

The Garden

See what's growing in Eden

April 2023 Issue Vol. 3 No. 3



Note from the Pastor

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

Philippians 1:3-5

It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I conclude my pastoral ministry among you this month. My faith has been enriched, challenged, and grown in these past six and half years. Many memories flood my mind as I reflect upon the many ways that we have shared our lives together in faithful partnership in following in the footsteps of Jesus.

Each Sunday we gather for worship to remember that we are God's beloved children and we renew our connection to God who created us and loves us dearly. It's been a joy to offer my gifts in worship leading, singing, praying, and preaching. Working alongside the worship commission and Pastor Derek has been a creative process allowing us to explore many different themes throughout the years as well as meaningful rituals like communion.

Studying the Bible together on Wednesday nights and in Sunday school is such a crucial way that we are formed and shaped in our lives of discipleship. It has been a privilege for me to lead many studies, to dig deeper into the biblical texts, ask hard questions, and ponder what it means to live faithfully in our world today. What fun it was to plan and watch children and adults engage together during our times of inter-generational Bible study, seeing new relationships form.

My life has been enriched in the many conversations I've had with so many of you in our visits together. It's been a delight to hear stories of your life and marvel at the ways that God's presence has sustained you particularly during challenging times. I'm humbled that you allowed me into your lives on normal days and during those times of grief and loss. I cherish you as dear friends in Christ.

May the God who created you, encompass and protect you, and may you move with joy deeper and deeper still into the life that God has called you to.

Pastor Dianne

News from the library!

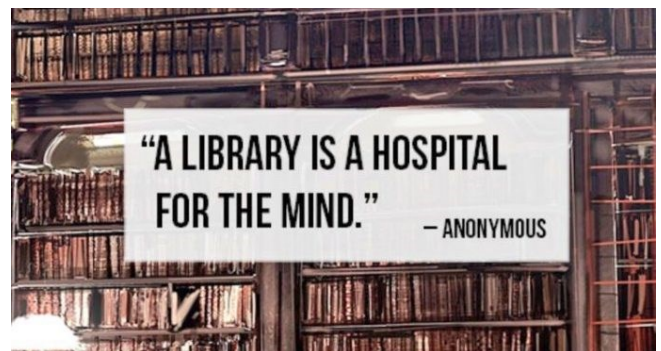
Bibliotherapy is a way of dealing with the challenges of life through educational stories, self-help resources, and religious readings. Bibliotherapy books can be fiction or nonfiction. While bibliotherapy often focuses on the educational aspect of reading, all types of resources can offer psychosocial benefits by refocusing the mind and providing connection and catharsis.

Reading, of all kinds, offers stress-relief even in short bursts of less than ten minutes (Lewis, 2009). Readers also have shown increased empathy building through a stronger theory of mind (Kidd & Castano, 2013). Reading can also offer religious support in times of need (Stone, H.W. et al, 2003). Setting aside time to read can be a good way to take care of yourself and impact your mental and spiritual health in a positive way.

Kidd, D. C., & Castano, E. (2013). Reading literary fiction improves theory of mind. *Science*, 342(6156), 377-380.

Lewis, D. (2009), Galaxy Stress Research. Mindlab International, Sussex University, UK.

Stone, H. W., Cross, D. R., Purvis, K. B., & Young, M. J. (2003). A study of the benefit of social and religious support on church members during times of crisis. *Pastoral Psychology*, 51, 327-340.



Amanda Harrison, librarian
Aesharrison@gmail.com

Meet Our New Members

Whitney Loganbill

The beginning of my faith journey started at a young age. I was baptized as an infant, fortunate to grow up in a Christian home and attended Bethesda Mennonite Church in Henderson, Nebraska. Some events that shaped my faith journey at a young age were Sunday school, VBS and Swan Lake Christian Camp. As a Junior in high school, I was rebaptized and became a member at Bethesda. One of the greatest impacts on my faith was always being surrounded by friends who held the same values throughout high school and college.

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plan I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Lance Loganbill

I started my faith journey as a child going to West Zion Mennonite Church with my family. Being able to attend church with Parents and Grandparents who were able to set an example of what it meant to follow God is something that I shall always be thankful for. Attending Camp Mennoscah several times and being able to be actively involved in a youth group at West Zion also had vital roles in shaping my Christian values today. During high school I was baptized and became a member of West Zion. Being a parent of 3 kids now, makes me want them to have some of the same experiences that I was able to take part in within a church community and family.

John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

About four years ago, we moved back to Moundridge and were invited to attend Eden Mennonite Church. We have enjoyed getting to know people and being involved at Eden. We have especially enjoyed watching our kids start their faith journeys with this congregation. We look forward to officially becoming members and supporting this church.

Christopher Thompson

I grew up in Mulvane, south of Wichita. I'm the youngest of four siblings. I was baptized in a Methodist church, but we stopped going to the church when I was young. Ultimately my parents decided they wanted all of us kids to find our own paths and not just believe what they believe because we had to. I went to the Methodist church down the street with my friends, and we had good conversations about faith and what Jesus stood for and taught, but we did not have a formal church community.

