

The Osler Mennonite Church

November 2025 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 XVIII Ninth Edition

A WELCOMING COMMUNITY FOR PEACE
Following Jesus on the Path of Reconciliation

From Brad's Desk:

The beginning of Osler Mennonite Church's Statement of Purpose reads, "The purpose of Osler Mennonite Church is to be a supportive community in which people can meet God through worship and fellowship." The phrase 'in which people can meet God' has been on my mind of late. How do we, both as individuals and as a faith community, posture ourselves and make ourselves available to commune with God?

In his book, *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God*, author Gary Thomas discusses 9 common pathways that Christ-followers through the centuries have used in order to open themselves to encounter the Divine. It is not an exhaustive list but describes some of the pathways and practices that have been common through history. A brief summary of these pathways is as follows:

- Naturalists
 - Those who tend to encounter God when out in nature, surrounding themselves in creation.
- Sensates
 - Those who tend to encounter God when their senses are engaged. This can include smells like incense, sounds like music, sights like architecture and icons, etc.
- Traditionalists
 - Those who tend to encounter God through the practice of traditions such as rituals, symbols, sacraments, etc. that can connect them to the broader and historical Church.
- Ascetics
 - Those who tend to encounter God through silence, simplicity and/or solitude.
- Activists
 - Those who tend to encounter God by joining social or evangelistic causes, protesting or confronting injustice, etc.
- Caregivers
 - Those who tend to encounter God by serving and caring for others, often the poor, in-need, ill, etc.

- Enthusiasts
 - Those who tend to encounter God through celebration, experiencing and feeling God move, etc.
- Contemplatives
 - Those who tend to encounter God through ‘sitting at God’s feet’, simply attending to God’s presence, adoration.
- Intellectuals
 - Those who tend to encounter God when their minds are engaged, through study and discussion and learning.

We may each have a dominant pathway(s) but I find it encouraging realizing that followers of the Christ throughout our history have enjoyed such a variety of practices to open themselves to meeting with God. Our theme for Advent (*how is it almost Advent already?!*) this year is **“Be Amazed”** and encourages us to reflect in amazement at the ways God has ‘shown up’. And, I think, it is important to remember it was and is God who initiates our communion. It was first God’s desire to meet with us and we, once we are awakened to this reality, open ourselves to that meeting, that communion. As we prepare for Advent, I am thankful for a God who meets with us, for Jesus who came as Immanuel, God-With-Us.

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**“Meditation can bring you peace and serenity.
It also gives you an excuse to look busy doing nothing.”**

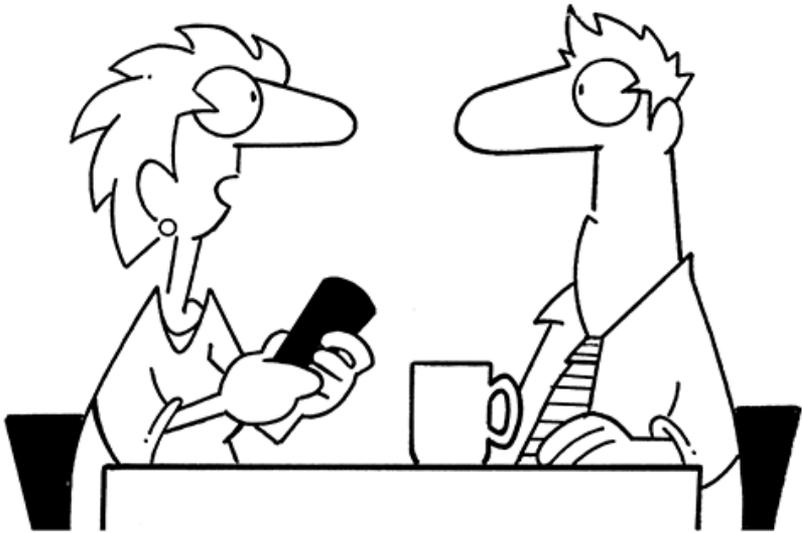
Luke's Little Life Lessons....

