



## Council Meeting Minutes

from Jan. 19, 2026

- Debbie opened the meeting with prayer. Minutes were approved from November as written (no December meeting).
- Discernment Team - Ruth reported they have been working on filling the slate of officers.
- Vision Team - Chuck reported that the Pastoral Review/evaluation-visitation was discussed. Trying to discern when or if someone wants a visit, phone call, etc. He said they are still working through meeting with all the ministries. More discussion on membership.
- Care Ministry - Ron reported that communion will be February 1. Memorials have been set up for Mary Cummings and Linda Aylward. Ron said they helped a family in Burtron with a tree removal (received matching grant money from Everence to help with the cost). The prayer chain has been updated (communication by email and phone).
- Hospitality Ministry - Brocia and Kaitlen reported they are working on revising their policies and procedures. There will be a Bob Ross painting night on February 1. Last Sunday Potlucks will continue, doing something different with the Easter brunch or having it at a different time was discussed. Valentine care packages will be taken to shut-ins, care packages will be sent to the college students in March, Camp Mennoscah will be May 2 and 3. An

information sheet with church activities, programs, etc will be placed in the pews for visitors. Brocia will be stepping down as the co-chair for the ministry.

- Mission Ministry - Dwight reported that the mission supper proceeds was \$5,640 after expenses. One third went to the Neighbors Store and two-thirds went to the Givens. Dwight will be stepping down as the co-chair of this ministry.
- Nurture Ministry - Debbie reported that they have updated their policies and procedures. The Winter quarter missions are USD 440 backpacks. Debbie said there was \$600 less given for Sunday School offering then last year and reminded everyone that that Sunday School materials are costly. Holy Week boxes will be given to families and Lent emails will go out starting February 18. We are also in need of more nursery workers.
- Stewardship Ministry - Larry reported a budget balance of \$12,217.68 at the end of December. James reported they met to work through the budget draft. He presented the budget for 2026. Sandy Allen seconded and Council approved. The sidewalk on the west side of the church was discussed, Mick Bean will be joining Stewardship and Jason Mueller will be going off. Thank you to Larry for all his years of service as the church treasurer.
- Worship Ministry - Denice reported there will be an Easter Cantata the Saturday evening before Easter Sunday, Erica will help Lauren with sanctuary visuals, Emmitt is doing word searches to go along with the sermon.
- Pastor Steve reported that the Halstead Community Foundation contacted him

# February

## February Calendar

Feb. 1	10:30 a.m. Covenanting & Anointing Service
	12:00 p.m. Sr. High Youth Group Fundraiser Lunch
	12:30 p.m. Annual Meeting
	6:00 p.m. Bob Ross Painting Party
Feb. 4	5:00 p.m. Kids Club
	6:00 p.m. Wed. night meal
	6:45 p.m. Adult Bible study
Feb. 8	10:30 a.m. Communion
	12:00 p.m. Beginner Bells practice
	6:00 p.m. Sr. High Youth Group
Feb. 11	5:00 p.m. Kids Club
	6:00 p.m. Wed. night meal
	6:45 p.m. Adult Bible study
Feb. 13-15	5:00 p.m. Sr. High Youth Group to Snow Camp
Feb. 15	12:00 p.m. Beginner Bells practice
	6:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study
Feb. 17	7:30 p.m. Vision Team meeting
Feb. 18	5:00 p.m. Kids Club
	6:00 p.m. Wed. night meal
	7:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday Service
Feb. 19	9:00 a.m. Prayer team meeting
Feb. 22	10:30 a.m. Beginning Bells perform
	12:00 p.m. Last Sunday Potluck
	12:30 p.m. Advanced Bells practice
	6:00 p.m. Jr. & Sr. High Youth Groups
	6:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study
	6:00 p.m. Community Worship Service @ Halstead Life. Church
Feb. 23	6:00 p.m. Nurture meeting
	7:00 p.m. Church Council meeting
Feb. 25	5:00 p.m. Kids Club
	6:00 p.m. Wed. night meal
	6:45 p.m. Adult Bible study
Feb. 28	4:30-7 p.m. Verenike Supper

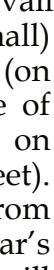
## Looking Ahead

April 4 Easter Cantata  
April 5 Easter  
May 2-3 Camp Mennoscah Weekend

## Upcoming Church Events

### Easter Cantata

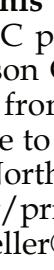
There will be an Easter cantata this year, and all those interested in singing are invited to participate. The cantata will be performed on Saturday, April 4, at 7:00 p.m. to allow for more community



## Community & Broader Church Events

### Verenike Supper

Make plans to join us for the Verenike Supper on Saturday, Feb. 28, from 4:30-7:00 p.m. in Stauffer Hall. The menu includes verenike, ham gravy, sausage, green beans, zwieback, relishes and pie and will be available for dine-in (in the fellowship hall) and carryout (on the west side of the church on Santa Fe Street). Proceeds from this year's supper will support the MCC Relief Sale, FMC youth group and other local ministries.



