



Wildwood  
**Mennonite  
Church**

## "The Micah Mission"

Wildwood Mennonite Church // July 25, 2021  
Worship Leader: Eileen K // Music Leader: Linda G  
Sermon: Dave Feick, The Micah Mission

### **Welcome to Wildwood!**

Good Morning and welcome to Wildwood! Wherever you are this morning I trust that you will feel God's presence during this service. This morning our sermon will be offered by Dave Feick, Executive Director of The Micah Mission – and if you don't know what that is, I expect he will fill you in when he speaks.

I want to thank Dave for sharing about his work, which is also our work - and also thank Linda Gossen for choosing the music, Breanne Fast for the Children's story, Brenda McDonald for the Offering Prayer - and Les Klassen Hamm for being our Zoom host this morning!

We also acknowledge with gratitude that we live and are gathered in in traditional First Nations lands and the homeland of the Metis, known as Treaty 6 Territory. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Metis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another as neighbours.

Please prepare for worship with me by listening to the Music for Mediation, and then join me for the call to worship.

**Music for Meditation // [Breathe on Me, Breath of God](#) // Voices Together #737**

### **Call to Worship // Voices Together #30 - Worship Leaders Edition**

Leader: Open our ears

**People: to hear your word.**

Leader: Open our eyes

**People: to see your presence.**

Leader: Open our arms

**People: to the embrace of community.**

Leader: Open our minds

**People: to the beauty of truth.**

Leader: Open our hearts

**People: to the joy of new life.**



## Peace Candle

On Thursday of this past week, the federal government hosted a summit on Islamophobia following a series of violent, targeted attacks that killed or injured Muslim Canadians. Locally, today marks one month since a Muslim man was attacked here in Saskatoon while out for an early morning walk. I find these attacks – and Islamophobia, Antisemitism, and racism against our indigenous, Black, and Asian neighbours to be most disturbing. I am grateful that our Church Council has actively shown support for the Islamic community by writing letters of support to local leaders of that community.

So if you have a candle ready, please join me in lighting a candle for peace as we pray.

### Prayer:

Inclusive God, you have created the world with incredible diversity, and in nature we marvel at the richness of that diversity. Yet somehow, we have failed to recognize that richness in humanity, we have been unable to celebrate that diversity, and instead feel threatened, and eager to claim superiority.

As governments convene to consider how to stop these attacks and implement policies that protect the Muslim communities, we pray that they will follow up this week's summit with concrete action; that they will resolve to implement new policies and strategies that will build a country where everyone is welcome, safe, and respected; where we stand together and look out for each other.

And God, we recognize that each of us has a responsibility to speak out against hate; against racism – whether that be on social media, in our schools, or in the grocery store. Fill us with awareness and love for all your created beings. Grant humility and understanding. Open our minds and convict us of the importance of standing up for those who are of descent and religious beliefs different from our own. Born of the conviction that all are created in your image, grant us courage to build relationships and do what is right. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

## Sharing Time

Not hearing from one another in person through the Sharing Time is a significant loss for many of us. Sharing items can be emailed to the church office or the pastors to be shared with the congregation. If you're able, join us for our Sunday Morning Zoom gatherings, or check your email for the sharing items from last Sunday. Or maybe now would be a good time to pause your reading to call someone from church or elsewhere that you haven't heard from this week.

## Congregational Prayer // Eileen Klaassen

All-knowing God,  
We come before you as those who know so little,  
whose understanding is so limited.  
We come before you as people with many questions,  
about why things are the way they are,  
why this world is so imperfect,  
why WE are so imperfect -  
and so we turn to you,  
pleading that you will heal this world and heal our hearts.

We pray for those in Germany and Belgium and China  
who are dealing with the aftermath of severe flooding.  
We pray for those in Haiti, South Africa,  
and so many other countries experiencing civil unrest.  
We pray for those in Oregon, Ontario, B.C., and our own province of Saskatchewan  
who are suffering because of fire and smoke.  
especially those being forced from their homes.  
We continue to remember those in India and Brazil,  
those all around the world experiencing fear  
and devastating losses because of Covid-19.  
And we remember those who suffer because of racism and lack of understanding.

