

# The Osler Mennonite Church

## Aug/Sept 2023 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 XVI Eighth Edition

A WELCOMING COMMUNITY FOR PEACE

Following Jesus on the Path of Reconciliation

## **Pastor Patty's Ponderings**

Right now I'm sitting in the downtown Humboldt Public Library writing sermons while waiting for John R to come out of day surgery (what a nice hospital!), I've had a donut at The Danish Oven, then toured the Museum and Gallery with it's touching Broncos memorial. I even had excellent sushi at Jiraba and bought a new dress. Who knew Humboldt had so much to offer?

Love a Sask road trip in July with blooming canola fields. I'm looking forward to two more road trips in August to Missinipe for a canoe trip with women friends and a family reunion with Mom's siblings in Tofield, AB.

August brings us sermons from our lovely lay preachers - Dave, George and Charlie. August 27 is our joint outdoor service with Aberdeen, Warman, Langham and Osler at Ruth and Wilf's backyard. We'll sing, have communion and a bible skit *Midwives of Justice* written by Len Rempel, Warman/Pleasant Point Mennonite and hopefully eat rollkuchen and watermelon. Joint outdoor service signals the end of summer already and we look ahead to fall programming; the beginning of Sunday school and faspas with conversation and other outreach opportunities. We'll have a congregational meeting Sun. Sept. 24 to hear all these future plans.

May God bless our summer down-time and our fall up-time and all the seasons of our lives.

## **and *more* Pondering**

On Tuesday, July 18, I met the 100th Anniversary train at the Saskatoon train station. My young cousin Emily Friesen was on the train with other young adults on a scholarship. She's the grand-daughter of my dad's youngest brother who got off the Canadian Prairies and went to Pennsylvania. We had never met before but I reminded her that her great-grandparents and my grandparents Jacob and Justina Friesen and their three children were met in Rosthern by Bernard and Mary Friesen with their three children, who hosted this doubled household that first winter. I've often wondered if Mary Friesen worried that the potatoes would last.

I made a sign for the 100th Anniversary train that said, “Welcome Refugees to Saskatchewan.” As Mennonites got off the train, they weren’t sure if the sign was for them since they weren’t technically refugees but they enjoyed the joke and took pictures. A Middle Eastern man came up to me and read my sign slowly and hand on heart thanked me for welcoming *him* to Saskatchewan, though he said he was on his way to Edmonton from Toronto. I asked where he was from and he said Iraq and hand on heart, thanked me again for the welcome. I wondered if he didn’t always feel welcomed. An unexpected twist to my tongue-in-cheek plan reminded me that we have to keep on the work of welcoming refugees to Saskatchewan.

On that note, we may have opportunity to help Lina Al-Nouris sponsor another single mother with two children in Syria to come to Saskatoon. Are we ready for it? I think it marks the 100th anniversary of our grandparents’ refugee sponsorship quite well.

## **August**

Late summer is the time when  
you are meant to lie in a hammock, drink ice tea or cocktails,  
read a cheap novel, and above all, not worry too much.

You are not meant to remember the ticking of the clock  
or how earth, right now, rotates at one thousand miles per hour.  
You are not meant  
to think about duty, death,  
or the daily race toward money.

Late summer is for hanging suspended,  
as if the Universe is holding you  
in her arms for safe keeping,  
soothing you with the beauty of August flowers and a soft summer  
breeze.

-Ruth Johnston, Iowa City, IA

## **Pastor Patty's Picks**

**The Myth of Normal** by *Gabor Mate* opened my eyes to the effects of stress in our bodies that cause illness and the awareness that can help bring healing

### **Kate Bowler Blessing for Hard Times**

Blessed are you who have realized  
that life is hard.

And it's hard for everyone.

Your awareness came at a cost.

You lost something you can't get back.

You were diagnosed with chronic pain or degenerative disease.

Your family fell apart and things have never been the same.

Blessed are you who gave up the myth  
that the good life is one of happiness, success, perfection.

The life that looks beautiful on Instagram,  
—but isn't real.

You who realize it is okay to not be okay.

To not have a shiny life because no one does.

Blessed are you who see things clearly,  
where struggle is everyone's normal.

You walk among the fellowship of the afflicted,  
a club no one wants to join.

And while this life isn't shiny,  
it does come with superpowers.

Superpowers of ever-widening empathy  
and existential courage that gets you back up after another fall  
and a deepened awe at the beauty and love that can be found amid life's  
rubble.

Like flowers that grow from the cracks in the sidewalk.

These virtues blossom in you.

And thank God for you.

Blessed are all of us who struggle,  
for we are in good company,  
and we'll never walk alone.

