

September 2026, Volume 49, Number 10

YOUTH PASTOR POSITION FILLED

Whenever a new staff member joins the ranks, it's been customary to provide him or her with a few questions that will allow us to get to know the person a bit. Since Conner grew up among us it's likely his journey to this position is somewhat familiar to many already. He recently shared a little about his background:

"I grew up here in Berne, Indiana, and in First Mennonite Church, where I was raised by two fantastic parents. My dad is the Director of Worship and my mom works in the children's ministry here, so I grew up spending a lot of time in the church.

For the last two-and-a-half years I have been working with a ministry called VidaNet located in Heredia, Costa Rica. I started off by doing work projects around the ministry's base in a program called VidaMini for three months. Then I decided to go back to Costa Rica and do VidaNet's discipleship training school called Vida220, based upon the verse Galatians 2:20. It was there that I grew exponentially in my faith, learned a lot about missions, leadership, and culture, and ultimately established a deep desire to serve God and take up my cross daily."

Conner went on to share about his family and why he decided to go into Christian service:

"I grew up in a family of five. My dad, Brent, as I already mentioned, is the Director of Worship here at FMC. Chris, my mom, also works here in Children's Ministries. My older brother's name is Camden, and he is working in Worship Ministry in a Mennonite church in Pennsylvania. My younger brother's name is Cole, and he is a student at South Adams, planning on going into music as well. God has put a desire into my heart to disciple and see other young people get excited about being a Christ follower. And after over two years serving in missions, I feel that I have gained a lot of knowledge and experience that I'm excited to share with the youth of First Mennonite."

Following are some of Conner's favorites, as well as some of the ways he enjoys spending his free time. If we were all sitting together in a group, I'd have you write down your guesses and then reveal his answers, but since that would be impossible, I'll just list them.

First job:

- Cutting grass at Wilson Brother's Lawn and Landscape, LLC

Prized possession:

- My Yamaha YZF-R3 motorcycle

update

Favorites:

- Song: Who Else – Gateway Worship
- Food: Tortellini Alfredo
- Movie: Anything Marvel
- Book of the Bible: Matthew or John
- Verse: Galatians 2:20
- Place to visit: Grandma's house/the lake

Free Time Activities:

- Playing my guitar, or enjoying playing or listening to music in some way
- Riding my motorcycle
- Wakeboarding
- Hanging out with friends or family
- Playing or watching tennis
- Drinking coffee

Conner was asked what he would someday like for an epitaph, and his response was: "Conner, a servant, lover, and follower of Jesus Christ, with a call to disciple and see others love and desire Him more."

How can we be praying for Conner? He said he would definitely appreciate prayer as he is stepping into this ministry role. "Pray that God would give me fresh ideas, and that I would be His hands and feet as I lead the youth of FMC."

Conner is super excited to be serving the youth of First Mennonite, and he can't wait to see what God is going to do this year through the young people of the church. He encourages you to feel free to message or call him any time!

JUNIOR QUIZZING:

HIDING GOD'S WORD IN YOUR HEART

All third, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders are invited to join Junior Quizzing. Practices begin in October 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. Please sign up in the patio. If you have any questions, 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.

FROM THE EDITOR

It's quite the scene on a Saturday morning in September at various schools dotted all over the surrounding area. Cross-country meets can easily bring together a few hundred students along with their parents, siblings, grandparents, and other spectators, not to mention the coaches. The air is sometimes heavy with the heat and humidity that seems to be left over from July. Other times it can be brisk—crisp as freshly-picked apples filling up bushel baskets everywhere this time of year.

Looking around as we travail the way from our parked car to the area of the starting line, I'm impressed by the number of people who've gathered for this event. All ages, all shapes and sizes, a variety of skin tones and hair colors uniting with a common destination in mind—the finish line. Eventually, all of us who've gathered will be there, either running/stumbling across it, or cheering from the side. Anticipation for the “pop” of the starting pistol grows as the runners all take their place, concentrating and deciding (even now) how they will run their race today. I especially have my eye trained on one particular girl, my granddaughter.

Having myself developed a strong *aversion* to running in the seventh grade, I must confess I always struggled to complete that dreaded “mile run for fitness” in P.E. class. I could never understand the exhilaration of a pounding heart, labored breathing, and sweat pouring out of my body, dripping into my eyes. You see, I never learned how to properly train, and no one was really pushing me to try, either. Flash forward to the present. I have gained great admiration for those who put forth the effort, train in discipline, and run such races as these. Still, I remain a spectator.

Typically, we humans do not subconsciously move in the direction of great difficulty and pain. We much prefer the easy way—the path of least resistance, as it were. Given the choice without any outside influence or perspective, we all tend towards what is easiest. Seasons of greater effort may come, but eventually we naturally go back to what is comfortable and requires less exertion. Unless, that is, we choose to do the hard thing again, and again, and again... continuing on the narrow path in front of us.

