

Halstead Old Settlers Community Worship Service

The Old Settlers Community Worship Service will be held at First Mennonite on Sunday, Aug. 9, at **10 a.m.** There will not be any Sunday School that morning for the adults. Kids will have a shortened Sunday School hour. Join believers from churches across our community for what has become a special time of shared worship.

Ron Chronister will be directing a community choir that morning. If you're interested in singing in the choir, a rehearsal will be held on Wednesday, Aug. 5, at 7 p.m. at the United Methodist Church.



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The Church Corner



Matthew 5:16 (ESV)



First Mennonite Church
427 W. 4th Street
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Pastor Steve Wilcox

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Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.
Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.
****The service is livestreamed on the church's Facebook page.***

"We are a community of believers who follow Jesus Christ as we receive and share God's love."

We, of First Mennonite Church, valuing the convictions of our faith, endeavor to:

- **Engage our members in ministry**
- **Expand community outreach and**
- **Embrace new people in the love of Christ.**

The Elevator Chair Gospel

As I drove away on Sunday, almost the last person out of the building, I caught a glimpse in my rearview mirror of Elijah running full tilt up the ramp toward the front doors. He'd spent the time after church playing upstairs, downstairs, around every corner, having such a wonderful time. The pure, unfiltered joy on his face as he ran up the ramp brought a smile to my face.

It sent me straight back to my own childhood church. I knew that building like the back of my hand. I knew where the good hiding spots were during hide-and-seek. I knew where the hidden key lived so a kid with more curiosity than sense could sneak up into the bell loft. And I knew about the elevator chair—the one we absolutely were not supposed to ride, that crept up the stairs at a blistering .05 an hour, and somehow that made it more thrilling, not less.

This made me think now, years later, about all that mischief. It wasn't in spite of church that I felt so free. It was that church—the building with all its nooks and its off-limits elevator chair—was the safest place I knew. I could run, hide, get a little too loud, and nobody was going to love me any less for it.

That, I think, is a pretty good picture of what it's supposed to feel like to be with God.

We can turn our life with God into

something so serious, so careful, so tiptoe-around-the-sanctuary, that we forget He is the safest place in the universe to just be a kid, to just be ourselves. Zephaniah says God rejoices over His people with gladness and exults over them with loud singing. That's not a distant, arms-folded deity tolerating our noise. That's a Father delighting in us the way I delighted in watching Elijah run up that ramp.

Jesus put it even more plainly. When His disciples tried to shoo the children away, He told them to knock it off, and let the kids come. He said the kingdom of

heaven belongs to people like that, and that unless we turn and become like children ourselves, we won't even recognize what He's building (Matthew 19:14, 18:3). Somewhere along the way, a lot of us traded in our childlike freedom for a more respectable, buttoned-up faith. At times that has its place, but so does the freedom and joy to be like a child before God!

David understood this too. In Psalm 16 he says God will show him the path of life, and in His presence there is fullness of joy, with pleasures forevermore. Not a stiffness with a tiny bit of joy. Fullness. Forevermore. That's not a place you creep through quietly; that's a place you run through with your arms out.

God's presence is also where we rest. Jesus' invitation was simple: come to Him, all who are weary, and He will give rest (Matthew 11:28). Play when you need to play. Rest when you need to rest. Both are welcome at the same address, whether it's



will cost \$3,500-6000. The stain glass has been replaced, insurance covered it. Still waiting on the roof to be replaced, will be late Aug-early Sept. Then the sidewalk will be replaced, with the help of a grant from the City.

- **Worship Ministry** Steve reported Worship met June 16. Vision team joined in. They will go over policies and procedures at the next meeting.
- **Pastor's Report:** Steve reported he's working on the final planning details for the Old Settlers service.
- **New & Continuing Business:** David will make sure to send the \$730 Birthday offering from 2025 to Laundry of Love (Circles of Hope).