## Luke's Little Lessons (*Lies?*)

Oftentimes in life, I find that a certain lesson, or a certain theme flashes at me over and over for a season. The past while, I have been really struck by the concept of grace. It seems every book I have read, sermon I have written, and even the emails I have received have had that beautiful word in them- grace. I find that I like the idea of grace... on the surface. I like the idea that I can make mistakes, and learn, and there is some grace for me as I navigate life. I like the idea that everyone can turn their lives around, and that reconciliation is always possible. When I get deeper into grace, I find I struggle with it. I find that grace sometimes seems to be at odds with my desire for justice. I once had a professor highlight this question brilliantly. He described a scenario where an abuser and the abuser's victim both end up in heaven. He then asked if heaven can really be heaven, if victim's have to stand next to their abusers worshipping God for eternity. This question has always stuck with me. These are the times when I question how committed I am to the scandal of grace. If someone who has deeply hurt others receives grace, does that stop those hurt from experiencing justice? If grace is shown to the ones who have done harm, does that not make the harmed responsible for the work of reconciliation? What about when people take advantage of grace in order to continue doing harm? As I have become more attuned to the suffering of others, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized, I have found my space for grace shrinking, and my hunger for justice growing. Justice and grace have to coexist somehow. While I may be left struggling to show grace in extreme circumstances, I also believe in a powerful, loving, radical and just savior. Maybe grace is less of a concept and more of a mystery. Something that cannot be imposed, forced or quantified. Not something that can be achieved through certain steps, but something miraculous that happens. Maybe grace is something we hope for and believe in. Perhaps in extreme circumstances we just have to look to Jesus for guidance, trusting that our savior can help us with the hard work of forgiving and reconciling, so that grace can sprout in the most difficult circumstances



**Fall 2023 Xplore Session begins the first week of October**  
**Below is the list of courses**

**Tuesdays** 11:00-12:00 Noon CST Tuesdays October 3 – November 7  
*Zoom only (choose 1)*

Hope and Courage: Responding to the Climate Crisis as a People of Faith with *Sandy Plett*

Pearls of Wisdom from Henri Nouwen with *Michelle O'Rourke*

**Wednesdays** 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CST Hybrid Classes—at CMU and on Zoom October 4 – November 8 (choose 1)

Reconsidering Anabaptist Identity after 500 years with Karl Koop

Micah: Prophet of Justice, Judgement, and Hope with Dan Epp-Tiessen

**Wednesdays** 11:30-12:30 p.m. CST Hybrid Classes

—at CMU and on Zoom October 4 – November 8 (choose 1)

Mennonite Literature and Theology in Conversation with *Paul Doerksen*

Indigenous Peoples and the Canadian Nation with *Shelisa Klassen*

**Thursdays** 9:30-10:30 a.m. CST October 5 – November 8 *on Zoom only*  
Disability, Theology, and the Church with *Christina Reimer*

**Thursdays** 11:00-12:00 noon CST October 5 – November 8 *on Zoom only*

Are You Living Your Dream? Or Longing for a New One? with *April Yamasaki*

More detailed information available information at the CMU web site

Registration forms will be available at the end of **July**.

**([www.cmu.ca/xplore](http://www.cmu.ca/xplore))**

## MDS NEWS

When MDS agrees to do a job for a homeowner affected by a natural disaster, we sign a job card with them detailing the things our volunteers will do—a new roof, new floors, fix the ceiling, replace the windows, paint, etc.

But sometimes when volunteers go into a house they see other needs not mentioned in the job card. That’s when they sometimes spring into action, using their own initiative.

That’s what happened at Brianna Fraser’s house in Sydney, Cape Breton. Volunteers who were working at the single mother’s house in June noticed the mattresses in the children’s bedrooms were musty and old and needed replacing.

That wasn’t on the job card, so they took it into their own hands by raising the funds among themselves to get new mattresses for the two boys, Anthony and John Michael.

“It’s another amazing MDS story,” said Peter Thiessen, who served as Project Director in May. “Jesus loved children, and so do we. Volunteers were just reflecting Jesus when they provided new mattresses.”

We might call that “going the second mile.” But for our volunteers it’s just another reason why they serve with MDS to help others, doing what they can to make their lives a bit brighter and better.

Speaking of Cape Breton, we will be ending our response there at the end of August. By then we will have done what we could and set out to do, given our volunteer and financial resources. We are looking forward to a closing celebration on August 24 with our partner, the United Way of Cape Breton, and with homeowners, local businesses and others. It will be a time to praise God for how we all—volunteers and donors—were able to respond to needs there after Hurricane Fiona.

Thank-you for your part in that response

## CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

Hello Church,

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Executive Director

Mennonite Disaster Service Canada



## LECTIONARY PASSAGES FOR AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

### **August 6, 2023**

- Genesis 32:22-31 and Psalm 17:1-7, 15
- Isaiah 55:1-5 and Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21
- Romans 9:1-5
- Matthew 14:13-21

### **August 13, 2023**

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

### **August 20, 2023**

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

### **August 27, 2023**

- Exodus 1:8-2:10 and Psalm 124
- Isaiah 51:1-6 and Psalm 138
- Romans 12:1-8
- Matthew 16:13-20

### **September 3, 2023**

- Exodus 3:1-15 and Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b
- Jeremiah 15:15-21 and Psalm 26:1-8
- Romans 12:9-21
- Matthew 16:21-28

### **September 10, 2023**

- Exodus 12:1-14 and Psalm 149
- Ezekiel 33:7-11 and Psalm 119:33-40
- Romans 13:8-14
- Matthew 18:15-20

