

Western District Conference Annual Assembly

The Western District Conference annual assembly will be held August 7-9, 2026, at Iglesia Luz del Evangelio in Dallas, Texas, and there is something for everyone, both in-person and virtually.

There will be three different tracks. The Delegate Track is for those who are sent to Assembly as church representatives to help make decisions on behalf of our conference. The Intergenerational Track is for adults and school-aged children and will be a meaningful faith formation experience for all ages led by Kids Meet Christ staff. There will be fun things to do together—bible stories, drama, sharing, art, and even water games (for the kids)! The Youth Track is for youth - high school age and young adults - and will include a service project.

WDC Annual Assembly registration is by donation this year, rather than a required registration fee. Instead you are encouraged to donate what you can toward the anticipated costs of \$150/adults or youth and \$70/child. The registration deadline is July 26. Register at <https://mennowdc.org/2026-assembly-registration/>

Lodging and transportation costs are the responsibility of the attendee. More information can be found at mennowdc.org.



July 2027
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The Church Corner



Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Psalm 90:1-2

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427 W. 4th Street
Halstead, KS 67056
www.firstmennonitehalstead.org
Pastor Steve Wilcox

Phone: 316-835-2282
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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.

What is a Lectionary?

On a few occasions, you may have heard me use the word "lectionary." For the past nine years, unless we were diving into a specific topical sermon series, I have relied on the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) to select our scripture texts each week.

However, a few months ago, I decided it was time for something different. I started using the Narrative Lectionary. It has been a good change for me thus far. This new rhythm has already pushed me to preach from passages of Scripture that I had not yet used. Because I occasionally mention the word "lectionary" during worship, I thought it would be nice to share exactly what that means and look at the history behind these two helpful tools.

At its simplest, a lectionary is a curated calendar of weekly Bible readings. It ensures a congregation encounters the vast breadth of God's Word rather than just a pastor's favorite passages, which is the main reason I use it. As the Apostle Paul writes, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). Lectionaries help us live out that truth systematically.

The Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) has a rich history of bringing churches together. Developed by an ecumenical group called the Consultation

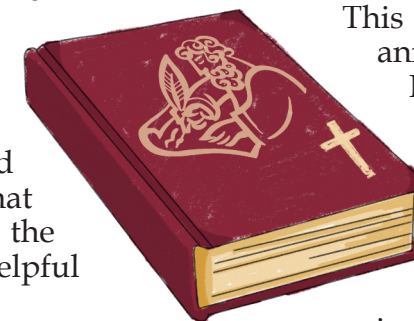
on Common Texts and finalized in 1992, the RCL was designed to unite different denominations around the same weekly readings. It operates on a three-year cycle (Years A, B, and C), focusing on a specific Gospel each year—Matthew, Mark, or Luke—with John woven throughout. Each Sunday, it offers four distinct readings: an Old Testament lesson, a Psalm, an Epistle, and a Gospel text.

While the RCL is a beautiful tool, it can sometimes feel like a collection of disconnected snapshots because it aligns strictly with the calendar of the church year. To offer a different approach, professors at Luther Seminary developed the Narrative Lectionary around 2010.

This is a four-year cycle that runs annually from September through May. Instead of jumping between various biblical books each week, it moves chronologically through the sweeping story of God's people. We start in Genesis, move through the prophets, immerse ourselves in a single Gospel during the winter, and conclude with the early church in the spring.

This shift will hopefully help us see the overarching arc of God's redeeming love, reminding us of Psalm 119:105: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Whether we use the RCL or the Narrative Lectionary, the goal remains the same: to be shaped by the living Word of God. I am thankful to continue walking through this grand biblical narrative alongside you all.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Steve



approved the sidewalk grant for replacing the west sidewalk. The City will pay \$3,800 of the \$5,200. We are still on the list to get our roof done, which should happen this summer. Stained glass panels will get replaced by the House of Glass as soon as they are in. Leon sold the large battery powered sweeper back to the company it was purchased from. They added a small, upright battery powered sweeper in the deal.

- Worship Ministry: They started switching up the Praise Team members to allow a break for the regulars as well as opportunity for new people to join. They are doing this on a three month trial and will reevaluate at that point. They are looking to update their policies and procedures. Worship Ministry would like to find a youth to join their commission to help with planning/brainstorming. Projector and sound would also like to add someone to help run these, especially projector, with the potential of learning sound.
- Pastor's Report: Steve reported he was gone for quick trip to help his parents in Florida and was grateful for Tyler and Casey stepping up to preach the Sundays he was gone. He worked a lot on the new worship leading schedule to bring in different people to help lead each week.

