

The Osler Mennonite Church

September 2024 Newsletter

JOURNEY OF *Faith*

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 XVII Seventh Edition

A WELCOMING COMMUNITY FOR PEACE

Following Jesus on the Path of Reconciliation

Pastor Patty's Summer Ponderings on Life Worth Living

A summer highlight for me was watching the sunset over the bluffs of the North Saskatchewan River from the Shekinah Timberlodge balcony with Anne Peters and having a hummingbird come right up to us and look us in the eye. This summer has flown by like it always does. I am thankful for the quieter schedule and days spent paddling my kayak with friends, family reunions, going to outdoor concerts and Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan. In our church life - I am thankful for the hard work of our camp cooks at OMC week and July 1 Outdoor Market and Ice Cream. I'm thankful for our summer singalongs, wedding of Katherine and Dakota and summer book club discussions. It certainly has been a life worth living, growing deeper to God and others in nature.

Through the book *Life Worth Living* by Miroslav Volf which I used to base my summer sermon series on that title, I've gained appreciation for the uniqueness of the Christian call to a life worth living beyond myself, and my own family and material gain and gain in deeper relationship to God and others. I feel inspired by Amanda Held Opelt's and Kate Bowler's freshly honest faith challenge to the notion of the prosperity gospel where if we believe enough, then we will be blessed. They show us through their cancer journey and loss of loved ones that life is hard and God is in the struggle to find meaning. Their perspective helps us as a number of us go through health issues this fall. It is a daily rage and cry for help and trust walk all at the same time.

May God guide our seasonal transition to fall scheduling and church programming. May God guide our pastoral search process and dreams of building use.

May we grow deeper in God with each other.

Pastor Patty's Pick for Books and Movies

Thelma (movie) is a comedy about an octogenarian's revenge on scammers.

The Literary Afterlives of Simone Weil by *Cynthia Wallace* is scholarly but rich. In the church library.

The New Anabaptists by *Stuart Murray* is a 20 year later update of his *Naked Anabaptist* in which he examines 12 common practices shaped by Anabaptist vision in the UK. In the church library.

A Good Neighborhood by *Therese Anne Fowler* was our delicious August book club read.

Arab Peacemakers: Qatar, like several other Arab states that often serve as go-betweens in conflicts, has relied mainly on nurturing trust and understanding between adversaries, such as Hamas and Israel, to achieve an agreement rather than on deploying carrot-and-stick tactics. Qatar, for example, mediated a 2020 deal between the United States and the Taliban in Afghanistan. Oman often plays the role of a bridge-builder between the U.S. and Iran, while the United Arab Emirates recently facilitated a prisoner-of-war exchange between Russia and Ukraine. Iraq has been a key mediator between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

These Arab mediators bring an approach that is deeply rooted in Middle East culture and “emphasizes reconciliation and restoration of relationships,” according to Nickolay Mladenov, a former United Nations special coordinator for the Middle East peace process. “In contrast to the more Western focus on swiftly identifying problems and executing interventions, the Gulf approach significantly emphasizes the slow and careful building of trust and rapport,” he wrote in a paper for the Center for International Relations and Sustainable Development. “Quiet, in-depth discussions between rivals rely on a mutual recognition of inherent dignity and honor, allowing exchanges from the heart. Their fresh perspectives on conflict resolution in an increasingly complex world are invaluable,” he stated. (*Christian Science Monitor*, July 1, 2024)

From A Good Neighbourhood, OMC Summer Book Club discussion:
The church was huge and clean and full of light. There was music and singing. The people were calm and unhurried. They seemed to always be smiling. *Welcome!* They said every time. *We're so glad you're here to join us in giving thanks for this glorious day, this gift from our Lord.* Everyone was grateful. Everyone was cheerful. There were special classes for kids, with lots of treats and crafts and music. No one was crabby or stressed out. Kids didn't fight with one another or yell at the teachers or call one another names or offer to sell her drugs. It was a place - really, the first place she'd every spent time - where the atmosphere was one of harmony and peace. We're so glad you're here. At church, everyone loved her. And, she soon learned, the Lord loved her, too. (p. 132)

Compassion is what spans the abyss which creation has opened between God and the creature.

It is the rainbow.

Compassion should have the same dimension as the act of creation. It cannot exclude a single creature.

One should love oneself only with a compassionate love.

Compassion directed to oneself is humility.

Praise for God, compassion for creatures, humility for the self.