### **September 14, 2023**

- 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 17, 2023**

- Exodus 14:19-31 and Psalm 114 or Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21
- Genesis 50:15-21 and Psalm 103:(1-7), 8-13
- Romans 14:1-12
- Matthew 18:21-35

### **September 24, 2023**

- Exodus 16:2-15 and Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
- Jonah 3:10-4:11 and Psalm 145:1-8
- Philippians 1:21-30
- Matthew 20:1-16

### **October 1, 2023**

- Exodus 17:1-7 and Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16
- Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 and Psalm 25:1-9
- Philippians 2:1-13
- Matthew 21:23-32

## **OMC CALENDAR**

**Aug 6 10:00 a.m.** Dave Feick preaching

**Aug 13 10:00 a.m.** George Janzen preaching

11:00 a.m. Second Sunday Lunch Bunch Restaurant

**Aug 15 6:00 pm** Executive mtg

7:30 pm Council mtg

**Aug 20 10:00 a.m.** Joseph Prays by Patty Friesen

**Aug 27 10:00 a.m.** AWOL (Aberdeen, Warman, Osler, Langham)

Joint Outdoor Service and Communion in Ruth and Wilf's yard

11:00 a.m. Rollkuchen and watermelon.

**Sept 3 10:00 am** Patty Friesen speaking

**Sept 10 10:00 am** Julie Bergen speaking

**Sept 17 10:00 am** Patty Friesen speaking

Sept 17 11:00 am Semi-Annual mtg

**Sept 24 10:00 am** Luke Bushman

## August/September Birthdates

9 - Lyle Stucky  
9 – Kendra Reddekopp  
10 – Eva Martens  
12 – Matthew Braun  
16 – Gaye Guenther  
19 – Lloyd Sawatzky  
20 – Jim Dyck  
20 - Betty Friesen (89)  
21 – Bill Peters  
21 – Merel Kriegsman  
27 – Eli Schellenberg  
29 – Jan Guenther  
29 – Terry Stefaniuk  
30 – Kathy Boldt (87)  
30 – Dan Schellenberg

8 – Dick Braun  
12 – Cornie Guenther (83)  
12 – Jacqueline Funk  
14- Mark Bigland-Pritchard  
16 – Doug McKinnell  
17 – Adeline Cox  
18 – Anna Peters  
22 – Margaret Dyck  
23 – Rob Borne  
24 – Chris Buhler  
25 – Christy Martens Funk  
26 – Tena Friesen (91)

“You can’t effect change, but you can witness it. You can’t change the outcome, but you can sit with someone while they’re going on their journey and just say, I see you and I’m here with you. And I know you’re suffering and if you’re suffering because you’ve had another horrible botched surgery or you’re suffering because school boys chase you down the street in Glasgow barking at you like a dog at two o’clock in the morning or you’re suffering because you’re shooting up and you’re alone. I just want to be there. I can’t change it, and I can’t stop it. But I can be there. That’s it.”

– ANN PATCHETT ON LOVING HER FRIEND LUCY WHO DIED OF DRUG ADDICTION FROM HER CONVERSATION WITH KATE BOWLER

*Submitted by Pastor Patty*

## Christian Peace Makers

Last week's musings on binary thought, or essentially the idea that only two options exist, have stuck with me. I see it clearly in my own experiences, and so I thought maybe it was just my brain. Turns out, it's systematic.

Democrat/Republican, capitalist/communist, male/female, East/West, the list goes on. We've created these camps with labels that, maybe at one point, offered us safety and security in a shared identity and a manifesto that resonated with who we are. And then fear took over and we built walls around these identities. You're in, or you're out. This meant that we lost the capacity to accept anything that lay in between two camps, or even beyond the camps themselves.

War and Peace. Somehow, even these descriptors that are meant to signal a state of being have been divided into camps and attributed to core ideological and racial identities. The media have painted a clear picture of what 'parts of the world' are expected and normalized to always be at war and which 'types of people' are peaceful. It has been decided for us, and that way, the political and economic warlords can continue their destruction behind the smokescreens of these supposed truths.

But this is the beauty of nonviolence. Nonviolent ideology refuses to accept the dichotomy of war and peace: the inherent need for violence to achieve progress or the veneer of 'peace' in a terribly unequal world. Nonviolence is creative; nonviolence is radical; nonviolence re-imagines what we're capable of. Nonviolence is hope.

Similar to the beauty of nonviolence is also the wonder and strength of Two-Spirit, Trans, and Queer communities. Breaking the mold is terrifying, dangerous, and incredibly brave. But once we are able to accept and celebrate the freedom that comes with breaking down our walls of fear, we open ourselves to a whole new world of existence, truth, and shared vulnerability.

With vulnerability comes love. And love conquers all.

And, just one more thing. The key to opening ourselves up to this 'diversity of thought' is that it's a practice. I might have a great breakthrough moment of clarity and understanding one day, and the next day I'll be back at square one. We are on a journey and these systematic dichotomies are deeply ingrained. But just as a drip of water can reshape a stone, give yourself a daily reminder that a third way exists, and we are breathing it into being.

Hannah Redekop

*CPT Communications Associate*