



# e-Bulletin

Providing bi-weekly communication for PNMC

Please share widely. If you receive this e-bulletin via more than one address, let us know which address you prefer. To submit announcements or manage your subscription, email [brenda@pnmc.org](mailto:brenda@pnmc.org). See schedule on second page for publication dates and submission deadlines.

## From the PNMC Office

The 2024 Conference Communication Council will be **Saturday, February 10**, via Zoom.

## Where the Wild Things Are

Eric Massanari, Executive Conference Minister

*See, I am sending my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness . . .* MARK 1:2-3

In order to hear John's message and receive his baptism of repentance, people needed to step away from the comforts of home, well-laid plans, and predictable patterns. They needed to travel lightly and release expectations, assumptions and judgments. They needed to risk venturing into that place where their emancipated ancestors journeyed with Moses, where Elijah fled for safety, and where Jacob once wrestled with God. They, too, needed to encounter temptation and redemption, struggle and transformation, before they could understand this new beginning.

We might think of "wilderness" as those places in life where . . .

- we feel uncertain or insecure because we meet our own limits
- we know our vulnerability and our need
- we accept that we are not fully in control
- we release former ways of doing and knowing things and accept new vision
- we let go of resentments over what has been, and assumptions of what should be
- we are asked to remain steadfastly awake and present to what is most true
- we meet our own need for mercy

In this sense, the world as a whole seems a very wild place at the moment.

In faith, we are asked to turn towards it and move into it.

**"Come to the wild place!"** bellows John, son of Elizabeth, son of Zechariah.

*Leave the resentments you have harbored.*

*Leave the answers you have settled upon.*

*Leave the futures you have expected.*

*Come to the place of unbinging: where wind disjoints, where fire refines,  
where the life of silence is hatched.*

*Come out past the hard street that will one day be broken by a wild root.*

*Come out beyond your well-worn trespasses and well-rehearsed excuses.*

*See how they wither in the light; feel how they waste in the wind.*

*Come to the wild place where humility disrupts.*

*The tree does not care about your comfort, and the lightning knows nothing of your fear.*

*The river will flow whether or not you witness it, and the flower will bloom without your admiring gaze.*

*Here is power beyond your control, and possibility beyond your invention.*

*Come to the wild place where mercy reorients.*

*Come here, so you can turn to look back there,  
and know you have been living lost.*

**Come and be forgiven. Come to forgive another. Come, and dare to forgive yourself.**

**Come, and prepare for a new beginning, one that you never could have imagined or created on your own.**

This reflection is adapted from an Advent sermon offered at Salem Mennonite Church on Sunday, December 10, 2023.



Photo: Cave Dwelling,  
Bandelier National Monument, NM. Eric Massanari



## Take a glimpse at a few PNMC Advent traditions:



### Seattle Mennonite Church

*A few of the Advent traditions enjoyed by Seattle Mennonite include:*

- Advent candle-lighting, and large candle banners, adding one each week.
- Christmas caroling gathering in the home of a church family, including caroling outside on the front yard for folks who are walking through the neighborhood looking at lights.
- Pageant with kids, youth, and adults participating - returning to a live version for the first time this year (COVID brought us several years of pretty amazing video pageants that Pastor Megan is feeling sad to see go...). Followed by cookie decorating, crafting, and giving back. Affectionately called "Cookie Sunday".
- Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols service.

Photo Left: Advent lights hanging in Seattle Mennonite's sanctuary



### Albany Mennonite Church

This year, AMC is enjoying the lights and aroma of freshly cut trees that are brightening the sanctuary along with candles and the image of baby Jesus.

Photo Right: Trees illuminate AMC's sanctuary



### Portland Mennonite Church

On the first Saturday of December, folks gather at PMC for an annual Advent Workshop. The church's lower level is transformed into a Christmas fair with crafts, gingerbread houses, a coffee shop, and a pop-up gift store called **Just Cause** run by Paula Brunk Kuhns. This year approximately 150 people enjoyed the festivities and refreshments.

Photo Above: PMC children enjoying a feast for their senses!

### Advent at Home resource

The [2023 Advent at Home worship guide](#) is available from Mennonite Education Agency. Taken from *Leader magazine's* theme, "How will we know?" the guide accompanies folks through the days and weeks of Advent through Epiphany with scriptures, prayers, worship rituals, suggested activities, and contextual information. It is intended for all ages and life stages to deepen the experience of the season. This helpful resource is available for free download in English and Spanish for all congregations, individuals, and families of Mennonite Church USA from the MEA.

