Kip Wedel will discuss Anabaptist attitudes toward American civil religion at SMCHA's annual meeting on Sunday, March 10 at First Mennonite Church of McPherson at 2:30 pm.

Wedel is an associate professor of history at Bethel College, where he teaches courses in American history, political science, and peace studies. He is a native of McPherson County, completed his Ph.D. at Kansas State University, and has taught at Bethel College seven years.


Wedel's article describes why Anabaptists have traditionally been troubled by civil religion. In his talk on March 10, he will explain what civil religion is, the nature of the Anabaptist case against it, and what he found when he examined one Mennonite church's debate about whether or not to display an American flag on their premises.

On the agenda at the annual meeting will be an overview of the 2018 year, election of SMCHA officers for 2019, and opportunity for members to give counsel and ask questions. The Handbell Choir of First Mennonite Church will provide music. Membership renewal payments can be made at the meeting or sent directly to P.O. Box 93, Moundridge KS 67107. All are invited to enjoy poppyseed rolls (made by Deanne Loganbill) and refreshments provided by First Mennonite members and stay for visiting and fellowship. No reservations are needed, so bring friends and enjoy the time.
Early Historical Data

The City of Richmond ship arrived in New York on August 31, 1874. Some went to Dakota and some to Kansas. The Kansas group traveled to Peabody, Kansas, first and then to Halstead Kansas before many moved into the Immigrant House in the prairie identified now as just west of Moundridge. They continued in the U.S. in the same pattern of worship, use of the German language, and under the same leadership of Elder Jacob Stucky and his assistant, Rev. Jacob D. Goering, as in the Ukraine. They called themselves the Gemeinde zu Hoffnungsfeld congregation, Lakeview Post Office. The Immigrant House was used for worship for eight years.

In 1870 a state census estimated the McPherson county population at 738. By 1878 the population was listed at over 11,000 (probably around 1500 Mennonites or more). The Mennonites experienced a change from the village system of Russia to rural communities of farms and small towns.

The town of Christian was established already in 1874 with a post office in 1876 and a few years later a store, church, and blacksmith. In 1886 the Missouri Pacific Railroad established a station named Moundridge just one mile to the north and the town of Christian was dissolved. Moundridge became the main trading town for these Mennonites who now invested in new businesses of a telephone company, hardware store, bank, and others. By 1904 a telephone was available for some of the rural occupants. Automobiles did not become standard public transportation until the 1930s. The electric power line from McPherson was not accessible until after 1922.

In 1882 the Hopefield Church building was constructed with 160 families and 182 persons eligible for communion. On February 5, 1895, 80 members and their families broke from the mother congregation and formed the Hoffnungsfeld-Eden Church. Both congregations used the same church building until 1898 when the Hoffnungsfeld-Eden group dedicated their new building across the road west. Leaders of the new congregation were the Reverends Peter M. Krebsiel, Peter Stucky, and C.J. Goering. The German language was spoken in the church for many years.

The Freeman Three
From Shirley Waltner, Freeman, SD, note dated 2012: “Our community is the only one in the U.S. that has the Low German, Hutters and Swiss living in the same community. We also have Hutterite Colonies within ten miles of Freeman. Although the Low German, Hutters and Swiss spoke different dialects of German, we all originated from the Anabaptist movement and Freeman Junior College became a unifying effort to provide education of the young people in the late 1800’s. Most of the three ethnic groups came about the same time. 1874 from Russia although the Hutters were followers of Jakob Hutter (Austria) and the Low Germans came from Holland, and the Swiss from Switzerland.”

SMCHA Annual Meetings

1980 - 1986  Hopefield - business meetings
1987  Hopefield - William Juhnke showed slides
1988 - 1991  Hopefield - business meetings
1992  Hopefield - William Gering
1993  Hopefield - Marlene Krebsiel
1994  Hopefield - Dale Schrag
1995  Hopefield - Don Kaufman
1996  Hopefield - James Krebsiel
1997-2009  Hopefield - business meetings
2010  Eden - Pretty Prairie drama
2011  Eden - Rosemary Fisher
2012  First Menn of Christian - David Habegger
2013  First Menn of McPherson - Marlene Krebsiel
2014  First Menn of Halstead - scholarship recipients
2015  Kingman - video and panel
2016  First Menn of Hutchinson - John McCabe Juhnke
2017  First Menn of Newton - Curt Goering
2018  First of Pretty Prairie - Kathy Goering Reid