Next meeting: July 20, 2026

Church FAMILY —PRAYER LIST—

- July means many are traveling on vacations and kids are attending camp. Pray for safe travels and fun experiences.
- Pray for the Vision Team as they prepare for a congregational review. Pray it will be another positive and energizing experience for our church.
- Pray for those in our congregation who have experienced challenging medical issues lately. Pray for continued healing and patience in the waiting.
- Pray for our mission partners - the Woodward-Breckbills and the Givens—as they travel and speak at churches this summer. Pray it will be a good time of connection for them.
- Pray that we can be a light to our community and effectively share the love of Jesus with those around us.
- Pray for our older adults, that they would be protected in their various activities, and that they would know they have a place and a purpose in our congregation.
- Pray for our relationships with one another, that we would live in intentional community with one another.
- Pray for our nation and our world and all the big issues that only prayer can change.

Council Meeting Minutes

from June 22, 2026

- Steve opened the meeting with prayer. Minutes were approved from April as written.
- Discernment Team: Have not met. Waiting to hear from a potential new member for Mission Ministry. This person attended a meeting to see what it's all about.
- Vision Team: Steve reported they are currently working on figuring out the next Pastoral & Congregational Review. They had hoped to have the report done by the January annual meeting, but it may take longer depending on who they get to facilitate it. They continue to meet with the different ministries to see what ways they can help.
- Care Ministry: Ron reported they met in April and May. Chuck joined them from Vision Team at their May meeting. They reviewed their policies. They asked Maeanna to come up with clarification of some medical terms to help them when they are visiting members.
- Hospitality Ministry: Hospitality met on May 28 and planned out a few items for this summer and early fall: a Men's Gathering (7/12) at Mick's house, Swim Night (7/26) at Halstead Pool, Ice Cream Social (8/16) at MCC Center, Women's Soup and Salad Lunch (9/27), and P & M Pumpkin Ranch (10/11). They will also be doing directory updates later this summer.

- Mission Ministry: Sandy reported they met last Monday. On August 2, Ben and Laurel Woodward-Breckbill will be here. We'll have a potluck for lunch and a love offering for their mission. The Givens family will be here July 19 in the evening with cookies and other churches will be invited. Chuck Haspels' brother, John, and his family will be here in September and we'll have a potluck that Sunday too. They are planning to do two challenges: pantry goods for Neighbors Store and soap and hand towels for MCC. Mission is looking to add two new members to their commission.
- Nurture Ministry: James reported on behalf of Debbie that Nurture met May 20. Beginning in September, they will begin the 3rd year in the current kids curriculum. They will begin looking at different options for curriculum for the following 3-year cycle sometime this fall. The summer mission offering is for Zone 33. The adult summer SS will consist of *The Power of God's Names* video series along with several speakers and fellowship Sundays. VBS was a success with approximately 100 children participating. The church picnic was planned and held on June 7 with wonderful weather. They cleaned out the supply room, and leftovers are available in the Anchor classroom for anyone interested. Their next meeting will be the week of July 6.
- Stewardship Ministry: James reported that last month had increased offerings and decreased expenses putting the budget \$12,000 in the positive. Fisher HVAC checked out the AC and it's working well. James set up and tore down the VBS panels. The City

Directory Updates

It's time to update the directory! If you have added a member to your family or have changes to your address, phone numbers or emails, please let Kaitlen or Melanie know by the end of July. We will print the updated pages in August. If you would like a new photo included, please submit that to Kaitlen (kaitlen.ortman@gmail.com).



Church Announcements

1. The deadline for the August newsletter is Thursday, July 23.
2. The Neighbors Store pantry requests oatmeal and canned peaches for July.
3. Offering schedule for July:
 - June 5: Church Budget
 - June 12: Western District Conf.
 - June 19: Offender Victim Ministries
 - June 26: Church Budget
4. The link for our church online library is [librarything.com catalog/FMCHalstead](http://librarything.com/catalog/FMCHalstead).



July Calendar

July 12	5:00 p.m.	Men's Evening at Mick Bean's
July 20	7:00 p.m.	Council meeting
July 23	9:00 a.m.	Prayer Team meeting
	1:00 p.m.	Care Team meeting
July 26	5:30 p.m.	Swim Night at the Halstead Pool

Looking Ahead

Aug. 9	Old Settlers Service
Aug. 16	Ice Cream Social at MCC

Treasurer's Report

Budget Balance @4-30-26	\$6,801.04
May Receipts	\$15,419.22
May Expenses	(\$10,707.08)
Budget balance @5-31-26	\$11,513.18

Upcoming Church Events

Men's Evening

All men are invited to a Men's Evening on Sunday, July 12, at 5 p.m. at Mick Bean's house (6033 S. Mission Road). Mick will provide the hot dogs, please bring a side or dessert to go with it and a lawn chair. There will be a couple blue rock throwers, if you would like to participate.



