

The Osler Mennonite Church

March 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*

Osler Mennonite Church
oslermcoffice@sasktel.net
<http://www.oslermennonitechurch.org>

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

Volume XVII Second Edition
A WELCOMING COMMUNITY FOR PEACE
Following Jesus on the Path of Reconciliation

Pastor Patty's Ponderings

"We gather in the assurance of God's promise; to be present to love us unconditionally, to welcome us home. Our hope in all situations is so closely tied to our faith that strengthening our faith can build up our hope. An unshakeable faith produces unquenchable hope. We begin this Lenten journey to walk daily in our anticipation and expectation that our faith will be challenged and that we will overcome obstacles, which will give us strength and courage to sustain us."

- Hungering for Hope Prayer Guide Lent 2024

Through Lent we will be hungering for hope and discerning our pastoral needs with interviews with executive. We will be discerning renting to a daycare.

Both transitions are big changes for our congregation that bring both loss of what we know and love and new opportunities to let go, stretch ourselves and grow.

It will require patience with ourselves and each other as we go through these changes. Our faith will be challenged and we will overcome obstacles, which will give us strength and courage to sustain us. Lent and Good Friday are here but Easter is a *comin'*!

Pastor Patty's Picks

Finding the Mother Tree by *Suzanne Simard* is a brilliant mix of biology and memoir. Powerful metaphors for our life in Christ and each other. Sermon material!

Finding Franklin by *Ken McGoogan* is less sermon material but great history and discovery.

The Cost of Free Land by *K. Clarren* is an interesting memoir/Jewish/Lakota history of South Dakota mix. Sounds a lot like Cree and Mennonites in SK. Church library.

Sacred Fire by *Ronald Rolheiser* addresses our life stages and changes in spirituality and discipleship. Church library.

DVD Oppenheimer - there's a reason it won a lot of awards.

Fascinating history and struggle of science and ethics.

DVD Barbie - yes, I admit I went and it was a trip down memory lane while being a cultural critique.

**Reimagine by Bonnie Thurston, Christian Century,
February 2024**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.
Revelation 21:1

The world has become
a sad and sordid place
full of absence, longing
for what might have been.
We are scattered, shattered,
broken as bone china cups
dropped on a tile floor.
I shake accusatory fingers
at the formless void,

from somewhere out
beyond imagining
hear a terrible Eloquence:

“What have you done
with what I gave you?
You made the pieces.
Now pick them up,
re-imagine them as
fragments of possibility.
Fit them together anew.
Re-create my image
in your damaged hearts.”

Luke's Little Lessons (*Lies?*)

My favorite movie ever is *The Dark Knight* directed by Christopher Nolan. In fact, he made three Batman movies and I love them all. Nolan is known for his love of striking visuals, but also his ability to create mind bending concepts, like his explorations of time in *Interstellar* and *Tenet*, and his depiction of the human subconscious in *Inception*. He seems like an odd choice to direct a superhero film- which is generally just action and comic book references for nostalgic geeks like me who love Batman. These movies, particularly the *Dark Knight*, received praise for redefining the superhero genre, by using superheroes as a medium to address deeper points of life. Each film goes into different themes, and the theme of the final movie, *The Dark Knight Rises*, is hope. Bane who is the villain of the movie, and Batman who is the obvious hero have different perspectives regarding hope. Bane uses hope as a method of torture, stating “There can be no true despair without hope”. He dangles hope in front of Batman to make his suffering worse. Hoping things will get better, when they likely won’t. Batman on the other hand uses an impossible hope of saving others to motivate himself to achieve an impossible task (I say this very vaguely because spoilers are the worst). I have been thinking about this movie more than usual in relation to our theme of Lent, *Hungering for Hope*. I think in our lives, hope has the power to provoke surrender and also action. When we have the hope of the Kingdom of God that Jesus preaches about, and we see the despair around us, it can be easy to check out. To focus on our future hope, to avoid the pain that hope in the present can cause. Having an impossible, outlandish, mysterious hope that God is capable of making all things new can inspire us to action. Right now, it doesn’t make sense to hope for peace in this lifetime. And yet groups like Mennonite Action are hoping and working for exactly that against all odds. Our hunger from hope can seemingly worsen our despair- because it means being invested in the heartbreak around us. That same hunger for hope can also inspire us to work hard for a better world now.