-Simone Weil, *The Literary Lives of Simone Weil* by Cynthia Wallace, p. 245

Blessing our New Executive Minister for Mennonite Church SK

Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Sunday, July 21, 2024

Bless you, Len Rempel,

as you serve us as Executive Minister for Mennonite Church
Saskatchewan,

knowing you are called for such a time as this in our need for leadership,
called by God and called by a number of us
pushing you in this direction.

Bless you, knowing this call comes at a cost.

That time you'll never get back.
Those ornery pastors and reluctant donors
who won't ever be as grateful as you hope.
The MC SK pay cheque and benefits that will never compensate.

May you be reminded
that maybe you were called for such a time as this
To pour out your God-given creative gifts and commitment to
the larger church
To work toward this dream of collaboration between pastors and
churches

To make an impact in our province.
And on the days where you feel
like your work is just a drop in the ocean.
Or you want to throw in the towel.

May joy and delight be yours,
and may it fuel the hard, beautiful work you do;
where your gifts and passions and resources
meet our community's deep needs.

Thank you for your courage to serve us.
May God bless you in it.

By Patty Friesen, *based on Kate Bowler's Blessing for Those Serving Others*

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Quote: What lies behind us and what lies before us are but tiny matters compared to what lies within us. *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Luke's Little Life Lessons

The Power of Stories

One of my favourite things about the Bible is that its authors used story to pass on wisdom, history, and other facts. Most of what we understand about Jesus is told to us via stories.

I am currently studying the Gospel of Mark for upcoming sermons, and having read the other gospels, I am always impressed at how necessary four different *tellings* of the same story are. These four different stories paint a picture of Jesus better than any history book, or singular story ever could. Which is interesting, considering there are at times “contradictions” between the gospel accounts. And yet those inconsistencies and different focuses do not subtract but add to the story.

On Friday August 23rd I came in for office hours as usual. Patty had recently found out about an event celebrating the relationship between Mennonites and the Young Chipewyan (*also known as the Stoney Knoll Band*), as well as progress in their land claims. I decided it would be good to go to the gathering, despite having little idea of what this was all about. While this story is likely a familiar one for locals who have been paying attention to Mennonite news, this was all new information to me. I gained a much better understanding about this interesting history and situation through stories. Three of them to be exact.

On the way to the event, riding in Patrick Preheim's SUV, I asked him what was happening, and for some background information. Patrick generously gave me a brief retelling of the story, so that I wouldn't be completely clueless at the event I was attending. He did a great job of summarizing our relationship as Mennonites with Stoney Knoll.

After passing the unfortunately hail damaged fields, and arriving at the Stoney Knoll site, Patty encouraged me to walk through and read the signs that had been put up to tell the story of the place we were sitting. I always say I am going to read more signs when I go to exhibits, but the last time I said this was at Boom Town and spent the entire time chasing my niece and nephew and left with the same level of understanding as

them. This time I did read through the signs, and I got a factual, concise, impersonal version of the story.

Finally, during the program Gary LaPlante spoke at length about this story, from the perspective of a Young Chipewyan descendant. Without discrediting Patrick, and the historical signs, Gary gave the most comprehensive and engaging account. He was able to talk about the people he knew, give details about the unjust treatment of the Young Chipewyan, and discuss the emotional aspect of such a story. I will likely get a 4th story when I watch Reserve 107. I think I learned far more in these retellings of the same story, than I would from putting all the stories together in an organized way.

Different perspectives, biases, and emotions give a fuller picture. Stories have the power to teach us in ways that a list of facts cannot. I hope that we continue to find fulfillment in the stories around us, and listen well to one another's stories. Even if we have heard it before, we can always be enriched by stories.

Foodgrains Bank

Greeting Friends,

As an organization committed to being a Christian response to hunger, we seek to reflect God's heart—one of love, compassion, and justice that desires no person should go hungry. Our presence and voice can be drowned out amidst the noise, busyness, and stress of the culture of our day, but for those who have taken notice, for those who take a moment to hear, or to join in (such as putting up a field sign), our collective work to increase food security in areas most severely impacted by hunger conveys its own sense of beauty and identity, even in the midst of suffering. Whether it's the athletic performances at the Olympics or the intricate flowers in your surroundings, we all understand the temporary nature of both trials and blessings. Our role as stewards of a 'good' creation offers ample opportunity to reflect the Creator's heart for the well-being of all people and the earth that is our home