Swim Night

Our annual swim night will be Sunday, July 26, from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. at the Halstead Pool. Hospitality will bring paper goods and drinks, please bring a snack to share. Invite a friend to join!



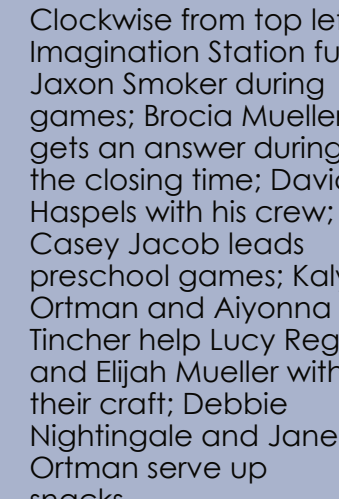
Broader Church Events

MCC Grandparent Days

Mark your calendars and gather your grandchild(ren) to pack MCC school kits at the Material Resources Center in North Newton on July 13 & 14 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. each day. You'll be helping MCC reach their 2026 School Kit Challenge goal of 30,000 school kits this summer! There is more information at mcc.org/grandparent-days or you can contact brociamueller@mcc.org or call her at 316.836.5045.

Ag Community Gathering

Buhler Mennonite Church & Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church invite local farmers and ag professionals to Soil & Soul, a gathering for farmers, ranchers and the ag community on Friday, July 31, from 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at Hilton Garden Inn, Hutchinson, Kansas. Soil & Soul brings together the people who support agriculture every day to strengthen relationships, share resources, and build support systems that help producers thrive. This meeting is the first in a two-part series. A second event will be held November 14, 2026. Registration is requested but not required. Register at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NQKWKFZ>. For more information contact bmcpastor@gmail.com or 620-899-8918.



Clockwise from top left: Imagination Station fun; Jaxon Smoker during games; Brocia Mueller gets an answer during the closing time; David Haspels with his crew; Casey Jacob leads preschool games; Kalyn Ortman and Aiyonna Tincher help Lucy Regier and Elijah Mueller with their craft; Debbie Nightingale and Janet Ortman serve up snacks.

Rainforest Falls: Halstead-Bentley Community VBS

The Halstead-Bentley Community VBS was held May 26-29, 2026. Over 100 kids joined us at Rainforest Falls for a week of worship, Bible learning, experiments and games. Clockwise from top right: Ewan Jacob and Isaiah Haspels greeted people with an open door; singing during the opening time; Pastor Steve and Melanie Haspels started each day with a skit; Kaitlen Ortman kept everything running smoothly in her role as VBS Director.



YOUTH Spotlight

Beginning this month, we will feature either a youth or a kid at FMC in each newsletter. We invite you to become acquainted with Allison Smoker this month, who will be a sophomore at Moundridge High School in the fall.

If you had to choose only one class to stay in all day, which one would you choose and why? Art class because it's fun and not too stressful.

What activities are you involved in in school and which one is your favorite? Volleyball and softball. Volleyball is her favorite and she plays club volleyball during the off season.

If you could do anything you wanted for a day, what would it be? Hang out with friends.

If you were given a million dollars, what would you do with it? Save it for college and the rest of my life.

What is your favorite food? Any kind of fruit.

What is your favorite ice cream flavor? Mint Chocolate Chip

Across the year, what's your favorite church activity? Youth Group



JULY birthdays & anniversaries

- 1 Justin Stucky
- 1 (A) Kyle & Tia Regier
- 2 (A) Jason & Lauren Mueller
- 3 Carol Rose
- 4 Bruce Nightingale
- 4 Joel Loflin
- 5 Brent Buchholz
- 6 Rebecca Klassen Rose
- 12 Dick VanWye
- 13 (A) Jim & Marj Gundy (69 years)
- 14 Janet Schmidt
- 14 Chelsea Nemeth
- 14 (A) Shaun & Kaitlen Ortman
- 14 (A) James & Betsy Davis
- 16 Katie Nightingale
- 16 Ethan Rodenberg
- 17 Dorothy Dick
- 18 Emily Groom
- 19 David Flask
- 19 (A) Tom & Carol Rose (68 years)
- 19 Shawn Ruth
- 21 (A) Chuck & Melanie Haspels
- 23 Erica Schlender
- 23 Terry Koehn
- 23 Mark Brandt
- 23 Samuel Holub
- 25 Nancy Back
- 26 Garrett Whorton
- 27 (A) Glenn & Kris Mueller
- 27 Verna Regier
- 29 Steve Wilcox
- 29 Karen Siebert
- 30 Michael Warren
- 31 Wade Buchholz
- 31 John Regier
- 31 (A) Leon & Janet Schmidt
- 31 (A) Jason & Sara Smoker



This month, we invite you to get to know Tyler and Nadya Gehring. They have lived in Halstead for less than a year and began attending First Mennonite Church of Halstead last November.