At the same time, O God,  
we are aware that the line between good and evil  
also runs through the center of our own hearts.  
Help us to recognize our own weakness,  
help us in our resolve to do better  
whether in relation to our earth and how we care for it  
or in relation to those who inhabit this earth with us,  
neighbours near and far.

This morning we pray for the leaders of the world,  
for the governments of our country and our province.  
We pray for the leaders of our city,  
particularly as they move forward working with local Indigenous partners  
and partners throughout the community.  
We pray for religious leaders of the world,  
and especially for Mennonite leaders around the world,  
for Mennonite Church US & Canada, and for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.  
Grant them wisdom and much love as they lead your people.



We pray for those who are ill, for those in hospital,  
and in Long Term Care and Personal Care Homes,  
and we pray for the families and friends who support them.

We pray especially for those who make their living off the land,  
whose livelihoods are dependent on the weather.  
We pray for rain.

We pray for our seniors, our youth, and all those in between,  
grateful for the energy, purpose, and wisdom that each phase of life offers.

We are grateful for the hope that vaccinations have brought:  
hope for being out and about more safely,  
hope for families reuniting, for travel,  
and for the possibility of gathering in person to worship and fellowship together!

Generous God,  
despite all the longings of our heart for a better world,  
help us to be grateful for we truly have so much!  
Help us to remember and be mindful of the many things in which we take such  
pleasure,  
the many things we take for granted,  
the many freedoms we enjoy!  
Help us to live with joyful and generous hearts –  
Sharing your gifts and sharing your love!  
Amen.

**Song // [The Love of God](#) // Voices Together #162**

**Children's Story // [Click here for video storytime with Breanne F: Part 1 Part 2](#)**

This week's story is "The Boy Who Grew Flowers" by Jen Wojtowicz.

**Scripture // [The Inclusive Bible Translation](#)**

**Acts 13:22**

*After forty years, God deposed [Saul] and made David their ruler, with these approving words: "I have selected David ben-Jesse, a person after my own heart, who will carry out my whole purpose."*



### **Ephesians 3:14 – 21**

*That is why I kneel before abba God, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. And I pray that God, out of the riches of divine glory, will strengthen you inwardly with power through the working of the spirit.*

*May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, so that you, being rooted and grounded in love, will be able to grasp fully the breadth, length, height and depth of Christ's love and, with all God's holy ones, experience this love that surpasses all understanding, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

*To God – whose power now at work in us can do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine – to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations, world without end! Amen.*

### **Sermon // A Restorative Response to Life // Dave Feick, The Micah Mission**

***(The sermon will be preached live via Zoom so there is no video available.)***

In the Veggie Tales movie, King George and the Ducky, Larryboy, the cucumber plays King George, a rather self absorbed and somewhat ineffective king who loved to take baths with his rubber ducky. Yet, on one occasion, he noticed Thomas across the way taking a bath with his own rubber ducky. Though King George had a cupboard full of rubber duckies he wanted Thomas' ducky as well. So, he has Thomas sent off to the pie war to get rid of him and then helps himself to the ducky. But Thomas returns from the pie war as a traumatized war hero and King George is uncertain what to do. Then Melvin, that slightly odd wise man shows up to tell him something. King George gets the message, sees the error of his ways, asks for forgiveness, and helps Thomas with his physical and mental health and restores his ducky to him. The lessons learned in the story are to not be selfish, to be kind to others, to apologize and ask for forgiveness.

The story is rather loosely based on a story in the Bible where King David has all the riches he needs, has all the wives he needs, and more. Yet, from the roof of his castle, he spies a beautiful woman, has her brought to his room where he seduces her. As a result, she becomes pregnant, and David gets her husband to come home from the war, in hopes that he will spend the night with his wife and it will never become evident that David is the father of the child. But Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, knows the rules of purity when it comes to fighting in battle. He also does not feel it is right or fair to spend the night with his wife when his colleagues are out on the battlefield. In other words, he has higher morals than King David in this case. So, David sends him back to the war, with written instructions for the general to ensure that Uriah is at the front lines of the battle where he is subsequently killed. David then marries Bathsheba, hoping to cover up the affair.

Like King George in the video, King David also receives a visit, from the prophet Nathan, who confronts David with his sins which David confesses. And yet he is punished with the loss of the son who is born to Bathsheba.