Celebrating agriculture & practicing generosity

July and August always have their share of community events, and this summer the Foodgrains Bank has had plenty of opportunity to connect with people in rural communities and in the agriculture industry. From July 16-18, thousands of guests visited Discovery Farm Langham, home of Ag in Motion. Along with a host of volunteers (thank you, Gerry, Garth, Justin, and Kiersten!) our booth engaged visitors with a focus on our humanitarian and food assistance work, along with the scope and depth of commitment from community growing projects, farm families, and agriculture businesses across Canada that support our work to help end hunger. On July 25th, Grow Hope Saskatchewan was present at Aberhart Farms Field Day, which offers a deep dive into data-driven agronomy and tech advances that support sustainable farming operations. Aberhart Farms is an active farm member of Grow Hope SK, and it was so meaningful when Deb Aberhart offered a beautiful blessing-prayer prior to the BBQ supper, reminding us all of the humble and generous nature of farming communities—this [historical] prayer is shared at the bottom of this newsletter, FYI. Grow Hope SK also engaged visitors at Bruno's Cherry Sunday on August 11, sharing in our desire to help connect urban and rural people in an appreciation of agriculture and food and a reminder of the value of giving back to those who do not have enough to eat.

Upcoming harvest events

At the time of writing (Aug 14-16), there had not yet been a growing project harvest, although there are numerous that will soon be ready. It's usually the pulse crops that get taken off first, followed often by the cereals, and finally the canola. But many factors play into the scheduling of a Foodgrains Bank harvest. In case you were not aware, out of the 30+ projects across SK, a handful have their own social media presence! Check out the following Facebook pages that highlight a local growing project. These pages are usually updated during harvest so that the greater community can come out and watch the crop get taken off. We also try to amplify these events through our Saskatchewan Foodgrains Bank Facebook page.

- Balgonie Harvest of Hope
- Moosomin Harvest of Hope
- Rotary Club of Melfort
- Southwest Growing Project (near Leader SK)

- Wiwa Growing Project (near Bateman SK)
- Grow Hope Saskatchewan – with fields near Goodsoil, Rosthern, Bruno, Willowbrook, Langenburg, and Main Centre!

Interested in being a part of this initiative but don't have a growing project near you? Join us as a Growing Partner – by generously sharing some of the proceeds that are derived from your fields/gardens and wisdom that you steward. *Go to their homepage for more information and to see the progress made towards the collective goal!*

Join us this World Food Day, October 16 at 7:00 p.m. CT, as we discuss how conflict affects global hunger and what Christian faith looks like in this context.

Peace to you,
Rick & Jacquie
Saskatchewan Representatives,
Canadian Foodgrains Bank

This is but a small part of the whole fall update. For the complete version go to <https://www.foodgrainsbank.ca>

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Dear Friends,
As you plan for the fall, we invite your church to mark **World Food Day – October 16th** on your calendar.

This is a day for the global community to raise awareness for the people around the world who suffer from hunger. And as a Christian community, who believes that everyone is made in the image of God, we have a few ways to invite your faith community to remember the women, men and children who must live with this injustice.

First, we'd like to invite you to join us for a virtual gathering on **World Food Day, Wednesday, October 16, at 7:00 p.m. CT**. We'll hear from World Renew's partner, MERATH in Lebanon, about how conflict and faith intersect in their food security work. And from the Democratic

Republic of Congo, Canadian Baptist Ministries' Polisi Kivava will join me in a conversation to share insights from his personal experience leading the organization's African Relief and Development work. We will close this gathering in a time of prayer together, standing united in our mission to end hunger and bring hope to those affected by conflict.

If your church or community is committed to engaging more deeply in the issue of global hunger this World Food Day, register by going to <https://www.foodgrainsbank.ca> and receive event details.

In the meantime, if you would like to support your community in learning about World Food Day, we have compiled a [resource guide](#) to help you choose which resource will help educate your congregation on global hunger. One resource that many find impactful is the guide to hosting a [Ration Meal](#) - a simple plate that mirrors what millions of people facing hunger receive as humanitarian assistance. This can be a powerful moment for your church family to reflect on the daily realities of those in need.

We hope you will join us in a time of reflection, learning, and prayer together this World Food Day.

Blessings,

Christina Philips

Director, resources and public engagement
Canadian Foodgrains Bank

MDS NEWS

August, 2024

Hi Church,

Since joining MDS a half year ago, I've noticed common threads in my interviews with disaster survivors. In the aftermath of a disaster, people reflect on what's most important to them. Security, love, connection and belonging are common motivators and factor into their resilience and recovery.

This was highlighted for me on a recent visit to MDS response sites in Barre and Montpelier, Vermont. It was a memorable opportunity to meet flood survivors, RV volunteers and summer youth program participants.