Next meeting: August 24, 2026

Treasurer's Report

Budget Balance @5-31-26	\$11,513.18
June Receipts	\$9,976.04
June Expenses	(\$13,133.01)
Budget balance @6-30-26	\$8,356.21

Looking Ahead

Sept. 13	John Haspels speaks during SS. Potluck following worship.
Sept. 27	Women's Soup/Salad Luncheon
Oct. 11	P & M Pumpkin Ranch Outing



- August means school resumes for many in our congregation. Pray for all teachers, students and families as they begin a new school year.
- Pray for our Church Council as they make decisions on behalf of the congregation. Pray for wisdom as they discern together.
- Pray for the plans being made for the fall...for Kids Club, Adult Bible Study, Women's Bible Study, youth groups, the Mission supper, special speakers, fellowship events and more. Pray that they will help us grow in our faith and knit us together as one body.
- Pray for any who might be experiencing challenging times within their family. Pray they will be led by the Holy Spirit and God's peace will descend upon them.
- Pray for any children who come to Kids Club for the first time. Pray it will be an enjoyable time for them and feeds them spiritually as well.
- Pray for anyone who is lonely in our congregation, that God would provide the friends they need to support and encourage them.
- Pray for any unspoken prayer requests. Pray that each need will be met.

Council Meeting Minutes
from July 20, 2026

- Debbie opened the meeting with prayer. Minutes were approved from June as written.
- Discernment Team: Sara reported that they met electronically in June. They are still looking to fill two positions on the Mission Ministry. They have been asked to find someone for the Et. Cetera board of directors as Debbie’s 3 year term is up at the end of 2026. Steve reported WDC contacted him looking for an Advocate (this is a new role) from our church. They are hoping to fill the role by August in time for their training. They filled a couple positions in June: Jaren Smoker has agreed to take on the projector operator role, with the possibility of learning sound too. Allison Smoker has agreed to serve on the Worship Ministry.
- Vision Team: The Pastor & Congregational evaluation will be their main focus in the coming months.
- Care Ministry: Ron reported they met June 25 and discussed a number of concerns with homebound members. They will plan a date for communion at their next meeting.
- Hospitality Ministry: Kaitlen reported via email that Hospitality hasn’t met again, but the Men’s Night went well at Mick’s house and positive comments were heard about having something for the guys. There is a Swim Night on July 26, and they are

collecting updates for the directory. An ice cream social is planned for the MCC parking lot on August 16 and they will be thinking on how to do some mobile socials for shut-ins in response to the Sunday School intergenerational discussion.

- Mission Ministry: Sandy reported they’ve met electronically. They hosted the Givens on July 19 and the Woodward-Breckbill family will be here on Aug. 2 to speak during Sunday School & church. John Haspels and his family will be here on September 13 to speak with a potluck following.
- Nurture Ministry: Debbie reported they met July 6. The spring quarter offering was \$500 for MDS. An idea was proposed: should our Sunday School curriculum & supplies budget be allocated from the church budget, instead of the Sunday School offering? Currently 60% goes to Supplies/ Curriculum and 40% goes to the quarterly mission. Summer quarter mission is going to Zone 33. No adult SS on Old Setter’s Sunday. There will be abbreviated kids SS that Sunday. Christian Ed Sunday will be August 30. Nurture is currently finding teachers, kid club volunteers, and youth sponsors for the next year.
- Stewardship Ministry: David reported we were \$3,100 short in June (due to low summer attendance/vacations), but he wasn’t worried about it as we have an overall surplus. James reported they have met via email. The basement, sanctuary and entryway carpets will get cleaned as they still have some cat smells. The kitchen refrigerator is 35 years old, and failing. They are looking to replace it, which

our church on earth or our Father's arms in heaven.

So maybe the elevator chair was onto something. Slow, a little forbidden, undeniably fun, and never once outside the safety of the building it was in. That's the kind of freedom God offers us: room to explore, room to be silly, room to collapse in exhaustion, all inside a love that never once considers kicking us out.