### The 2026 VLC Annual Assembly

will be held on Aug 7-9, 2026, at Iglesia Luz del Evangelio, Dallas, TX, with activities

for all ages, worship, fellowship and

delegate sessions. Lodging will be at area

hotels. Check <http://menowd.org/2026-annual-assembly/> for more details

in the coming months!

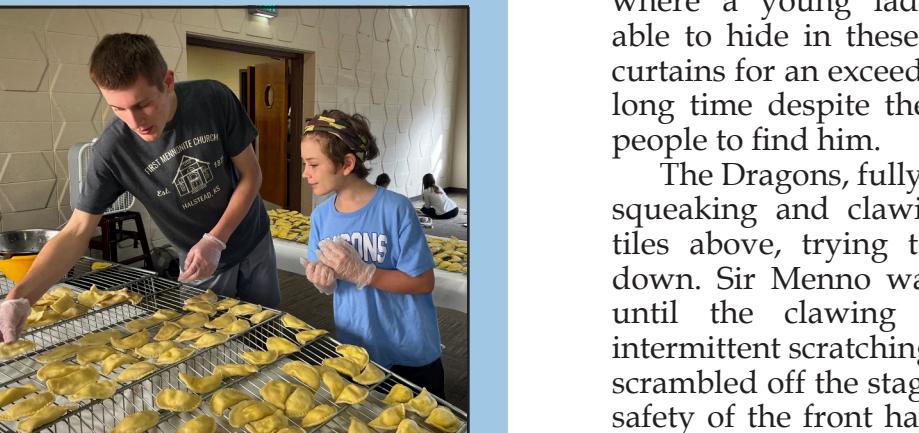
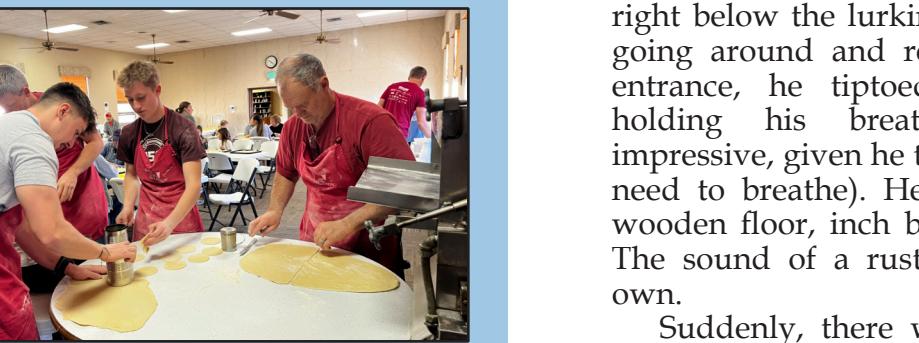
1 Kaer Colbert  
1 Carolyn Whitezel  
2 Kent Dick  
2 Shirley Rodelberg  
4 Don Haury  
5 Hannah Unruh  
8 Rebecca Reger  
9 Matthew Rodelberg  
10 Kyle Reger  
12 Leila Dalkie  
12 Teresa Gandy  
13 Cindy Siemers  
13 Mandy Evansoff  
13 Andrew Kaderabek  
15 Steve Koehn  
19 David Siemers  
21 Brett Berger  
22 Kaitlen Ortmann  
26 Michael Groom  
26 Marie Reger  
28 Ron Auerheinrich  
28(A) Dwight & Sharlene Lohrzen  
28 Brocia Mueller  
28 Daniel Rodelberg



## FEBRUARY Birthdays & Anniversaries

## Verenike Making Day

The proverb "many hands make light work" accurately describes our annual verenike making day, which was held on January 10. Thank you to everyone who joined in the fun. We couldn't have done it without you!

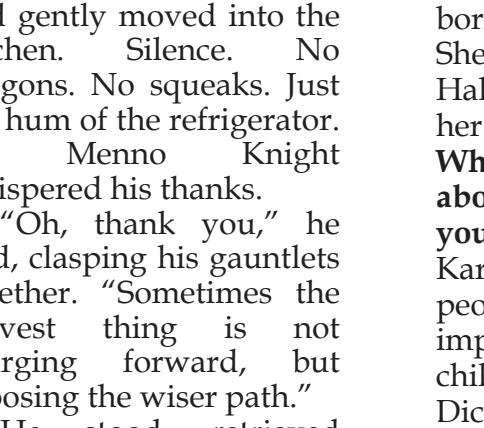


## The Quest for a Cookie, cont'd

right below the lurking Dragons. After going around and reaching the stage entrance, he tiptoed up the steps, holding his breath (which was impressive, given he technically did not need to breathe). He crept across the wooden floor, inch by inch. SQUEAK. The sound of a rusty knee joint—his own.

