

The Osler Mennonite Church

October 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***

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Volume XIX Eighth Edition

A WELCOMING COMMUNITY FOR PEACE

Following Jesus on the Path of Reconciliation

From Brad's Desk:

A couple weeks ago I presented a sermon on the book of Ecclesiastes. As I stated then, this is one of my favorite books of scripture because I have found in the Teacher in this book an empathetic companion on the journey of faith in a messy world. I appreciate words from commentator Douglas Miller introducing the ideas of Ecclesiastes:

“Welcome to Ecclesiastes, a most unusual and exciting book of the Bible. Ecclesiastes has challenged interpreters over many centuries and continues to do so today. The puzzles of the book are numerous. Yet many people, both believers and unbelievers, have recognized its basic theme—that life brings the unexpected, the tragic, and the confusing—and they have found in the author a trustworthy companion for walking through such experiences. The author shows himself to be one who can recognize life’s problems, is not afraid to name them for what they are, and has insight to help us make the most of our existence on earth. His work may be the most personal book of the Bible, revealing the author’s frustrations, indignation, and reflections on mystery.” (p. 17).

“The Teacher’s book complements the book of Job because he sympathetically addresses people of faith who share many of Job’s complaints; we could say he was the kind of friend that Job had in mind. He understands those who are disappointed with God, whether pondering in silence or crying out in pain; whether covertly cynical or unafraid to vent their anger openly to God.” (p. 18).

Ecclesiastes acknowledges the brokenness and messiness of life on earth and, like Job, gives honest voice to some of the thoughts we may hesitate to say aloud. The Teacher’s primary idea is that everything in life is touched by *hevel*, that Hebrew word that means ‘vapor’ or ‘breath.’ The idea here being that life, like vapor, is fleeting, so often insubstantial and failing to satisfy, and at times doesn’t make sense. We may have to dig a bit deeper in the book to find it but I believe the Teacher does more than just lament and that they offer us wisdom for how to move forward and how to find joy and hope in the midst of the

hevel. To that end I appreciated Audrey Korotkin's words from reformjudaism.org:

“Rather than a message of futility, this reads as a message of hope: Even if we cannot make sense of life in some grand cosmic sense, we can find purpose and satisfaction in the tasks of daily life. We can create, and we can share; we can heal, and we can love. Maybe it's not all that we would like, for as long as we would like. But God provides us with ‘a time for every experience under heaven’ (Ecc. 3:1).”

I would encourage everyone to have another look at Ecclesiastes but if you do, keep this word ‘*hevel*’ in mind and its meaning of ‘vapor’ or ‘breath.’ It is most often translated as meaningless, pointless or vanity but I think it is more nuanced than any of those English words is able to capture. May you find the Teacher in Ecclesiastes to be a trustworthy and empathetic friend who understands the difficulty of earthly life yet encourages you to find joy and hope in the midst of it.

References

Korotkin, Audrey R. So, What's the Point? Ecclesiastes and Chol HaMo-eid Sukkot | Reform Judaism

Miller, Douglas B. (2010). Ecclesiastes. Believers Church Bible Commentary. Douglas B. Miller and Loren L. Johns (Eds.). Herald Press, Waterloo ON.



Luke's Little Life Lessons....

My love for Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

I was recently given the opportunity to speak at the RJC Grade 12 retreat about servant leadership. For our second session, I had them pick an article about a Christian leader. They had to summarize it, while giving me some adjectives about what kind of leader that person was. The options were Apostle Peter, Dorothy Day, or Dietrich Bonhoeffer. I warned them that I could not find a very brief article about Bonhoeffer, and thus looking at his life and leadership would take the most work. To my surprise, lots of groups selected the Bonhoeffer article, and when we went to summarize it, I had to restrain myself from talking about Dietrich Bonhoeffer for ages and boring these students.

I was reflecting afterwards about why I am a fan of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Is it because I frantically read *The Cost of Discipleship* in a single evening for a school project? Probably not. Is it because I think we would get along? Also probably not, he was described as very proper, serious and intellectual. We certainly wouldn't agree on lots of theological issues either.

I am drawn to Bonhoeffer because his life and ideas represent the complex journey of faith we are on. He changed, learned, contradicted and wrestled. He believed in pacificism, and yet he decided that his respect for human life compelled him to participate in assassination attempts on Adolf Hitler. He believed he was doing something wrong, but that it was still the right choice. He grew up in an affluent world, but in his 20's he attended a Black Church in Harlem. This reshaped his worldview, and compelled him to focus more on having an active faith. At one point he left Germany for his safety, but felt like he should go back despite the dangers.

I resonate with Dietrich's story. I too ponder if "peacemaking" and "pacificism" have limits in their efficacy in this world. I have also been shaped by leaving my comfortable worldview and meeting "others". I have also felt scared of the pastoral call, even though my life is not remotely at risk. The tensions within his life are the reason I admire him.