Album Recommendation: Marvin Gaye- *What’s Going On*. While most know of him as a romancer, on *What’s Going On*, Marvin Gaye really focuses on the social issues around him, singing about them in a catchy, hopeful voice.

ODE TO SCAMMERS

By Nettie Balzer

Used with permission

I do not like those scammer's scams
I do not like them or their plans
I do not like them on my phone
I do not like them in my home

I do not like them; how they scare
I do not like them anywhere
They sit before computer screens
Moving that mouse and planning schemes

They target those with failing sight
And those who hardly sleep at night
They trouble those who cannot hear
And try to multiply their fears

In early morn we hear the ring
And find that it's a scammer thing
Our coffee we have not yet made!
We have not read; we have not prayed

Their message comes with cruel intent
To rob us of our last few cents
They'll call police if we don't pay
We don't know why, they will not say

They call and call and call again
But here is what we should tell them
"Leave us alone! Get off the phone!
We do not owe you for a loan!"

"Our bank account's not in arrears,
We'll not succumb to foolish fears
Our rent is paid, our credit's fine!
Your scam intent is out of line!"

Then there are those who call our suites A grandchild cries; it makes us weep "I am in jail! I need some bail!"
Accompanied by sobbing wails.

"But don't tell dad; he'd be so mad
And mom would be so very sad."
'Police' get on the call as well,
"It must be cash!' they firmly tell.

The price for bail is very high
(That comment's made to terrify)
It must be secret, so they say,
But that is just a scammer's way.

Before we let our hearts go wild,
Hang up that phone and call that child!
She'll be at home or at the mall
She's not in trouble - not at all!

We may be old; that's just in years,
Let's use that brain between our ears.
Please be aware, when that phone rings It just might be a scammer
Thing!



"If telemarketers call, invite them to church."

MDS NEWS

Hello Church,

I'm Nikki.

This month, I joined the MDS Canada team as communications coordinator. I entered this role following seven years with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba, where my work has spanned administration, donor stewardship, engagement and a cultivated focus on communications.

I see a lot of parallels between MDS and MCC, including a missional focus on disaster response, a strong tradition of volunteerism, faith through action, and prioritizing the needs and empowerment of vulnerable people. I am thrilled to become a part of MDS' good work. Receiving someone's story is a gift. That is the most beautiful lesson I learned in communications work with MCC. I was continually inspired by the dedication and purpose that propels volunteers, and by the resilience and resourcefulness of the participants in MCC's work. I know that I will be gifted with stories like these in MDS, too.

Over the coming months, I look forward to opportunities to visit project sites, connecting with volunteers and disaster survivors, and learning about MDS more deeply.

Outside of work, I spend much of my time (trying to) keep up with my toddling daughter. My husband Goodwill, daughter Norah and I live in Winnipeg. As a multicultural family, home means both southern Manitoba and subtropical South Africa to us. We enjoy spending time outdoors and exploring our local community and province. If I had free time, I imagine I would spend it baking, doing yoga and catching up on sleep!

I look forward to coming opportunities to meet you in person.
Grace and peace,

Nikki Hamm Gwala
Mennonite Disaster Service Canada
Communications Coordinator

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Thank you for your generosity!

It is with much gratitude from our home to yours that we say thank you to everyone in Saskatchewan who gave a financial gift to Canadian Foodgrains Bank in 2023. Together, we raised over 2.4 million dollars towards the work of ending hunger, some of which will leverage further funds from the Canadian government.

As we look over the 1450+ donations, we see funds going into each one of our member agencies' accounts, as well as donations into the general account, which each member can access to fund projects implemented by their local partners. We celebrate that these resources will end hunger for some.

We are thankful for groups and networks of people who continue to give through their growing and community projects, churches, ministerial, rotary clubs, businesses, and colonies. We are moved by the generous, large donations that come from individuals and monthly donors who give faithfully. As usual, we received a high percentage of support in December from those who have us on “your list” because you like what we do. We had folks respond to our appeals due to crisis situations in Africa, Turkey/ Syria and Gaza. And many chose to specifically support food assistance, conservation agriculture, and our new Nature+ programming.