When I spoke with flood survivors there, I was struck by our shared humanity... While our personal circumstances may vary, we are all motivated by the most basic physical as well as emotional and social needs. I hear about this from volunteers too, who find connection and belonging in MDS community.

It's a privilege to be a part of an organization that prioritizes basic needs and facilitates healing, where security or connection have been lacking.

Thank you to the many volunteers who have helped bring healing — raising a wall, making fast friends with a first-time volunteer or sharing a cup of coffee with a disaster survivor. This is God's love in action.

With appreciation,
Nikki Ham Gwala
Communications Coordinator, MDS Canada

For more stories and information go to their website:
<https://mds.org/about-mds-canada/>

PEACEMAKERS

For over thirty-five years, people have asked CPTers, "Has CPT been successful?" This is often a loaded question, usually difficult to define. CPT has been in solidarity accompaniment in Palestine since 1995, and the occupation has not ended. Our team has been active in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan for two decades now, and Turkey continues to bomb the Kurdish farmers living in the border areas. Building partnerships and transforming violence is a long-term commitment to embodied solidarity often visible in the micro-successes of evacuating threatened partners in Colombia from their village when the risk to their lives demands it. Successful solidarity looks like a report published by the team in Lesvos that persuades European parliamentarians to take action to facilitate

refuge for migrants and refugees arriving on the shores of Europe or when the team on the US/Mexico border safely accompanies a migrant out of harm's way towards seeking asylum. The work of solidarity accompaniment is granular, detailed and calculated, often dealing with the immediate context while illuminating the larger structural issues that create injustice and violence.

But that is not always the case with success.

Last week, the President of Colombia, Gustavo Petro, on behalf of the government, granted titles to fifty plots of land for the *campesinos*—small farmers—of Las Pavas. This decision marks a significant moment in the country's attempt at land restitution and to address the landlessness of millions of Colombians who were internally displaced during more than half a century of internal conflict. CPT accompanied the 116 campesino families from 2009 to 2022 in their nonviolent struggle to resist forced displacement from palm oil companies. These companies used right-wing paramilitary forces to intimidate and displace the campesinos to grab land for monocultivation. The families' brave insistence on justice and peace did not go in vain; in 2013, they were nationally recognised for their emblematic and exemplary nonviolent struggle and were awarded the National Peace Prize.

On receiving the land titles, Misael Payares, one of the community's leaders, thanked the organisations, including CPT, for accompanying the people's resistance even when the state had abandoned them. Another community leader, Claudia Machuca, thanked the President but also made it clear to him that the agrarian reform process in Colombia was not born with the delivery of the land titles but with the blood, tears, and struggle of campesinos over many years.

Today, we celebrate with the farming families of Las Pavas and stand in awe of their resistance. These are the successes of solidarity accompaniment and partnership. A celebration like this might come once in twenty years, but as Claudia said, social justice is built on years of resistance struggles and often at the cost of forced displacement, violence, and even assassination.

CPT seeks to create safe spaces for our partners to do the work of peacebuilding and justice, and it is in these spaces where the success of accompaniment lies.

Caldwell Manners *CPT Communications Coordinator*

Below is the list of courses for Fall 2024 Xplore

Tuesdays 9:30 a.m.–10:30 a.m. CT Oct 1–Nov 5 (Zoom only)
Wisdom, Tension, and Conflict in the Gospel of John with
Robert J. Suderman (Jack)

Tuesdays 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon Oct 1–Nov 5 (Zoom only)
Dreams and Dreaming--In Scripture and in Our Lives Today
with April Yamasaki

Wednesdays 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CT Hybrid Classes—at CMU and on
Zoom Oct 2 – Nov 6 (choose 1)
Exploring our Relationship with Grief with John Koop Harder
Coming to Terms with Christian Antisemitism with Dan Epp-
Tiessen

Wednesdays 11:30 – 12:30 p.m. CT Hybrid Classes—at CMU and on
Zoom Oct 2 – Nov 6 (choose 1)
The Great Oratorios with Nolan Kehler
“Lord, Teach Us”: Learning from the Sermon on the Mount with
Michael Pahl

Thursdays 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. CT Oct 10 – Nov 14 on (Zoom only)

Starting 1 week later

The Great Soviet Experiment: A Postmortem with Leonard
Friesen

Thursdays 11:00 – 12:00 noon CT Oct 3 – Nov 7 on (Zoom only)
Learning About Biblical Characters and Events Through Art
with MaryLou Driedger

