

The Osler Mennonite Church

March 2025 Newsletter

do everything
in Love

1 Corinthians 16:14

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 XVIII Third Edition

A WELCOMING COMMUNITY FOR PEACE
Following Jesus on the Path of Reconciliation

Luke's Little Life Lessons

2025 is the 500th year of Anabaptism, and so I have been thinking a lot about what that means, and so my Newsletter articles reflect that.

Last month, I reflected on my time with fellow OMCers contributing to the Anabaptist Community Bible. In January, we had a baptism in our church again! Baptism is obviously an important part of what made the Anabaptists who they are. Before our most recent baptism, I was thinking and reflecting about what Baptism means, and how I might understand it. I have always struggled to understand how certain rituals are supposed to be understood in light of our faith. In the case of baptism, it is regularly asserted by Anabaptists that it is not an action that correlates with one's salvation. They did not believe that infant baptism was the route, but they still knew the practice was significant. They didn't throw the baby out with the baptism water so to speak.

Baptism was meaningful and important, which is why we have a record of Felix Manz baptizing Hans Bruggbach on January 25th, 1525. Getting rebaptized was worth dying for, and held a lot of significance in the church. How are we to understand baptism today? Because while it is not associated with salvation in our current context, there are always arguments about baptism. Is it connected to membership? Who is authorized to baptize someone? How old should someone be before they are baptized? Does it have to be immersion, or is pouring also okay? Which baptisms (infant or otherwise) are acceptable and which ones aren't? (I ask this last question because many are encouraged to recant previous baptisms not just if they were infants, but also if they were with the 'wrong' church).

I struggle to find a balance when it comes to conversations about baptism. On the one hand, I don't believe it to be an action that seals one's name in the book of heaven. And yet, baptism seems to be more important than just an initiation ritual, or a faith graduation. There is something spiritual and wonderful that happens, that is more than symbolic, but less than salvific. In my conversations with Patty about baptism, I commented that it is pretty cool that we have a "start date" for a movement like Anabaptism. Perhaps that is another part of the

meaning. To set a date that can be commemorated and celebrated. Like an anniversary or a birthday, a baptism date might help us take time to reflect on the spiritual aspect of our lives. It is a wonderful, spiritual, commemorative event to be baptized.

Album Recommendation: If you ever listen to any of the music I recommend, please come tell me about it even if you have not listened recently. I love talking about music, and if you have a piece of music you love I would be happy to hear about it.

This month for music I would recommend listening to one of the singers I have loved since I was a kid. Jon Foreman played in the band Switchfoot when I was growing up. Switchfoot was very popular in Christian circles at the time, so I listened to them with my older sister a lot. Jon Foreman has released several solo EPs since then, that are more singer/songwriter, than rock and roll.

The Wonderlands: Sunlight EP by *Jon Foreman* is a small collection of songs that I really enjoy. The opening song Terminal is a nice reflection on life and death, while All of God's Children is a reminder that we all shine in beautiful ways.



Blessing – Celebrating and Releasing Pastor Held February 9

Dave: Patty has been intentional about bringing healthy closure and saying farewell to her time at Osler Mennonite Church. In that spirit, we want to say words of release and blessing.

People: We come with joy to meet our God, forgiven loved, and free, in awe and wonder to recall Christ's life laid down for all.

Dave: Patty, today we come with joy as we celebrate your years of ministry within our congregation. Our footsteps have come alongside each other for a time as we walked a common path on a journey of faith as people of God here at Osler Mennonite. We celebrate the gift you have been to our congregation. You have encouraged us to see with new eyes, in awe and wonder and excitement, what Christ has done for us.

(Presentation of walking stick)

People: We come with Christians far and near to find, as all are fed, the new community of love in Christ's communion bread.

Nora: Patty, you have embraced life and faith wholeheartedly, and with authenticity, creativity and energy sought to nurture faith and life in us. With compassion your various ministry gifts wove multi-colored threads into the larger Osler community tapestry. You have become an important part of our ongoing story, and we of yours.

(Presentation of tapestry)

People: As Christ breaks bread and bids us share, each proud division ends. That love that made us makes us one, and strangers now are friends.

Julie: Patty, you have journeyed with this community, walking with us in our strength and in our human frailty, in our laughter and in our joy, in our tears and in our pain. You cared about our individual journeys

whether we were young or old in age or faith. God's loving Spirit has sustained us and together we have grown.

(Presentation of bag of salt)

People: The Spirit of the risen Christ, unseen, but ever hear, is in such friendship better know, alive among us here.

Kathryn: You wanted us to draw closer to God, to seek and understand God's presence in real way together, to be inspired to faithful, authentic living, to be unique individuals walking together as Christ's disciples in a caring community, Your love of music incorporated song into our expressions of faith, life and worship. Music surrounded us and you invited all to join the song.

(Presentation of signed hymnal)

**People: Now our paths are separating
and our footsteps will take us in different ways,
but we all still walk towards Christ with the Holy Spirit.**

**So as a congregation
we must allow you to step off our path
and travel on your new one.**

**With God's help,
we release you from pastoral responsibilities among us.
May you be strengthened in your inner being
with power through God's Spirit.**

**May Christ dwell in your heart through faith
and may you continually be rooted and grounded in love.**

**We pray that you may have the power to comprehend,
along with all of us, how all-encompassing God's amazing love is,
so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

**We ask God's blessing on your retirement endeavors.
We offer our support and encouragement to you, Patty,
as your ministry unfolds in a new setting.**

**God is able to accomplish abundantly more
than we, or you, can ask or imagine,
and so we commit you, Patty, together with Patrick,
into God's ongoing care.**

Patty: We have walked together in faith and trust,
looking out for each other and for Christ on the way.
after today our paths will part for a time,
our footsteps moving further away from each other.
This space between us will be one of friendship.

