

More Summer FMC Fun



Aiyonna Tincher, Sara Dick, Marilyn Balzer, Janet Ortman and Cindy Siemens tie a comforter during the MCC School Kit Bag sewing event.



Men and boys gathered at Mick Bean's place in July for a Men's Night.

September 2026
Volume 50, No. 9

The Church Corner

Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it." Whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.

ISAIAH 30:21, NKJV

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

Phone: 316-835-2282
Email: office@firstmennonitehalstead.org

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.



Sir Menno Knight and the Quest for a Proper Welcome

All the church doors clicked shut, the deadbolts engaged, and the silent sanctuary exhaled into the evening. Then...CLANK. Sir Menno Knight jolted to life. His visor snapped open, his helmet plume quivered with nervous energy, and his rusty knee joints groaned in a resonant B-flat. Tonight was not just any midnight watch. Tomorrow was the grand Old Settlers Community Service! A glorious assembly of believers was about to descend upon the sanctuary: Methodists, Baptists, the Halstead Life congregation, and the Bible Fellowship group.

"We must prepare the grand hall!" Sir Menno proclaimed to an indifferent stack of cardboard. "Hospitality demands absolute perfection!"

His first quest: The Pew Patrol. Sir Menno marched down the center aisle, inspecting every single wooden row. Each hymnal needed to stand at a flawless ninety-degree angle. Hymnal by hymnal, he nudged each one until its spine sat flush with the pew rack, muttering things like "Unacceptable" and "Better" and, once, after seeing a hymnal wide open draped over a pew, "Now that is a hymnal at peace with itself." By the time he reached

the back row, he had developed very strong opinions about hymnal posture.

Next came the sound equipment in the balcony. Sir Menno peered over the mixing console—a bewildering expanse of knobs, faders, and blinking lights that he considered modern sorcery. "Surely the high frequencies require a knight's delicate ear," he murmured. He reached out with a heavy iron gauntlet. His thumb bumped three faders at once. SKRRRRREEEEEEEECH!

A piercing wall of feedback shrieked through the sanctuary like a dragon's battle cry. Sir Menno threw his arms over his helmet, dropped to his knees in a clattering heap, and waited for the ceiling to collapse. When the howling finally faded into silence, he backed away from the desk on his knees, bowing reverently. "The wizard box shall remain undisturbed," he wheezed.

Finally, he hurried toward the front of the sanctuary to inspect the altar. The arrangement was lovely, but to his discerning eye, it sat precisely two inches off-center. He tiptoed onto the platform and reached out to nudge the display. THUD. SNAP. His armored elbow clipped the tall altar candle. It toppled against the wooden communion table and broke cleanly into two pieces.

Sir Menno gasped. "A fallen light!" he hissed in despair. "The



- Stewardship Ministry: David reported July was a good month with a \$1,300 surplus. There is a budget deficit of \$2,000 year-to-date, which is normal for this time of year. He is looking into moving some of the surplus from the checking account so it can earn more interest. Kaitlen asked if we still want the \$300 Dragon Backers ad that goes all year in the programs. We agreed to do it again. James reported they met July 26. Basement carpets and some of the upstairs carpets were cleaned for about \$700. The two-door kitchen refrigerator was replaced for \$6,500. The Stauffer Hall roof was replaced, and they are now working on the sanctuary roof. The stained glass windows were replaced about a month ago and the sidewalk on the west side will be replaced this fall.
- Worship Ministry: Denice reported they met July 31 and reviewed the Worship Ministry policy. Steve planned the Old Settlers service. They reviewed the Narrative Lectionary that Steve uses.
- Pastor's Report: Steve reported there have been requests to live stream our services in the nursery and kitchen for those serving in those areas. He has put a lot of research into the technology we'd need to accomplish this so that we can apply for a grant through WDC's Kids Meet Christ for technology for ~\$7,000. Casey is finalizing what Steve came up with to send it off by September 1st.
- New & Continuing Business: Revisited the discussion about the constitution and membership. After

much discussion we have decided to revise the constitution with the following changes:

- Add "Covenant Member" under "Categories of Members:"
- Change to Avenues For Becoming a "Member" to "Traditional Member."
- Change "Full Member" to "Traditional Member."
- Add definition of covenant member, signed annually.
- Change all "Full Member" to "Traditional Member."

