

Who's Helping in September?

Welcome Center Host

- Sept 6 Glenda Maury
- Sept 13 Angie Teeter
- Sept 20 Glenda Maury
- Sept 27 Deb Preheim

Coffee Bar Host

- Sept 6 Sheri Esau
- Sept 13 Carrie Belshe
- Sept 20 Atlee & Deb Preheim
- Sept 27 Bob & Barb Esau

Connect Cooking Team

- Sept 16 Brenda Nebel' team
- Sept 23 Brenda Nebel's team
- Sept 30 NO CONNECT

Greeters

- Sept 6 Gail Baumgartner, Bob Maury
- Sept 13 Kendal Slabach, Brenda Nebel
- Sept 20 Dallas Stutzman, Leon Janzen
- Sept 27 Judy Reimer, Bill Zuercher

Nursery Attendants

- Sept 6 Toshia & Emily Widener
- Sept 13 Kennedy & Garrett Roth
- Sept 20 Kylie & Rob Moore
- Sept 27 Saralyn Murray Oyer & Jasmine Stutzman

Connect Dishes & Clean-Up

- Sept 16 3 dishwashers, 2 clean-up needed!
- Sept 23 Megan & Matt Smith
1 dishwasher, 2 clean-up needed!
- Sept 30 NO CONNECT

Let's Celebrate!

BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2 Anne Brenneman | 16 Kason Landes |
| 3 Tami Keim
Emily Widener | 17 Jeanette Wedel
Briggs Stauffer |
| 4 Scotty Billings | 18 DeeDee Landes |
| 6 Vonna Yoder | 20 Betsy Buller |
| 7 Greg Jones | 21 Marilyn Wilder |
| 8 Owen Landis
Landon McMaster | 22 Callum Schumann |
| 10 Joe Widner | 23 Jonah Garrison |
| 11 Mariah Stauffer | 24 Rachel Creamer |
| 12 Jack Unruh | 27 Eli Royston
Tera Stucky |
| 14 Kevin Finley | 28 Betta Kym
Larry Miles |
| 15 Ron Moyo | |

ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Frank & Anne Brenneman
Chris & Sheri Esau
- 4 Ron & Sue Moyo
- 14 Paul & Andrea Schrag
- 19 Ed & Evelyn Peters
- 20 Dean & Sondra Leatherman
- 21 Jerol & Becky Schrag
John & Olivia Reimer
- 27 Ed & Ruth Basinger

SEPTEMBER 2026

WHITESTONE Life

BRETT'S BEATS

A HANDSHAKE AGREEMENT WITH GOD

A lot has changed in farming since I was a kid. Our tractors drive themselves, the combines are massive, and we plant at 10mph with our high-speed planter. That's fast compared to the 5 mph we used to go. We also do far less physical labor—today, it's about learning how to stay awake in the various pieces of equipment one must learn to operate.

There are many other ways that farming has changed, and one of them is the 'handshake agreement.' Over the years I've witnessed my dad make lots of handshake agreements. There was never a need for a written document because the terms were clear and the farmers were true to their word, well, most of the time. But that has changed. Now a written agreement is required, and while a handshake is still a part of the exchange, it doesn't mean what it used to. Written agreements are also tenuous at best, and I've seen firsthand how they can break down even in the face of potential legal action.

Shaking hands after a verbal contract is close to the idea of 'covenant' in the opening pages of the Bible. Both sides agree to uphold their end because they care about their own integrity and about the welfare of the other person. At least that's how I think about the old-time farming agreements. But the Bible adds a bit to this idea. Whenever God makes a covenant with people, we know that God is completely trustworthy. One side of the covenant is a sure bet. But the other side? Not so much.

In the scriptures we see that one of the great attributes of God is God's willingness to uphold both sides of the covenant. Which means that if we break the agreement, God's handshake is still good and there is forgiveness and an invitation back into the agreement. And what's exceptionally cool is that God is even willing to adjust to new situations, forming new covenants as time flows on.

Part of our autumn worship this year will focus on **covenants and promises** as we journey through the scriptures, beginning with Noah. Pay attention to God's proposals, God's steadfast-ness, and the strength of God's version of the handshake agreement.



Upcoming Worship Themes

- | September 6 | September 13 | September 20 | September 27 |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Slavery or Freedom | Flood and Promise | Call of Abraham | Joseph in Prison |
| Psalm 78:23-29, 38-39 | Genesis 6:5-22; 9:8-17 | Genesis 12:1-19 | Genesis 39:1-23 |
| Brett Klingenberg | Howard Keim | Brett Klingenberg | Brett Klingenberg |

In the fall of 2018, we made the decision to change our Wednesday evening program from W.O.W. (Whitestone on Wednesdays) to Connect. W.O.W. started in the late 1980’s, and was the first Wednesday evening program of its kind in Hesston, which introduced many children and their families to Whitestone. In the 2010’s, it was becoming difficult to maintain W.O.W. as it was currently structured, so we made the decision to rethink what Wednesday night could look like. Connect focused on providing more intergenerational opportunities and activities with the meal being open to everyone.

Eight years later, we are again finding ourselves with an opportunity for reexamination and experimentation. Since the COVID pandemic, the number of children attending Connect without parental involvement greatly increased. With these changes in attendance patterns, it has been difficult to maintain Connect in its current structure. While these changes have brought some challenges, we also feel like we have been presented with a great opportunity to reach beyond our doors. As a result, we are looking to experiment with some changes this fall to our Wednesday night activities.

