

The Osler Mennonite Church

November 2023 Newsletter

SEEK
Peace
& PURSUE it
PSALM 34:14

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 XVI Tenth Edition

A WELCOMING COMMUNITY FOR PEACE

Following Jesus on the Path of Reconciliation

Pastor Patty's Ponderings

I love November. The shorter days are hard but I love the month of remembering - not only the official Remembrance Day of those who have died in wars but all our loved ones who have died. Sunday, November 26 is our Memorial Sunday, the last Sunday before Advent when we light candles in memory of our loved ones and out of the collective silence, we say their names aloud. It is my favourite service of the year. It also gives me permission to talk openly about death and loss outside of funerals. At any one time, someone is grieving in the congregation.

Marcus Borg in *The God We Never Knew*, reminds us that our rituals and special services and the music that accompany them reminds us of God's presence with us in our most profound difficulties in life. These acts of worship open our hearts and nourish the spiritual life all within the experience of community (p. 121). That's why we keep practicing this ritual, year after year, even when we haven't lost anyone, because someday it will be us who needs it.

Pastor Patty's Picks

The Covenant of Water by *Abraham Verghese* may be one of the best books I've ever read. I'm still thinking about it months later.

Netflix's **Extraordinary Attorney Woo** was a delight with this South Korean series about an autistic attorney. I love South Korean series more than British series now. They are fresh and creative without the need for sex or violence.

Luke's Little Lessons (*Lies?*)

Winter is upon us! Although I survived last winter, I am still not sure I am cut out for winter on the prairies after several years in the West Coast's mild climate. I hope you feel more equipped to survive Winter, here is a poem about peace I wrote, the blessing we gave for our parking pad, and an album recommendation. Please enjoy!

Parking Pad

Blessing God we thank you for the resources you have given us
We thank you for the workers who put in this parking pad
We thank you that we are able to make our church more
accessible to all
Bless this slab of concrete
May it stay safe in the ice and snow
May the children who ride their scooters and skateboards
on this space, be safe
Give all those who park here sureness of foot
Bless all of the walkers, wheelchairs and canes
that touch this parking pad
We thank you that you are a God who cares about everyone
May we be a people that have open doors
for all who want to worship here

Album Recommendation

Last month, I recommended *Bon Iver's* For Emma, Forever Ago. I want to try and give as much variety as possible, so this month, I would recommend listening to the album that made me like Jazz music: **Mister Magic** by *Grover Washington Jr.* There are no words, just lots of good sax solos!

A Poem

Perhaps peace has perished
I know that is pessimistic to say
But what else would one think if they saw
everything today
If they saw the wars all across the world
If they saw the internet where slurs are hurled
If they heard about the strife in families
Or if they could somehow see the conflict
inside you and me
Perhaps peace has perished
What a perfectly awful thought
This world is many things, but hopeless, it is not
Perhaps peace is a spark lighting a forest ablaze
And we get to start the fire, in so many ways
A loving look at our smile in the mirror
Calling close family and friends,
and drawing them nearer
Seeing beauty and design in every person
we meet
Praying violence will end, without victory, or defeat
Perhaps this is idealistic, too optimistic, unrealistic
Perhaps it is a fairytale,
to believe one day hate will fail
Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps
Peace cannot perish
No matter how much uncertainty,
no matter how many times I say perhaps
Peace cannot perish, because we will light the match

MDS NEWS

“God turns things out for our better”

MDS Alberta Unit responding to Carstairs tornado

Elisa Humphreys was sitting on her couch in her home in Carstairs, Alberta when she got the emergency alert about the tornado.

It was July 1 and Humphreys, 63, who manages Clothing for a Cause—a ministry that recycles clothing and household textiles to provide financial assistance to non-profit partners in Canada and in the developing world—was enjoying the Canada Day holiday.

After getting the alert, she looked out the window. “I could see it coming,” she said.

With no time to spare, she grabbed her dog and one of her three cats—she didn’t know where the other two were—and headed for her car.

Sadly, she had no time to spare to get her three horses and lead them to safety. “I was unable to rescue them,” she said. “The tornado was big, and I didn’t know how fast it was coming. I didn’t want to put my life in danger.”

After the tornado passed by, she drove back to check on her house and other buildings, including a house owned by her son and his wife also on the property.