Thoughts on violence in scripture. One topic I have been researching recently is the Canaanite Conquest in the Bible. From the biblical perspective, God instructs the Israelites to take the land of Canaan by violent, and even brutal means. How are we to understand this as Christians? Was it wrong for them to do that? Many patriotic folks gravitate to these texts and see them as a justification for certain wars. If it is God-ordained against evil people, war seems fine. Others try to reduce the damage of these texts. Hyperbole was a common literary tool at the time, so many would argue that Israel was not nearly as brutal as they are said to be. This makes sense since despite “completely wiping out” the Canaanites, there always seems to be Canaanites in the biblical story. Others (like myself) ponder if the conquest story is a warning. A warning that in any time and space, people are prone to using faith to justify their actions and prejudices. While listening to a Bible for Normal People episode about this, I heard two interesting thoughts that have stuck with me and encouraged me.

1) In Joshua 5, Joshua comes face to face with a commander of the Lord's armies. Joshua asks if the being is friend or foe, and the commander says neither. Is this a hint at God's neutrality? An acknowledgement that God does not side with armies?

2) In Matthew 15 Jesus encounters a Canaanite woman. Canaanites were not a people group at the time. While there is clear tension between Jesus and the woman, Jesus brings healing to her family. Is this a call back to Israel's conquest of Canaan? Is Jesus undoing Israel's past violence? Is Jesus showing us how Israel should have treated the Canaanites?

Album Recommendation: I recommend *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars* by David Bowie. I only started listening to Bowie in recent years, and I have found his ability to fully be himself inspiring. He seemed to grow as a human, leaving behind the addictions, and hurtful statements of his youth. "Five Years", "Starman" and "Rock N Roll Suicide" are some of my favourite tracks!



**“Today’s students aren’t reading the classics anymore.
I’m rewriting *War and Peace* in 140 characters or less.”**

MDS CANADA

Hi Church,

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) brings people together to be the hands and feet of Jesus. It’s incredible to see volunteers from across Canada and the U.S. come together in response to disasters —often to serve people they’ve never met. I see God moving in powerful ways through the dedication, compassion, and unity of those who serve.

I recently joined MDS as the Admin and Weekly Volunteer Coordinator. In this role, I have the privilege of being one of the first people individuals speak with when a crisis hits. I listen to their stories as they reach out for help, and I connect with volunteers who walk through our doors, ready to serve. I also help match volunteers with service opportunities and get to witness the generosity of the MDS community. Every day, I work alongside an incredible team of staff and volunteers who are deeply committed to this mission.

Looking back, I see how God has prepared me for this role. I grew up in Kitchener, Ontario, in a Mennonite church after our family returned from Nigeria where my parents served as missionaries. I attended school there at ages nine and ten, and during that time my faith deepened. I came to understand that wherever I am, God is with me. That truth became especially meaningful through the verse that has remained important to me: "I am with you always." — Matthew 28:20.

Before coming to MDS, I worked for many years as an Early Childhood Educator, supporting the growth and development of one and two-year-olds, and encouraging parents in their parenting journey. I later served as a pastor, walking with people of all ages as we grew in faith together. Every season of my life has shaped me for where I am now.

I'm married to Conrad, and we have two young adult children. I continue to be amazed by the ways God is moving around me. I'm deeply thankful for the opportunity to serve with the MDS community.

Michelle Stoesz

Admin and Weekly Volunteer Coordinator MDS Canada

MDS involvement at former residential school "gives hope" for the future

The former Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford, Ont., where youth from across Canada served in 2019 as part of a Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) summer youth project, officially opened on Sept. 30, 2025.

A total of 74 youth from Mennonite churches in Ontario and B.C. served at the former school through the project, which was a partnership between MDS Canada, the MCC Indigenous Neighbours Program, and the Woodlands Cultural Centre which operates the school as a living museum to tell the story of how residential schools impacted Indigenous people in Canada.