Here are a few things that will be different:

- **Intergenerational Faith Formation:** We want to be intentional about promoting the faith formation of all ages. Children and adults benefit from seeing faith practiced in new ways and having conversations and interactions with people of all ages. Each evening from 6:15-7:00 PM, we will have a time of singing, Bible storytelling and an activity in which all ages are encouraged to participate.
- **Six Faith Practices:** The faith practices that were the focus of our recent sermon series: *Talk, Pray, Learn, Serve, Worship, and Celebrate*, will serve as the themes for each evening.
- **Intentional Connections:** During our Village Visits we heard a resounding desire to build relationships with the families of the children who attend Connect. This fall we plan to make an intentional effort to connect Whitestone individuals and families with those who are new to Connect. DeeDee Landes will be leading this effort. Be on the lookout for opportunities to help with this initiative.

Jr. and Sr. High Youth: Our JYF and MYF will continue to meet as they have in the past. JYF will meet from 6:30-7:30 and the MYF from 7:00-8:00 PM.

Connect will begin on September 16th with a meal and some loosely organized activities. This will be the same for the 23rd. The new schedule will start on October 7th (after Homecoming).

This is how we anticipate Connect looking from October 7th through November 18th:

- Meal served from 5:45-6:15
- Gathering time in the sanctuary from 6:15-6:30
- Intergenerational activities from 6:30-7:00

We look forward to experimenting with these new ways of connecting together while recognizing that changes always come with a mix of emotions. So, I want to acknowledge the loss that some of us might feel at this change, while also looking at the opportunities. I reiterate that this is an experiment, and I invite your feedback as we go through the fall semester of Connect. We will make needed adjustments along the way, and reevaluate before the winter and spring semester.

The Hesston Community Foundation awarded Whitestone with a grant of \$3,600 to use for Connect, specifically for the meal. We know that having a hot meal on Wednesday nights is significant for many of the children, youth, and families who attend Connect. We are excited to continue to offer meals without needing to rely as much on donations.

Hesston College

A quilt exhibit titled “Section Selections” will be featured in the Regier-Friesen Gallery located in Hesston College's Laban Peachey Center from September 1-27 with a reception on September 16. Exhibit hours: 9am-4pm, M-F, free admission. Visit hesston.edu/fine-arts.

Homecoming 2026: September 25-27. Some highlights during the weekend include a disc golf tournament, the Athletic Hall of Fame induction ceremony, family festival Saturday evening and much more! Schedule and registration at hesston.edu/homecoming.

Hesston College Theatre department will perform “The Children’s Hour” October 1 to 4 in the Black Box Theater located in Keim Center. Performance times are Thursday through Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets can be purchased online at hesston.edu/showtix or by calling 620-327-8104.

Bethel College

Now in the Regier Art Gallery in Luyken Fine Arts Center at Bethel College – “Alive with Wonder,” fabric art by Hattie Lee Mendoza, through Sept. 17. Gallery hours are Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. 2-4 p.m.

Flatlander Bike Ride - Saturday, September 19. This ride is designed to provide an enjoyable bicycling experience for people at all fitness levels. The Flatlander is a benefit ride for Peace Connections and Circle of Hope. Visit www.peaceconnections.org for more info.

New Hope Shelter

Join us on **September 22** for **Blueprint for the Future**, a Christ-centered evening celebrating what God is doing through New Hope Shelter and casting the vision for the years ahead. Enjoy dinner, dessert, music, testimonials, and fellowship — and be part of an evening that supports the mission and future of this ministry. Check out the Save the Date below for all the details, and use the link or scan the QR code to reserve your tickets today. Seating is limited!

Newton Et Cetera Shop

Current Needs: men's, women's, & children's clothing.

The Newton Et Cetera Shop is celebrating 50 years of serving the local area and contributing to the missions of MCC and many local organizations throughout September. Beginning September 1, two \$5 gift cards will be given out daily to customers selected by staff and volunteers. Also, each Saturday in September, donors will be given a homemade monster cookie and a 20% off coupon for their next purchase.

Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp

QUILTOBER: We have four quilt retreats to choose from: UFO I - October 4-7, UFO II - October 7-11 and UFO III - October 20-25 and last but not least, Fall Mennonite Quilters Retreat, October 29-Nov. 1. Come enjoy good food, accommodations and fellowship as part of working on a variety of projects. Sharing projects, ideas, tips, techniques, walks and snacks are all part of the time shared together. To register, please visit www.rmhc.org.

MDS FIRE, HAZARD & DISASTER MITIGATION: On October 6-10, 2026, Mennonite Disaster Service and RMMC will continue their critical partnership in the work to remove 32 dead standing trees impacting Aspen accommodation, the basketball/volleyball courts and campground and forest thinning behind Pleiades and DH/Lodge on Aspen Ridge. 12-15 volunteers are needed each day to accomplish the tasks at hand along with additional volunteers for foodservice. Please visit www.rmhc.org and click the "VOLUNTEER" link to join in this effort.

Foodservice/Housekeeping Assistance - As the cooler weather starts to move in and the leaves begin to change colors, RMMC is blessed to host Church Retreat weekends as well as multiple Quilt retreats. Kitchen volunteers are an important part of serving delicious and healthy meals to our campers and guests. Please visit the volunteer page at www.rmhc.org.