First Mennonite Church
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update

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MIRACLE MAN WINS CORNHOLE AT 5TH ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF

One of the most special times for me about Fellowship Point with the church family is the opportunity to come together, just relax, and enjoy visiting with one another. Of course, that is likely somewhat revealing of my age! It truly was a perfect weather night for the 5th annual Chili Cook-Off, corn hole tournament and fishing contest, held the last Sunday evening in September. Twelve crockpots of chili were sampled and judged by anyone who wished to vote, so it was a little different from having designated judges as in the past. Ample time was given for multiple chili soups to be sampled, along with a large variety of desserts and other sides. Someone was heard asking how to vote for his favorite dessert. Maybe that will come next year.

This year's winners were Ava Hirschy in 3rd place with her Mexican Street Corn Chicken Chili, Grant Meyer's Brisket Chili captured 2nd, and voted "best chili" 2026 was Elise Neuenschwander's Meat Lovers Chili. She was willing to share her winning recipe, which is included in this issue.

The corn hole tournament results were as follows: In 3rd place were Aaron Hirschy and Kevin McGeath. Second place was awarded to Nate Hirschy and Jason McAlhaney, and the champions for 2026 were Corbin Hirschy and "Miracle Man," Kyle Yoder. Congratulations!

The fishing contest that evening resulted with bragging rights going to champion Colt Garringer and runner up Aaron Hirschy. There were no tales of "the one that got away". On this particular evening, we also had a special guest (G.C.) visiting all the way from Finland.

BLUE RIBBON "MEAT LOVERS" CHILI

INGREDIENTS

2 lbs. ground Beef, 2 lbs. ground Italian Sausage, 1 lb. bacon
3 red bell peppers, diced; 2 onions, diced
2-22 oz. cans maple baked beans, undrained; 2-15 oz. cans kidney beans, drained and rinsed; 2-15 oz. cans black beans, drained and rinsed
4-10 oz. cans diced tomatoes & green chilies, undrained; 1 15 oz. can tomato sauce; 1-12 oz. can tomato paste
4 cups chicken broth (or beef broth)
3 Tbsp. chili powder, 2 Tbsp. smoked paprika, 2 tsp. cumin
1 tsp. black pepper, 2 tsp. sea salt, 1/2 tsp. onion powder, 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1/2 cup BBQ sauce

DIRECTIONS

Cook bacon in a skillet; remove bacon from skillet, but leave the grease. Dice bacon into small pieces and put in a soup pot. Add diced bell peppers and onion to the skillet. Cook in bacon grease until softened. Place cooked vegetables in the soup pot. Add sausage and beef to the skillet. Cook until browned, then drain the grease. Add browned meat to the soup pot. Add all other ingredients to the soup pot. Simmer for at least 2 hours; stir often. Adjust spices to taste & enjoy! †

MIRACLE MAN WINS, PART 2

"What has been a pivotal moment for you in the past year of your life?" I recently asked Kyle Yoder this question. We had begun a conversation the night that he won the corn hole tournament with Corbin Hirschy. Kyle was quick to point out that Corbin had been champion for, like, three years in a row, so he felt lucky to have gotten him as a partner. No, it wasn't the first-place medal hanging around his neck that Kyle talked about in answer to my question.

You see, it was nearly one year ago, on October 30, 2025, around 11:30 a.m. that Kyle's life changed forever. He had been working on remodeling his house and was using a chop saw, cutting 2x4's for framing a wall, when he started to sweat and felt chest pain. He decided to take a break and have some lunch, but the chest pain continued to increase to the point he couldn't breathe. "It's like they say, it was like an elephant was standing on my chest."

Kyle's wife, Tammy, called 911 as he sat in a chair. "I could hear the sirens coming as she was talking to the dispatcher. Geneva police and fire responded and the EMS from Berne was there shortly after. They put me on a gurney in my living room and then into the EMS. I gave everyone a thumbs up as the paramedics shut the door. I can remember someone saying to me, 'put this under your tongue', and that's when the lights went out and I lost consciousness." The EMS was rushing Kyle to Fort Wayne, heading to Lutheran Hospital, when in Decatur, not far south from Casey's gas station on US 27, he coded. The paramedics called for help and an off-duty fireman happened to be traveling south on US 27. He heard the call, did a U-turn and met the ambulance. A second fireman had also responded. Both paramedics and a fireman jumped in the back with Kyle while the other fireman drove. He flew over railroad tracks as Kyle was getting chest compressions and ultimately being shocked four times to keep him alive. He was told the ambulance traveled 81 mph to Fort

Wayne as he was intubated and they started an IV. The awaiting medical team took over. Doctors found that his main artery was 100% blocked and were quick to put in a stent. After the procedure Kyle coded a second time and was shocked four more times. Although he'd been revived, he was holding on only by a thread. "My heart was so weak it could barely function, so the doctors put an Impella device inside my heart to help pump blood so my heart could rest and heal." For the next 24 hours a nurse remained by Kyle's side, constantly controlling the speed and flow of the pump so his heart could rest. Friday night the doctors removed the pump and his heart was able to function enough to keep him alive.