Kaitlen, Sara & Steve will meet to edit the document prior to the next Council meeting so it can be brought to Council for approval. If approved, Council will take it to the church for a vote, hopefully in October.

Next Council Meeting: October 5, 2026

Treasurer's Report

Budget Balance @6-30-26	\$8,356.21
July Receipts	\$15,500.82
June Expenses	(\$14,199.45)
Budget balance @7-31-26	\$9,657.58



Council Meeting Minutes
from August 24, 2026

- Sandy opened the meeting with prayer. Minutes were approved from July as written.
- Discernment Team: Sara reported that they created a spreadsheet to track regular attendees and the areas they serve in the church. This document will be very useful as they are seeking to fill the following positions: two Missions Ministry members, a board member for the Et. Cetera shop, and a WDC Advocate (this is a new role) from our church.
- Vision Team: Chuck reported that they found John Friesen from Hesston for the Pastor/Congregation evaluation focus groups and lunch, which is planned for Sunday, Oct 25, with the goal of finalizing the review by the annual meeting.
- Care Ministry: Ron reported they met last month. They served communion on August 16 and the next communion will be October 4 on World Communion Sunday. They tried something new with putting words on the screen to say as elements are passed. They are open to other new ideas for making communion meaningful.
- Hospitality Ministry: Kaitlen reported their next event is the Women's Soup & Salad lunch after church on Sept. 27. Directory updates are in mailboxes. Melanie is going to take over updating the directory, moving it back into the Secretary's

Office, and away from Hospitality's responsibilities.

- Mission Ministry: Sandy reported they've been emailing and their next event will be John Haspels speaking on Sept. 13 with a potluck following. The Mission Supper is coming up in November, date TBD. Possible dates for the Hog Roast are Oct. 4 or 18.
- Nurture Ministry: Debbie reported they met August 10. They chose Angel Tree & Neighbors Store for the fall Sunday School offering. Christian Ed Sunday is Aug. 30. They will give Bibles to the two 3rd graders, dedicate the MCC school kit bags, and recognize the Sunday School teachers. Kids club is Sept 2 - Oct 21 with a theme of Disciples: Challenge Accepted. Adult Bible Study will be Sept. 2 - Oct. 7 and Casey is leading the study. Meals will be provided on Wednesday nights. Youth group begins Sept. 13. Kaitlen is joining Jason & Lauren as Jr. High sponsors. David, Brocia & Erica are senior high sponsors. Nurture is researching new Sunday School curriculum for next year. Debbie & Lauren went to MCUSA & WDC Safe Church workshop at Hesston Mennonite, which was focused on the entire church and not just Nurture programs. Discussion followed about if we need to form a Safe Church committee, make a new policy or add it to our current policy. Steve encouraged we don't go so far as to create such a rigid environment the kids don't enjoy coming. We talked about bringing it up at the Annual Meeting.

brethren will arrive at dawn to find ruin!"

Trying to fight down the rising panic. He picked up both halves of the broken candle. Wax required heat to mend. Sir Menno began vigorously rubbing his metal palms together. Scritch-scratch-scratch-scratch! Friction generated a steady glow of warmth. Pressing the heated metal against the fractured ends, the wax softened. He carefully pushed the halves together, smoothing the seam with the tip of his sword until it fused solid. The candle stood once more, a little crooked, slightly lumpy around the middle, but unbroken and proud.

Sir Menno stepped back, exhaling a phantom sigh of relief. He looked at the mended candle, the untouched soundboard, and the neat rows of pews. A gentle truth stirred beneath his breastplate. He recalled the ancient words of Hebrews 13:2: "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it."

