taught from childhood  
about being a Christian  
was not the only way to think.

Reading the Bible opened a new way.  
They envisioned a church  
not automatically filled with citizens from birth,  
not led by leaders who bought their positions,  
not having a hierarchy at all.  
And so they knelt and were rebaptized as adults,  
claiming their own faith in their own time,  
ready to suffer the consequences.  
Your Spirit continues to move [today](#),  
reforming your church in new and myriad ways.  
You challenge us to draw close,  
to read and reread your sacred texts,  
and to discern where the church is  
not serving the one who washed feet,  
not honouring the Creator of all creatures,  
not tuned to your beating heart of love.  
Wake us up to claim our faith in our time,  
becoming yielded to your goodness.  
Turn us away from sins  
that vary and multiply in our very souls,  
and in our beloved communities.  
Together we read and listen,  
together we want to find the footsteps of Jesus  
and walk in them.  
Give us courage to resist what you want resisted;  
tyranny, callousness, unkindness,  
and violence on every level.  
Through your power, mold our congregations  
into true communities of devotion and simplicity,  
that bring good news of great joy to all people.  
The world needs your touch,  
and we have hands.  
The world needs your voice,  
can we speak your truth?  
By your grace, we live and move  
and find new ways of being. Amen.

## LECTIONARY PASSAGES FOR February

### **Feb 02, 2025 - Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany**

First reading: Jeremiah 1:4-10

Psalm: Psalm 71:1-6

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Gospel: Luke 4:21-30

### **Feb 02, 2025 - Presentation of the Lord**

First reading: Malachi 3:1-4

Psalm: Psalm 84 or Psalm 24:7-10

Second reading: Hebrews 2:14-18

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

### **Feb 09, 2025 - Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany**

First reading: Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13)

Psalm: Psalm 138

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

### **Feb 16, 2025 - Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany**

First reading: Jeremiah 17:5-10

Psalm: Psalm 1

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Gospel: Luke 6:17-26

### **Feb 23, 2025 - Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany**

First reading: Genesis 45:3-11, 15

Psalm: Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

Gospel: Luke 6:27-38

### **Mar 02, 2025 - Transfiguration Sunday**

First reading: Exodus 34:29-35

Psalm: Psalm 99

Second reading: 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

Gospel: Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a)

## **OMC Refugee Sponsorship Application Hasani Family Update**

Alia has started classes at the U of S as of January.

The youngest brother was on his way to the market this past week. He was stopped by a group and threatened with a knife.

They took his phone and all the money he had. This took place in Quetta, Pakistan where the parents and 3 brothers are refugees.

MCC has received 75 sponsorship applications. This list was shortened to 21 this past week. Our project involving the Hasani family is on that shortened list .MCC is waiting to hear how many projects they will be granted for this year.

## **CALENDAR**

**Sunday February 2, 10:00 a.m.** Wading In: A Retirement Sermon

Pastor Patty's Retirement Sermon

11:11 Forum: Enneagram Part 2 Wings and Triads with Amanda Dodge. Join us for a study of our personality understandings and how we function in life and on church committees. OMC library books and other resources on lobby table. Please also check-out [www.enneagraminstitute.org](http://www.enneagraminstitute.org) and Richard Rohr's work on the spiritual components of Enneagram.

12:00 Osler restaurant lunch with Amanda

**Saturday February 8, 9:30 a.m.** Annual General Meeting

**Sunday, February 9** Patty's last Sunday

11:11 am Patty's Roast – special coffee time in MPR

**Sunday, February 16, 10:00 a.m.** Lois Siemens speaking

**Sunday, February 23, 10:00 a.m.** Dave Feick preaching

**Sunday, March 2, 10:00 am** Luke Bushman speaking

## **February Birthdates**

5 – Anna Rehan

14 – Walter Tataryn

14 – Isa Boldt

16 – Nora Bergen-Braun

19 – Junko Friesen (88)

25 – Simon Clark

27 – Bruce Sawatzky

## 31 January 2025 – PEACEMAKER TEAM

There's a story that Britain likes to tell itself. It *used* to have a problem with racism. After the 1993 racist murder of Stephen Lawrence, his friend, who survived the attack, was treated as a suspect, and his family's campaign for justice was spied upon. A soul-searching public inquiry into the treatment of his death led the British state to hold up its hands and admit that the police force had a problem with institutional racism. Having owned up, Britain could write off its racism as a dark chapter of the past

The UK's anti-racist movements of the '60s and '70s had found institutional racism in the foundations of the police force, arguing that it brought "home" colonial methods. The state, on the other hand, had now defined institutional racism as a result of the collected personal attitudes of those who staffed its forces, which were in turn representative of the general public.