When we've asked for help, you have responded. Thank you for your cheerful and generous hearts. Thank you for your willingness to be a Christian response to hunger

Growing Projects Update 2024

In approximately 100 days from now millions of acres across the prairies will be seeded, supporting diverse regional economies. Some of those acres too (more than 4000 in SK) will be dedicated to raising funds for the Foodgrains Bank!

We are so grateful for the many growing project committees, individuals, church, and business sponsors that demonstrate their generosity in such a tangible way. There's a lot of relational and logistical work that goes into sustaining a growing project – many in SK have reached 10, 15, and even 25-year milestones, having contributed

more than \$500K, \$1M, or even \$1.5M to the Foodgrains Bank! If you know someone involved, won't you take a moment and send a text, card, or phone call to encourage them in this compassionate act of neighbourly love.

Upcoming Events – Save the Date!

March 19: Growing Project leaders & volunteers zoom gathering

April 5: Sask Valley Auction – Pierogi & Sausage Supper Fundraiser, Warman

Peace to you,

Rick & Jacquie

Saskatchewan Representatives,
Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Telephone: 306-222-8977

Email: saskatchewan@foodgrainsbank.ca

Twitter: @randjblock

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Dear Friends,

If you're wondering who Leona Lortie is, I'm the new public engagement manager at Foodgrains Bank. And I'm thrilled to tell you about an upcoming event!

In the face of the current global landscape, we need young adults to raise their voices more than ever.

That's why I'm excited to share the unique opportunity to empower young adults ages 18 - 30 to be agents of change at our upcoming Hunger on the Hill – Young Voices event! We're inviting 25 passionate individuals to join us in Ottawa from April 27 – May 1, 2024, to learn about the power of advocacy in influencing Canadian decision-makers to respond.

But this is more than just an advocacy event; it's a chance to actively engage in conversations addressing global hunger, climate change, and

other critical challenges that the world is grappling with. In a world that needs innovative solutions and diverse perspectives, events like these empower young individuals to use their voices to shape a more sustainable and just future.

Do you have any young adults in mind from your congregation or community? We're asking for your help to share this invitation! And don't forget to let them know that the application deadline is March 15, 2024.

As we navigate the challenges of our world today, let us come together to empower the voices of tomorrow.

Blessings,

Leona Lortie

Public engagement manager, Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Land Acknowledgement

As followers of Christ, we recognize the call to love our neighbors and care for creation, which includes respecting and honoring the Indigenous peoples who have lived on and cared for this land since time immemorial. We commit ourselves to reconciliation, justice, and partnership with Indigenous communities as we seek to be faithful stewards of God's creation.

Land Acknowledgements and Why They Matter by Michelle McKinnell

There are many views on land acknowledgements: why they are (or are not) important, what should be said and who they are for. I would like to preface this by saying I still have much to learn and am by no means an expert. Through classes and conversations with Elders I continue on my journey of truth and reconciliation and understanding land acknowledgements are part of that learning.

Land acknowledgements have existed for hundreds of years within Indigenous communities. It is customary when visiting another territory to pay respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of that land.

Introductions were (and are) made based not on your ownership of the land but on your relationship to the land you live on.

Why do we do it and who are they for? I believe they are a direct response to the Calls to Action and an active form of truth and reconciliation and are for Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike. The purpose of a land acknowledgement is to recognize how systemic and institutional systems of power have oppressed Indigenous peoples. It is to acknowledge how that oppression has historically influenced the way non-Indigenous people perceive and interact with Indigenous peoples in today's cultural, social and political climate. It is to challenge and rebalance the whole idea that Indigenous people have been erased from the history of the land. It is important to acknowledge the original people of the territory, to remind ourselves of the responsibility we have to the land, to each other and to future generations.

It is essential to understand that land acknowledgements are not to place blame or make people feel guilty. So why do many of us feel unsettled, called out or even defensive?

Today's land acknowledgements contradict what many of us were taught—not to mention with how our own Canadian identity is reflected through our family histories. As Mennonites, our history is based on overcoming war and conflict, immigrating as refugees to a cold and empty land. Our ancestors worked hard to create successful farms, communities and churches.