True Christian hospitality was never about flawless decor, perfect audio, or pristine candles. It was about opening the doors wide, making room at the table, and welcoming brothers and sisters in Christ with glad and sincere hearts. With a quiet clank of contentment, Sir Menno Knight climbed back onto his pedestal, locked his armor in place, and waited joyfully for morning.

september			
Sept. 1	7:30 p.m.	Vision Team meeting	
Sept. 2	5:00 p.m.	Kids Club	
	6:00 p.m.	Wed. Night Meal	
	6:45 p.m.	Adult Bible Study	
Sept. 9	5:00 p.m.	Kids Club	
	6:00 p.m.	Wed. Night Meal	
	6:45 p.m.	Adult Bible Study	
Sept. 13	12:00 p.m.	Potluck	
	6:00 p.m.	Jr. & Sr. High Youth Groups	
	6:00 p.m.	Women's Bible Study	
Sept. 14	7:00 p.m.	Hospitality meeting	
Sept. 16	5:00 p.m.	Kids Club	
	6:00 p.m.	Wed. Night Meal	
	6:45 p.m.	Adult Bible Study	
Sept. 23	5:00 p.m.	Kids Club	
	6:00 p.m.	Wed. Night Meal	
	6:45 p.m.	Adult Bible Study	
Sept. 24	9:00 a.m.	Prayer meeting	
	1:00 p.m.	Care Team meeting	
Sept. 27	12:00 p.m.	Women's Soup & Salad Lunch	
	6:00 p.m.	Jr. & Sr. High Youth Groups	
	6:00 p.m.	Women's Bible Study	
Sept. 28	7:00 p.m.	Nurture meeting	
Sept. 30	5:00 p.m.	Kids Club	
	6:00 p.m.	Wed. Night Meal	
	6:45 p.m.	Adult Bible Study	

Upcoming Church Events

Women's Soup & Salad Lunch

All women and girls of the church are invited to join together for a Soup and Salad Lunch on Sunday, September 27, following the worship service. Hospitality will provide a salad bar. A sign up for soups and an RSVP will be posted on the bulletin board in the hallway. Plan to come and bring a friend!



Women's Bible Study

All women are invited to join the women's Bible study this year. We will be using Jen Wilkin's Bible study *God of Deliverance* to study the book of Exodus. We will meet the 2nd and 4th Sundays from 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., beginning with Sunday, Sept. 13. Books can be purchased through Faith and Life Bookstore in Newton or bought online. Talk to Melanie if you are interested in attending or have any questions.

Looking Ahead	
Oct. 11	P & M Pumpkin Ranch Outing

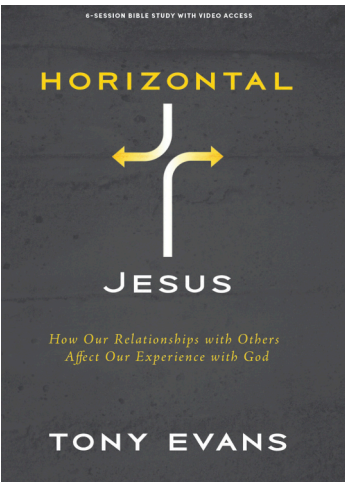
Wednesday Nights at FMC

Kids Club resumes September 2 from 5-6 p.m. and will run for 8 weeks, ending October 21. Kids ages 3 years through 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.

Wednesday night meals will begin on September 2 at 6 p.m. Please sign up on the bulletin board if you plan to eat to help those making the food prepare the proper amount. Thanks!



Adult Bible study will begin September 2 at 6:45 p.m. and will run for 6 weeks, ending on October 7. Casey Jacob will lead a 6-week study based on Tony Evans' book *Horizontal Jesus: How Our Relationships with Others Affect Our Experience with God*. All are welcome!



