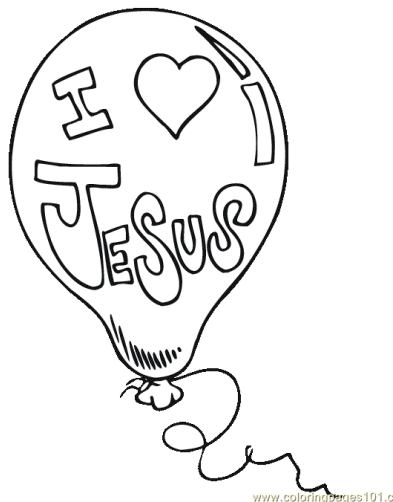


# The Osler Mennonite Church

## JULY/AUGUST 2026 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  
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Volume XIX Sixth Edition

**A WELCOMING COMMUNITY FOR PEACE**

**Following Jesus on the Path of Reconciliation**

## From Brad's Desk:

### The God of Pleasure and Joy

“John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ Yet the Human One came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunk, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’” (Luke 7:33-34, CEB).

The verses above are interesting to me as they present peoples’ impressions and comparison of John the Baptist and Jesus. The impression people had was that one, John the Baptist, lived out an ascetic lifestyle, continually denying themselves while the other, Jesus, seemed to enjoy daily pleasures of eating and drinking to a ‘sinful’ extent. While it’s important to acknowledge these accusations were coming from critics, it nevertheless highlights different approaches to their spirituality. My history in the Church has given me the impression that people within it are more often admonished to lean towards the John-the-Baptist-life, more often encouraged to deny themselves the enjoyment of good gifts, than they are encouraged to embrace and enjoy pleasure and joy.

I have long appreciated an article by Dorothy A. Lee entitled “Pleasure: A Biblical Perspective.” (*found here:*

<https://www.theway.org.uk/back/33Lee.pdf>). In it, Lee points out this tendency stating, “Christians...have sometimes preferred the role of moral guardian and been more concerned to stem the abuse than to facilitate the enjoyment of God’s gifts.” (*p. 19*). Lee points out that this can come from a good place in that the Church has often felt called to a prophetic role in society and protested against the abuse and misuse of creation and God’s gifts. While this role can be good, Lee says that Christians have often “failed to recognize that there are more ways than one of distorting God’s gifts. We know a good deal about the abuse of eating, drinking and sexuality. What we are not so familiar with is the other side of the coin: the ‘abuse’ which comes when we are afraid of God’s gifts” (*p. 20*).

Lee is not arguing to swing the pendulum from one extreme to the other, but rather, she is trying to rectify an imbalance and remind Christ-followers to recognize God as the Creator of pleasure, joy, and good gifts and remind us to embrace this God of pleasure. She states, “a theology of pleasure challenges forms of spirituality which identify God only in suffering and painful human experience. Alongside this latter perspective, we need to develop a spirituality which sees play and pleasure as equally God-revealing. In the pleasures of eating and drinking, in the joy of sexual passion, we need to discover the God who is joyful and extravagant, the God of play and passion, the God of love and celebration.” (p. 29).

Over these summer months that pass by too quickly, my hope is that we can re-embrace God as the giver of good gifts and feel the freedom to enjoy the many pleasures present in creation. May you feel God's joyful presence this summer!

*Lee, Dorothy A. Pleasure: A Biblical Perspective. Pp. 19-33.*

<https://www.theway.org.uk/back/33Lee.pdf>



## Luke's Little Life Lessons....

I have been to the Pride Parade for the last several years, and it is always a heartwarming and emotional event for me. The importance of these parades and events has increased in my mind over the past several years. Hatred for 2SLGBTQ+ people seems to have risen. Transgender persons seem to be particularly at risk. I have a small voice, and I am unfortunately not as bold as I should be. It felt important this pride month to deliver a sermon at Nutana focused on supporting the existence of our transgender neighbours. Here is an excerpt from that sermon, that is based on reflections about the creation narrative, inspired by the reflections of Austen Hartke in his book *Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians*:

The second thing in this Genesis passage, is the diversity and variety in creation. Austen Hartke's book is what first put me onto this line of thinking. Some people will say "Trans and non-binary people aren't real, it clearly says God only created man and woman". What about the rest of creation. It says that there is light and darkness, but there is also dusk and dawn. It says land and sea, but there are gorgeous wetlands and marshes teeming with life. Animals are classified as birds of the air, fish of the sea, creatures that scurry across the earth. If this poem is supposed to be used to categorize creation in a binary instead of a spectrum, I have to ask, what on earth is a platypus? God's creation from one end of the spectrum to the other, and everything in between is beautiful and wonderful. That is the point. That this, and that, and everything in between everything that is unique is very good. Variations are not cursed. They do not need to fall in line. We are all wonderful variations in this beautiful world, just as we are created.