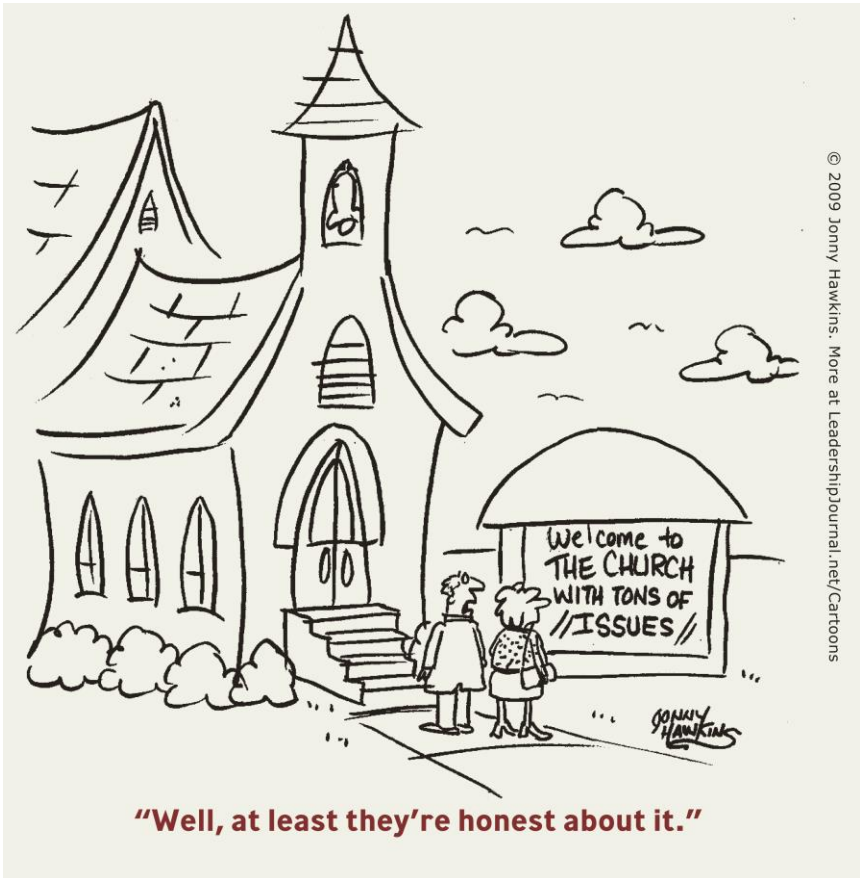
When we start to connect the necessary dots to gain a thorough understanding of why land acknowledgements are important, we're faced with some harsh truths about injustices that have happened—and are still happening—right here in Canada, often carried out by institutions we've believed in and trusted. It doesn't mean that we are wrong to live where we live or farm the land that we have, and it doesn't mean we have to give the land back. But we do have a responsibility to acknowledge that the land that we were allowed to settle on was taken from another group of people.

As Selena Mills says, "It's not so much about focusing on the omission of belonging, and all of us having a right to a home, but rather about

introducing non-Indigenous people to this land's accurate confederate history and the importance of relationship to land despite the dominant worldview of owning the land. All we're asking you to do is to remember, and remember with us."

Sometimes learning the truth feels like a betrayal, there is grieving that occurs before we are able to reconcile, and that's okay. Maya Angelou said, "Do the best you can until you know better and when you know better, do better." We are all doing the best we can and as long as we keep moving forward, we will also do better.

Source: Land Acknowledgements and Why Do They Matter by Selena Mills <https://www.unitedwaygt.org/issues/what-are-land-acknowledgements-and-why-do-they-matter>



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LECTIONARY PASSAGES FOR MARCH

Third Sunday in Lent - March 3, 2024

- Exodus 20:1-17
- Psalm 19
- 1 Corinthians 1:18-25
- John 2:13-22

Fourth Sunday in Lent - March 10, 2024

- Numbers 21:4-9
- Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
- Ephesians 2:1-10
- John 3:14-21

Fifth Sunday in Lent - March 17, 2024

- Jeremiah 31:31-34
- Psalm 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16
- Hebrews 5:5-10
- John 12:20-33

Liturgy of the Palms - March 24, 2024

- Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
- Mark 11:1-11 or John 12:12-16

Liturgy of the Passion - March 24, 2024

- Isaiah 50:4-9a
- Psalm 31:9-16
- Philippians 2:5-11
- Mark 14:1-15:47 or Mark 15:1-39, (40-47)

Annunciation of the Lord - March 25, 2024

- Isaiah 7:10-14
- Psalm 45 or Psalm 40:5-10
- Hebrews 10:4-10
- Luke 1:26-38

CALENDAR

Thurs. Feb. 29, 7:00 p.m. www.commonword.ca. Book Launch of
Together in Hope - Matthew Braun participates!

