
HOPE HEADLINES

A PUBLICATION OF HOPE MENNONITE CHURCH

Volume 36 Number 11

November 2021



Voices Together **is Our Spiritual Director**

Not only do our Anabaptist hymnals through the centuries reflect the times we live in. They also form us to engage the times we live in as followers of Jesus, that is, as alternative people.

Consider the songs of gathering on September 26, our dedication service for *Voices Together*. We sang #389, "I will sing with you." The melody and tempo are up-beat. These musical characteristics are positive and engaging. Simultaneously, the lyrics carry the intentional alternative spiritual formation which shapes us as followers of Jesus. So, for example, among the words, "I will sing with you, *my rival*" describes connecting with people with whom we disagree, rather than retreating to our enclaves of the like-minded.

Similarly, "My words will be imperfect, but I'll try," and "I will learn to see the log in my own eye," commend efforts at bridge-building, as well as the mandatory humility that must attend such efforts.

Finally, "Difference is a place where **God** is found," makes a bold theological statement, counter to the dominant message of the culture around us, which is, "Difference is a place where the **enemy** is found."

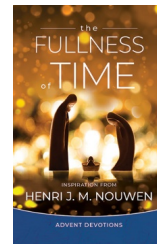
"I will sing with you" is just one example of the spirit-forming role of Anabaptist hymnody. In such ways, *Voices Together* is the latest and powerful (even if sometimes subtle) instrument for shaping the followers of Jesus as alternative people, sometimes in radical ways.

~Pastor Dave

VOICE
Together.

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

Here are the options for devotionals during the Advent season this year. Please reserve your copy(ies) of the adult and/or the children's selections through the church office by November 14.



The Fullness of Time- for adults

Celebrate Advent and draw closer to God through the daily reflections and prayers inspired by Scripture and the spiritual writing of Henri J. M. Nouwen. Author Amy Ekeh offers rich, warm and encouraging reflections that invite readers to pray each day and encounter Emmanuel, God-with-us.



Read about the ways that kids around the globe celebrate Jesus' birthday. Beginning on the first Sunday of Advent, cut out a link of chain from this sheet and add it to the previous day's link. At the end of the season, a colorful chain is yours to string around the Christmas tree or hang in your child's room. As Christmas gets nearer, children see with their own eyes how our excitement grows and grows.

Mission through hospitality

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it."

— Hebrews 13:2 (NRSV)

November is Mission Month, which means that Mennonite Mission Network will team up with pastors and congregational leaders to share mission resources that relate to a certain topic. This November, on the trailing end of our second year with limited inter-personal contact, we're focusing on hospitality in mission.

Hebrews 13:2 says, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." Through hospitality — the welcoming of strangers and extending the hand of friendship — we experience the presence of

God. Similarly, mission — the sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ across cultures — cannot be separated from hospitality.

This hospitality is very evident throughout Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS). Every aspect of this program is filled with the ideal of hospitality, as can be seen in local churches welcoming participants, participants finding and making a home with each other, the communities that welcome the MVSers, or the MVSers who engage in ministries of hospitality — soup kitchens, the welcoming of refugees, and others.

“One of the things that surprised me the most about MVS was how quickly my housemates and I became a community,” said Anali North-Martin, an MVS participant in Washington, D.C., from 2020-2021. “[We] came to support each other and rely on each other, especially during COVID-19, when community was kind of hard to find. They were there for me, and I really appreciate that.”

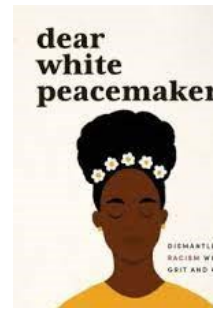
MVS participants live in unit houses across the nation. They don’t just live in a community; they join in community with their neighbors and one another. While there, they intern with nonprofits that work with various foci, like immigration, houselessness, sustainability and many more.

Placements aren’t just a place to work — they’re a valuable part of the MVS experience. “My favorite thing about my MVS placement is how much of a home it has become for me,” said **Sabrina Bellar**, an MVS participant in Washington, D.C., from 2020-2021. “Joseph’s House [a D.C. nonprofit] has created such a beautiful community ... [we] just support each other. That’s where real community happens.”

Programs like MVS are important — not just for the good work of hospitality — but for the development and formation of participants in the church. This Mission Network program, and others like it, allow young people to grow and learn, while living out a call to service.



2020-2021 Washington D.C. MVSers Anali North-Martin, Sabrina Bellar, and Kaitlyn Skelly.



Book Review by Margaret Wiebe

The women in the Thursday evening Bible study have been reading and discussing the book *Dear White Peacemaker: Dismantling Racism with Grit and Grace* by Osheta Moore. Osheta has a refreshing approach to anti-racism peacemaking. She says that white people must step out of their comfort and privilege and into the work of anti-racism. Her book is an invitation to White Christians to come to the table and join the hard work and the holy calling which is rooted in the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus. The book draws on the Sermon on the Mount, spirituals, and Osheta’s personal stories. Several concepts that stood out for me that Osheta addresses are the Belovedness of all people, the Beloved Community, and Shalom.

Osheta bases racism education on white people owning their own Belovedness. She says that what the world needs are more White Peacemakers who know they are beloved by a loving God and from that overflow, seek the Belovedness of others. Jesus owned his own Belovedness and then proclaimed it to everyone he met. Osheta calls White Peacemakers to own their own Belovedness so that they can proclaim the Belovedness of people of color. Belovedness is like a flowing river of renewal and justice and allows us (when using the pronouns “us/we,” I mean White People) to challenge systems and to have difficult conversations. This moves us from individuality into community—the Beloved Community.

