

January 2026 Volume 49, Number 2

MARRIAGE CONFERENCE

Are you ready for an opportunity to take a little break from your daily schedule and rediscover your marriage partner?

Adams County Strong is happy to be sponsoring their sixth annual Marriage Conference on February 13 & 14 at the Adams County Fairgrounds.

This year, national speakers Craig and Molly Sanborn invite you to view your marriage as a living investment. They are sure to inspire through humor, personal stories, and biblical wisdom, bringing to light how small, intentional actions can lead to lasting trust, intimacy, and joy in your marriage. Come pursue a fresh start!

You can register at adamscountystrong.org or through this QR code:



- Location: Adams County Fairgrounds Expo Center in Monroe, Indiana
- Friday, February 13, from 6:30-9:00 p.m. (childcare provided)
- Saturday, February 14, from 1:00-4:30 p.m. (date night encouraged) †



MCC BLANKETS

Wanted: Flannel fabric for MCC blankets. Please bring 1/2 yard or larger pieces, and color or design, to the Craft room. Contact Sharon Ninde or Nicki Lehman for more information.

update

BOOKMARKS

Looking for a good book to read? The church library is a wonderful place to grab a physical copy and hold something other than a screen in hand. It's located on the lower level of the church. At the bottom of the ramp, turn left, and the library is the first door on the right as you walk towards the classrooms. It's self-serve, open whenever the church is open.

If it's challenging to find time to look for a book when at church, the process to select something to read may be enjoyed from the comfort of your own living room. Availability to the church library catalogue is found on the church's website under News & Resources. One simple click and you have access to what's new, what's been popular, and the ability to browse the entire collection.

When you do find a book you want to borrow, the next time you're in the building just sign and date the check-out card, place the card in the holder provided, and you are ready to enjoy your selection.

Here are three newer titles:

Scrolling Ourselves to Death: Reclaiming Life in A Digital Age / edited by Brett McCracken and Ivan Mesa – 248 SCR. From the Gospel Coalition, this book examines the contemporary media ecosystem and its wide-ranging implications for Christian ministry, discipleship, and mission.

Blue Ribbon Trail Ride by Miralee Ferrell – Y FER. Number 4 in the series Horses and Friends, this story is about 13-year-old Kate Ferris who comes up with the perfect way to raise money for her autistic younger brother and others to attend summer camp—a horse scavenger hunt!

Tame Your Thoughts: Three Tools to Renew Your Mind and Transform Your Life by Max Lucado – 248 LUC. When was the last time you awakened to a swirl of out-of-control thoughts? Perhaps you were overwhelmed with the weight of worry, the fear of falling, or the grip of guilt. The way we think directly impacts our joy and peace. Three biblical and practical tools are presented. †



FROM THE EDITOR

Recently, I awoke to the melodious sound of my alarm on a Sunday morning. Almost immediately, excuses invaded my thoughts about why it might be okay to stay home (just this once). A slight headache, frigid temps outside, thoughts of what to prepare for lunch... just to name a few. Deep sigh. No, we need to go to church. Now that the snooze button had been employed a couple of times, Sunday school would begin in 50 minutes.

An hour later we were sitting together in class looking at a passage in Matthew, not one at first glance you'd expect to generate a great deal of *encouragement*; however, it was the conversation surrounding this particular set of verses that powerfully encouraged my own heart. At one point the teacher stated that we often underestimate the pursuit of the Holy Spirit. Also, one can never EXAGGERATE the love of God. What was I (inaudibly) hearing? The Holy Spirit whispered through others to say, "Don't give up praying for them. I hear you and I will answer." Thank you!

