

The Osler Mennonite Church

November 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 Ninth Edition

A WELCOMING COMMUNITY FOR PEACE

Following Jesus on the Path of Reconciliation

From Brad's Desk:

By the time you're reading this I am either about to preach or just preached a sermon on the book Song of Songs in the Bible. Perhaps more than any other scriptural book, the Song of Songs leaves us wondering, "How did this book end up in the Bible?" It is 8 chapters of two lovers going back and forth sensually expressing their love and desire for each other, their infatuation with each other. There seems to be no mention of God or faith, just sensual and erotic poetry. So why might this book be included in the Bible?

I've come to appreciate Pete Enns' answer when he says, "The Song insists on delight in the midst of a canon that often leans heavy on struggle, lament, and moral instruction." (podcast episode 313). Scripture is more often than not a serious and heavy text. The Song of Songs stands out in the midst of this seemingly as a reminder that enjoying pleasure, even sexual pleasure, is equally part of Creator's good plan for us as is faith, service, or morality.

Theologian Dorothy Lee wrote an article entitled 'Pleasure: A Biblical Perspective' and in it argues that Christ-followers have often leaned too far in the direction of concern over abusing God's good gifts and in the process, neglected to enjoy that which God created to be enjoyed. She states:

God's gifts are equally 'abused' through neglect and fear. Moreover, 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. Our caution and timidity, as much as our moralism and hypocrisy, need to be challenged by such a spirituality. Where God's gifts are neglected out of fear and mistrust, God's own generous and life-giving self is neglected. We end up with a distorted image of God and a narrow, self-limiting understanding of human life. (p. 29)

Neglecting, avoiding, fearing enjoyment of God's good gifts not only ends up harming us, but it distorts the image of God we present to the world. She goes on to say:

We are called to present God to the world, not only as an ethical being who stands over against all forms of human oppression and all distortions of creation, but also as an extravagant, joyful being, who stands for passion and intimacy which is joyful, self-affirming and self-giving. We need to be careful of presenting only God the moralist, the ascetic, the puritan, without giving a thought to God the lover and giver of abundant life. (pp. 29-30).

One common pushback against the idea of embracing and enjoying pleasure is that it seems selfish to prioritize our own joy. Granted, leaning into self-centeredness and neglect of others is a temptation we all face, but I would remind us again that love for others and love for self can and do go hand in hand, I believe. The Christ invites us to love others as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:39). Adrienne Maree Brown, in her book 'Pleasure Activism' observes:

I have seen, over and over, the connection between tuning into what brings aliveness into our systems and being able to access personal, relational and communal power. Conversely, I have seen how denying our full, complex selves—denying our aliveness and our needs as living, sensual beings—increases the chance that we will be at odds with ourselves, our loved ones, our coworkers, and our neighbors on this planet.” (Brown, p. 6).

Love for self and love for others are connected. It may sound strange, but I do believe that embracing and enjoying pleasure in our lives can be and is part of the Christ's invitation to us and part of our call to pursue shalom for all members of our Community of Creation. The Song of Songs, this short and erotic book in the middle of the Old Testament, can serve as a reminder for us that our God is the Giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17) and that we can accept and enjoy these gifts from Them with thanksgiving.

Resources:

Brown, Adrienne Maree. (2019). *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*. AK Press.

Enns, Pete. Pete Ruins Song of Songs. The Bible for Normal People podcast.

[Bible] Episode 313: Pete Enns - Pete Ruins Song of Songs

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

Luke's Little Life Lessons....

"Where's God When I am Scared" was the name of the first episode of VeggieTales. That VHS got a lot of use in our house growing up. I used to sing "God is bigger than the boogeyman" to comfort myself when I was walking in the dark as a kid. I was thinking about all of this, because it is Halloween weekend. While I enjoy scary movies, spooky costumes, and all things eerie- I don't like being afraid and anxious. Horror movies are fun to watch, but the really scary things, like climate change and war, are legitimately terrifying. How does a person of faith respond to fear and anxiety? In my experience, faith has been misused many times to gloss over very real fears. "God is in control", "Be strong and courageous", "Rebuke it in the name of Jesus" etc. Using the metaphor of watching a scary movie, I have two ideas for how a person of faith might respond to fear and anxiety.