Album Recommendation: *We Will Always Love You* by the Avalanches. Best songs are "Interstellar Love" and "Gold Sky".

MDS CANADA

Dear Church,

This week marks a significant milestone for families in Denare Beach, SK. All homes built by MDS volunteers are now complete and have passed final inspection! The homes will be dedicated this Saturday, after which our focus will shift to our rebuilding project in the Swan Valley region of Manitoba.

I had the opportunity to visit Denare Beach shortly after it got underway. Being there reminded me that it takes many people, each playing a different role, to make a project like this possible.

One of the things I love most about my role at MDS is the opportunity to connect with volunteers and donors.

I connect with donors when they call to give. Their generosity helps keep projects moving and makes it possible for volunteers to serve.

I help schedule volunteers who give their time and energy to come alongside people affected by disaster. I also get to hear the stories of how volunteers went to serve but were touched by God in unexpected ways.

I am often reminded of 1 Corinthians 12 and Paul's beautiful reminder that we are all part of the body of Christ and that every one of us has a part to play. There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

I see this every day. God is moving through the generosity of donors, through the hands and hearts of volunteers, and through the prayers of people supporting the work of MDS.

Some give. Some serve. Some pray. Some encourage. We may not all have the same role, but every contribution matters.

To all the volunteers who have served in the past, those serving today, and those who will serve in the future, thank you. And to every donor and person who prays and supports this ministry, thank you.

Michelle Stoesz
Admin and Weekly Volunteer Coordinator
MDS Canada

Pieces from their Newsletter....

Three generations from the same extended family came together to serve with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) at Denare Beach in June.

The three—grandfather Henry Warkentin, 74, his son Eric, 46, and grandson Parks, 18—installed furnace ductwork in homes being built in the northern Saskatchewan community, along with other construction tasks.

Volunteers needed in Swan Valley, Manitoba

MDS volunteers are helping families rebuild after significant flooding in the Swan Valley. We continue to have openings for weekly volunteers and crew leaders from October-November.

If you are interested in volunteering, please email mdscanada@mds.org or call (204) 261-1274.

With Grateful Hearts

MDS is hosting three special evenings across Canada to celebrate God's work through MDS. Join us for food, fellowship, music, and to hear stories from Kevin King (retiring MDS U.S. Executive Director). Find more details on our events page: <https://mds.org/event/>

- St. Vital EMC Church, Winnipeg, MB - Oct. 13, 7-8:30pm
- King's Road Church, Abbotsford, BC - Oct. 16, 6:30-8:30pm
- Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, ON - Oct. 31, 2026, 7-8:30pm

25 years after Sept. 11 tragedy, STAR program still shines

Tom Smucker still regards responding to the Sept. 11 attacks 25 years ago one of the toughest responses he ever led for Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS).

Then MDS executive director—and now retired but still volunteering for MDS—Smucker analyzes why the aftermath became so difficult: “There was no blueprint,” he said. “There was no pattern—what do you do?”

GROW HOPE

Millions of people around the world face food insecurity, and through your support of Grow Hope Saskatchewan, food and hope are reaching many families.

Seed, land, rainfall, and harvest are all gifts from God, and through Grow Hope Saskatchewan, you help share those gifts with people experiencing hunger. Throughout Scripture, feeding the hungry is considered more than an act of charity. It is a reflection of God's love and justice.

Thank you for your faithful partnership. Your generosity is making a lasting difference.

Crop Updates

As we near the end of the 2026 growing season, here are some notes from the farmers about their crops. This year, we have a total of 508 acres seeded.

- **Rosthern** – Nathan and Jeannette Janzen and family are growing wheat. Evan tells us "The wheat looks great! The heads have filled nicely and with the very last of the green plants finishing turning harvest will just be around the corner."
- **Biggar** – Diana Dolack is growing a crop of mustard this summer. The field had some very wet spots early in the season but now is doing well! Diana reported "we are a bit delayed for the 31 mm of rain (recently). A bit wet - no harvest going on around here at the moment. We will spray ASAP to help the green spots get ripe in time

and should be able to combine in 10-14 days depending on weather. Yellow mustard is our only crop this year."

- **Willowbrook** – Josh and Janelle Prybylski and family are growing canola. Josh reports that "the canola is filling nicely. But with all the moisture this year it prematurely bolted resulting in smaller stems so it is starting to lean over a lot. Hopefully it won't result in a challenging harvest. It looks to be an average stand yield wise."
- **Langenburg** – Terry Aberhart and Roland Schappert planted wheat for Grow Hope SK this summer.
- **Main Centre** – Dan and Carol Siebert and Chaun and Sara Holdfeld have a crop of large green lentils. They seeded May 16 into good moisture. Dan Siebert tells us, "We harvested green lentils on August 17th - a great day and a good yield, approximately 25 bu/ac"
- **Bruno** – Brian and Michelle Hergott are also growing canola. Brian finished most of his seeding on June 6 but still had some parts of the field that were too wet to seed yet. Brian tells us, "Canola looks really good, a little behind but praying for a long dry fall."
- **Goodsoil** – Ian, Reg and Patrick Sonntag are growing oats this year. They finished seeding May 29, and even though they were a little late, the germination was strong and the crop was "coming out of the ground FAST!) Ian tells us now that, "the oats are looking good - we will be starting to desiccate the end of this week and then hopefully combining in about two weeks."