Sun. Mar. 3 10:00 Luke Bushman preaching *Third Sunday of Lent*
11:00 Forum: MCC Climate Change film with Erika

Mon. Mar. 4 6:00 pm Exec mtg
7:30 pm Council mtg

March 4 – 8 9:00 am MCC Blanking making in the MPR

Weds. Mar. 6 11:00-11:30 Lent Prayer Group in Coffee Room
11:30-12:30 Lent Bible Study Zoom with Dan Epp-
Thiessen Coffee Room (Zoom link/recording available for
homes)

Sun. Mar. 10 10:00 Patty Friesen preaching *Fourth Sunday of Lent*
11:00 Deacons Meeting
12:00 Second Sunday Lunch Bunch

Tues. Mar 12 7:30 pm C.C. mtg via zoom

Sun. Mar. 17 10:00 am Karl Martens speaking

Sun. Mar. 24 10:00 am Patty Friesen speaking *Palm Sunday*

Thurs. Mar 25 6:00 pm Maunday Thursday Service *Faspa & Communion*

Friday Mar 29 7:00 pm Good Friday service

Sun. Mar. 31 10:00 am Patty Friesen speaking *Easter Sunday*
11:00 am Easter Brunch – Group C-M helping

Upcoming Wednesday Zoom Bible Study

Mar. 6: The Development and Persistence of Christian Antisemitism
and Its Evolution into Secular Antisemitism

Mar. 13: Jewish Zionism and the Formation of the Modern State of
Israel

Mar. 20: The Origins of Christian Zionism and Its Unwavering Support
for the State of Israel (with special attention to biblical texts that
Christian Zionism appeals to)

Mar. 27: The Role of the Bible in Developments Since 1948 that Have
Brought Us to the Current War in Gaza

Community Events

Mennonite Historical Society of Sask.

AGM - March 23, 2024 at Bethany Manor, Saskatoon

9:30 - MHSS Business Session

10:30 - coffee break

11:00 - speaker, Ken Dahl - city of Saskatoon Archivist

noon- Lunch - \$16.00 / ticket

1:00 - film "ConForm" - Mennonite Migration to Mexico

The Warman Community Band is participating in a concert: The Midwinter Winds and Pipes concert on **March 24 at 7 p.m.** at Grace Westminster Church in Saskatoon. Entry by donation.



March Birthdates

5 – John Gascho

6 – Erna Funk

10 – Micah Guenther

23 – Sandra MacArthur

26 – Liam Boldt

26 - Merla Dyck (89)

27 – Keeley Buhler

28 – Clint Neufeld

31 – Ava Boldt

Youth Schedule

SATURDAY MARCH 2ND MCC VOLUNTEERING
1:30-4:30 Warman MCC

Friday MARCH 8TH NO YOUTH

SUNDAY, MARCH 10TH YOUTH @ OMC 7-9PM

Sunday, MARCH 17TH MEGA MENNO
More details to come.

SATURDAY, MARCH 23RD CREATIVE NIGHT
Easter themed creativity night, OMC 7-9pm

Friday, MARCH 29TH NO YOUTH
No youth because of Good Friday.

Friday, APRIL 5TH YOUTH COFFEE HOUSE
If any of the youth want to share their talents or passions, they are more than welcome to, as we host a little talent show and enjoy some hot drinks!

Friday, APRIL 12TH PROGRESSIVE SUPPER
I should be moving around again by then, and I will find some locals to host us for a food-based walking tour.

Saturday, APRIL 20TH MEGA MENNO
Party with the Poovongs! Meet MC Canada Witness Workers Tom and Christine Poovongs, as well as their kids Joseph and Phim. We'll hear about life in Thailand, and learn some Issan worship and dance moves, and share some of our own favourite worship songs as well.