Next time you're at church, watch the kids running the halls, and remember you are in your Father's house. You are safe. You are loved. So go ahead: kick off your shoes, take a deep breath, and feel free to play, rest, and rejoice in the light of His grace.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Steve

Church Announcements

- The deadline for the September newsletter is Tuesday, Aug. 25.
- The Neighbors Store pantry requests egg noodles and tuna in water for August.
- Offering schedule for August:
Aug. 2: Western District Conf.
Aug. 9: Zone 33 (Old Settlers Sun.)
Aug. 16: Scholarship Fund
Aug. 23: MC USA
Aug. 30: Church Budget
- The link for our church online library is librarything.com catalog/FMCHalstead.



August Calendar			
Aug. 2	10:30 a.m.	Woodward-Breckbill family share during the worship service	
	12:00 p.m.	Potluck	
Aug. 5	7:00 p.m.	Community choir rehearsal - Methodist Church	
	8:00 p.m.	Community Praise Team practice - FMC	
Aug. 7	10:00 a.m.	School kit bag sewing event	
Aug. 9	10:00 a.m.	Old Settlers worship service	
Aug. 10	7:00 p.m.	Nurture meeting	
Aug. 16	6:30 p.m.	Ice Cream Social at MCC	
Aug. 24	7:00 p.m.	Council meeting	
Aug. 27	9:00 a.m.	Prayer Team meeting	
	1:00 p.m.	Care Team meeting	
Aug. 30	10:30 a.m.	Christian Ed Sunday	
	12:00 p.m.	Potluck	

Upcoming Church Events

School Kit Bag Sewing Event

Come and learn how to sew a School Kit bag at the church on Friday, August 7, from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Fabric will be pre-cut and ready for helpers to iron, sew and string the bags. Sewing bags will be the focus, but there will also be comforters to tie. A light lunch will be provided. Bring your sewing machine if it’s easily portable.



Ice Cream Social

You are invited to join us for an Ice Cream Social in the MCC parking lot (North Newton) on Sunday, August 16 from 5:30 - 7 p.m. A sign up sheet for ice cream and toppings will be posted on the bulletin board soon.



Christian Education Sunday

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Where are these qualities mentioned and what do they have to do with our church? Join in the fun on Christian Education Sunday to find out and share in the excitement of kicking off the start of a new Christian education year!

Our church will celebrate this annual event on Sunday, August 30, during worship and following with a lunch together. Some of the things to look forward to are giving out Bibles to our third graders, a potluck lunch together, recognizing our teachers, dedicating our MCC school kits and praying for the upcoming year. We will have games with prizes, opportunities for fun pictures, and an amazing meal to share with our church family. You don't want to miss it! Please plan to participate in this special day and bring a dish or two to share. Information about MCC school kits follows.

MCC is challenging churches to provide school kits in the month of August. MCC hopes to have 30,000 kits donated by August 31. Our church has a tradition of encouraging the donation of school kits to celebrate Christian education. Please join the Nurture Team in gathering supplies for one (or more!) kits by August 30. Some drawstring bags will be available for your kits in early August as well as the metal pencil

Nurture Ministry Updates

Disciples: Challenge Accepted

Kids Club resumes September 2 from 5-6 p.m. and will run for 8 weeks, ending October 21. Kids ages 3 years to 6th grade are invited to join us on Wednesdays as we learn how the disciples began their ministry after Jesus’ resurrection. We will dig into the book of Acts this school year. Supper for all at 6 p.m.



Pray for Me

Nurture Ministry invites kids and adults to partner together in prayer this year. It’s a great intergenerational way to connect with others. All children and youth in the church will be automatically signed up, but we need adults to join us! Please sign up on the bulletin board if you would like to be paired with a youth and specifically pray for them, while they pray for you. Deadline for sign up is August 23.



