

JANUARY 5, 2021

A New Year – A New Perspective!

Finally, finally, we have put 2020 behind us. I can hear a giant sigh of relief. Many people consider 2020 the year to forget. Our lives were disrupted in so many ways, canceled plans, lost work, lost jobs, lost opportunities, lost loved ones. And that is not all. There were riots in our streets, looting, social and political unrest unlike anything we had seen in our country for decades. People did things they never imagined they would, like wearing masks in public, and submitting to being locked in their homes, virtual learning, and virtual worship. Some of my friends asked, "Can life go on if there isn't March Madness?" We discovered that it does.

Just a year ago, I was looking forward to 2020 with such optimism. It was a new decade with new optimism. The economy was roaring along, I had big plans for the year, life looked good. And then, before we knew it, schools were closed, restaurants were closed, churches were closed, and life as we knew it came to a screeching halt.

While this may be the worst year any of us can remember, and for many of us, it was, Historians would be quick to point out there have been worse years in the history of the world. The Great Depression, which had begun with the collapse of Wall Street in 1929, reached its peak in 1933. By then, one in four adults in America were unemployed, half the nation's banks had defaulted, draught, strong winds, and poor farming practices combined to turn the Midwest into a dust bowl, and in 1933 alone, more than 200,000 farms in the U.S. were foreclosed on. Not only was it a miserable year, but the future looked so bleak, and many were wondering if the nation and the world would ever recover.

In history, here have been several weather phenomena that have caused extreme changes in weather leading to famine and panic. In 536, people across Europe, the Middle East, and large parts of Asia were plunged into darkness. Scientists have since shown that a huge volcanic eruption, possibly in Iceland, but it is not certain where, caused temperatures throughout the world to plummet as ash blocked out much of the sunlight for more than a year.

Then there was 1816, which has come to be known as the "year without a summer." In April of 1816, Mount Tambora, a huge volcano in Indonesia, erupted, spewing millions of tons of ash and sulfur into the atmosphere. More than 12,000 Indonesians were killed immediately from the eruption, but the effects were felt the

BIRTHDAYS

Edna Mast	1/8
Grace Rheinheimer	1/11
Charles Hartzler	1/14
Sam Weirich	1/15
Linda Young	1/16
Mary Weaver	1/17
Gene Bender	1/18
Marlene Yoder	1/18
Dawn Miller	1/19
Katie Walther	1/24
Jeri McClain	1/24
Dee Weaver	1/25
Keith Thomas	1/25

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*Our mission is to extend
grace, build peace, and
share love within & beyond
our faith community*

*Worship Service
Sunday 9:00 am*

Office Hours

*Pastor Phil
Tuesday 9:30a—1:30p
Thursday 1:00p—6:00p*

*Business Office
Monday and Tuesday
8:00a—5:00p
and Fridays by chance*

*The church office is closed
on Wednesdays*

world over for the next year. The skies remained nearly dark, crops failed, leading to a worldwide famine. In Europe, as well as in North America, snow fell through June, making it feel more like March than June, and throughout much of the U.S., temperatures fell below freezing every month of that year making it impossible to grow crops. Millions of people were convinced the world was coming to an end.

And there were pandemics that decimated populations in past years also. In 1347 the bubonic plague arrived in Europe, and over the next years fear and death spread over the continent. Estimates on the total number of casualties worldwide vary. However, most guesses put the total number of victims at a minimum of 100 million, and possibly as high as 200 million out of a world population estimated to be 475 million. An estimated 50% of Europe's population was wiped out because of the plague. In England alone, more than 1,000 villages disappeared because of the plague. Fears and superstitions would linger for hundreds of years that would follow.

While disastrous years may not be new, they do significantly alter people's lives and change people's perspectives on life. They remind us that life is filled with uncertainties, and that in the end, we are at the mercy of God and the world we live in. To be sure, this past year was extremely harsh for many individuals, families, businesses, schools, and churches, and especially for healthcare workers and those living in Care Facilities. For some, and perhaps for many, life will never again be like it was. And while nobody wants another year like the one we just went through, hopefully we won't curse it, sweep it out the door and say, "Good riddance!" without considering that God, too, has a perspective on the events of the year.

None of us can see what God sees, and none of us knows how God will use the events of the past year for His purposes. And not only that, but if we, in the past year, have been made more aware of the precarious nature of life and of the fleeting value of the things of this world, if we have learned to trust less in the things of this world, and have turned toward God and learned to walk more closely with God, if we have learned to care in new and deeper ways for our neighbors who were suffering, if we have reoriented our lives to live from the perspective of eternity and not just for the few years we have on the earth, then there were some redeeming factors to the year, even though it was filled with hardships. To be sure, God is at work in ways we are not aware of. And God frequently uses the broken things and difficult experiences of life to make something new, something of great value, and to help us refocus our hearts toward things of eternal value. The Bible reminds us that, "Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on that is unseen. For what is seen is temporal, but what is unseen is eternal" (II Corinthians 4:17-18).