Osheta goes on to say that Non-violence is the best way we can communicate our Belovedness to each other. White people have always been the standard of humanity. For brown and black people to become fully human and treated with the dignity God designed for each and every human and which God intends as the standard of humanity, White people have to sacrifice some benefits received because of their white skin and will have to actively resist the system of white supremacy which has reinforced inherent worth. Shalom is the deep, abiding peace we experience when we know we’re right in the palm of God’s hands, and it is the fire in our belly to defend those on the margins. Love is the reason for us to offer each other grace and dream of reconciliation. Love is also the reason we relentlessly pursue justice and equity.

Osheta says that we must ask each other these questions. What does it mean to be white? How has that

affected people of color? Where does it hurt? What can we do together to protect and love our siblings of color? When we do this, we are building a culture of peacemaking.

To be black in America is to be constantly grieving says Osheta, and White and Black people must grieve together. White people must learn how to enter into the great, unrelenting pain of people of color that has been caused by white supremacy. White people entering in when they don't have to are walking in the way of Jesus.

The two responses which promote peace are: "I'm sorry" and "I'm listening." When we mourn with people of color, we've allowed ourselves to be anointed by the spirit; it is holy work, the work of Jesus.

Osheta goes on to say that White fragility is the defensive reactions so many White people have when our racial world views and positions of advantage are questioned or changed. When we know we are beloved, we can do the work of anti-racism. When we acknowledge our own fragility, we must neutralize it. We must be willing to let people of color lead and teach from their experience, and we must use resources created by people of color. Osheta asks that we embrace downward mobility, choose moral and intellectual humility, give up all semblance of having it all figured out and follow gentle Jesus meek and mild. The first act of peacemaking is to pay attention to our own privilege—we must first remove the plank from our own eyes before we can see the suffering of others.

We have a number of chapters to read and discuss yet, so I know there's much more for us to learn from Osheta. Our ultimate goal is to take what we've learned and put it into action. We are still discovering what those actions could/might be for each one of us.



GLOVES FOR SANDWICH SATURDAY

The youth group will be coordinating Sandwich Saturday on December 4. As per their tradition, in addition to the

150 sack lunches, they will be distributing warm winter gloves for men. You are invited to donate to this project and place your gloves in the boxes in fellowship hall. They need to be here no later than 9:00 am on December 4. Thanks for your generosity for those who are houseless in our community.

Hope's Discernment Process

On Sunday, September 26, 2021, Michelle Jantz, Moderator shared the results of the welcome statement decision ballot. 109 people voted and 4 abstained. This represents 91% of the congregation. Vision Council determined this was broad enough participation to consider the results a direction for the congregation.

The results of the ballot process are: 82 (75.23%) votes to move forward with a welcome statement and 27 (24.77%) not to move forward. The breakdown of who voted: Members: 85.32%; Regular Attendees: 10.09%; Members, not regular attendees 4.59%. 4 members actively abstained.

Additionally, approximately 25% of the congregation submitted comments. These comments ranged from concerns about the ballot wording, the overall process, uncertainty about the need for a welcome statement, and misunderstanding that non-heterosexual wouldn't be the only group named in a welcome statement. Michelle will be reaching out to those who provided comments to explore the need for additional conversation and/or discernment in a 1 on 1 or small group setting with members of Vision Council, Deacons, Pastor Dave or the Moderator. It is anticipated this follow up will take a few weeks.

Vision Council will continue to discuss the next steps in the process. There is not agreement at this time. Some feel it is time to move directly to crafting the words of a welcome statement. Others feel we need to form a group to help not only craft a welcome statement, but to also design elements to help the congregation live into the welcome statement. The next steps will be shared as path becomes clear.

In addition to discussion on the next steps in the welcome statement process, it is the time of year when we will begin spiritual gift discernment for volunteer roles in the church, and begin the budget process. Watch for additional updates in Hope Headlines or during church announcements. Questions, comments, and concerns can be directed to Vision Council through contacting a member of Vision Council or via email at moderator@hopemennonite.org.

~~Michelle Jantz, Moderator

Sunday School schedule for November

All classes will meet during this month, except on November 28, Thanksgiving weekend.



Please don't forget to "Fall Back" on November 7. Otherwise you would be kind of early to church! Get that extra hour of sleep!



For November...

Worship Leader

November 7-Mike V.
November 14-Mike V.
November 21-Renetta ?
November 28-Renetta ?

Scripture Reader

November 7-Mike M.
November 14- Lowell
November 21-Mike V.
November 28-Ruthie

Pianist

November 7-Ruthie
November 14-Vicki
November 21-Amy
November 28-Cynthia

Song Leader

November 7-Kendrick
November 14-TBD
November 21-TBD
November 28-TBD

Tech

November-Randy

Zoom Host

TBD

Worship Prep

November 7-Connie
November 14-Lori
November 21-Ruthie
November 28-Heidi

Coffee

November 7-Hand
November 14-Kasitz
November 21-Luty
November 28-Pinkerton

November Head Usher

Randy

SS Superintendent

Joan

SS helper-kids

Alison

Mowers

Nov 7-Clinton; 14th-Grant