I went to college at Kansas State. While there, I met some great people, and I did explore my faith more by joining friends in going to church or going to events put on by the faith-based clubs they belonged to.

I'm a math and science guy. I struggled with believing in something more that wasn't as concrete. One of my friend's dads was a Lutheran pastor, and one of his services got me thinking more about religion. When we got into a

Christopher Thompson (continued)

discussion about how to reconcile a belief in God and work in science, he said, "God gave us science to answer the how things work. God gave us Jesus to teach us why we are here, why we were created, and to remove our sins. These are two different questions that can exist together." That helped me move through my block and be more open minded.

2007 and 2008 brought more questions. In late 2007, my mom passed away due to lung cancer, and within the next year my older brother developed severe issues with injuries he sustained serving in Iraq in previous years. I lost two of the few people I turned to for talks about issues or ideas, one from disease, one from combat injuries that completely changed his personality. I originally was going to go to Graduate School in Illinois but decided to move back with my dad in the Wichita area to help with family. I fell into depression and struggled for years before getting to a point where I made progress toward something resembling normal again. That is when I met my wife, Kristeen.

I struggled to understanding why, if God is caring, He would allow the suffering we had experienced through the years. Yet, questioning my beliefs allowed me to get to where I could see that God did not cause my suffering. God was there to give my parents wisdom to get us out of a bad church situation. God was there to give me friends to help explore my faith, and the intelligence to recognize I needed to ask questions to understand faith more. God led me to my friend's dad, who gave me what Pastor Derek would call an Aha! moment. God gave the doctors their skills to try to save my mom, and the patience and knowledge to keep working with my brother. God led me to Kristeen, who, despite all the craziness, loves me and wants to continue my faith journey with me. Finally, God gave us Jesus, his teachings and his death on the cross to remove our sins and allow a new start.

So, I choose now to re-baptize at Eden and become a member and continue the journey with the congregation. Aside from bringing a new last name to the church directory pool, I hope to provide a new perspective and help those who are challenged with suffering and depression. God gives us the strength to get through it all and doesn't abandon us in our need, even if we can't understand it all in the moment. I appreciate how the community has embraced our family and look forward to continuing to be a positive part of Eden.



Pictured left to right: Judy Harrison, Steve Harrison, Mattison Booth, Josh Booth, Lance Loganbill, Whitney Loganbill, Christopher Thompson, Pastor Derek King, Pastor Dianne Schmidt.



I'm thinking about changing religions," the young woman tells me. "Islam offers nothing for women or girls, and Christians are nice, good people."

This kind of talk is common among people who come to the Maria Skobtsova House (MSH) from Iran. They have seen how religion can be used as an oppressive force against people when it is allowed to dominate the government, and when the government interprets that religion in a specific way that leaves no room for dissent. This is definitely the case in Iran. Women are forced to dress a certain way, act a certain way, and follow a strict set of rules, based on the oppressive government's strict interpretation of the Koran. If they choose to disobey or dissent, as this young woman has, it could mean imprisonment or death. This young woman was involved with the protests of women and girls against the government in Iran. She has many stories to tell that range from the unnerving to the downright disturbing. She has experienced much pain and suffering, as well as threats to her life, for such a young person, all in the name of religion. This is why she has fled.

I have to hold my tongue when she says that Christians are good people. Indeed, I have seen how Christianity and a specific interpretation of the Bible can likewise be used for oppression. The history of the Western world is littered with stories of killing and suffering in the name of God. Rather than responding indignantly, I choose to find a Bible translated into the Persian language to give to the woman. I tell her that if she wants to learn about Jesus, she can start in the New Testament. She says she wants to take the Bible up to her room and read. I pray that she encounters the Jesus that I know, the One who loves and serves the poor and broken, who sets the captive free. Perhaps in Jesus, she can find her own kind of freedom.

I am reminded of the words of Jesus in Matthew 23:23-24: "You Pharisees and teachers are show-offs, and you're in for trouble! You give God a tenth of the spices from your garden, such as mint, dill, and cumin. Yet you neglect the more important matters of the Law, such as justice, mercy, and faithfulness. These are the important things you should have done, though you should not have left the others undone either. You blind leaders! You strain out a small fly but swallow a camel."

In Calais, we seek to be the kind of people who demonstrate the mercy, justice, and faithfulness that Jesus talks about. We want to be an example of who Jesus is to the people who flee from war and violence to seek safety in Europe. Rather than condemn and complain about the



"invasion" of migrants as a British minister recently said, we will choose to love and serve those God has entrusted to our care here in Calais.

The young woman I spoke about here has a positive opinion of Christians because of the kindness they have shown her. We hope to further the example of the Christians she has already met and help her encounter Jesus in a real and meaningful way that affects her life in this world by providing her a safe place to stay and a warm meal to eat. Christians are often overly concerned with the afterlife, failing to remember that life in the Kingdom of God starts now, and that we can live in the Kingdom by remembering to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.