Kyle described his experience the next morning. "Saturday morning, I heard people talking and was very agitated. I could hear my 90-year-old mother, Barb, and Uncle Steve talking. I opened my eyes, confused, and didn't see anyone except the red digits 11:31 on a wall clock. My hands were tied and a tube was down my throat. I could not talk so I took my fingers and rubbed my wedding ring indicating 'Where is my wife?! Help! What is going on?!' The ICU nurse explained I was waking up after surgery from a massive heart attack and 'we will be removing the breathing tube soon'. She went and got my wife Tammy. Tammy came in shortly and she grabbed my hand. My eyes teared of joy to see her, along with my children at my side. By Sunday evening I was sitting up and by Tuesday I was standing and taking steps. Wednesday I was walking the hallways and discharged on Thursday."

The most pivotal moment for Kyle was him wrestling with the question "why?" Why was he alive? Why did God save him? "Realizing that God is not done with me was a huge wake up call for me. Feeling His love and having family support was huge. This made me really look how I live and how important it is to keep God first in your life."

How have you changed in the past year? "Keeping God first daily, and my spiritual relationship with my wife has definitely changed. We are closer to God than we have ever been. Lots more prayer time together, reading the Bible, and getting family involved in church."

What has been especially challenging or difficult on this journey? "After waking up [from] my heart attack, it was tremendously hard for me to close my eyes and fall asleep. I was so scared that I wouldn't wake up. This went on for weeks. While I was in ICU, I would say to myself, 'look at all the machines hooked up to you, Kyle, you're in a safe place. If something goes wrong the nurse stationed outside the door would be in the room in a second.' [Once home] I turned to my faith and prayed, 'Lord comfort me, give me peace and let me rest knowing you've got this in the palm of your hands.' Keeping my faith and trusting in God was how I made it through challenging days."

Do you have a favorite Bible verse that has encouraged you? "Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." Matthew 6:34 NIV

When asked how Kyle saw God intervene in his life, he was quick to mention that at the time of the heart attack, although he was in excruciating pain, he was not scared or in fear of dying, knowing he has eternal life. God provided the people to save his life: The paramedics and first responders, the off-duty firemen in Decatur, and the doctors available at Lutheran (the heart pump specialist just so happened to be in the hospital). God also made it possible for Kyle's children to fly home from three different states to be by his side.

Kyle is so thankful for the church family praying for him! His quick recovery with "no heart damage" is once again evidence of God's intervention. "It's a miracle that I'm alive! Praise God for saving me! I'm so blessed to be alive. It is truly a miracle that God put his hands on me and said, 'I got you, Kyle, you're a child of mine. I'm not done with you.'" †

ET CETERA ECKE BLESSES BIG

I recently had the honor and privilege to sit down a few minutes with Kim Alberson and Jaci O'Dell to talk about their work at the "Ecke". It has been two years already since they undertook the managerial role together. November 1 is the anniversary when Joanna Gerber completely stepped away, getting married and moving to Kansas. Sisters, who for quite some time had discussed a dream of theirs to one day run their own business, perhaps selling scarves or shaved ice, felt compelled to jump into this venture when the position opened up.

They have never looked back. With lots of support from their parents and aunt, as well as their husbands, not to mention the nearly 50 volunteers who do their part to keep the shop neat, tidy, and welcoming, Kim & Jaci are having fun doing the very thing they had contemplated for some time. They count it a joy to serve the local public, but also find great satisfaction in watching God multiply the efforts of everyone involved, and have been able to support some very important projects making a huge difference around the world.

Jim Eicher provides direction with his numerous connections for specific needs that arise through Mennonite Central Committee. Last year, $117,000 was given to a project in Uganda for fresh water. This year the dividends from the expansive donations and sales have been given to bless an orphanage in South Sudan that serves 100 students in preschool, elementary, and upper jr. high classes. Also, a large donation was made to help displaced people from the earthquake in Colombia and conflicts from war there. Partnership with a Mennonite Brethren Church is providing people with counseling and day-to-day living needs, helping them get back on their feet. Each of these projects received $30,000 and there will be one more gift given before the year's end.

March of 1978 was the opening of Et Cetera Ecke. The Women in Mission of First Mennonite Church pioneered and sponsored the store, and the name was chosen to convey the idea of a variety of merchandise, plus the Swiss word "Ecke" which means "corner." Over the years the thrift side of the business has expanded. However, delicious Fair Trade coffee and chocolate are still available, enjoyed by many.

There are many ways that you can be involved with this vital ministry of our church. Stop in and do some shopping sometime. Good used clothing and household items can be donated anytime. It was noted with a chuckle that items featuring cats seem to sell very well. Perhaps you are not aware that they also take partially-used items, such as cosmetics, fingernail polish, perfume, lotion, and cleaning products. These do sell. Used gift bags also sell well. Another helpful way to support them is supplying plastic bags, bubble wrap or packing paper, as well as jewelry sacks/boxes.