Course descriptions and Instructor bios available at the CMU web site

www.cmu.ca/xplore

LECTIONARY PASSAGES FOR SEPTEMBER

September 1, 2024

- Song of Solomon 2:8-13 and Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9
- Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9 and Psalm 15
- James 1:17-27
- Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

September 8, 2024

- Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23 and Psalm 125
- Isaiah 35:4-7a and Psalm 146
- James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17
- Mark 7:24-37

September 14, 2024

- Numbers 21:4b-9 and Psalm 98:1-5 or Psalm 78:1-2, 34-38
- 1 Corinthians 1:18-24
- John 3:13-17

September 15, 2024

- Proverbs 1:20-33 and Psalm 19 or Wisdom of Solomon 7:26 - 8:1
- Isaiah 50:4-9a and Psalm 116:1-9
- James 3:1-12
- Mark 8:27-38

September 22, 2024

- Proverbs 31:10-31 and Psalm 1
- Wisdom of Solomon 1:16-2:1, 12-22
or Jeremiah 11:18-20 and Psalm 54
- James 3:13 - 4:3, 7-8a
- Mark 9:30-37

September 29, 2024

- Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22 and Psalm 124
- Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29 and Psalm 19:7-14
- James 5:13-20
- Mark 9:38-50

October 6, 2024

- Job 1:1, 2:1-10 and Psalm 26
- Genesis 2:18-24 and Psalm 8
- Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12
- Mark 10:2-16

CALENDAR

September 1 – 10:00 am Luke preaching on Mark 2

September 8 - 10:00 am Patty preaching on Life Worth Living:

Children, Loose Change Sunday

11:15 Semi-Annual meeting

12:15 Second Sunday Lunch Bunch, DQ Warman - all welcome

September 15 – 10:00 am Lois Siemens preaching

10:30 Children's SS, 11:15 Sunday school for youth, adults

11:11 am Deacons mtg

12:00 Lunch with Lois @ *Osler Café backroom*

Fri – Sun – Sept 20 – 22 Youth to Camp Elim

September 22 – 10:00 am Patty preaching on Life Worth Living: Work

11:11 Community Connections mtg

September 23 6:00 pm Executive mtg

7:30 pm Council mtg

September 26 7:00 pm Worship mtg @ OMC

September 29 10:00 am Luke Bushman speaking Mark 3

Special music by Bethany Ukulele Band

11:15 am SS Forum Poland presentation

12:00 noon Potluck (*please bring extra for the band*)

Group C-M please set-up

October 6 – 10:00 am Patty preaching on 7 Shared Convictions: #1-2

God, Jesus and the Enneagram

11:15 am Forum on Enneagram with Amanda Dodge, MCC SK

October 13 – 10:00 am Patty preaching on 7 Shared Convictions: #3

Baptism and Communion, Thanksgiving Communion, no SS

October 20 – 10:00 am Patty preaching on 7 Shared Convictions:

#4-7 The Church

11:15 am Forum on 7 Shared Convictions of Global Anabaptists

as OMC teaching position

October 27 – 10:00 am Luke preaching on Mark 4

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Join the Walking Club – Fridays 9:00 am starting from church and walking for an hour. Coffee/water is served at 9:30 am.

Forever in Motion will begin October 1 at the Community Hall, Tuesday and Fridays at 10:00 am to 11:00 am. Please wear running shoes and bring a water bottle.

Celebrate Shekinah's 45th Anniversary! Sunday, September 8th from 2:00 - 6:00! Enjoy hikes, crafts, zip line, climbing wall, wide games, tours of the Timber Lodge and Timber Frame Cabins, a special service, and of course, a simple supper of farmer sausage on a bun and a cupcake! What to bring: A picnic blanket and/or chairs, \$20.00 for the newest Shekinah fashion wear, if you wish, hiking boots, creativity, energy and an appetite! What to wear: Any Shekinah tee shirt you own! Please pre-register at the following link for the event so we are able to have enough food!

<https://www.cognitofirms.com/ShekinahRetreatCentre/SHEKINAH45thANNIVERSARYPREREGISTRATION> (new)

September Birthdates

8 – Dick Braun
12 – Cornie Guenther (84)
12 – Jacqueline Funk
14 - Mark Bigland-Pritchard
16 – Doug McKinnell
17 – Adeline Cox
18 – Anna Peters (80)
18 – Brad Schroeder
22 – Margaret Dyck
23 – Rob Borne
24 – Chris Buhler
25 – Christy Martens Funk
26 – Tena Friesen (92)