Joseph and Rachel Givens
Elijah and Micaiah

Eden Leadership Team Minutes // February 21, 2023

Pastor Derek read **Deuteronomy 30:11-14** and led in prayer.

Minutes from December 2022 were approved.

Budget report from January.

Actual income	31,725.32
Actual expenses	31,116.21
Net Income '23	609.11
Net Income '22	-5,221.55
Giving '23	30,379.51
Giving '22	25,954.57

Commission Reports:

Education: They will be making baby blankets for Eden babies

Peace/Witness: This commission will be taking over the School Kit project from Mary Martha.

Trustees: They will be expanding the cemetery to the west and south. Talking about having the church locked all the time and getting in with a digital lock.

Worship: Planning a Maundy Thursday service. The summer retreat will be July 15-16. Thinking about having kids collect special offerings more regularly through the year, not just for Kansas Mennonite Relief Sale.

Executive Committee: Gail will contact Heidi Regier Kreider for an interim associate pastor. Derek will work on a job description. Will work on a search committee for an associate pastor.

Brenda Dalke, ELT Secretary

Thank You!

Thank you everyone over the last few weeks for the meals that you provided. They were wonderful and much appreciated! I may even come find you for the recipes.

Justin, Miranda, Diego, and Sofia Soriano
Maya-Justin's mom who lives with us

Thank you so much for the continued kindness and support that you provide Pine Village. We are so grateful for your partnership in ministry and the many ways you enhance our work with visits, prayers, referrals and gifts!

Eric Schrag, Director of Fund Development, Pine Village

Thank you so much for your gift! Our vision to create a sacred space for people of all ages to renew themselves, their relationships, and their connection with God through Jesus Christ is realized only with your help.

Olivia Bartel, executive director, Camp Mennoscah

Thank you for your generous support for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). We value your relationship with us and trust that we can walk together and provide resources that can be mutually beneficial.

Randy Detweiler, AMBS Development Associate

Bethel College Board of Directors recently approved the *Knowledge is Not Enough* strategic plan, which lays out areas of focus to achieve our vision of graduating students who increase human flourishing in society. With the generosity of our alumni and friends, we can reach these goals.

Ben Lichti, Coordinator, Alumni & Church Relations
Bethel College

Thank you very much for your recent gift to Hesston College. We are grateful for your support, which allows more students to study and learn in Hesston's Christ-centered community.

Rachel Swartzendruber Miller, PhD,
Vice President of Advancement, Hesston College

Thank you for your contribution to Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). Because of contributions from donors like you, MDS volunteers can clean up, repair, and rebuild homes damaged by disaster in the U.S. and Canada.

Kevin King, Executive Director, Mennonite Disaster Service

Thank you for supporting Western District Conference.

Beth Yoder, Business Manager, Western District Conference

Thank you for your gift! Mennonite Church USA

April Birthdays

- 3 Kenneth Stucky
- 4 Marge Goering, Monica Ewy
- 5 Gerry Schrag, Bret Gillmore
- 5 Kathy Neufeld
- 6 Luene Flickinger
- 6 Rhett Stucky (David)
- 7 Greta Koehn
- 8 Karen Stucky, Angela Harmon
- 8 Scott Klassen
- 9 Howard Kaufman, Gib Burgan
- 9 Kathy Neufeld
- 10 Kirby Goering, Sandy Stephenson
- 10 Katie Gillmore
- 11 Gracyn Stucky (Jacob & Katie)
- 12 Andy Goering
- 14 Kathy Waltner, Nathan Graber
- 14 Heath Goering
- 14 Reid Graber (Nathan & Shelby)
- 15 Ken K. Stucky, Ben Schrag
- 16 Leland Flickinger
- 18 Don Kaufman, Bonita Howard
- 19 Jerry Schrag, Mary Schrag
- 21 Joshua Knight
- 22 Cory Howard, Rory Howard
- 23 Bev Goering
- 24 Danielle Goering
- 24 Connie Schrag, Dan Knoll
- 24 Nathan Vontz (Nick & Lori)
- 24 Jetson Smith (Ian and Shayna)
- 25 Elwood Stucky
- 25 Del Kaufman, Linda Goering
- 26 Terry Regehr, Tim Regehr
- 30 Flynt Kaufman (Brandon & Morgan)
- 30 Tenise Wedel

April Anniversaries

- 2 Mark & Pat Rupp
- 8 Gib & Kay Burgan
- 9 Gary & Bonita Howard
- 12 Tim & Susan Goering
- 13 Greg & Glenda Krehbiel
- 18 Robert & Sondra Tolle
- 25 Zach & Kali Graber
- 30 Del & Ann Kaufman
- 30 Greg & Karen Stucky
- 30 LaVerne & Luene Flickinger