SEPTEMBER Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 1 (A) Mark & Cheryl Berger
- 2 Katherine Ewy
- 4 (A) Scott & Angela Chandler
- 5 Marlo Klassen
- 5 Carol Linn
- 5 Karen Linn
- 6 Scott Mueller
- 7 Matthew Balzer
- 8 Carrol Flickinger
- 9 Bill Ewert
- 9 Emmit Jacob
- 10 Valerie Keller
- 10 Jena Black
- 10 Nicholas Schmidling
- 11 Kim Brandt
- 12 Shaun Ortman
- 12 Marilyn Schrag
- 13 Keith Dalke
- 13 Brett Rose
- 14 Kevin Finley
- 15 (A) Robert & Luann Yutzy
- 16 Ewan Jacob
- 16 Rhonda Regier
- 16 (A) Lee & Vivian Snell
- 17 Michelle Dalke
- 17 McKial Bliss
- 17 Draco Miller
- 18 (A) Alan & Marilyn Mueller
- 18 Elvin Conard
- 18 Mallory Loflin
- 18 Kyndal Lee
- 18 Trevor Gadue
- 19 (A) Larry & Carrol Flickinger (72 yrs)
- 19 Evelyn Heath
- 20 Johnathan Haspels

- 20 Larry Flickinger
- 21 Hannah Sutcliffe
- 22 Glenn Mueller
- 23 Jacob Whitesell
- 23 (A) Gregg & Julie Dalke
- 23 (A) Mike & Jane Fitch
- 24 (A) Mark & Shirley Rodenberg
- 25 Dale Dick
- 26 Ron Dick
- 26 Melisa Kaldenbach
- 26 Monty Westerman
- 27 Ron Gundy
- 28 David Mueller
- 28 Jesse Mueller
- 28 Christian Kloepper
- 28 Mike Fitch

Church Announcements

- The deadline for the October newsletter is Tuesday, Sept. 22.
- The Neighbors Store pantry requests canned fruit cocktail and canned peaches for September.
- Offering schedule for September:
 - Sept. 6: Western District Conf.
 - Sept. 13: Hesston College
 - Sept. 20: Church Budget
 - Sept. 27: MC USA
- The link for our church online library is librarything.com catalog/FMCHalstead.

Summer at First Mennonite

Summer at FMC means fun! From the Sunday School Picnic at the beginning of summer to an ice cream social at the end, the summer held several events that brought us together. Clockwise from top right: The Golf Outing was held June 28 at Wedgwood Golf Course; Youth and adults participated in the cake walk at the Sunday School Picnic; Adler and James Davis, Jaren Smoker, Casey Jacob and Brocia Mueller enjoy the ice cream social at MCC; Kaitlen, Lakyn and Megan Ortman work on sewing School Kit bags for MCC while Elijah Mueller watches.



The Broader Mennonite Church

Art, Improv, and Lego are Worship, Too!

Kids Meet Christ invites you to a fun community event for EVERYONE—parents, children, leaders, and anyone who wants to see what is possible when all ages are fully engaged in worship. Talashia Keim Yoder, pastor at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana, and faith formation extraordinaire, will guide us in exploring worship that works for everyone.

Date: Saturday, September 12

Time: 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Location: First Mennonite Church at 52 Rambler Rd. in Hutchinson

Breakfast and lunch included. Morning program is for all ages. The afternoon session will be separate adult and children's workshops.

Register by Sept 4 at mennowdc.org

Women's & Girls' Retreat

The annual Mennonite Women in Mission Women's & Girls' (ages 8 through high school) Retreat will be held at Camp Mennoscah on September 12-13. For the detailed schedule and registration information, visit www.mennonitewomeninmission.org.



This month, we introduce you to Emmitt Jacob. Emmitt is home schooled and also takes two classes—STEM and computers—at Valley Center Middle School.

What is your favorite class? Science

What are your favorite activities to do?

Rock climbing and hunting as much as I can. Deer hunting is his favorite.

If you could do anything you wanted for a day, what would it be? Go shooting with my dad and grandpa.