Looking Back at Centennial 1974 Plans

Excerpts from August 20, 1973 Progress report on Memorial Marker (we call it Monument now) folder: Footings and foundation have been poured. It will take approximately two months to build. Vernon Wedel has been secured as a stone mason to put up the memorial marker. Seventeen tons of Silverdale Limestone has arrived. Old square nails were found at the site of the Immigrant House during the time of the foundation digging. Kansas State University ordered 21 bushels of Turkey Red Hard Winter Wheat from the Wheat Commission to plant in test plots.

The celebration for the coming of the Swiss Volhynian Mennonites will be held August 31, September 1-2, 1974. People will be coming from as far away as Louisiana, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

The suggested activities include a parade, an old-fashioned threshing bee, a walking plow contest, demonstrations, pony and wagon rides, tours, contests for the most authentically-dressed man, woman, child, family group, contest for the most Mennonische “beard and moustache, recognition for those who have gone into the ministry, mission work, or MCC service. There will, of course, be plenty of Swiss Volhynian food.

“City of Richmond” docked in New York on August 31, 1874. A commemorative service of this docking will be
held in connection with the Centennial activities west of Moundridge.

Prizes will be offered for those who grow the largest poppyseed heads and excel in other categories. Prizes will be awarded in a folk-lore writing contest.

During the first quarter of this year, the Fine Arts Committee will put on the play “Von Russlant auf Americka” and the Clothing Committee will sponsor a style revue of authentic costumes.

$18,000 budget includes money for memorial marker, replica of the Immigrant House, Centennial publications, wheat and poppyseed centennial activities, drama, music, and a variety of Centennial programs. [More money was requested to carry out the event.]

The Centennial belongs to all of the descendants of the Swiss Volhynian forefathers. It represents our effort—that is all of our efforts collectively—to commemorate and express appreciation for the arrival of our forefathers 100 years ago and for the faith and commitment which motivated them.”

You can view the video of the 125th Anniversary celebration in 1999 on the swissmennonite.org website. Showing plowing with horses, cemetery tours, stories of early leaders, speech by Congressman Moran, and much more.

SMCHA incorporated on Feb 14, 1973


You can view the video of the 125th Anniversary celebration in 1999 on the swissmennonite.org website. Showing plowing with horses, cemetery tours, stories of early leaders, speech by Congressman Moran, and much more.

SMCHA incorporated on Feb 14, 1973


See the SMCHA Display at the Moundridge Museum.

Major SMCHA Events

1974 100th Centennial celebration
1974 Pioneer Heritage Days
1984 110th anniversary celebration
1995 McPherson County Tour
1999 125th Anniversary celebration
2002 Hopefield Cemetery Directory building completed, Stan Regier architect
2002 Historic oak tree planted near monument
2002 Web site developed, Dennis Quiring webmaster
2003 Stone posts installed at end of each cemetery row
2006 Trees planted at Hopefield Cemetery, gift from Harley Stucky family
2010 Ozzie Goering family scholarship funded
2010 Delbert Goering family gift to Endowment Fund
2010-2011 Mike Putnam interviews about dialects
2012 Brush cleared and new plantings at the 1943-Marker
2012 Catlin monument dedication
2012 Makeover planned for Monument plantings
2012 Research Committee identified pioneer homesteads
2012 Endowment Fund at McPherson County Community Foundation
2013 Salem Zion Cemetery Marker
2013 Trip to Ukraine, Switzerland, Holland...
2013 Compiled master list of cemeteries, on web
2013 Betty Hartzler’s Swiss Volhynian Database
2014 New logo by Jesse Graber
2014 Water well drilled at Monument site
2015 Major monument maintenance work
2015 August Local bus tour
2016 Future oversight responsibility agreement signed with Eden Mennonite Church
2016 Digitizing out of print historical books for web site
2017 “Swiss Volhynian Favorite Recipes—800 books sold
2017 Freeman and Henderson NE bus trip
2017 Signage installed with directions to SMCHA properties
2017 Opened an Expendable Endowment Account at MCCF
2018 Discussion about identifying Immigrant House