Spiritually speaking, scripture puts it this way: “... do not let me stray from your commands.” Psalm 119:10; “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way...” Isaiah 53:6; “We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.” Hebrews 2:1; “For ‘you were like sheep going astray’...” 1 Peter 2:52; and finally, “My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth...” James 5:19. *I am prone to leave the God I love!* Let that sink in for a moment. Do you believe it? Have you lived it?

BANG! Off they go! A mass of athletes moving along that first open stretch of grass running almost in sync with one another. Visible for a short time before they disappear around a bend, onto a wooded trail somewhere. It now becomes the job of those watching the race to find these runners and encourage them along the way. Parents and coaches can be seen sprinting from place to place in order

to give encouragement, feedback, and incentive to the runners who hope to improve upon their personal records.

My favorite spot to cheer is the final 100 yards before the finish line. It is such a beautiful picture of how I imagine those in Heaven, who've gone before, are cheering for us who are following Christ on life's journey and come upon difficult times.

“You can do it!”

“Come on, don't quit!”

“Almost there!”

“You've got this!”

“Good job, you're doing great!”

The first runners to finish may not always appear that winded or tired. Time passes and the middle of the pack goes by. Some are struggling and visibly winded and tired. Then it becomes noticeable that the crowd gathered is growing as these runners who've completed the race are now becoming part of the applause. Then the stragglers pass by until finally, here comes the last two or three. It may seem as if they will never make it, but as voices cheer and the end is in sight they usually find within themselves enough energy to cross that finish line, one by one.

Paul exclaims, “Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” 1 Timothy 6:12

Peter shouts, “But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do...” 1 Peter 1:15

James adds, “Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.” James 3:18

Keep running. Choose hard, again and again. Don't quit.

PLACES TO BE IN SEPTEMBER

Spiritual Gift of Wisdom: Join the Disciple Commission during the Sunday school hour on **Sunday, Sept. 20, or Sunday, Sept. 27**, in Room 15 to share what you've experienced and seen about this gift. You can attend either session or both! Bring your questions as well.

Relief Sale Baking Supplies: Supplies are available on the baked goods table for the Michiana Relief Sale, **Sept. 25-26**. Items will need to be placed on tables set up in the hallway by **9:00 a.m. Friday, Sept. 25**.

Night of Worship at Fellowship Point: Join us for worship around the campfire at 6:30 p.m. on **Sunday, Sept. 20**, out at Fellowship Point.

The Hope Clinic Fundraising Banquets: Registrations are open for The Hope Clinic fundraising banquets. The Berne banquet date is **Thursday, Sept. 24**, here at First Mennonite Church.

Chili Night at Fellowship Point: Join us at 5:00 p.m. on **Sunday, Sept. 27**, out at Fellowship Point. for our 5th annual Chili Cook-Off. Bring your chili to share or a dessert/snack. We'll have corn hole and a fishing tournament, too!

NOTES OF APPRECIATION

The Family of Leona Neuenschwander would like to Thank the Kitchen committee for the wonderful luncheon, Ted Beitler for leading us in Mom's favorite hymns, Marie Nussbaum for the reading of the Obituary, Scott Lehman for the beautiful music and Pastor Jim Schwartz for leading us through a difficult time. Her garden bloomed just as her kindness touched everyone who knew her.

Judy, Patti, Cheryl and Family

First Mennonite Family,

Thank you so much for your cards, thoughts, and prayers! I also want to thank Pastor Jim & Mary Carol for their visit and prayers.

Love you,
Gyneth & Mike Sutton

Dear First Mennonite Church Family,

Please accept our sincere apologies for the delay in sending this note. While this message is long overdue, our gratitude for your generous support has been present from the moment your gift was received. On behalf of everyone at Agape Respite Care, Inc., thank you for our generous donation of \$1,250.00 in January. Your kindness helps us continue providing respite and support services to individuals with disabilities and the families who care for them. Because of caring supporters like you, we are able to continue our mission and serve those who depend on our program. Your generosity is making a meaningful difference, and we are truly grateful that you have chosen to partner with us. Thank you for believing in our mission and investing in the people we serve.

With heartfelt appreciation,
Sherri Kizer, Executive Director, Agape Respite Care, Inc.

AMONG OUR PEOPLE

Sue (Phil) Wulliman was hospitalized due to a blood clot.

Darrel Williamson was hospitalized because of a kidney stone.

Bill Beachey is serving with MDS in Hawaii from Sept. 9-Oct. 10.