If you were given a million dollars, what would you do with it?

Use part of it for fun things but save most of it.

What is your favorite food? Unanswerable. I like too many different things.

What is your favorite ice cream flavor? Mom's homemade vanilla

Across the year, what's your favorite church activity? I like youth group, the Christmas play, serving at New Hope Shelter and decorating cookies at the nursing home.



Jo Pjesky was born and raised in Newton and grew up attending First Mennonite Church in Newton. After she married John Pjesky, she moved down the road to Halstead, his hometown. Now, she is living back in Newton at Kidron Bethel Village, coming full circle.

Jo and her husband, John, who passed away April 4, 2021, met during Old Settlers when Jo and a carload of girlfriends headed to Halstead for the festivities. They encountered a carload of boys, including John, and soon the two groups joined together.

"I really liked John," Jo said. "He was so cute!"

Several months after they met, John was drafted into the Navy and was gone for two years. The two wrote back and forth, sometimes exchanging two letters a day, Jo said.

While John was serving on a Navy ship, Jo graduated from high school and traveled to California to visit relatives as

a graduation gift. When she returned home, she wasn't sure what she wanted to do next, so she attended Bethel College for a year before enrolling in nurses' training at Wesley Hospital.

Nursing school ended up being a short-lived endeavor for Jo. Married students weren't accepted into the program, and one year after she started, John returned home. The two decided to get married, bringing her nursing education to an end.

By 1954, the couple had moved to Halstead, yet they continued to attend church in Newton. That changed in 1961 when Jo transferred her membership to FMC, and John joined as well, changing from the Lutheran church in which he had been raised to a Mennonite church.

The couple became involved at FMC as they were able. John served on some committees, while Jo helped with Bible school and played piano for the opening exercises that used to take place before Sunday School. Jo said she would also put Sunday School materials in the boxes for each



Jo Pjesky

class in the basement on Saturday afternoons. In addition, she has served on the Sharing and Caring Committee for years, helping with "many, many funeral meals."

Some of Jo's favorite memories at FMC are the large dinners.

"I just think they do a wonderful job with their dinners, how everyone comes together," said Jo. "I like that. I think it's a very warm, caring church."

Jo took piano lessons for 16 years, instilling an enjoyment of music that continues to this day. It is also one of the things she most appreciates about FMC.

"We have so many talented people," Jo said. "I'm not a singer; I just love the music!"

Her love of music spans all genres. Whatever she is listening to at the time becomes her favorite.

"I just love it all. When I'm listening to classical, that's my favorite; when I'm listening to popular, that's my favorite."

For 26 years, Jo worked as an insurance agent for Chesky Insurance Agency in Halstead, beginning her tenure there once their son, David, was in school. John was initially employed at Boeing before beginning a career at the post office in Halstead, a job that allowed him to be done with work by the time school was out.

An avid quilter, Jo quilted with the church ladies for only three or four years after she retired, but she continues to quilt every Thursday at the Senior Center in Sedgwick with a friend. She also volunteers at MCC, putting school kits together.

"I've quilted for years," Jo said. "I can't imagine how many baby quilts I've

made."

Though she recently turned 92, she is looking forward to turning 100. Her grandfather lived to 100, and both her mom and aunt lived to 102.

"I think I've inherited good genes," she said.

Jo's son and his wife, Karen, still live in Halstead. Jo also has two grandsons—Matthew and Andrew—who are both engineers.



- Pray for the families of Orville Voth and Jim Loflin as they mourn the loss of their family member.
- Pray for those dealing with new or ongoing health issues, that they would find the answers and healing they need.
- Pray for Kids Club, Wednesday night meals and adult Bible study as they begin in September. Pray they would help all who attend grow in their faith.
- Pray for the Vision Team as they plan the next pastor and congregation evaluation. Pray it will be an energizing exercise for the church.
- Pray for Sunday School teachers as they begin a new year. Pray the Holy Spirit works through each one to impart truth to members of their classes.