**Album Recommendation:** Since this article touches on transgender rights, I would recommend listening to **Frailty** by Jane Remover. Jane Remover is a transgender artist who I really like listening to!

# MCC Peace & Justice Newsletter

## **Refugee resettlement: Why we're better together**

For nearly two decades, Brian Dyck has worked to help resettle refugees from around the world into communities in Canada. He's seen countless times the impact that this move has on people fleeing conflict and disaster, but he's also seen the life-changing effect that welcoming the stranger has on communities in Canada.

## **Keep Canada a country of welcome**

This year, the Government of Canada plans to resettle approximately 40% fewer refugees than it did in 2024. MCC is alarmed by this steep reduction in refugee admissions. We believe that Canada should be a country of welcome because we know we are better and stronger together.

More stories from MCC

## **More than a meal at Anamiewigummig**

In Kenora, Ontario, a simple meal served under the shade of a tent provided far more than just physical sustenance. Anamiewigummig, the Kenora Fellowship Centre, provides practical services like meals and clothing donations, but it also provides something even more essential: a safe, low-barrier space for those who are struggling.

## **Blessings by the bucketful**

In Cuba, despite significant shortages, high prices and electricity blackouts, Brethren in Christ church networks are working together to distribute MCC relief kits, canned meat and other critical supplies. Household items like towels and soap have become hard to get, and every delivery is cause for celebration for communities across the island.

## **What we're working on**

I am ashamed to say that, just a few weeks ago, the city of Ottawa welcomed CANSEC, the largest military and weapons trade show in Canadian history, with open arms just a half an hour from my own home. It is hard to watch a city that you love become home to so many tools of death and destruction, even if only for a few days.

One afternoon, a few of us from the MCC office joined a group outside the gates of CANSEC, in prayer and quiet reflection for peace. As we watched thousands of people pass through the gates and high fences, I found myself overcome by a deep sadness. Do they even know that a better way is possible?

Here in Canada, military spending is increasingly coming to be seen as the “realistic” response to an uncertain world. This could not be further from the truth. A safer world is one with fewer weapons, not more!

This experience highlighted to me the importance of mobilizing together to raise our voices. We’ve already seen hundreds of people engage with our recent campaign calling on Canada to send bread, not bombs, to our global neighbours. Changing the narrative around security will take lots of people across the country, and that is why I am incredibly grateful for all the people standing alongside us and proclaiming that a better way is possible!

If you haven’t sent the letter yet, I encourage you to take a moment and send it today.

**Mackenzie Graham, Advocacy and Networking Specialist**

## **MDS CANADA**

Grace and peace to you and your congregation as you enter into a time that for many churches includes a shift into summer programs and times of rest. Our national MDS project in Saskatchewan is well on its way. When I was there a couple weeks ago, Please continue to pray for the many MDS volunteers who are joining this project.

I also want to let you know that the June edition of On the Level (linked below) with you. Feel free to share the newsletter as well as some announcements with your networks!

<https://conta.cc/4eseKmp>

Moses Falco

Operations Manager, MDS Canada

## Announcements

Denare Beach Project on Schedule! Seven weeks of incredible weekly and leadership volunteers have been moving the project along well. If you wish to read weekly updates with photos, visit <https://mds.org/weekly-reports/?rsp=denare-beach-sk>

We are grateful that all volunteer positions to serve with MDS in Denare Beach, Saskatchewan this spring and summer are now filled. If you are interested in being on a waitlist for the fall or in case of cancellations, please contact Weekly Volunteer Coordinator, Michelle Stoesz, at 1-866-261-1274 or [mstoesz@mds.org](mailto:mstoesz@mds.org).

Want to learn more about volunteering with Mennonite Disaster Service? Join our Zoom call on August 24 at 7:30pm EST. This Zoom meeting provides an opportunity for prospective volunteers to learn about MDS and the many available volunteer opportunities! Register by August 19 at <https://mds.org/event/ways-to-get-involved-with-mds-2/>.

## CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

I'll start this newsletter with a question for you – *What inspires you?* Perhaps this inspiration may result in feelings of wonder or gratitude, and yet at other times inspiration may result in conviction and the decision to take action. Both responses have immense value, stirring our internal and external worlds in the hope for something more whole, more peaceful.

This newsletter is about sharing the inspiration that I experienced these past weeks as the SK regional representative for Canadian Foodgrains Bank and wish to convey to supporters. I wonder if inspiration is often right here in our midst, and it's on us to be present in the present moment to perceive it! As my awareness grew, it seemed that our work as a non-profit, together with grassroots supporters, the Canadian government, and a vibrant network of member agencies and partners around the world...just seemed somewhat elaborate, kind of vulnerable, yet also resilient. The image of the crop is placed here for a reason: where a seed has died unto itself for there to be a harvest for many. The

basic premise of the Gospel itself is inspiring and indeed is the seed from which the Foodgrains Bank was born more than 40 years ago!

It's the people of this network, however, that convey the spiritual inspiration. Over the past weeks I've read articles and listened to podcasts of my colleagues who are willing to speak of the more difficult aspects of our work and to remind us of the inherent dignity that remains amidst suffering and those bearing witness to the suffering. I met Foodgrains Bank supporters from across Canada who are mobilizing others in their communities to respond generously and compassionately to hunger. I've spoken (well mostly by text message) with farmers in SK who are facing a crush of circumstances way beyond their control – trusting that God will carry them and their livelihood through. I'll end where I started - *What inspires you?* I'm truly interested, send me a note at [saskatchewan@foodgrainsbank.ca](mailto:saskatchewan@foodgrainsbank.ca)

### **Upcoming events and field days**

The Foodgrains Bank has had a variety of 'looks' at Ag in Motion over the past 10 years. Growing a project, conservation ag demonstration plot, supporters' appreciation luncheons, and now more recently facilitating a food security-focused mini learning tour! Last year we had very positive feedback, and the plan is to do the tour again for a group of 8-10 people. This is an open invite to supporters and those interested in becoming more familiar with Canadian prairie agriculture and our partnerships in the ag community to help contribute to Canadian aid. Ext AGtour to 306-222-8977

### **Grow Hope Saskatchewan field days**

One of the original concepts of Grow Hope SK was to help connect urban and rural folks with a focus on learning more about our food system, to which we all contribute and are all dependent upon. Summer field days have become a staple for this province-wide project. See below for a short "save the date" list, and be sure to check out our *Grow Hope SK Facebook page* for updates. If you live in or near the areas represented, why not come out and say hello?

## **Date - Event - Location details**

**July 30** (Thursday) - Aberhart Farms Field Day - Near Marchwell, SK.

**August 8** (Saturday) - Sask Open Farm Day - With Prybylski's at CreekrIDGE Farm, near Willowbrook, SK.

**August 9** (Sunday) - Cherry Sunday - St. Therese Institute, Bruno, SK.

**September 12** (Saturday) - Doerksen Family Threshing Bee - Near Carrot River, SK.

**October 16** (Friday) - MCC Thrift Store sales for World Food Day - Rosthern, Warman, Saskatoon, Lanigan, Swift Current, Herbert.

## **Learning Tour 2027 - Bangladesh**

Come learn with us about our work to end hunger! A learning tour is an immersive, relational way to understand more fully our identity as a global Christian response to hunger working together for a more food-secure world. You'll visit communities that are participating in our food security projects, discover the reasons why communities live with the reality of hunger, and learn about responses to food insecurity.

Many past participants talk about this life-changing experience as one that helped them come home ready to take meaningful action in their own communities on ending global hunger.

The learning tour will take approximately 12 – 14 days between January 27 – February 10, 2027. Exact dates will be finalized when flights are booked in Fall 2026. Travel dates may shift by 1-2 days based on flight availability. The learning tour includes travel to and from Bangladesh.