In a way, it may appear that he got off easy. It was the son who suffered and died, yet anyone who has lost a child or a loved one knows that is not an easy thing to endure. David suffers greatly in that loss, but everything else pretty much returns to normal for him and years later, another son born to David and Bathsheba becomes the next King of Israel.

This story is really somewhat problematic in our time and probably has been since it was first told. But it is just one of many happenings in the Bible that could give credence to how women have been treated throughout history as well as the kinds of things kings have gotten away with throughout history. Acting above the law.

But it could be slightly less problematic if we look at it as a story of Restorative Justice and even a foretaste or an example of what our Saviour, Jesus Christ has done for us. It struck me as I thought about the story, that the son takes on the punishment for the sins of the father just like Jesus, also known as the son of David, died not only for the sins of David, but certainly for all of us. Through his death and resurrection, we receive forgiveness. In this story, however, there is no resurrection, but there is forgiveness.

This story, too, had it occurred today might have turned out differently. How public this incident actually was, we don't really know. Perhaps David, Bathsheba, David's army general and Nathan the prophet were the only ones who knew all the details. But it's likely there were others on the inside who knew – and it's recorded in our scriptures so it obviously was known somewhat more broadly.

But David's actions amount first or all, to adultery – and in the way that it happened, had it happened in the 21st century, Bathsheba might have eventually gone to the media and been another member of the #metoo movement, but instead she agreed to marry David in order to help coverup the indiscretion. But it was not only adultery that is covered up, there is a murder as well. Though his coverup made it look like Uriah's death was just a result of war, God knew, Nathan the prophet knew and the General knew what really happened here. David had committed crimes that were worthy of death according to the Israelite law and at least one that would be punishable by any law. But who was it that once said, "all's fair in love and war"? So David, as far as the nation is concerned, gets away with his crimes. But he also finds forgiveness, he does not lose his place in society, he is allowed to continue to rule. Maybe it's just being in a position that could be seen to be above the law, or maybe it is part of God's great plan of redemption. David continues to rule, Bathsheba becomes the next queen mother when her son Solomon becomes king. Maybe the point of the story is that there is no crime or offense that is beyond the scope of God's forgiveness and redemption.

In Acts 13, the apostle Paul is giving a sermon in Antioch to introduce people there to the gospel message. And because many of the people to whom he is speaking are Jews, he begins by reciting Jewish history. And in verse 22, he comes to the point in history where David is anointed the next king of Israel when God testified concerning David, "I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to."

Certainly, at the time of his anointing, David was seen to have a strong relationship with God. As a shepherd, out in the fields, taking care of the sheep, he had plenty of time to ponder God and his own relationship with God, to see God in the nature around him, and to write songs and poetry expressing his delight in that relationship with God. And over his life, he continued to write songs reflecting his own moods in the midst of the ups and downs of his life.



So, for most of my life, I've looked at David as something of a role model – after all, we do share the same name so in some ways he provided an example to which to aspire. But recently, during my daily Bible readings, I've been reading through the two books of Samuel and paid a little closer attention to just what sort of person he really was.

He was anointed King, had several wives, numerous children which led to interesting dynamics between those who were full siblings and half siblings.

And in those family dynamics it seems that David is not the greatest of fathers. One of his sons, Amnon, rapes his half sister Tamar and David does nothing about it. Then another son, Absalom decides that since his father did nothing about it then it is up to him and he murders Amnon.

In turn, Absalom escapes any sort of punishment and in time, tries to wrest the throne from his father and dies in battle.

Whatever all this says about King David, one thing it does say is that as human beings, we all fall short from time to time. Even if God sees us as someone after God's own heart, there is always a chance that we will not fully live up to God's desires and expectations for us, but it is then that we can fully trust in the saving grace of God through Jesus Christ.

What's interesting to me about King David and his family's shortcomings, indiscretions, or lets just call them what they are - crimes - is that the kinds of things described in these stories are the very things that we encounter in our work at the Micah Mission.

I certainly hope that you have heard of us and know a bit about us. Micah came into existence in 2009 when the Person to Person program in Saskatoon, which already included Circles of Support and Accountability, joined with Community Chaplaincy in Saskatoon.