First, horror movies are less scary when you watch them with the lights on. What are the sources of light in your life that make things less scary? It is impossible to escape anxiousness entirely, but are you able to find places of hope and light that make the fear more tolerable. It is reasonable, and maybe even important, to be afraid of the Climate Crisis. Are there stories of hope that you can also take in, to balance out some of the fear?

Second, horror movies are less scary when you watch them with others. When I was younger, I used to have very scary nightmares on a regular basis. I found that talking to someone about the nightmares always made them less scary. While I would wake up with my heart pounding, when I would explain the nightmare to someone, it didn't sound so scary. The feeling of fear was there, so present in my body, talking made me realize how ridiculous most nightmares really are. If you are addressing fears, don't act like they don't exist, don't stuff them down, don't write them off, and don't be hard on yourself. Find sources of light and hope, and find people to journey with you.

Album Recommendation: Heavy Metal by Cameron Winter. It isn't a heavy metal album at all; it is sweet and emotional. I like the songs "Love Takes Miles" and "0\$".

MDS CANADA

As I write this, I am returning home from traveling and speaking across Canada in Mennonite communities—what some have affectionately called my “farewell tour.” My heart is full of gratitude for the remarkable partnership between MDS Canada and MDS US.

For more than 45 years, through my work with Mennonite Central Committee and MDS, I've watched Canadians and Americans work side by side, learning each other's customs, occasionally puzzling over our differences, and finding plenty of reasons to laugh together, eh?

I've learned something important: When people work together, pray together, and laugh together, they build something that lasts. I've often said that I want MDS to be known not only for the walls we build, but also for the walls we tear down.

Our Canadian friends have contributed far more than volunteer labor (although I suspect our warmer winters have something to do with their enthusiasm!). Canadian leadership has given input to the origin of our volunteer scheduling call centers, the Four Pillar Assessment process, bridge-building efforts in West Virginia, and safety and risk assessment practices. Canadian generosity also supported our 2009 office expansion. These contributions reflect a partnership where ideas, resources, and faith flow freely across the border.

I'm especially grateful for my years of friendship and collaboration with Canadian staff and board members. I commend the new MDS Canada Executive Director, Reynold Friesen, as he assumes leadership. We've navigated organizational changes, leadership transitions, and occasionally different perspectives. Yet our shared mission has remained stronger than any organizational chart.

Above all, I thank the hundreds of Canadian volunteers who travel south each year, bringing their skills, compassion, humor, and servant hearts. You've blessed countless disaster survivors—and you've blessed me.

As I approach retirement after nearly 23 years with MDS, I celebrate what God has accomplished through this binational family. May we never allow a border to define the boundaries of our compassion.

Thank you, MDS Canada, for walking this journey together. What a privilege it has been!

Kevin King Executive Director, MDS U.S.

CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

Saskatchewan Updates

Greetings Friend!

It seems hard to believe that we are now in October! Certainly, the rains we received in late August and early September delayed the start of (or put a pause on) harvest for many farmers across Saskatchewan.

Understandably, this has caused much stress. Yet it's also been a blessing to have received a good stretch of warm and dry weather in the past 10 days. Harvest dust is again in the air and gardeners (like myself) are enjoying an extended growing season, with beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, and squash (not to mention all the root crops) still producing fruit. 😊

I hear in the voices of farmers - those I'm connected with through Canadian Foodgrains Bank - that they trust God will guide them through all the years, whether they be lean or bountiful. The church so often acts as a gathering place where we remind and encourage one another of God's faithfulness, regardless of the circumstances.

It's my pleasure to share a few words from the Sunday message given by Rick Guenther (from Grow Hope SK) with Carrot River Mennonite Church on September 13 that stirs us to consider the way in which we think of a bountiful harvest:

“Our God is interested in the human and earthy things of our lives so there's joy and meaning in sharing in the work and the harvest with God, no matter what the quantity turns out to be. And as any farmer or gardener would know – it is a profound privilege to grow and share food with others so that people can eat. It's participating in providing the most basic of human need that we get to be a part of.....Through those not-so-bountiful harvests, I find it helpful to be reminded that we are co-creators and co-harvesters with Christ, and to know that we're part of something that's bigger and deeper than ourselves, and beyond what we ourselves can do or control. It's comforting to me to know that we work alongside a God of justice and grace, and a God who never stops working together with us to make all things right..... So participating in the bountiful harvest starts with compassion and love. More is not necessarily better. Faithfulness matters. God measures a

bountiful harvest by generosity, relationship with Him, and love for others. That's where bountiful harvest is found. That is where I believe we flourish and find abundance."