“Everything was gone. Vanished. All there was was a debris field,” she said. “Even the fence posts were sucked right out of the ground.”

It was, she learned later, one of the strongest tornadoes the province had seen in over 35 years, with wind speeds up to 275 kilometers/170 miles per hour.

Her horses survived, but they were all injured. “I don’t know if they were hit by flying debris or were picked up and thrown by the tornado,” she said, adding one was so badly hurt it had to be put down. Her other two cats were found later, also dead.

Fortunately, the community rallied to help her with the cleanup. Hundreds of people came out to clean up her property.

“It was a mass mobilization, the most amazing thing,” Humphreys said of the church groups, 4-H groups and others who lent a hand. “They didn’t rest until ever speck of debris was cleaned up.”

The next step was rebuilding, and that posed a challenge.

Since her mobile home was on wood blocks, she was unable to get insurance. And her son and his family had recently sold their house; it was ready to be moved by the purchaser. It wasn't insured, either. Humphreys thought about buying another mobile home, but there was nothing affordable in good condition. Her son and his family also worried about where they might find a place to live.

Humphreys may have not known what to do, but someone in the community did—they contacted MDS. After sending an investigation team, the MDS Alberta Unit quickly decided to help.

“It wasn't a hard decision,” said Harold Friesen, a member of the Alberta Unit. “Elisa is a very selfless woman, always giving back to the community and concerned about others.”

They agreed to a house plan for them all—her son and family living on the ground floor and a living space for Humphreys in a walkout basement. They hope to break ground and start building this fall. Meantime, they are all living in rented accommodations.

“I like the plan,” she said of the new house, adding the investigation team was very sensitive and respectful. “I appreciated how they interacted with us. I never felt like we were receiving charity.”

She especially liked how they invited her to provide input into the design of the house, right down to the paint colours. “I felt like we were more important to them than the house they were building,” she said. Although sad about the loss of her horse and cats, and acknowledging the trauma from the disaster, Humphreys still feels blessed.

“I gained more than I lost,” she said of all the help she has received. “God turns all things out for our better.”

John Longhurst, MDS Canada Communications

CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

Tragedy has struck Gaza

Dear Friend,

In just two weeks, over 5,000 women, men and children in Israel and Gaza have lost their lives as the death toll from the conflict continues to rise.

Our hearts are breaking for everyone affected, especially the families mourning the loss of their loved ones. Over 13,000 others are injured, with many holding onto hope that they can access medical care. And more than one million people have been forced to flee their home to find refuge and safe shelter elsewhere

It is a heartbreaking situation. As members of the Humanitarian Coalition, we're responding to ensure humanitarian assistance reaches the most vulnerable people as quickly and effectively as possible.

Please also join us in prayer for all the people who are affected in this situation, for peace, and for the hostilities to end quickly

I'm grateful for your generosity as we work together to support vulnerable women, men and children with urgent humanitarian assistance in this crisis.

Andy Harrington

Executive director

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

P.S. Your donation can bring hope when it matters most

We are recognizing our 40th anniversary with two final events in SK:

JOIN US on November 14 for an Anniversary Supper in Swift Current, where we will hear from Foodgrains Bank executive director Andy Harrington on our past and current work, and our vision for the years to come. See the poster for details. Register by November 5 – there is still space to accommodate more people.

A smaller gathering with Andy Harrington will be held in Regina on November 15 at 6:00 p.m. at the Rooftop Bar & Grill. There are a few spots left, call Rick at 306-222-8977 if you are interested in joining

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Nov. 5

Anabaptist Witness: Call for submissions. Anabaptist Witness welcomes submissions on “Mission and Peace in Ethiopia” for its April 2024 issue, which will be guest edited by Henok Mekonin, MA, and Abenezer Shimeles, AMBS MDiv student. Submissions can be from various genres and should relate to the journal’s focus on Anabaptist and Mennonite churches in mission; in this case, the Meserete Kristos Church should be central to most submissions. Historical, biblical and theological approaches are welcome. The deadline is Jan. 1, 2024. View guidelines: anabaptistwitness.org

Online Short Course: Understanding Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture: Jan. 31 – March 12. Study how 16th-century Anabaptists approached Scripture — as compared with Catholics and other Protestants — and consider those similarities and differences in light of today. Instructors for this six-week AMBS Online Short Course are Laura Brenneman-Fullwood, PhD, and David Cramer, PhD. No grades, no papers! CEUs available. Sign up by Jan. 10 to save \$50. ambs.edu/online-short-courses