HOMEGOING

Leona Adeline Neuenschwander, 99, of Berne passed away Wednesday morning, August 19, 2026, at Swiss Village surrounded by her family. She was born on July 31, 1927, in Adams County to the late Amos and Della (Nussbaum) Liechty. Leona was united in marriage to Philip D. Neuenschwander on September 22, 1946, and he preceded her in death on September 6, 2015. They shared 68 years together before his passing. She joined the First Mennonite Church in Berne by baptism in May of 1941. Leona faithfully served her family as a homemaker and worked with her husband in his business, Phil's Auction Co. for over 50 years. Leona was a beloved mom, grandmother, great-grandmother, and had just become a great-great-grandmother on August 6, 2026. She loved her family and told everyone about her grandkids, great-grandkids, and great-great-grandson and prayed for them every day. Leona was an avid gardener. She enjoyed taking care of her beautiful garden and flowers on their farm for 65 years. Survivors include her daughter, Judy (Marvin) Bransteter of Fort Wayne; daughter, Patti (Ron) Hoelle of Fort Wayne; daughter, Cheryl (Mike) Roop of Van

Wert, Ohio; sister-in-law, Beverly Liechty of Berne; brother-in-law, Howard (Wanda) Neuenschwander of Berne; brother-in-law, Paul (Judy) Neuenschwander of Berne; brother-in-law, Roger Beer of Decatur; sister-in-law, Dorothy Neuenschwander of Berne; eight grandchildren, Angela (Mike) Phillips, Scott (Lisa) Rosener, Lori (Matt) Young, Jason (Sarah) Bransteter, Ben Bransteter, Michelle (Gabe) Daniels, Kyle (Julie) Seekings, and Isaac (Danielle) Roop; 20 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandson; and many step-grand, great, and great-great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her son, Thomas Lynn Neuenschwander; siblings, Justine Liechty, Vera Gerber, Irena Sprunger, Marcella Scholl, Esther Neuenschwander, Grover Liechty, Irvin Liechty, Grace Herman, Ernest Liechty, Ernestine Liechty, and Amos Liechty, Jr.

CONVICTION MEETS OBEDIENCE

Two Wednesday nights remain, **Sept. 23 & 30**, to hear Dr. Ben Sprunger present his interactive series about the Anabaptist movement. The following is a written account of the movement's humble, yet revolutionary beginning: On the evening of January 21, 1525, Conrad Grebel, Georg Blaurock (an ex-priest from Chur) and a number of others had found their way through the back streets to the house where Felix Manz lived. Then, according to the *Aelteste Chronik* this took place:

And it came to pass that they were together until fear rose up within them and came upon the gathering. They were constrained in their hearts. Then they got down on their knees before the highest God in heaven. They cried to him because he knew their hearts. They prayed that he would help them to do his will and show his mercy to them, because flesh and blood or human instigation had not brought them to this place. They well knew that their patience would be tried and that they would have to suffer for this. After the prayer, Georg of the house of Jakob got up. He had asked God to show him his will. Now he asked Conrad Grebel to baptize him with the correct Christian baptism upon his faith and testimony. When he knelt down with this desire, Conrad baptized him because at that time no servant had been ordained to handle such a work. After this the others asked Georg to baptize them, which he did upon their request. In this way they gave themselves together to the name of the Lord in high fear of God. They commended one another to the service of the Gospel. They began to teach and hold the faith, to separate themselves from the world, and to break themselves off from evil works.

The first Anabaptists were not leaving the old corrupt church of the Dark Ages. They were leaving the new "Biblical" and "evangelical" church of Huldrych Zwingli in Switzerland. But in following Jesus, they got to where it made no difference. They could walk only with a church that followed Jesus, and wherever it did not, they felt "constrained in their hearts" to disobey it.

The Secret of the Strength: What would the Anabaptists tell this generation? by Peter Hoover, pp. 53-55

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

Address Service Requested

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
OCTOBER 2026 				1	2	3
4 10AM: Conner Hyman Communion Sunday 7:00PM: Revelation 20 - Dr. Kent Lehman Offering	5	6 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	7 7PM: Revelation 20-21 Dr. Kent Lehman	8	9	10
11 10AM: "Spiritual Gift: Healing" - Pastor Jeff Linthicum 7:00PM: Revelation 21-22 - Dr. Kent Lehman Offering	12	13 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	7 7PM: Revelation 22 Dr. Kent Lehman	15	16	17
18 10AM: "Feast of Tabernacles" - Pastor Jeff Linthicum (Lev. 23:33-34; John 1:14; Rev. 21:3-4) 7:00PM: Revelation wrap-up - Pastor Jim Schwartz Offering for Global Disciples	19 F A L L	20 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	21 No Evening Service (Fall Break)	22 W E E K	23	24
25 10AM: Pastor Jeff Linthicum NO EVENING SERVICE (Fall Break) Offering	26	27 6:30PM: Sunshine Hour	28 7PM: Exodus 3 "Moses: The Burning Bush" Pastor Jim Schwartz	29	30	31