Britain had looked in the mirror but failed to see its own reflection, instead building its redemptive arc on the basis of a distortion: its own structure was not the problem, but the individual ignorance or political extremism of its subjects. The solution, therefore, was a combination of top-down education and punishment. This redefinition hid the state's active hand in racism, and gave it a renewed mandate as an impartial adjudicator. Alongside a toolkit of "anti-hate" legislation, "British values" soon also became the yardstick by which to measure the intolerance of *other* cultures.

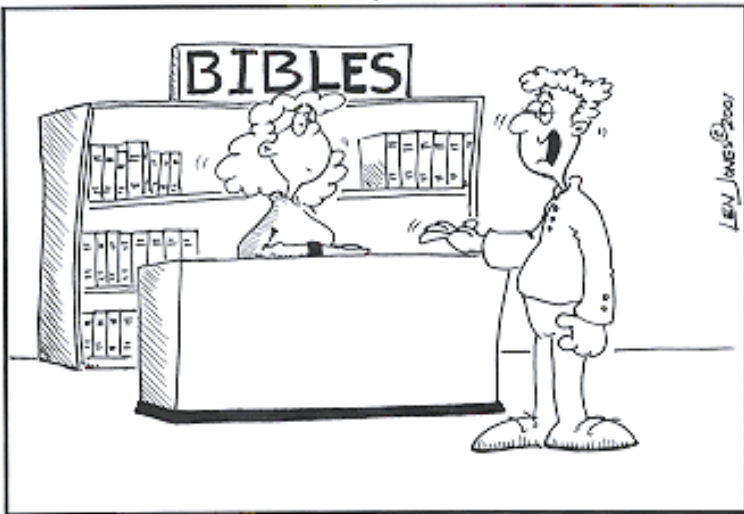
How a state defines injustice has consequences. What we might welcome in one moment as a step forward can come back to bite us if it lacks enough meaning. The disastrously-ambiguous "anti-hate" framework is now invoked throughout the West in order to criminalize solidarity with Palestine, in the disingenuous claims to tackle antisemitism. It has reaffirmed that, regardless of how many institutions publicly condemn racism, anti-migrant rhetoric was never limited to incoming people: if they sympathize with Gaza, the British-born children of migrants are questioned about their loyalties and the compatibility of their cultures. Where once the War on Terror placed

conditions on Muslim belonging, Israel's war on the Palestinians has seen similar conditions extended in the diaspora to those with heritage from overseas. If anyone was having trouble seeing the outline of the War on Terror in the current phase of the West's War on Migration, Trump's promise to turn Guantanamo Bay into a deportation prison has cast it in lead.

Writing about Germany, Pankaj Mishra asks to what extent a country's acknowledgement of guilt leads to the belief that the crimes of the past have been resolved, sidestepping a real "reckoning" with them, and leading to the expression of new forms of racism. The question applies in general. In what ways have our governments built new kinds of oppression on the legacies of older ones?

Ryan James  
*Communications Associate*  
PEACEMAKERS

**ALTAR EGO** by Len Jones



"What I really need is a translation that won't leave me feeling guilty, convicted, or in need of making some kind of decision."



## THREADS OF HOPE

It's been a while since my last newsletter, and I apologize for the delay. However, I'm excited to share some good news – I've finally given our newsletter a name: *Threads of Hope*. Through this newsletter, I hope to keep you informed about the impactful stories we're a part of, as well as any updates related to comforters and MCC.

I'd like to start by sharing some inspiring stories of individuals whose lives have been touched by the comforters you create. I encourage you to click on the button below to take a look, and feel free to share these stories with those who work alongside you in making comforters.

I would love to visit your group sometime this year to share more stories about how your generosity is making a difference. It's always a highlight of my job to connect with communities and show the impact of their support. If you're interested, please reply to this email. During my visit, I'll also share the special story of the blanket in the picture below, which has a meaningful connection to Saskatchewan.

Lastly, the Great Winter Warm-up is being promoted and will run through February, raising awareness of the impact of comforter making for MCC. If your group would like to participate or host a Great Winter Warm-up event, I'd be happy to assist with the details. Please don't hesitate to reach out!

Thank you so much for all you do in sharing God's love and compassion through making comforters. **You are amazing!!!**

Yours gratefully,  
Karla Koehn  
Donor Engagement Coordinator  
MCC Saskatchewan