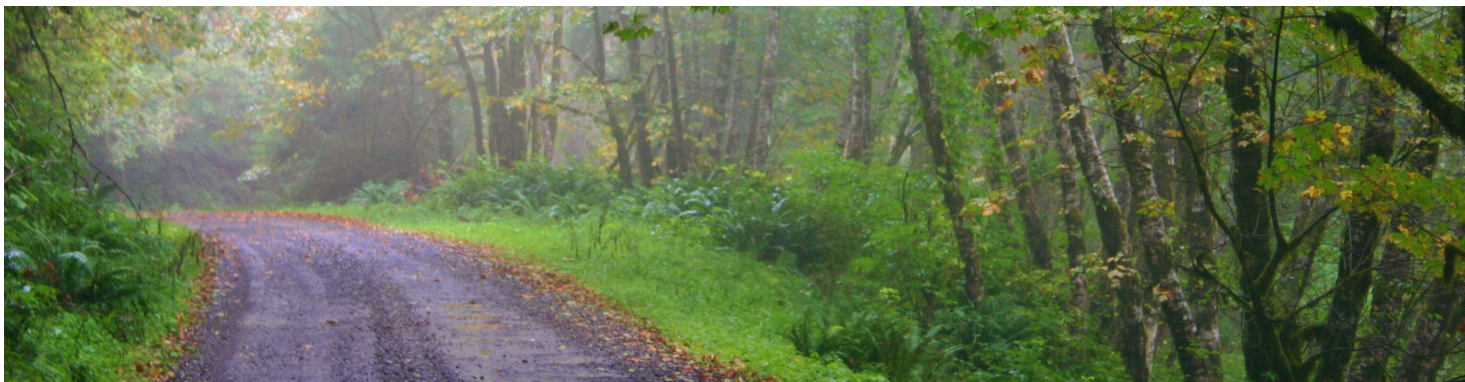




## PNMC CONGREGATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS & MINISTRIES

### Drift Creek Camp

**Ron and Jeanne Sears**, will lead a spirituality retreat **Jan. 19-21, 2024**. The focus will be “A Way of Life—*Intentions for Going on the Road with Jesus—Come Away, Rest Awake, and You Will Recover Your Life*”. Participants will be invited to reflect at the “hinge” month of 2024. We will look back on 2023, noticing what was life-giving and what was life-draining. Where are we weary? Where are we refreshed? What spiritual life rhythms might be a trellis to hold your values and intentions? More details [here](#).



### Pacific Northwest Mennonite Historical Society

The Pacific Northwest Mennonite Historical Society invites you to our 2024 Annual Meeting on **Saturday, February 17, 2024**, at Zion Mennonite Church, 6124 S. Whiskey Hill Road, Hubbard, OR. A luncheon will be served at Noon followed by the annual business meeting. The cost for the meal is \$15 per person. RSVP for lunch only to Jerry Barkman at [jbarkman@canby.com](mailto:jbarkman@canby.com) or 503-871-6413 by February 9. A program featuring Dr. Abraham Friesen will follow at 1:30 pm. His presentation is titled "Russian Mennonites & the Recovery of an “Anabaptist Vision.” Dr. Friesen is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

## MENNONITE CHURCH USA and OTHER MENNONITE ORGANIZATIONS

### Mennonite Church USA

**Mennonite Action**, a grassroots movement, united more than 800 Mennonites representing 250 congregations across the U.S. and Canada in a mobilizing call for peace, on Tuesday, Nov. 28, on Zoom. The “Call to Action” served as a resounding demand for a ceasefire, an end to the U.S.- and Western-funded occupation of Palestine, and a push for lasting peace. Mennonite Action coordinators Adam Ramer and Nick Martin outlined the role of the grassroots movement, stressing the importance of Christians being publicly visible and vocal in opposition to the misuse of faith. Ramer is a peace activist who grew up in [Madison \(WI\) Mennonite Church](#) and has served with several anti-occupation organizations, such as Jewish Voice for Peace, in New York City and Washington, D.C. Martin is a peace activist and member of [Community Mennonite Church](#) in Lancaster, PA. They introduced six guiding principles – people, peace, public, power, prayer and Palestine – and defined the organization’s scope, committed to supporting Mennonites in taking peaceful public action. “Mennonite Action is prepared to support Mennonites across Canada and the United States to take peaceful public action for a permanent ceasefire and an end to the occupation of Palestine,” Ramer said. “Specifically, we are prepared to offer online platforms for widespread coordination across geographies and offer trainings on organizing and mobilization skills. We will release toolkits and action guides to help you along the way. We will coordinate and call for specific actions.” Read more [here](#).

**Safe Church**, Mennonite Church USA’s newly formed abuse prevention ministry, now has a webpage available on the MC USA website. The site offers resources, including the updated [Circle of Grace](#) curriculum, to help faith communities keep children, youth and vulnerable adults safe from all abuse. One way that Safe Church recommends faith communities protect people from abuse is through the creation of a protection policy. The webpage provides guidelines on [how to develop a protection policy](#), as well as [policy examples](#) from other churches. Congregations and other faith-based organizations may request [Safe Church consultations](#) from MC USA’s Church Vitality staff. Consultations may be related to pre-established or new protection policies, sex offender policies, or how to handle specific situations. Safe Church also offers [tailored training sessions](#) on a variety of topics to help prevent abuse, from raising awareness about safety policies to caring for victims. These presentations can be offered in person or by Zoom, in the format of a Sunday school lesson, a children’s sermon or in another arrangement that fits the group’s specific needs. Read more [here](#).

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### Upcoming e-Bulletins:

Jan 8 (submissions due by 1/2)  
Jan 22 (submissions due by 1/15)  
Feb 5 (submissions due by 1/29)  
Feb 19 (submissions due by 2/12)

If you would like to contribute, please send a brief announcement in Spanish & English with website links to [brenda@pnmc.org](mailto:brenda@pnmc.org). Our goal is to provide a valuable resource, not an In-Box jammer. If space is tight, we may omit announcements that are not as pertinent to PNMC. Announcements will run ONE time only, unless specified otherwise. *We welcome your feedback!*

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For more PNMC updates: <http://pnmc.org> e-Bulletin Archives: <http://pnmc.org/Resources/eBulletin>