Suddenly, there was the sound of many dragon wings fluttering above. Fearing for his life, Sir Menno screamed. Well—screamed as much as a knight could scream, having only an empty helmet. He spun, slipped on an imaginary banana peel (which he later insisted was definitely there), and slid across the stage, colliding with a table and getting wrapped in the curtains. He became perfectly still, having once heard of a great legend where a young lad was able to hide in these very curtains for an exceedingly long time despite the heroic efforts of people to find him.

The Dragons, fully awake now, were squeaking and clawing at the ceiling tiles above, trying to find their way down. Sir Menno waited a long time, until the clawing had faded into intermittent scratching. At that point, he scrambled off the stage and raced to the safety of the front hallway, whispering prayers he half-remembered. "Though I



walk through the fellowship hall of the shadow of bats, I will not fear... well, actually I will fear at least a little bit."

After a moment of contemplation, he remembered that Mennonites often have a third way.

"Oh yes!" he exclaimed. "There are stairs on the southeast side that lead right into the kitchen!"

Quietly, very quietly, he descended the steps to the lower level, each step a heroic act of restraint to not just rush ahead. He reached the kitchen entrance

opposite the stage entrance and gently moved into the kitchen. Silence. No dragons. No squeaks. Just the hum of the refrigerator. Sir Menno Knight whispered his thanks.

"Oh, thank you," he said, clasping his gauntlets together. "Sometimes the bravest thing is not charging forward, but choosing the wiser path."

He stood, retrieved exactly one cookie, and returned to his post before dawn. By morning, he was motionless once more.

But if you listen closely, you might hear a faint clank of contentment—and learn, as Sir Menno Knight had, that courage is not the absence of fear, but faithfulness in the face of it... and sometimes taking the long way around is the best way, especially around Dragons.

they memorized everything possible. The class had exams and received bookmarks as rewards, which Karen still has today. "They were very kind but very serious, spiritual teachers," Karen said. "I was always so grateful to those two ladies."

**How long have you attended FMC?** Karen has attended First Mennonite Church nearly all of her life. Her parents, Cecil and Hazel Keller, were members of

FMC, and she was born into the church. She has lived in Halstead for most of her life as well.

**What do you recall about FMC from your childhood?** Karen recalls three people who made an impact on her as a child at FMC: Helen Dick, Amelia Mueller and Edna Ruth Mueller.

Helen was

her mother's best

friend and poured into Karen's life through that friendship. Amelia and Edna Ruth were her Sunday School teachers, and both were strict and focused on memorization of all biblical material.

and Edna Ruth Mueller and Helen Dick were the original ringers when Phyllis Neufeld formed the bell choir, playing medium-sized bells at the beginning

and eventually moving to the larger bells. "I just loved that, we had so much fun," Karen said. "We would pack up the bells and travel to local churches and give concerts, and we felt like we were big stuff. They're still so enjoyable, especially with the chimes. It



## Meet the Sheep

thrills me to see the little kids playing bells too."

**What about the church (FMC) means the most to you?** The church's legacy, history and connection to Bethel College are all meaningful to Karen. She attended Bethel for two years following her graduation from Halstead High School. She also has a long family history at FMC with most of great-grandparents, grandparents on both sides of her family, and aunts and uncles all having been part of the congregation at one time or another.

"There's just too much history and legacy, I couldn't go anywhere else," said Karen. "First Mennonite is a very special place and a very special congregation. I think we have been blessed with wonderful leadership in our ministers."

**What's a special memory you have connected to FMC?** In 1976, Marylyn Balzer and Armand Nightingale started a quilting group. For lack of a better name, they called themselves "The 76ers" so they would always know when they began quilting together. The group made quilts for MCC and was also hired by other people to make personal quilts. The money earned from those quilts was used to buy materials to create quilts for MCC, which were often displayed in storefronts in Hutchinson.

Karen was part of this group for its entire existence and it is still her fondest memory of FMC. "It was the most wonderful group of ladies," Karen said. "Those quilting sessions were my therapy sessions. Those ladies didn't know it, but they were saving my sanity and my life. They were just angels, every one of them."

## Treasurer's Report

Budget Balance @ 1-1-25	23,932
Jan-Nov Receipts	13,576.5
Jan-Nov Expenses	(13,841.05)
Budget balance @ 11-3-25	2,978.2
December Receipts	2,577.32
December Expenses	(4,334.46)
Budget balance @ 12-3-25	1,217.68