Church matching grants for seminary. Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary offers grants of up to \$2,000 per academic year to match contributions that congregations, conferences and regional churches make toward a full-time graduate student’s tuition costs. Part-time students may be eligible for matching grants as well. We’re committed to making theological education affordable and accessible for students across the church — tap a shoulder! ambs.edu/church-matching-grants

Nov. 12

Seminary Preview Webinar. Thinking about seminary? Or do you know someone who might be? Join us online on Tuesday, Jan. 30, 8–8:45 p.m. ET, and get a glimpse of what Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary has to offer — whether you want to study at a distance or on our campus in Elkhart, Indiana. Areas of study at AMBS include pastoral ministry, chaplaincy, Christian formation, peacebuilding, Anabaptist theology, environmental sustainability leadership and more. Register online (no cost): ambs.edu/preview

LECTIONARY PASSAGES FOR NOVEMBER

November 1 All Saints Day

- Revelation 7:9-17 and Psalm 34:1-10, 22
- 1 John 3:1-3
- Matthew 5:1-12

November 5

- Joshua 3:7-17 and Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37
- Micah 3:5-12 and Psalm 43
- 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13
- Matthew 23:1-12

November 12

- Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 and Psalm 78:1-7
- Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-16 or Amos 5:18-24 and Wisdom of Solomon 6:17-20 or Psalm 70
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
- Matthew 25:1-13

November 19

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

November 26 Reign of Christ

- Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 and Psalm 100
- Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 and Psalm 95:1-7a
- Ephesians 1:15-23
- Matthew 25:31-46

OMC CALENDAR

- Nov 5 10:00 am Patty Friesen speaking**
12:00 pm congregational discussion on budget
- Nov 7 6:00 pm Exec mtg
7:30 pm Council mtg
- Nov 8 7:30 pm C.C. mtg via zoom
- Nov 12 10:00 am Luke Bushman speaking**
11:00 am Discussion on Dementia
Noon Lunch Bunch at Osler Cafe
- Nov 19 10:00 am Patty Friesen speaking**
11:00 am Dick & Kathy Bolivia learning tour
- Nov 26 10:00 am Patty Friesen speaking**
- Dec 3 10:00 am Luke Bushman speaking**

November Birthdates

- 2 – Marlene Campbell
5 – Kaytee Edwards- Buhler
10 – Benjamin Penner
10 – Michelle McKinnell
16 – Uma Boldt
18 – Sarah Guenther (83)
18 – Steve Guenther
18 – Nettie Siemens (88)
21 – Tobin Leaf Friesen
22 – Lois Siemens
24 – Ruth Buhler
28 – Jake Buhler (81)
29 – Zoe Schellenberg
30 – Cheyenne Buhler

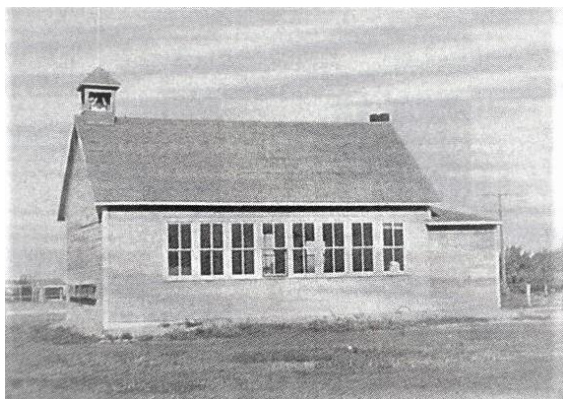
Happy 95th Birthday, Osler Mennonite Church!!

Where did we Worship from 1928 to 2023?



The first church building was completed in September, 1928 at a cost of \$7,000. There were 51 founding members.

The church above was closed in October of 1933 because payments couldn't be made. Members worshipped in the public school across the street until February 1936



The church was reopened in February, 1936 and worshipped here continued. The building was enlarged in 1968





Members worshipped in this enlarged building from 1968 to 1996



The current building was built in 1996 at a cost of just under a million dollars. It was paid off within ten years.



Let us treasure our past. But may we as a welcoming church look forward – committed to our Anabaptist faith to embrace the teachings of Jesus Christ, and to serve others.

Jake Buhler, Nov 2023