Volunteering a few hours a month is another way to support this ministry. Those who help at Et Cetera Ecke often describe it as their "happy place" or "happy time." Greeting customers and making them feel welcome makes a lasting impact. There are also opportunities to engage in meaningful and uplifting conversation with people. Kim & Jaci expressed their desire for the church to pray the "Ecke" would be a shining light in the community. Pray for them and all the volunteers to be kind, compassionate, and ready to share hope with those who need it. †

RELIEF SALE RESULTS

The Michiana Relief Sale organizers were thrilled to report (via Facebook) that roughly $460,000 was raised this year at the Elhart County 4-H Fairgrounds in Goshen, Indiana. They thank everyone who came out and supported the cause, which goes a long way toward MCC's mission of responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice around the world. Our church sent 254 items for the crafts sale and 39 baked items. We also delivered 141 baked items from Emmaus Road Mennonite Fellowship (they used our kitchen to bake). The people in the crafts and baked goods areas were delighted when we arrived. A big thanks is extended to everyone who contributed. Next year's sale is set for September 24-25, 2027. †

NOTES OF APPRECIATION

Thank you for your ongoing support of AC LifeWise. I really enjoyed sharing what God is doing here with one of your Sunday school classes. Thank you again for having me! Our classrooms are once again filled, Praise God. We continue to see hearts being changed and impacts being made. Thank you for partnering with us to reach the next generation for Christ!

For His Glory,
Jessi Henning, Program Director

On behalf of the entire team and the students of LifeWise SA, thank you so much for your recent donation. Your partnership is a blessing to our community and directly impacts the local students participating in our program. We are serving 550+ students, K-7, and our numbers are growing weekly. They are diving into the Word every class! We again thank you for your support.

In Christ,
The LifeWise SA Team

The Et Cetera Ecke is happy to report that we've been having some great months here at this little shop on the corner of Main & Fulton Street. We owe that to the wonderful donations and our fantastic volunteers. We could not manage the store without them! These ladies won't want the recognition, but we owe our mom, Gretta Lehman, and our aunt, Linda Summersett, a huge thank you as they come nearly every afternoon that we are working to give us a hand. Yes, that is how many wonderful donations we get! We are overwhelmed with gratitude. Due to the expansive donations, we have been able to make wonderful dividends. It's so exciting! This store has been able to help aid in two new projects this fall. We are able to give $30,000 to MCC for an orphanage in South Sudan and $30,000 to Colombia to help those displaced by the earthquake and ongoing conflict from the war with the cartel. May the work of all of our hands, together, bless those around the world who are facing incredibly hard times. May God also bring these people more than just aid, but a presence of who he is and his great love for them.

With love and appreciation,
Et Cetera Ecke managers Kim Alberson & Jaci O'Dell †

AMONG OUR PEOPLE

Mark Sprunger was hospitalized due to illness.

Cindy Habegger is recovering after having had breast cancer surgery.

Annie Humphrey was hospitalized due to illness and is in rehab.

Helen Fox is recovering after a recent hospitalization due to illness.

Renee Liechty had surgery due to a cancer diagnosis. †

JUNIOR QUIZZING
HIDING GOD'S WORD IN YOUR HEART

All 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th graders are invited to join Junior Quizzing. Practices have begun this month and the season extends to the end of February. This year's quizzing will be over Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7. This is an exciting opportunity to learn and study God's Word while also having fun with your friends. The program is led by Chris and Jenny Dubach. If you have any questions, or would still like to join the fun, please contact Jenny at (260) 849-2342. †

UPCOMING MDS TRIP

A trip is being planned for a group to go to Asheville, North Carolina, the week of **December 13-19** to work with Mennonite Disaster Service in rebuilding after the devastation of Hurricane Helene, which took place in September 2024. If interested, please contact Bill Beachey at (260) 849-0426. †

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.

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NOVEMBER 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 MISSION FESTIVAL 10AM: Betsy B. 12NOON: MCC Relief Buckets Service Project and Lunch 6:30PM: Betsy B. Offering for Mission Festival 	**2**	**3** 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour 7PM: Choral Society Rehearsal	**4** 5:45PM: Ethnic Potluck Meal 7PM: Jared C.	**5** 9:30AM: Swiss Village - First Mennonite Misfits	**6**	**7**
8 MISSION FESTIVAL 10AM: Rene D. 6:30PM: Rene D. Offering for Mission Festival	**9**	**10** 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour 7PM: Choral Society Rehearsal	**11** 7PM: Exodus 4	**12**	**13**	**14**
15 10AM: "Eli" (1 Samuel 2:27-29) - Pastor Jeff Linthicum 6:30PM: Conner Hyman Offering	**16**	**17** 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour 7PM: Choral Society Rehearsal	**18** 7PM: Exodus 5	**19**	**20**	**21**
22 10AM: "Jonah" (Jonah 1:1-3) - Pastor Jeff Linthicum 6PM: SAMA Community Thanksgiving Service at West Missionary Church Offering	**23**	**24** 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour 7PM: Choral Society Rehearsal	**25** NO EVENING ACTIVITIES	**26** 	**27** CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	**28**
29 10AM: Pastor Jim Schwartz 4PM: Worship Service at Envive Offering 	**30** 7PM: Ministries Council					