Written by Philip Yoder

*We will be printing a **mini-bulletin** for the Sunday morning service for those who wish to "subscribe" to it.*

*In an effort to maintain minimal contact and reduce waste, you must request it **in advance**, via email or just drop a note in the office drop box and it will be distributed **through your mailbox** prior to the service.*

No extras will be available!

Worship

Focus Statement: The world is broken. That is not news to anybody. When sin entered the world, it affected creation in a way that Adam and Eve could never have imagined, and that they could never fix. There have been many ideas, philosophies, revolutions, and attempts to fix the brokenness of the world, but all to no avail, because the damage is far greater and much deeper than is humanly understood, and to fix the world will require something beyond any human powers. The vision of Isaiah is full of glimpses of the world being healed and remade into a paradise once again. This is accomplished through the work of the Messiah. There are four texts listed for the sermon for this week. Please, don't be

Sermon Title: "MESSIAH – Will Bring Healing to the World "

Texts: Isaiah 61:1-11, 35:1-9, 11:6-9, and 2:2-5

frightened away because there are so many. Each of these gives us a glimpse of the healing that is to come, and each of these represents a different dimension of

healing that the Messiah will bring.

New Testament Fulfillment:
Luke 4:16-21, Matthew 11:4-6

A Call to Prayer

A prayer movement has begun in churches in our area to pray for deliverance from the coronavirus. And the churches of Middlebury are asking their members to join in this larger prayer movement. This movement didn't begin in Middlebury and is much larger than our community, but we want to bring our community into this important movement of faith. Tuesday is the designated day for fasting (if you can and want to), but at least to join our hearts and voices in prayer with thousands of others around us and ask God to heal our land of this disease. The time of day and length of your prayers are up to you, but I am encouraging all of us to join in this effort and call on God to heal our land from the suffering this pandemic has brought on us.

The **Worship Commission** met Monday evening via Zoom. Discussion included creating a mini bulletin; challenges with the new sound booth equipment; and the music program. Betty Lou Kline will be stepping aside from both leading music and her place on the Worship commission as she deals with family issues. Due to an unexpected absence, additional content may need to be addressed via email "meeting".

Is there a song you have wished we'd sing or play during our church service?

We can't promise that we will be able to accommodate everyone's suggestion, but consider slipping a note in the office drop box, or email worship@firstmennonite.net with the song title and artist, if applicable.



Outreach

FMW Sewing Project

January will benefit our **Middlebury Food Pantry**. Please drop your item(s) off by **January 14!**

Community Life

Viv Schlabach has a new email address, please update your directories paper and electronic alike!

vivschlabach@gmail.com

If you would be willing to take a meal to Jim & Arlene Schrock, please call Jim at 574-370-5795 to arrange a time.

Calendar

1/6	9:00 am	Mom's in Prayer
1/6	6:30 pm	Food Pantry Advisory Board
1/7	6:30 pm	Board Meeting
1/8	6:30 pm	Ladies Night In
1/10	9:00 am	Phil Preaching
1/11		Heath Department
1/11	5:00 pm	POPS Advisory
1/12	6:00 pm	Community Life Comm
1/13	9:00 am	Mom's in Prayer
1/14	9:00 am	FMW Sewing
1/17	9:00 am	Phil Preaching
1/20	9:00 am	Mom's in Prayer
1/20	6:00 pm	Administration Commission
1/24	9:00 am	Phil Preaching

All Calendar Events are subject to change

SUNDAY WORSHIP - 9:00 AM

(You must pre-request a printed bulletin & Please DO NOT sign the attendance sheets)

- Call to Worship
- Worship Songs
- Congregational Sharing and Prayer
- Sermon
- Song
- Sending Words
- Sending Prayer
- Dismissal

You can now join in the live stream of Sunday sermons by clicking onto You Tube, then typing in FMC INDIANA in the search box. We begin at 9:00 AM on Sunday mornings

All newsletter submissions need to be in to the church office by noon on Monday.

Administration

1st Quarter Reports are on the shelf below the mailboxes, or ask Betty Lou for an email copy.

Stewardship Report for January 3, 2021:

Money Given to Budget

\$ 541.00

Amount Needed Weekly for Budget

\$ 5,417.78

Year-to-date Money Given to Budget

\$ 86,137.00

Amount Needed Year-to-Date for Budget

\$ 97,520.04