So, today, as for years past, volunteers visit with inmates/patients at the Regional Psychiatric Center just north of Attridge on Central Avenue. We are just in the process of moving back to in person visits after having to rely on letters and phone calls for the past year and a half. Today, also, we have volunteers who meet regularly to support people who have offended sexually and who are integrating into the community after having served time in the justice system. And we also continue to work with released offenders to find support in the faith community for their spiritual needs.

So we may not always know exactly what sorts of offenses a person has committed, at least with the people we visit through P2P, but seek to get to know the inmates/patients as people and offer friendship and companionship. For the other programs though, it is important to know a bit more about their past as we work to help them integrate safely into society.

I began working for Micah in 2012 as the coordinator of the P2P and CoSA programs and then in 2015 took on the role of reintegration chaplain when Correctional Services Canada contracted with us for a Faith Community Reintegration Project.

So, with those roles, I began to visit people in prison with the purpose of getting to know them and to connect them with a volunteer, a CoSA or a church or faith community for further support upon their release.

And now, my co-worker, Adriana, who is the CoSA Administrator, and I visit people in prison who could fit into that program and our volunteers meet with that person to assist him in whatever ways they can as he gets established back in the community.



One of the people that I met in prison a few years ago when I first began visiting people in the Sask Penitentiary in PA, is Terry. He was actually referred to me by his roommate at the time, who was waiting for his own release and to become a CoSA Core member. Terry and I began meeting monthly and had some good conversations together in prison and outside as well since that time. We've had some good laughs – he has a crazy sense of humor, and we've also cried together as he shared his story with me. I am grateful to know this man and I would like to ask him to share some of his story with you today.

Thank you Terry. I am thankful for your willingness and your desire to give back by sharing what a difference the community support can make for someone leaving prison.

One thing that we strongly believe in the work we do is that “No one does this alone.”

No matter how shy or introverted or whatever we may be, we all need people in our lives. This past year has probably shown that more than ever. This isolation has been damaging to many people's mental health. So all the more reason for people to have good, positive support in the community.

But when you've been involved in the justice system, in a negative way, it is often the case that you have lost those good supports. Family members may want nothing more to do with you. Your new found friends are people that you met inside and you don't necessarily want to continue to associate with them, especially when they aren't as keen as you to refrain from re-offending. You may not be allowed to go back to the community where you used to live and so you are cast instead into a place full of unknowns. And sometimes, the conditions put on you by the parole board cause you to wonder if you can even leave your room without getting sent back to prison. And all of it just serves to worsen the paranoias that you already had. Terry has been working to overcome all of that and is doing well because of the support that our organization and our volunteers offer.

Right now, we have several others who are waiting to be supported by such a circle. But we're in need of volunteers to make those circles happen. We ask for a one-year commitment from our volunteers but most stay longer because of the many stories like Terry's. It is good, enjoyable and rewarding to be able to participate in a circle. And I think we have one or two volunteers from your congregation who could vouch for that. We would certainly welcome others. If you are interested or want to talk more about this, I invite you to contact us. You have a week to think about it, as we are all on vacation this next week. But you can always call and leave a message or send an email.

It is important work to be part of. Statistics show that people who have committed general or violent crimes are 30 – 40% likely to re-offend. And people who have committed sexual offenses are about 13% likely to re-offend. But the statistics also show that when those people have positive supports in the community, the likelihood of re-offending is significantly reduced – by 70 – 83%.

That is what we seek to do – to be the positive supports for former offenders. Through friendship, we are helping to reduce crime. Incarceration in most cases only serves to warehouse people, to put them in contact with people who can help them be better criminals. Thankfully, there are also programs available to some to help them recognize the reasons for

their offending patterns, to help them learn to control their addictions or mental illness, and to also help them grow spiritually.

The latter are generally the people who come to us seeking our support in the community. I won't take time to talk further about our programs as you are probably familiar with them as you had Kerry here recently and also had Heather Driedger with you for a number of years as she coordinated the work out of Prince Albert. And I'm sure Heather Peters has mentioned us on occasion as well. But we would both certainly be open to questions after the service in a breakout room.