We're thankful for a growing season that has gone well, with some crops already harvested.

Upcoming Events

Oct 16 – MCC Thrift Shops World Food Day events (happening in Rosthern, Warman, Saskatoon, Lanigan, Swift Current and Herbert MCC Thrift Shops). All proceeds raised at each of these shops will go to support Grow Hope SK. Farmers, volunteers and MCC and CFGB staff will be present in each shop.

As we close this newsletter, we wanted to let you know of an exciting development. Grow Hope Saskatchewan has established a giving fund with the Saskatchewan Community Foundation to help foster the long-term sustainability of the Grow Hope project. It will provide an opportunity to receive donations from new donors across Saskatchewan,

including estate gifts, to help sponsor more acres. More information will be coming soon!

Thank you for being part of this important work,

Rick Guenther

Grow Hope Saskatchewan
Representative of MCC SK

Karla Koehn

Communications and Donor Relations
MCC Saskatchewan

Mennonite World Conference

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”
Romans 15:13 (NRSV)*

Dear Friends

Violence. Extreme political polarization. Financial crisis. Deaths caused by climate change and natural disasters. Emotional distress caused by social distance. Watching the news from my country, Colombia, leaves me with a sense of sadness and no hope.

Is it possible to find another reality?

I imagine a new world where people sit around a table no matter their language or race, their social class or their gender. I dream of a society where generosity balances the financial needs of those who have fewer resources.

I visualized people – living in solidarity – whose lives of love, forgiveness and compassion bring healing.

I imagine a community where political polarization is not present because there is only one governor and political system to whom everyone is loyal and faithful.

When I imagine such a new world, I find joy and peace. That joy and peace become hope when I realize that that new world is called “the kingdom of God.”

While we celebrate Peace Sunday, let’s keep building the kingdom of God that Jesus calls us to be.

In Christ,

César García General Secretary
Mennonite World Conference

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LECTIONARY PASSAGES FOR SEPTEMBER

Oct 04, 2026

- First* reading and Psalm: Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20 Psalm 19
- Alternate* First reading and Psalm: Isaiah 5:1-7 Psalm 80:7-15
- Second reading: Philippians 3:4b-14
- Gospel: Matthew 21:33-46

Oct 11, 2026

- First* reading and Psalm: Exodus 32:1-14 Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23
- Alternate* First reading and Psalm: Isaiah 25:1-9 Psalm 23
- Second reading: Philippians 4:1-9
- Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

Oct 12, 2026 Canadian Thanksgiving Day

- First* reading and Psalm: Deuteronomy 8:7-18 Psalm 65
- Alternate* First reading and Psalm:
- Second reading: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15
- Gospel: Luke 17:11-19

Oct 18, 2026

- First* reading and Psalm: Exodus 33:12-23 Psalm 99
- Alternate* First reading and Psalm: Isaiah 45:1-7 Psalm 96:1-9, (10-13)
- Second reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
- Gospel: Matthew 22:15-22

Oct 25, 2026

- First* reading and Psalm: Deuteronomy 34:1-12 Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17
- Alternate* First reading and Psalm: Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18 Psalm 1
- Second reading: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8
- Gospel: Matthew 22:34-46

Nov 01, 2026

- First* reading and Psalm: Revelation 7:9-17 Psalm 34:1-10, 22
- Alternate* First reading and Psalm:
- Second reading: 1 John 3:1-3
- Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

CALENDAR

Sun. Oct 4 – 10:00 am Brad Schroeder preaching – *Psalms*

Mon. Oct 5 - 6:30 pm Executive mtg

Sun. Oct 11 – 10:00 am Luke Bushman preaching – *Thanksgiving*

Sun. Oct 18 - 10:00 am Brad Schroeder preaching – *Proverbs*

Fri. Oct 16 – World Food Day

All proceeds from MCC Thrift Shops go to *Grow Hope*

Sun. Oct 25 – 10:00 am Dalen Applegate speaking

-11:10 am – Worship Workshop

Sun. Nov 1 – 10:00 am – Brad Schroeder preaching – *Song of Songs*

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

1 – Bruce Boldt
2 – Robin Neudorf
2 – Naomi Schellenberg
3 – Natalia Guenther
6 – Lanae Martens-Funk
6 – Jadrian Guenther
8 – Matthew Stefaniuk
12 – Stephanie Siemens
16 – Loretta Sawatzky
17 – Rachel Buhler
25 – Diane McKinnell
27 – Bree Schellenberg
29 – Mikwanis Bird
31 – Zenon Borne