Hope amid hardship: MDS in remote Alaska village

Robert Pitka thinks of MDS volunteers as good workers—and good listeners, too. The tribal administrator for Toksook Bay, home to about

700 people in western Alaska, Pitka recalled when the tribal council first considered inviting MDS to help repair homes in the Nunakauariut community, who maintain a predominately traditional diet from fishing, and hunting caribou and moose.

To read the complete stories and more go to: www.mdscanada.org

Canadian Mennonite Magazine

(This month we're shifting when we send the digital copy of *CM*. Look for it at the end of the month.)

Nineteen years ago today, my husband and I accidentally bought a house. He took our kids trick-or-treating while I stayed home and made offers and counter-offers. I always remember that strange night every Halloween.

This time of year (and especially this week) is a time of remembering in the church calendar. Tomorrow is All Saints Day, Sunday is All Souls Day, and three weeks from now, Eternity Sunday, we mark those who died within the last year.

In the Celtic tradition, this is the time of year when the veil between our world and the next is thinnest. The days in the northern hemisphere grow short, and the harvest is gathered in, both literally and metaphorically. We remember our loves and our losses.

I invite you to an evening of remembering losses on November 6. Canadian Mennonite together with Common Word is hosting an online Bite-Sized Bookclub with April Yamasaki to talk about her new book, *Hope Beyond Sorrows*. If you are experiencing fresh grief or past griefs, join us as we talk about learning to live with life-changing loss.

As April writes: "I pray God's comfort for all who are weary and weighed down by grief. I pray God's rest for body, mind, soul and spirit. I pray God's goodness and mercy to raise up those who are struggling, encourage the downcast and work healing and renewal for all."

By Susan Fish

Mennonite World Conference

Dear Friends

Greetings, brothers and sisters

This month, our hearts are tuned to both joy and mourning. We come together as a communion to pray and act for change.

We are happy to share with you a special double issue of Courier magazine that highlights the anniversary events from earlier this year, when we commemorated 500 years of the Anabaptist movement and 100 years of MWC. We remember our past to be renewed to step forward in our faith in Christ.

In this issue of MWC Info, you'll also read about the life-transforming YAMEN program and changes on our regional representative team.

You can download our Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday worship resource package to prepare for January 2026.

We invite you to pray with us as you read the pastoral letter from MWC leaders to our churches, where we remember and mourn the tragic anniversary of the outbreak of violence in the lands called Israel and Palestine and also in the larger region.

We continue to pray, "O Lord, how we long to see your peace reign in our world."

—Kristina Toews, MWC chief communications officer

P.S. I invite you to join us as we come together in prayer at our next Online Prayer Hour on 21 November 2025.

LECTIONARY PASSAGES FOR NOVEMBER

Nov 01, 2025 - All Saints Day

First* reading and Psalm: Daniel 7:1-3, 15-18 Psalm 149

Alternate* First reading and Psalm:

Second reading: Ephesians 1:11-23

Gospel: Luke 6:20-31

Nov 02, 2025

First* reading and Psalm: Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4 Psalm 119:137-144

Alternate* First reading and Psalm: Isaiah 1:10-18 Psalm 32:1-7

Second reading: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12

Gospel: Luke 19:1-10

Nov 09, 2025

First* reading and Psalm: Haggai 1:15b-2:9 Psalm 145:1-5, 17-21
or Psalm 98

Alternate* First reading and Psalm: Job 19:23-27a Psalm 17:1-9

Second reading: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17

Gospel: Luke 20:27-38

Nov 16, 2025

First* reading and Psalm: Isaiah 65:17-25 Isaiah 12

Alternate* First reading and Psalm: Malachi 4:1-2a Psalm 98

Second reading: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Gospel: Luke 21:5-19