But as I wind down here, I would like to draw your attention to a couple of things. First, a fact that concerns both of our organizations as well as CoSA South Saskatchewan, all of which have their roots in MC Sask, and that is that the federal funding for the CoSA program which we've been receiving for the past 4 years, runs out in March of next year. Between the three organizations, that is a loss of about \$200,000 annually. We have just a few months left to discern how we continue our program and seek funds that will keep us all going. We are currently in conversations to see how we might partner together to keep things working. So please keep us in your prayers and if you know of foundations or organizations or companies that might have that kind of funds or portions of that with which to support us, please let us know. We will certainly be going to our current supporters to ask for increased help, but that is a lot to ask of people who can only give so much. So we need to find other agencies with whom we can partner. And all of our organizations certainly welcome donations. And the other thing that we've been doing for the past several years is to explore our relationship with the Indigenous communities in and around Saskatoon. We've had several people in our employ and are now searching for a further person to guide us in that sort of work. As well, we've been blessed to have participated in some conversations over the past few weeks regarding Restorative justice and Indigenous Justice. This has led to some new relationships that I look forward to exploring as well.

But certainly, those conversations were overshadowed by the news about the graves outside the residential schools. And it was good to be able to talk together as settlers and as church people with residential school survivors and their descendants and to know that we are all grieving things that should never have happened.

I know that we're all wondering just what our role is in this time, but I think that we can certainly begin by being present for the conversations, seeking out conversations with Indigenous neighbours, participating in the walks for reconciliation, and listening to the pain, sharing your own shock and grief and pain. We need to work towards reconciliation and thankfully, there are people and agencies within the city that can assist us in those conversations.

Feel free to contact us if you need assistance in finding people to contact. Heather Peters can also provide you with that information if she hasn't already done so. Or follow us on Facebook, Adriana does a good job of posting events and contacts in the city.

In closing I would just like to say that I feel blessed to be part of this organization, to see the changes in people, and not only the people who are reintegrating into the community following their involvement with the justice system, but also in the volunteers who get to see things in a new way, to experience friendships like they might never have imagined. It's great to



introduce people to each other and watch the relationships take off and the friendships grow and the lives change.

I think it feels something like how Paul says it in Ephesians 3:14-21.

He sees the potential in people and he prays that through the Spirit, Christ would truly dwell in our hearts and help us to know and express the love Christ has for us all, being filled with the fullness of God. And we too have so much for which to be thankful as we give God the glory for the lives that are being changed.

500 years ago, Menno Simons gave leadership and subsequently, his name to the Anabaptist movement. One of his most famous sayings contains these words that are often posted somewhere in Mennonite churches:

True Evangelical Faith cannot lie sleeping ...

It clothes the naked,

It comforts the sorrowful,

It gives food to the hungry

It shelters the destitute ...

Though these words have become a hymn in the Mennonite church, it is evident by the volunteers who come to us from various denominations and some who do not self identify as being from any faith group that this is very much the Christian way to live and even the humanitarian way to live.

May we see Jesus in all the faces around us, and may we, in turn, know the power that is at work within us which is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine. To the glory of God and the church through the spirit of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Song of Response // [My Lighthouse](#) // Voices Together #597**

### **Offering Prayer**

Our loving and generous God,

From our place of privilege, may we learn from your generosity, in sharing our gifts with others. Today we bring our offerings to you, trusting that they will be used to the betterment of your people everywhere.

We give thanks for the people of Micah Mission, who have answered your call to work towards justice and healing in our hurting community. May our gifts contribute to that vital work.

Accept our gifts for the work of your church.

Amen

**Sending Song // [Here I Am, Lord](#) // Voices Together #545**



## **Benediction // Voices Together #418 - Worship Leaders Edition**

Leader: From where we are to where you need us,

**All: Jesus, now lead on.**

Leader: From the familiarity of what we know  
to the wonder of what you will reveal,

**All: Jesus, now lead on.**

Leader: To transform the fabric of this world,  
until it resembles the shape of this world,

**All: Jesus, now lead on.**

Leader: Because good things have been prepared  
for those who love God,

**All: Jesus, now lead on.**

Leader: Now to God – whose power now at work in us can do immeasurably more than  
we ask or imagine – to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus through all  
generations, world without end! Amen.

