

## ON THE JOURNEY

### **A Note From Pastor Phil: On Canceling Our Worship Services**

*As the coronavirus COVID-19 continues to spread, the list of closures grows longer every day. We applaud the efforts of all those who are working around the clock to stop the spread of this virus. And it is common sense and good citizenship on our part to be part of the solution and not to exacerbate the problem.*

*Even though we felt no immediate threat from the virus, canceling our service seemed to me and to the board to be the right thing to do for the following reasons. We want to do all we can to cooperate with health officials and government leaders as we as a nation aggressively work to stop the spread of this virus. Their best advice at this point is to stop the movement of people in hopes of stopping the spread of the virus. There is still little known about the virus, and there are relatively few test kits available, so we don't know who may have the virus or who is spreading it. And until we know that, and understand the virus better, there is going to be a lot of uncertainty in the near future. The element of the unknown is one of the largest factors in our decision to cancel services.*

*It seems to me that there are a few things that each of us can do as our nation weathers this storm. First is not to fear, and not to panic, and not to hoard. God is still on His throne, and this crisis is not news to God. Let us continue to trust God to care for us as His dear children. Second, let's cooperate with officials when and where we can. They are doing the best they know, and we trust that they have our best interest at heart. And third, we can pray. Don't ever underestimate the great and effectual power of prayer. Let's be diligent in praying for wisdom and for protection for research scientists, for health care workers, and for government officials, who are doing the best they know at the moment to get us through this crisis.*

*The Board and I will have weekly conversations about when to resume services, and we will do so as soon as we feel confident that it is a wise decision to do so. The decision to close or to resume services is going to be made on a week to week basis. If you aren't getting the messages from the church through the phone prayer chain, please let Maribeth know in the office so she can add it. Also, if you want to continue to give through offering and we are not holding service, you can always put it in the office drop box and Maribeth will take care of it.*

CALENDAR		
<b>Wed 3/18</b>	9:00 am	Moms In Prayer
	6:00 pm	Music Practice
	6:30 pm	Administration Commission
<b>Sun 3/22</b>	9:00 am	Phil Preaching
	12:00 pm	MYF Toboggan Run
<b>Mon 3/23</b>		Health Department
	6:00 pm	Ladies Exercise
<b>Wed 3/25</b>	9:00 am	Moms In Prayer
	5:30 pm	Outreach Commission
	6:00 pm	Music Practice
<b>Sat 3/28</b>	PM	POPS Kids Night Out/Parent Date Night
<b>Sun 3/29</b>	9:00 am	Phil Preaching

<b>Mon 3/30</b>	6:00 pm	Ladies Exercise
<b>Wed 4/1</b>	9:00 am	Moms In Prayer
	5:30 pm	Wednesday Evening Meal
	6:00 pm	Music Practice
	6:30 pm	Food Pantry Advisory Board

**Administrative Assistant Office Hours:**  
**Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM-2:00 PM**  
**Closed Friday**  
**Phil Yoder Office Hours:**  
**Monday 12:00-4:00 PM,**  
**Wed. 9:00 AM-12:00 PM, Thursday 1:00-6:00 PM**

- All newsletter submissions need to be in to Maribeth by noon on Tuesday.

**Please Note that all calendar events are subject to change.**

### March Birthdays

Tim Keller – 20  
 Jake Schwartz – 23  
 Linda Miller – 25  
 Bernie Miller – 28

## WORSHIP

**Focus statement:** In the Passion Narrative of Jesus, we are confronted with two kingdoms, each with their own king. One of the kingdoms is Rome, and it represents the kingdoms of this world, and the other kingdom is the kingdom of God. They meet and they clash. And in the confrontation, they are revealed to be ultimately different. They have different values, different goals, operate by very different principles and different means, have different sources of power, and have very different destinies. They present us with two different ways of seeing the world, and two different ways to live in this world. They confront us with some very important choices. The Anabaptist understanding of Jesus is that Jesus is much more than simply a Savior who takes us all to heaven when we die. Jesus ushered in a new kingdom and presents us with a whole new way to live in this world now!

**Background scriptures:** John 18:28-19:16, Matthew 3:8-10, 3:17, 13:1-51, Luke 17:20-21, 22:24-30, Acts 1:1-9

### Coffee Prep Volunteers

This Sunday: Janelle Walther  
 Next Sunday: Navigator Class

### Welcome Center

This Sunday: Verna Weirich  
 Next Sunday: Carol Johnson

**Looking Ahead: To be posted on a weekly basis.**

**March 22** – Sermon: “Which King Will You Bow To?”

**From the Board:** Right now, we are working on possible Elder positions and finding a pastoral candidate. We will start updating the commission job descriptions. The last time this was done was 2013.

## ADMINISTRATION

### Stewardship Report for March 15:

Money Given to Budget \$1,745.00  
 Amount Needed Weekly for Budget \$5,343.12  
 Year-to-date Money Given to Budget \$145,848.99  
 Amount Needed Year-to-Date for Budget \$154,950.48

**First Mennonite Church of Middlebury** is seeking an Administrative Assistant. This is a part-time job. Inquiries, copy of the job description and resumes can be directed to [info@firstmennonite.net](mailto:info@firstmennonite.net) or by calling 574-825-5135.

## COMMUNITY LIFE

### Wednesday Evening Meal Hosts:

**From CLC:** Dora Graber is the new Funeral Meal Coordinator. CLC is planning the Maundy Thursday meal for April 9th at 6:00. Easter breakfast will be on April 12. We will have a meal before the church business meeting in May.

## DISCIPLING

**Take an Intensive Term course at AMBS!** Hybrid and campus options beginning in May and June include History of Christian Spirituality; Religion and Peace Processes; Biblical Storytelling; and Practicing and Embodying Nonviolence. Nonadmitted students get 50 percent off their first course for credit! See our audit options for campus courses. [ambs.edu/onecourse](http://ambs.edu/onecourse)

**The Preschool Board** met in March and heard that our KPREP class is full for next year. Our POPS class has ten students enrolled. Our Scentsy fundraiser begins on March 10. Parent/Teacher conferences will be held on March 19 & 20. Easter parties are scheduled for April 1 & 2. Our Spring Carnival date is Sunday, May 17.

## OUTREACH

**First Mennonite Women's** next project is providing items for the Food Pantry. Items needed: cereal, feminine pads & tampons, body wash, deodorant, razors, tooth paste, tooth brushes, jelly, chicken noodle soup, cleaning supplies, and empty laundry containers.

**From the Food Pantry:** “As we are all aware, the coronavirus (COVID -19) is spreading. We at the food pantry want to continue to be responsible to our community. Our pantry advisory board has put in place measures for safety as we continue to operate in this uncertain environment. We will continue to operate, extending God’s hand in a responsible way. Effective immediately, we are requiring that all food pantry volunteers self-screen themselves in the following way:

1. Review your travel history; have you recently traveled to a country with a known COVID-19 outbreak or been in a city, state, or location with known cases of COVID-19.
2. Are you/have you in the last two weeks experienced a fever, cough and/or trouble breathing. If you answer positively to these two questions, please do NOT volunteer at the food pantry. These symptoms do not mean that you have the coronavirus, they are simply indicators of possible increased risk. We also have a plan to keep our clients safe as we continue to serve them. We appreciate your continued support of the food pantry, our desire is for you to take care of yourselves and be healthy, and for us all to act responsibly to safeguard the health of our community and neighbors. Let’s be good stewards together.”