Record of Earliest Names of Burials in the Hopefield Pioneer Cemetery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August Beutler</td>
<td>1852-1875</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anton Voran</td>
<td>1815-1876</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Beutler</td>
<td>1860-1877</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Beutler</td>
<td>1869-1877</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Schrag</td>
<td>1849-1878</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Schrag</td>
<td>1848-1878</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Preheim</td>
<td>1837-1878</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johann Wedel</td>
<td>1851-1879</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Gering</td>
<td>1861-1880</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magdalena Schrag Strausz</td>
<td>1809-1880</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karolina Krehbiel Kaufman</td>
<td>1854-1880</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katrina Gering Kaufman</td>
<td>1811-1884</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobias Unruh</td>
<td>1861-1884</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Schrag</td>
<td>1885-1885</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter P. Flickner</td>
<td>1880-1885</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydia Kaufman</td>
<td>1885-1886</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter JP Gering</td>
<td>1886-1886</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Kaufman</td>
<td>1824-1887</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lida Flickner</td>
<td>1887-1887</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karolina Waltner</td>
<td>1885-1888</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heinrich Bachman</td>
<td>1838-1888</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The list continues in the Directory Building.

Online at:
www.swissmennonite.org

SMCHA OFFICERS
LaVern Stucky, President
Ron Preheim, Vice President
Barbara Stucky, Secretary
Clemon Kaufman, Treasurer
Kathy Goering, Membership
Keith Albrecht, Exec Trustee
Trustees: Richard Stucky, Roy Kaufman, Eugene Goering, Nancy Stucky, Pat Rupp, LaDeen Frey
Nominating Committee:
Jim P. Stucky, Sandra Schrag Zerger
Research Committee:
Wayne Goering
Scholarship: Roger Juhnke, Kerwin Graber
Webmaster: Graham Unruh
“Only Schweitzer Spoken”:
Norvin Schrag, Lorita Zook
Genealogy Advisor: Betty Graber Hartzler
Honorary Historian: James W. Krehbiel

Altina Mill. Research continues at the Altina Mill site. If interested in a tour, contact Brian Stucky at 620-367-2610.

150th Anniversary of Swiss Volhynian Mennonites coming to the U.S. is in 2024. How shall we celebrate? Looking for leaders to plan ahead.

The SMCHA archive box at the Mennonite Library and Archives contains
- 1976 Our Town Our Country play by Bill Juhnke
- 1976 Pioneer Heritage Days poster
- 1979-1980 membership records, correspondence, newspaper clippings
- Board minutes 1976-2001
- 1977 Certificate of Amendment (Milo Goering, William Juhnke)
- 1977 on immigrant house that Felix Stucky built
- 1978 handwritten list of original trustees
- Article re: whatever happened to Menno play by J.O. Schrag
- Reconciliation - Which Way: Phil A. Goering, written by M.S. Kaufman
- Unsere Leit copy - directions to actual original
- And more.

Anyone can ask to see these historical items for study or research. We will be taking more items this year to update the ongoing history of SMCHA.

“Unser liebe Gott, segne euch als ihr versuchen die Christlicher wege unsere Forstellung folgen.”

(“Our loving God, bless you, our readers, as you seek the ways of Christ our Forefathers followed.”

(Schweitzer blessing for our readers, written by Marlene Krehbiel)

2019 Banquet
November 7

Looking Forward
From Christmas letter from Jim and Shirley Goering, 2017 are meaningful and appropriate encouraging words for our time.

“Looking forward, it seems to be a time of particular economic and political uncertainty. In 1939 the British were facing growing anxiety at home and increased political and military tension on the continent. In this situation the words of King George VI in his Christmas Day broadcast to his British subjects, seem appropriate:

“I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, ‘Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.’ And he replied, ‘Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be better than light, and safer than a known way!’”

— Kathan Goering

My time on the SMCHA Board and as editor of Schweitzer Salt for ten years has been rewarding and fulfilling. I have learned much about history and my Swiss Volhynian ancestors. This issue is my last, but I will be seeing you at SMCHA events. Best wishes for a vibrant future. — Kathan Goering