Where are you from? Nadya is from Denver, Colorado. She attended Colorado School of Mines in Golden, Colorado, where she earned her degree in metallurgical and materials engineering, which is the science of mixing, processing, and shaping materials like metals, plastics, and ceramics to create strong new materials for everything from smartphones to spaceships.

She moved to Wichita in 2019 for a job and was just beginning to find friends and build community when Covid shut everything down. Fortunately, she was considered an essential worker and was able to go to work, allowing her to still see people. She currently is a General Assurance

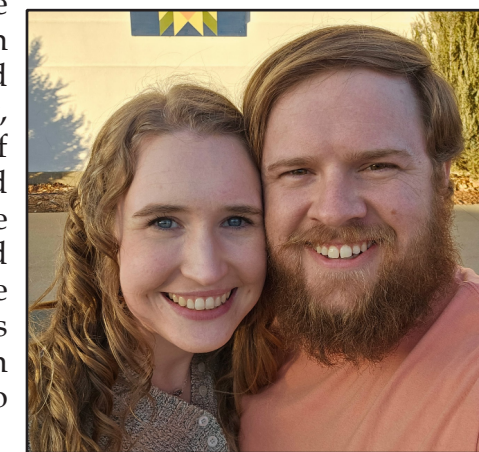
Quality Engineer for Textron in Wichita.

Tyler grew up in Pretty Prairie, Kansas. He attended Wichita State University for two years, spent a summer in Chicago with DOOR (a faith-based network of cities that provides opportunities for service, learning, and leadership development in urban settings) and then participated in Service Adventure in Alaska for a year.

He then moved to Virginia, where he lived for four years and learned landscaping. When he returned to Kansas, he began working at Mennonite Friendship Communities in South Hutchinson. He oversees the grounds department, caring for everything outdoors that's not building related, and also repairs the community's golf carts.

How did you meet? Tyler and Nadya met online after she liked a picture of his rock (Tyler enjoys rock carving). "I thought it was more interesting than fishing and hunting pictures and was a good talking point," said Nadya.

The couple became engaged after 10 months and were married on January 27, 2024, in Hutchinson. They honeymooned in



Tyler and Nadya Gehring

Europe, where they traveled to Germany, the United Kingdom and Ireland, as well as attended a friend's wedding.

What is your church background? Nadya grew up in a non-denominational church and attended a similar church in Wichita. Tyler grew up at First Mennonite Church in Hutchinson and attended Mennonite churches in the various places he lived. While in Virginia, he was part of a house church where he said he felt the closest to the Lord.

What brought you to Halstead? With Tyler working in South Hutchinson and Nadya working in Wichita, they needed a place to live in the middle and wanted a place with a small-town feel. When they drove through Halstead, they saw kids playing and people doing things outside. They appreciated that people appeared to care about the town.

Ironically, they forgot that Trae (Tyler's brother) was teaching in Halstead when they made the decision to make Halstead their home. They currently live on Pine Street but have dreams to one day have a homestead with a large garden and some animals.

What brought you to FMC? Tyler knew of First Mennonite from working with Alan Mueller and Susan Nisly at Mennonite Friendship Communities. He also knew Susan from his time in Service Adventure. They attended the Hog Roast last October because some of Tyler's cousins were singing with *Prairie Highway*, which performed that night. They thought the people they met seemed welcoming and thought they would give FMC a try.

They began attending regularly last

November and participated in Bible studies during the spring. For Nadya, attending a Mennonite church brought new experiences. Singing in four-part harmony was new and the children's time incorporated into the service was different than what she had previously experienced.

What both of them appreciate about FMC is that people are actually interested in having them attend and how involved the church is with the community.

What are your hobbies? Nadya enjoys reading, crafting, crocheting, gardening and sewing, and altering clothes. She recently began canning and experimenting with sourdough bread.

Tyler enjoys almost any activity that allows him to work with his hands, including rock carving and whittling. He likes playing games—board, card, and video games—and listens to a variety of podcasts.

What's your favorite ice cream flavor? Nadya will choose birthday cake or coffee ice cream if they're available. Tyler will eat whatever flavor is served but especially likes the Tie Dye Burst flavor from Dillons.

What's your favorite board game? Nadya says she's competitive when playing games and prefers the fun, interactive group games. Tyler's favorite is *Betrayal of House on the Hill* and recently began playing a card game called *Wonders of the First*.

The couple enjoys hosting others and hopes to do so more often as they continue to get settled in Halstead. Welcome to FMC, Tyler and Nadya!