**Application deadline is August 31, 2026!**

Grace and peace to you,

Rick Block  
Saskatchewan regional representative  
Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Telephone: 306-222-8977

Email: [saskatchewan@foodgrainsbank.ca](mailto:saskatchewan@foodgrainsbank.ca)

# LECTIONARY PASSAGES FOR JULY/AUGUST

## July 05, 2026

- First\* reading: Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67 Psalm 45:10-17 or Song of Solomon 2:8-13
- Alternate\*: Zechariah 9:9-12 Psalm 145:8-14
- Second reading: Romans 7:15-25a
- Gospel: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

## July 12, 2026

- First\* reading and Psalm: Genesis 25:19-34 Psalm 119:105-112
- Alternate\* First reading & Psalm: Isaiah 55:10-13 Psalm 65:(1-8), 9-13
- Second reading: Romans 8:1-11
- Gospel: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

## July 19, 2026

- First\* reading: Genesis 28:10-19a, Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24
- Alternate\* First reading and Psalm: Wisdom of Solomon 12:13, 16-19 or Isaiah 44:6-8 Psalm 86:11-17
- Second reading: Romans 8:12-25
- Gospel: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

## July 26, 2026

- First\* reading and Psalm: Genesis 29:15-28 Psalm 105:1-11, 45b or Psalm 128
- Alternate\* First reading and Psalm: 1 Kings 3:5-12 Psalm 119:129-136
- Second reading: Romans 8:26-39
- Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

## Aug 2, 2026

- First\* reading and Psalm: Genesis 32:22-31 Psalm 17:1-7, 15
- Alternate\* First reading and Psalm: Isaiah 55:1-5 Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21
- Second reading: Romans 9:1-5
- Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21

### **Aug 9, 2026**

- First\* reading and Psalm: Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28 Psalm 105: 1-6, 16-22, 45b
- Alternate\* 1 Kings 19:9-18 Psalm 85:8-13
- Second reading: Romans 10:5-15
- Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33

### **Aug 16, 2026**

- First\* reading and Psalm: Genesis 45:1-15 Psalm 133
- Alternate\* First reading and Psalm: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8 Psalm 67
- Second reading: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32
- Gospel: Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28

### **Aug 23, 2026**

- First\* reading and Psalm: Exodus 1:8-2:10 Psalm 124
- Alternate\* First reading and Psalm: Isaiah 51:1-6 Psalm 138
- Second reading: Romans 12:1-8
- Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

### **Aug 30, 2026**

- First\* reading and Psalm: Exodus 3:1-15 Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b
- Alternate\* First reading and Psalm: Jeremiah 15:15-21 Psalm 26:1-8
- Second reading: Romans 12:9-21
- Gospel: Matthew 16:21-28

### **Sept 6, 2026**

- First\* reading and Psalm: Exodus 12:1-14 Psalm 149
- Alternate\* First reading and Psalm: Ezekiel 33:7-11 Psalm 119:33-40
- Second reading: Romans 13:8-14
- Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20

## CALENDAR

**Sun. July 5 - 10:00 am Brad Schroeder preaching**

**Sun. July 12 - 10:00 am Brad Schroeder preaching**

**Sun. July 19 - 10:00 am Dave Feick speaking**

**Sun. July 26 - 10:00 am Luke Bushman preaching**

**Sun. Aug 2 - 10:00 am TBD**

**Sun. Aug 9 - 10:00 am Brad Schroeder preaching**

- 11:15 am Education mtg

**Sun. Aug 16 - 10:00 am Luke Bushman preaching**

- 11:15 am Worship mtg

**Sun. Aug 23 - 10:00 am Joint Outdoor Service**

**Sun. Aug 30 - 10:00 am Brad Schroeder preaching**

## JULY/AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

### August

2 - Anna Marie Martens-  
Beveridge

9 - Lyle Stucky

10 - Eva Martens (81)

12 - Matthew Braun

16 - Gaye Guenther

19 - Lloyd Sawatzky

20 - Jim Dyck (80)

21 - Bill Peters (82)

27 - Eli Schellenberg

29 - Jan Guenther

29 - Terry Stefaniuk

30 - Kathy Boldt (90)

30 - Dan Schellenberg

### July

1 - Phin Schroeder

2 - Vanessa Stefaniuk

2 - Luke Bushman

9 - Joanne Feick

9 - Kathy Braun

10 - Benjamin Clark

13 - Jean Harms

16 - Dylan Martens

19 - John Reddekopp (81)

20 - Katherine Penner

22 - Torben Sjoelin

23 - Diana Buhler

24 - Dennis Boldt (92)

28 - Emmett Bergen-Braun