It is a beautiful thing when the corporate worship service continues to highlight the very message that was begun that previous hour. Has that ever happened to you? What joy to witness the commissioning of John Foster at its conclusion. Following are excerpts from three songs plus two verses from Hebrews. Let these words encourage you today.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul
(It Is Well with My Soul)

†††††

Oh, Your grace so free, Washes over me,
You have made me new, Now life begins with You,
It's your endless love, Pouring down on us,
You have made us new, Now life begins with You
(Death Was Arrested)

†††††

I'm not afraid
to show You my weakness,
My failures and flaws,
Lord You've seen them all,
And You still call me friend,
'Cause the God of the mountain,
Is the God of the valley,
And there's not a place,
Your mercy and grace won't find me again
You turn graves into gardens,
You turn bones into armies,
You turn seas into highways,
You're the only one who can
(Graves into Gardens)

†††††

"...and let us consider [thoughtfully] how we may encourage one another to love and to do good deeds, not forsaking our meeting together (as believers for worship and instruction) as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more (faithfully) as you see the day (of Christ's return]) approaching." Hebrews 10:24-25 (AMP)

The month of January finds us taking a closer look at the spiritual gift of encouragement. This is number four in a group of sermons that began last August with hospitality, followed by evangelism then prophecy. How are you doing? Have you made a conscious effort to encourage someone, lately? A display of thoughtful and creative ways to do this can still be found on the chapel wall.†

NOTES OF APPRECIATION

We truly appreciate the supportive words and generous gift to LifeWise South Adams. I am truly humbled by the giving spirit of the people in this community and how God uses His people to fulfill His will. Without obedience like this, LifeWise SA wouldn't be possible. Thank you for supporting this mission field in our community. Thank you for remembering us and lifting us up in prayer.

—Sincerely, The LifeWise SA Team

Thank you so much for your continued support of AC LifeWise. Praise God for the funds raised through your mission festival! It is exciting to see God working in our community. We appreciate the many ways you feed into our community and program.

—The AC LifeWise Team

Dear First Mennonite Church,

On behalf of Three Oaks Christian School, we want to thank you for your generous giving to us through Mission Festival. Your support allows us to fulfill our God-given vision to offer an excellent, Christ-centered educational option to families in our area. Each day we're privileged to educate and disciple students consistent with a Biblical worldview. We simply could not carry out this vitally important mission without the support of God's people. May you be richly blessed!

—Lydia Fox & Darren Kloepper

As a faith-based Christ-centered ministry, the Hope Clinic could not move forward in our mission without the support of individuals, churches, groups, and organizations in our community. To remain centered in Christ, we will not accept funds from government agencies or any other sources that would attach strings to how we deliver services, or what message we share with the clients that God sends to us. That's why your support is so vital! Without you we could not help all the women and men who come through our doors. We could not provide them free medical services, education, and material assistance. We could not

lift them up, give them hope, and share Christ's love with them. Without our gifts, how many lives might not be saved? How many families might fail from lack of compassion and support? Recently you blessed us with a special gift from your Mission Festival for both Margie's Place and the Hope Clinic. It is important that you know that every gift is greatly appreciated, and that every gift is put to work saving lives, supporting families, sharing Christ. Thank you so very much for standing with us. We could not do what we do without you.

—Jim Heckman, Executive Director

Dear Ones at First Mennonite Church,

Liberally paraphrasing Andrae Crouch's "A Tribute" lyrics—directing thoughts also to you, FMC members—we appreciate you!

♪ ♪ How can we say thanks, for all that you have done for us? Things so undeserved, yet you give to show your love to South Asia & us (& the LORD); with hundreds of words it's still hard to fully express our gratitude...so much of what we have to work with, we owe it to you; To God be the glory, To God, be the glory for the Things He has done through you—enabling Community Health Evangelism in South Asia to influence people & change lives). ♪ ♪

Indeed, throughout the year, and pointedly during Missions Festival, your love for the Lord is expressed from your hearts, pockets & from the very "depths of your shoes!"

—Thank you; Merci; Dhanyawad, Tuasakidila;
Kiitos, Gordon & Yarna Claassen

Your faithful giving makes a lasting impact month after month. Your monthly support helps ensure our mean are surrounded by care, dignity, and opportunity. Thank you for standing with us..