Nov 23, 2025

First* reading and Psalm: Jeremiah 23:1-6 Luke 1:68-79

Alternate* First reading and Psalm: Jeremiah 23:1-6 Psalm 46

Second reading: Colossians 1:11-20

Gospel: Luke 23:33-43

Nov 30, 2025 - First Sunday of Advent

First reading: Isaiah 2:1-5

Psalm: Psalm 122

Second reading: Romans 13:11-14

Gospel: Matthew 24:36-44

Dec 07, 2025 - Second Sunday of Advent

First reading: Isaiah 11:1-10

Psalm: Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

Second reading: Romans 15:4-13

Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

CALENDAR

Sun. Nov 2 – 10:00 am Gareth Brandt speaking

Wed. Nov 5 – 7:00 pm Book Club discussion @ Loretta's house

Fri. Nov 7 – 7 – 9 pm MCC led Palestine Land Exercise @ OMC

Sun. Nov 9 - 10:00 am Len Rempel – Brad's installation

Noon – Potluck group C – M setup and clean up

Sun. Nov 16 – 10:00 am Brad Schroeder preaching

Sun. Nov 23 – 10:00 am Brad Schroeder preaching *Memorial Sunday*

Sun. Nov 30 – 10:00 am Luke Bushman preaching *1st Sunday of Advent*

Sun. Dec 7 – 10:00 am Luke Bushman preaching *2nd Sunday of Advent*

Humour - A wise old man once told me. When you understand why pizza is made round, put in a square box & eaten in triangles, only then will you be able to understand life.

Community Peacemaker Teams Bulletin

A month ago, hundreds set sail across the Mediterranean Sea – a citizens' flotilla to break the siege of Gaza and cry out against the erasure of its people. They passed through Greek territory, where drones spied upon them in the attempt to keep them in their place. These same drones are used to spy upon another group of siege breakers: migrants, hemmed in place by walls and wire, guns and dogs, warships and the judge's gavel, whose only demand is to live.

As the flotilla sailed eastward past Crete, Greece's southernmost territory, something strange was happening further north. In the dead of night, in dark waters, the Turkish Coast Guard discovered a 12-year-old boy from Afghanistan off the coast of Samos island. He was alone, floating in a bright orange life raft.

The raft is proof that he had been intercepted by the Greek Coast Guard on his journey west. The Coast Guard routinely uses these distinctive

devices – they look like floating tents – in illegal “pushback” operations at sea. We don’t know what happened to his co-passengers, or why the Coast Guard separated him from them.

This Monday, Lesbos island saw more shipwrecks. Local news confirms at least one incident, and CPT Aegean Migrant Solidarity reported from the ground of a rumoured second one, leaving “about 16 people dead or missing”. These aren't the island's only shipwrecks this month; on 5 October a boat capsized and a young woman was found dead, and on 7 October four more people died. In none of these cases do we know precisely how they died.

What we do know is that during this period migrants continued to be systematically intercepted, captured, and abandoned at sea – incident after incident, beating after beating.

The Greek state will not launch transparent investigations into the deaths. It’s up to networks on the ground – of activists, lawyers, surviving witnesses and family – to piece together their own autopsies.

We may never know what happened. Nor may we ever understand what has happened to a man who kidnaps a boy and leaves him to drift, or what he tells himself so he can live with it. Perhaps only novelists can answer such questions. Last month, officers involved in the Pylos shipwreck – which survivors describe as a pushback gone wrong: a massacre – said they were simply following orders. That seems inadequate. To ride out their consciences, these men need life rafts of their own. A Coast Guard spokesman, confronted with footage of a masked squad carrying a baby from Greek territory to be abandoned at sea, offered the following explanation: “migrants traveling in the Aegean Sea very often abandon their children” because “they don’t seem to have the same affection” for them as “we” do.

In other words: the brutality is not ours, but theirs. If they see only brutes, it's because they need to. It’s our job to remind them what we see.

Ryan James
Communication Associate

NOVEMBER



- 2 – Marlene Campbell
- 5 – Kaytee Edwards- Buhler
- 10 – Benjamin Penner
- 10 – Michelle McKinnell
- 16 – Uma Boldt
- 18 – Sarah Guenther (85)
- 18 – Steve Guenther
- 18 – Nettie Siemens (90)
- 20 – Mika Schroeder
- 22 – Lois Siemens
- 24 – Ruth Buhler
- 28 – Jake Buhler (83)
- 29 – Zoe Schellenberg
- 30 – Cheyenne Buhler