- Jerry Keller
- (A) John & Pamela Keller
- (A) David & Brocia Mueller
- Randi Schaff
- Rheannah Unruh
- (A) Garrison & Erin Gundy
- (A) Abram & Emily Rodenberg
- Derek Keller
- Virginia Berger
- Roberta Warren
- Crescent Haury
- (A) David & Monica Flask
- (A) Michael & Roberta Warren
- (A) Cody & Jessica Dyck
- Doug Auernheimer
- (A) Jim & Lois Loflin
- Jennifer Penner
- (A) Larry & Sharon Finley
- Rachel Klassen Gadue
- Tia Regier
- Korbin Black
- Tim Lewis
- Abram Rodenberg
- (A) George & Diana Torres
- Betty Schowalter
- Debbie Castillo
- Marj VanWye
- Monica Flask
- Amy Buchholz
- Lloyd Voth
- Allison Smoker
- Jaren Smoker
- Abigail Mueller
- Richard Schmidling
- Arthur Rodenberg
- Marisa Schaff
- (A) Kenneth & Dee Ann Lintz
- Ashlee Stucky

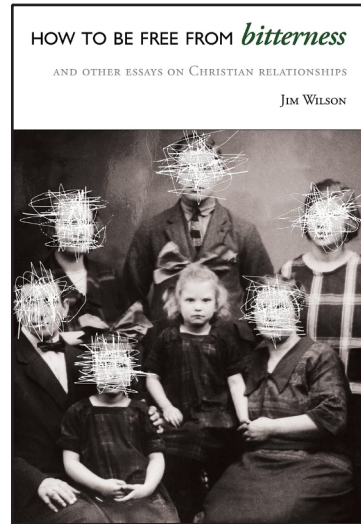
Relationship Advice

I kept coming back with the same prayer request: that God would change this person who was hurting my feelings over and over again.

One member of the study group, Emily, observed that my hurt seemed to be growing deeper every time I mentioned them. Like the very thought of them had a bitter taste. She suggested that might be the place to pray for change.

Boy, did that make me mad. It was quite obvious from my litany of complaints that THIS OTHER PERSON needed prayer and once THEY changed, I would be right as rain. But, Emily pointed out, that rain would continue watering the bitterness that was rooting itself ever deeper in MY heart.

At the next study session, Emily offered me Jim Wilson's "How to Be Free from Bitterness (and other essays on Christian relationships)." Since it was a rather thin book, I decided it would hurt to try it. Plus, I was amused by the black and white family photo on the cover. All the faces had been scratched out except



for the grumpy child in the center. If I had such a photo just then, I would probably be scratching, too.

Reluctantly, I spent a few weeks reading the little book, reflecting on the scriptures, and considering that I didn't have to stay bound to the pain—even if the person continued to be hurtful. Instead of burying each event and allowing bitterness to grow, I could take each one to the cross and leave it there.

I have to get the book back out and re-learn a lesson every once in a while. But I would like you to have the opportunity, too. So I've added it to our church library in the Bible Study section. I hope you'll check it out!

-Casey Jacob, Church Librarian

Interfaith Backpack Update

The beginning of the school year is almost here! Students in need and their families will receive an invitation from the school district to accept new backpacks and school supplies - made possible by donations from Interfaith Council Churches. Interfaith Council forwarded the donations from the churches to the Halstead/Bentley School District, in the amount of \$3610. Our congregation contributed \$1285. A big THANK YOU to all for your generous donations! *Arnita Haury*

sharpeners needed. Let's challenge ourselves to bring more kits than we did last year with a goal of 130 kits! We can do it! Kit items include:

- 4 spiral or perforated-page notebooks, about 8.5 in x 11 in. and approx. 70 sheets
- 8 new, unsharpened pencils
- 1 ruler (flat, good quality; must indicate 30 cm, inch markings optional)
- 12 colored pencils (in packaging)
- 1 large eraser
- 4 new black or blue ballpoint pens
- 1 small all-metal pencil sharpener (these will be provided by the Nurture Ministry)



This month, we introduce you to Isaiah Haspels, a nine-year old who will be in 4th grade in Halstead next year.

What is something you like to learn about? The different controls in video games.



What is the best part of your school day? Lunch

What is your favorite sport or activity to play outside? Soccer

If you could eat only one food

for all your meals for a whole week, what would you choose? A bacon cheeseburger from Texas Roadhouse.

What are your favorite colors? Green, orange and black

What is your favorite ice cream flavor? Coffee chocolate chunk

What is something you like doing with your family? Laughing at the dinner table.

What is your favorite thing to do at church? Take communion and have potlucks.