Join us for these upcoming Foodgrains Bank-related events

All across SK, farm families, rural communities, and local governments recognize the importance of stewarding our agricultural lands well and working cooperatively towards a healthy well-being for all residents. And the same can be said for agricultural areas around the world – including regions where the average farm size is less than 3 acres and the work to conserve soils and keep food on the table is paramount to the economic survival of the family

Our event on **November 9** brings together local and global experiences that improve food security for families and communities. Visiting us from Zimbabwe, my Foodgrains Bank colleague Nester Mashingaidze serves as the Lead Agriculture and Livelihoods Technical Advisor in Africa, and she will help bring even greater clarity from a short documentary film that will be screened that night - Nature+ : restoring landscapes, strengthening communities, which highlights the success of this Foodgrains Bank-funded program in eastern and southern Africa.

You don't want to miss this!

Additional opportunities to meet Nester, view the film, and learn more about our work include the following locations, dates and times:

- Regina, Saturday November 7, 7:00 p.m.: Film screening and presentation, St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral (hall) 1861 McIntyre St.
- Regina, Sunday November 8, 10:00 a.m.: Church service at Sonlight CRC, 139 Cannon St.
- Outlook, Monday November 9, 7:00 p.m.: Film screening and presentation, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 601 Ash St.
- Saskatoon, Tuesday November 10, 10:00 a.m.: Seniors group presentation at West Portal Church, 3134 33rd St. West

Managing the field's 'edges' to ensure all are fed: The power of perceptive stewardship

In the book of Leviticus, God commands the Israelites not to reap right to the very edges or corners of their fields, but rather to allow vulnerable

people to gather food with dignity, reflecting an ethic of care for outsiders and the destitute, and a practice that counters the tendency towards self-centeredness (contrast this with the parable of the rich fool in Luke chapter 12).

Many of us don't have fields (!); however, we may likely be blessed by regular income. How we manage the 'edge' of our field can have profound influence on the world around us, especially in helping alleviate another's suffering. Some Foodgrains Bank supporters choose to donate monthly – in this way, helping to provide consistent, reliable support that empowers our members' local partners to respond quickly in emergencies and build resilience for the future.

Go to their Website for the full-length Newsletter

Closing meditation – If you've come this far.....

...you'll know that there are many, many Foodgrains Bank supporters across SK, and indeed Canada. And every supporter has a unique story.

I was delighted and honoured to have the recent opportunity to meet with Mr. McLeod. We spoke at length about our respective histories of how our families came to settle in Saskatchewan, the manner in which agriculture and rural life have changed over the decades, and the role of the Foodgrains Bank in acting as a liaison/partner to farmers, churches, and the Canadian government to help respond generously and compassionately with our fellow brothers and sisters around the world who are suffering from a lack of food.

It might only be for an hour, and it might have seemed quite regular, but its also a holy moment, recognizing God's mighty-yet-gentle hand continuing to work for wholeness, justice, and flourishing.

Grace and peace,

Rick Block

Saskatchewan regional representative Canadian Foodgrains Bank

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Federal Funding Available – Up to \$50,000 for Multiculturalism Day & Canada Day 2027 Celebrations

The Government of Canada, through the Celebrate Canada Program, is now accepting applications for funding to support community celebrations in 2027.

Funding is available for events celebrating:

CA Canadian Multiculturalism Day – June 27, 2027

CA Canada Day – July 1, 2027

This is an excellent opportunity for cultural, religious, faith-based and community organizations to bring people together, celebrate Canada's diversity and showcase the contributions their communities make to Canadian society.

How much funding is available?

Eligible organizations may apply for funding covering up to 100% of eligible project expenses.

- Grants of up to \$50,000 may be available
- Requests above \$50,000 may be considered through a contribution agreement
- Funding is competitive and is not guaranteed

Who can apply?