—Crossroads Community

Our family would like to thank the church for the many cards sent to Carol while she was at Swiss Village. We put every one of them on her bulletin board for her to see. Thank you also to the faithful visitors that went to see her. The prayers you prayed with her and the songs you sang were very special. You were definitely the bright spots in her day. We appreciate the sympathy cards and food sent to us after her passing. This church is so supportive, and we are thankful for you.

Bud Lerdal and family †



AMONG OUR PEOPLE

Jane Velasco is recovering from knee replacement surgery.

Jean Lehman had gall bladder surgery.

Jack Int'Groen had hip replacement surgery.

Diane VonGunten had hip surgery and is recovering in rehab at Swiss Village.

Mike Liechty was hospitalized with pneumonia.

Roger VonGunten had a heart stent procedure at Lutheran Hospital.

Lois Lehman was hospitalized at Lutheran following a stroke.



HOME GOING

Carol Luann Lerdal, 86, has served her last cup of coffee and piece of sugar cream pie. She passed away peacefully at Swiss Village on December 18, 2025.

Carol was born in Belmond, Iowa on May 8th, 1939, to Joe and Mourine (Lieuwen) Pals. She married her high school sweetheart, Roland "Bud" Lerdal, on July 26, 1958, in Belmond.

They moved to Berne, Indiana in 1979 for Bud's work at Central Soya in Decatur. Carol took a waitressing position at the Palmer House restaurant and loved meeting countless people there for 35 years. Carol enjoyed sitting in her lawn chair waving and visiting with passersby, growing flowers and spending time with her family. She attended the First Mennonite Church, had fun with her Red Hat friends and loved taking drives around town with Bud.

Carol is survived by her husband of 67 years, two daughters and one son: Laura (Brent) Troy of Carmel, Lisa (Mark) Smith of Berne and Tom (Doug Snow) of Muncie, and a sister-in-law, Marlys Pals. Carol enjoyed her five grandchildren: Brandon Troy, Cody (Rachel) Grimm, Jenna (Graham) Hart, Dylan Grimm and Lauren (Weston) Davis, and her two great-grandchildren, Theodore Davis and Beckett Hart. She was preceded in death by her parents, one sister, Joan Carroll, and two brothers, David and James Pals.

The family will be holding a private celebration of life to celebrate Carol at a later date. They would like to thank so many of you who visited, sent cards or kept her in your prayers. Your kindness shown was very much appreciated.

Update is the publication of the First Mennonite Church, Berne, Indiana. It is published once a month to keep our people informed about the news and events in the church.

Senior Pastor.....Jeff Linthicum

Editor.....Debby Neuenschwander

Among Our People.....Jim Schwartz



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
FEBRUARY 2026						
1 10AM: "Spiritual Gift: Discernment" - Pastor Jeff Linthicum 6:30PM: Book of Revelation - Dr. Kent Lehman Offering	2  Groundhog DAY	3 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	4 7PM: Genesis 42	5	6	7
8 10AM: "Satisfaction" - Pastor Jim Schwartz (Psalm 17:15 and Matthew 5:6) 6:30PM: Book of Revelation - Dr. Kent Lehman Offering: Lancaster Conference	9	10 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	11 7PM: Genesis 43	12	13	14
15 10AM: "Mercy" - Pastor Jeff Linthicum (Psalm 126:5-6 and Matthew 5:4) 6:30PM: Book of Revelation - Dr. Kent Lehman Offering: Global Disciples	16	17 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	18 7PM: Genesis 44	19	20	21
22 10AM: "See God" - Pastor Jeff Linthicum (Psalm 27:3-4 and Matthew 5:8) 6:30PM: Book of Revelation - Dr. Kent Lehman Offering	23	24 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	25 7PM: Genesis 45	26	27	28