

Mennonite Women: 100 Years in Story and Song
**A historical record of women's organizations at First Mennonite
Church, set to music.**

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First Mennonite Church
Written by Wendy Chappell-Dick and Joanne Niswander
Accompanist: Jackie Wyse-Rhodes



Tens to Twenties p.327 **Great is Thy Faithfulness** 1923 (with tune
Bye Bye Blackbird 1926, Henderson/Dixon)

Soloist Sara Brenner
Congregation sing Verse 1
Mrs Fred Gratz appointed president
Of the Refugee Committee
20 Dresses were made
Tomatoes were canned for the Rescue Home
Comforters for the All-Day Sew
4 large dresses were made
Clothing sent to Mennonites in famine
India, Chicago at the mission
Make my bed, light my light
I'll be home late tonight
13 gingham dresses were made
Congregation sing Refrain

Twenties to Thirties p. 638 **God is Working his Purpose Out** 1931
(with tune **Brother can You Spare a Dime?** 1930, Harburg/Gorney)

Soloist Marlyce Gundy

Congregation sing Verses 1-3

A host of missionaries come to us

tell us stories, afar

A host of missionaries, on they come

Sister can you spare a dime?

As we have reviewed the work of last year, we are made conscious of the work that is ours

As Christian women our responsibility is to promote the Kingdom of God!

Our meetings make us conscious, enrich our Christian lives with purpose and joy to press on

Consider it a privilege to serve our God

Sister, can you spare a dime?

Congregation Sing Verse 4

Thirties to Forties p.418 **Move in our Midst** 1942 (with tune **Every Time we Say Goodbye** 1944, Cole Porter)

Soloist Wanda Stopher

Every time we pack a box I pray a little

Every time we send a box I pray for you a little

A box of clothes and blankets, so small after a war

Seems like nothing really, yet what else is prayer for?

A Christmas bundle, a quilt or two, I pray about it

A penny here, a dime- I don't know what to say about it

Oh my sister and brother, I wish I could ease the hurt and the hunger

So I pack a box, and say a prayer

Congregation sing hymn verse 2

Forties and Fifties p. 584 **They that Wait Upon the Lord** 1953

(with tune **My Boyfriend's Back** 1963, The Angels)

Soloist Ana Neufeld-Weaver

Congregation sing hymn 1 time through

We're quilting blankets for the Ramseyers (soon they will leave for Japan)

Planning a 50th church party to inspire (plates, tiles and stationary for sale)

Collected tax stamps and coupons (for a Korean orphanage)

Cleaning rooms for the students at the dorms (canning those kids tomato juice)

Vacation Bible School for the migrants!

Raising funds for a home for our parents

We had a hundred twenty members of our groups, and then (wah oo, wha oo)

At our mother-daughter banquet we'll be served by the men (wah oo, wait and see!)

Fifties and Sixties p. 47 **Earth and all Stars** 1964 (with tune **Last Thing on my Mind**, 1964, Tom Paxton)

Soloist Beth Boehr

Maybe we could help out at a funeral (funeral meals, funeral meals)
Maybe we could get soap from hotel rooms (for MCC, for MCC)
Maybe we could create our own library here, maybe we could sew drapes to send to Camp.
Maybe our girls could have a Missionary band and we could knit mittens for South Lima
Congregation sing hymn verse 3

Sixties and Seventies p.90 **For the Fruit of All Creation** 1970

(with tune **Let it Be**, 1970, The Beatles)

Soloist Laurel Neufeld-Weaver

Congregation sing verse 1

When I find myself in times of trouble,
All -Day Sewing comforts me
Sowing words of wisdom, let it be
And in my hour of darkness
Speakers standing up in front of me
Give missionary wisdom, let it be
Shop MCC, shop MCC, shop MCC
Baking pies, and nothings, let it be

Congregation sing verse 3, all join on refrain "Shop MCC, shop MCC..."

Seventies and Eighties p.87 **Great is the Lord** 1982 (with tune

Hard for Me to say I'm Sorry, 1982, Chicago)

Duet Jan Wiebe and Wendy Chappell-Dick

March, 23 comforters and a quilt
For the relief sale
April, 300 large bars of soap for Zambia
June, 50 animals stuffed
400 lbs of books for Botswana
July, 51 school kits
August clean the college dorms
September clean Et Cetera
October
Blankets knotted and 58
Health kits were done in November
Congregation sing hymn 1 time through

Eighties and Nineties p.479 **Lord of our Growing years** 1982/1990

(with tune **And so It Goes**, 1989 Billy Joel)

Soloist Kendra Johns

In every heart there is a room, a sanctuary safe and strong
To heal the wounds this world bestows, to reach out as the need presents
Congregation verse 1

We have two hands to put to work, to manifest our good intent
And we don't need to work alone, but side by side we can create

Congregation verse 2

And now we stretch beyond our church for breakfast at the park each Spring
And so it goes, and so it goes and times are changing I suppose

Congregation Vs 3

Our group grows smaller year by year as we consider what to do
So I will share this room with you, as we consider what we make

Congregation Vs 4

Nineties and Beyond p. 9 STJ Come, **Now is the Time to Worship**
2010 (with tune **All the Single Ladies**, 2008, Beyoncé)

Soloist Wendy Chappell-Dick

Congregation sing first part

All the Menno ladies! (all the Menno ladies)

All the Menno ladies! (all the Menno ladies)

Now put your quilts up!

We're having a show, a celebration of our 100th year

Director and cast of a quilter's musical coming to witness us here

From the Kidron sale to the Black Swamp Relief, our quilts are getting attention

Held a "comfort bee" for MCC including members of the community.

'Cause if you like it than you should have put a quilt on it

Congregation sing bridge "One day every tongue will confess..."

Congregation sing entire hymn two more times

Reflections from Researcher, Archivist and Narrator Joanne Niswander

It began as a request to do a little research. With another anniversary coming up - that of 100 years for our church's women's organizations - it's time to celebrate another milestone.

The college archives has a treasure-trove of material from our church's history, and part of that is an extensive chronicle of what the various women's groups did during the past 100 years... box after box of meeting minutes and records. One hundred years of "mite boxes" and counting tax stamps, Christmas Bundles and wrapping bandages, missionary boxes and school kits.

Sorting through a century of records tells a story of changing times, changing needs. Famine in India, displaced Mennonites in Europe and South America, Russian immigrants in Canada. Mennonite Memorial Home and Bible School for migrants. Camp Friedenswald and Chicago Learning Center.

Through it all, Mennonite Women continue to meet and serve.

Reflections from Writer and Arranger Wendy Chappell-Dick

Hymns, like our understanding of mission and theology, are not made in a vacuum, but are part of the great arc of history.

These songs take us through the decades as a poignant guide. Each hymn verse has been chosen carefully for the message of inspiration the lyrics have for us, and undoubtedly held for the women of that decade. The music serves as a reflection of waves of cultural and social events that shook, challenged and sometimes strengthened Mennonite Women's understanding of the church, and their role in the world.

The founders of our women's organizations dared to claim a role specific to women at First Mennonite, and honor its importance. Our Mennonite Women group has come through years when their work sometimes felt futile, exuberant decades of high turnout, and

times of self-reflection and even doubt, to emerge victorious and vibrant 100 years later. All the Menno ladies- put your quilts up! We're ready for the next 100 years.