Jim and Marj Gundy moved numerous times in their life until God brought them to Kansas, which was a move they didn't see coming.

Marj Gundy never wanted to come to Kansas. In fact she cried all the way to Kansas when they moved to Burrton and missed her exit off I-70 onto I-135.

"We don't have any negative thoughts about Kansas anymore," Marj said. "We like Kansas. The worst thing was being far from family."

Marj was originally from Lima, Ohio, and Jim was from Graymont, Illinois. The two met at Bluffton College (now Bluffton University) in Bluffton, Ohio, a short drive from Marj's hometown but nearly 300 miles from Jim's. They both studied education—Jim focused on math education, while Marj specialized in elementary education.

Even though Jim was a year ahead of Marj in school, she finished before him through a teacher cadet program. By his senior year, she was teaching 4th grade.

Jim was close to his graduation, and they both had contracts to teach in Ohio, when Jim was drafted and their plans changed.

Instead of beginning their teaching careers in Ohio, they became engaged and were married within a matter of weeks. Soon afterward, they moved to Ontario, Canada, where Jim completed two years of 1-W voluntary service. Both taught at The Ailsa Craig Boys' Farm, operated by MCC. The Gundys lived and ate with the boys and the other voluntary service workers serving there, and they welcomed their oldest daughter during that time.

With their time of service completed, Jim and Marj moved to a town near Peoria, Illinois, where Jim taught junior high while they welcomed three more children to their family. "I learned to love junior high kids at that time," Jim said.

Another move took them to Princeton, Illinois, where they again experienced a change in their plans.

The Gundys attended a church whose pastor had already retired once. He wanted to retire again, and he knew Jim's grandpa had been a pastor.

Jim said, "When he saw me coming, he

put me to work!"

Jim taught in Princeton for two years and gradually took on more preaching responsibilities at church. When the pastor retired, Jim and Marj were ready to save as much as they could so Jim could go to seminary.

However, through a situation that was out of his control, Jim's teaching contract was not renewed and plans for seminary were put on hold. Instead, the couple bought a camper top, loaded their family up and spent several weeks on the road traveling to Expo 67, the World's Fair in Montreal, Canada, while they figured out what was next.

When they returned, they packed up their house and moved to Leamington, Ontario, where Jim taught everything from high school math and bookkeeping to physical education classes for three years. During that time, two more children joined the family. At the end of those three years, their goal of attending seminary finally became a reality, and they moved to Elkhart, Indiana, so Jim could enroll at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

The family, now with six children, moved into a three-bedroom apartment. A seventh child was born during the three years they lived there. Jim worked as a painter while he studied for his Master of Divinity degree. A couple they knew from seminary had served at Burrton Mennonite Church and thought the Gundys would be a good fit for the congregation. So they moved yet again, but this time, it was to stay.

From 1973 to 2004, Jim served as pastor of Burrton Mennonite Church. In the early years, the position was only

part-time, so he supplemented his income with a variety of jobs.

"I did everything under the sun to provide for seven kids," Jim said.

That "everything" included working for a farmer, painting, delivering mail, hauling turkeys, and driving the school's activity bus.

Marj stayed just as busy. She worked as a substitute teacher, served as a special education paraprofessional, and was executive director of the Burrton Housing Authority for 35 years. She also cleaned the Methodist church in Burrton, did all of Jim's typing, and assembled the Sunday bulletins.

When Burrton Mennonite Church closed in 2015, the Gundys were among those who began attending FMC. They found it to be a welcoming church home.

"The people are very accepting and welcoming," they said.

They jumped in to help with church events such as the mission and venenike suppers. Today, they enjoy watching the many talented people who willingly participate in worship services. Jim especially appreciates the involvement of the children and youth, and they both say the Christmas Eve service is one of their favorite annual events.

Nearly four years ago, the Gundys moved from their home in Burrton to a residence at Schowalter Villa in Hesston. Jim keeps busy with flower and vegetable gardening, and they both enjoy working on puzzles. Along with their seven children, they have 17 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren, with a tenth on the way.