Eligible applicants may include:

- Canadian not-for-profit organizations
- Cultural and ethnocultural organizations
- Faith-based and religious organizations that meet program requirements
- Educational institutions
- Municipalities and municipal institutions
- Indigenous organizations and governments
- In certain circumstances, Canadian businesses proposing non-commercial projects

Faith-based organizations may be eligible; however, the event itself cannot be primarily religious in nature. The proposed celebration should be inclusive, free and open to the general public.

What types of events can be funded?

Funding may support community celebrations featuring activities such as:

- Multicultural music and performances
- Cultural exhibitions and displays
- Children's and youth activities
- Arts, dance and entertainment
- Canadian heritage programming
- Community ceremonies and celebrations
- Activities that bring together people from different cultural backgrounds

Canadian Multiculturalism Day celebrations take place on June 27, while Canada Day events take place on July 1.

The year 2027 will also mark **Canada's 160th anniversary**, giving communities an important opportunity to celebrate Canada's history, diversity, and future.

Application deadline November 23, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time

How GTA Strategies can assist

GTA Strategies can help your organization identify **an eligible project and prepare a strong, complete application.**

Our team can help confirm eligibility, develop the project and budget, prepare the application, review supporting documents, and support submission and follow-up.

If your organization is planning a Canadian Multiculturalism Day or Canada Day celebration in 2027, please contact us to discuss your event and how we can assist.

We would be pleased to arrange a short discussion to review your organization, potential projects and the steps required to pursue this funding opportunity.

Please reach out to us at info@gtastrategies.com or (888)241 9948 ext 1

Thank you,

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LECTIONARY PASSAGES FOR SEPTEMBER

Nov 01, 2026 – All Saints Day

- 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

Nov 01, 2026 – Alternate

- First* reading and Psalm: Joshua 3:7-17 Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37
- Alternate* First reading and Psalm: Micah 3:5-12 Psalm 43
- Second reading: 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13
- Gospel: Matthew 23:1-12

Nov 08, 2026

- First* reading and Psalm: Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 Psalm 78:1-7
- Alternate* First reading and Psalm: Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-16 or Amos 5:18-24 Wisdom of Solomon 6:17-20 or Psalm 70
- Second reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
- Gospel: Matthew 25:1-1
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Nov 15, 2026

- First* reading and Psalm: Judges 4:1-7 Psalm 123
- Alternate* First reading and Psalm: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18 Psalm 90:1-8, (9-11), 12
- Second reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
- Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

Nov 22, 2026

- First* reading and Psalm: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 Psalm 100
- Alternate* First reading and Psalm: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 Psalm 95:1-7a
- Second reading: Ephesians 1:15-23
- Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

Nov 26, 2026

- 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

Nov 29, 2026 - First Sunday of Advent

- First reading: Isaiah 64:1-9
- Psalm: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
- Second reading: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
- Gospel: Mark 13:24-37

Dec 06, 2026- Second Sunday of Advent

- First reading: Isaiah 40:1-11
- Psalm: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
- Second reading: 2 Peter 3:8-15a
- Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

CALENDAR

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

Mon. Nov 2 – 7:30 am Council mtg

Sun. Nov 8 – 10:00 am – Luke Bushman preaching – *Exodus Part III*

Sun. Nov 15 – 10:00 am – Charlie Clark speaking

Fri. Nov 20 – 2:20 pm – 8 :30 pm – Photo Directory

Sat. Nov 21 – 9:30 am – 2:50 pm – Photo Directory

Sun. Nov 22 – 10:00 am – Brad Schroeder preaching – *Memorial Sunday*

Wed. Nov 25 – 7:00 pm – Hanging of the Greens

Sun. Nov 29 – 10:00 am – Luke Bushman preaching – *Advent 1*

Sun. Dec 6 – 10:00 am – Brad Schroeder preaching – *Advent 2*

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2 – Marlene Campbell
5 – Kaytee Edwards-Buhler
10 – Benjamin Penner
10 – Michelle McKinnell
18 – Sarah Guenther (86)
18 – Steve Guenther
18 – Nettie Siemens (91)
20 – Mika Schroeder
22 – Lois Siemens
24 – Ruth Buhler (80)
28 – Jake Buhler (84)
29 – Zoe Schellenberg
30 – Cheyenne Buhler