I will not look to you
as the persons to whom I am responsible as pastor.

May God bless each of you on your spiritual journey.
I pray that each of you,
individually and all of you together,
will carry the Christ-light,
to light the way for your footsteps
and for the footsteps of others who need light to find their path.

Dave: Patty, we celebrate the times and ways we have walked together
over the years. We continue fon our way with love in our hearts and a
song on our lips, rejoicing that God walks with each of us as our
journeys of life and faith continue.

**People: Five Together met, together bound, we'll go our different
ways, and as God's people in the world, we'll live and speak God's
praise.**

This was followed by the congregations singing “One is the Body”,
followed by the benediction and lastly – singing “For She’s a Jolly Good
Fellow”.

The congregation was invited to continue the celebration in the Multi-
purpose room with ‘Osler’ donuts.

Following some sharing and a 'Roast' by Pastor Luke, a trio -Ben, Kathryn and Lynette sang.....

Leaving in her EV

Verse 1

All her bags are packed, she's ready to go
She's standing there outside the door
We're sorry that it's time to say goodbye
But retirements calling, the walks, the books
The burrowing owls need a look,
The northern lights are shining in the sky

Refrain

We wish this retiree
Footloose and fancy free
Happy trails and libraries
She's leaving in her EV
Retiring from her ministry
It's hard to let her go

Verse 2

There's so many times you drove to town,
To visit Osler, the holy ground
The hospitals, cafes, and many homes,
You planned every service so far ahead
The speakers, singers, the wine and bread
We sometimes had to try to slow you down

Verse 3

You told us this was coming last year
All too quickly the days arrived here
We think retirement will suit you well
No more sermon writing, no pastoral care
There's freedom hanging in the air
When you're ready, come back to say hello

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)

CANADAIAN MENNONITE Magazine

Spirit and screen. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of Apple, Insta and Google....

Canadian Mennonite magazine invites you to do a digital detox experiment this Lent. Starting March 5, cut screens back in some way and fill the gap with something holy.

Then be in touch. We'll bring detoxers together by teleconference during Lent and report stories in our June issue. If intrigued, see canadianmennonite.org/detox.

MDS NEWS

Dear Church,

This past weekend, we celebrated the 75th anniversary of MDS at the annual celebration in Wichita, Kansas. The weekend's theme: Building Hope.

Approximately 500 people attended from British Columbia to New Brunswick to Oregon, North Carolina and Puerto Rico. Three choirs joined together from local colleges — Tabor, Bethel and Hesston — to lead worship during the celebration service. And I heard many stories from long-term, weekly and faithful volunteers that spoke to Building Hope.

I saw hope in the coming together of volunteers from varying denominations, backgrounds, ages and political leanings, hope in the lives changed through the service of volunteers and new homes built for changing climates, and hope in the ways disaster survivors have changed those who serve.

Praise be to God for a rich time of fellowship, reunion and planning an inspired future!

Ross Penner
Executive Director
MDS Canada

Posted on the bulletin board is a letter from MDS thank our congregation for our contribution.

LECTIONARY PASSAGES FOR March

Mar 02, 2025 Transfiguration Sunday

Exodus 34:29-35

Psalm 99

2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a) Second reading: 1 Corinthians

Mar 05, 2025 Ash Wednesday

First reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12

Psalm: Psalm 51:1-17

Second reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Mar 09, 2025 First Sunday in Lent

First reading: Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Psalm: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

Second reading: Romans 10:8b-13

Gospel: Luke 4:1-13

Mar 16, 2025 Second Sunday in Lent

First reading: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

Psalm: Psalm 27

Second reading: Philippians 3:17-4:1

Gospel: Luke 13:31-35 or Luke 9:28-36, (37-43a)

Mar 23, 2025 Third Sunday in Lent

First reading: Isaiah 55:1-9

Psalm: Psalm 63:1-8

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Gospel: Luke 13:1-9

Mar 25, 2025 Annunciation of the Lord

First reading: Isaiah 7:10-14

Psalm: Psalm 45 or Psalm 40:5-10

Second reading: Hebrews 10:4-10

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

Mar 30, 2025 Fourth Sunday in Lent

First reading: Joshua 5:9-12

Psalm: Psalm 32

Second reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Apr 06, 2025 Fifth Sunday in Lent

First reading: Isaiah 43:16-21

Psalm: Psalm 126

Second reading: Philippians 3:4b-14

Gospel: John 12:1-8

March Birthdates

5 – John Gascho

6 – Erna Funk

10 – Micah Guenther

13 – Casadi Schroeder

23 – Sandra MacArthur

26 – Liam Boldt

27 – Keeley Buhler

28 – Clint Neufeld

31 – Ava Boldt

Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan Annual General Meeting

Saturday, March 29

at Bethany Manor in the Fellowship Centre

9:30 a.m. – Business session

11:00 a.m. – Workshop

Noon – Lunch available - \$\$/person

1:00 p.m. – To be decided

Everyone Welcome

Check the church bulletin board for more details