

# Faith Connection

February 2009

Monthly Newsletter of Faith Mennonite Church  
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*Faith Mennonite Church is a Christ-centered community which seeks to be a place of welcome and nurture for all. Our lives are guided by the life of Jesus and the historic peace position of the Mennonite Church. Our members are people from varied religious backgrounds, and diverse cultures, gay and straight, young and old. We invite you to join us in being a sign of God's healing and hope in our community and world.*

## Pastoral Musings...

*When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. The Apostle Paul, 1 Corinthians 13:11*

*Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it. – Jesus, Mark 10:15*

In his inaugural address on January 20, President Barack Obama referred to the words of St. Paul when he called on the nation to “set aside childish things.” He went on to define as childish those who “prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame.” Childish things, he continued, include “standing pat, protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions.” Many of us, I imagine, would agree with President Obama’s assessment that these childish actions contributed to the sorry state we find our country in today.

On Sunday, February 1, we will remember the more positive words of Jesus with regard to the ways of children. Jesus held children up as a model for how one must behave if one hopes to enter the kingdom of God. It seems that there is a difference between being childlike and childish. The former is something desirable; the later to be avoided.

Lately I’ve observed or heard about childlike behaviors that remind me of what Jesus must have seen in children. Several Sundays ago, two young girls stood behind the pulpit after the lights had been turned out and most people had left the building. They appeared to be leading worship, excitedly announcing that there would be an evening service, no doubt like the Dec. 14 Christmas program they had taken part in. These girls were in no hurry to go home, reminding me of the time that Jesus stayed behind in the temple after his parents

and travel party left Jerusalem. Church for them is a place of delight. A parent recently told me that part of her daughter’s bedtime routine is to name all of her church friends and to pray for them before she quiets for the night. Already at this young age, she is experiencing the joy of a caring community.

At the end of February we will mark the one-year anniversary of the death of Michael Schrock. While many of us have memories of Mike’s playful, childish moments that make us chuckle, certainly it was his childlike qualities that will endure and continue to inspire. Mike had boundless energy that he channeled into family life, a successful career, neighborhood soccer, high school wrestling, and his church. Mike turned his doubts and questions into doodles and wordplays filled with wonder and new possibilities. And always there was a place on his lap or in his arms for the child who couldn’t resist his magnetic smile or the surprise in his pocket.

As we celebrate the abundance of young children in our church and join their parents in the task of guidance and nurture, may we also be attentive to what they teach us. Let us never put an end to the childlike ways that lead to the kingdom: wonder, care, joy, trust, faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love.

--Joetta Schlabach

"Better that the book should not be quite so good, and the bookmaker abler and better, and not himself often a ludicrous contrast to all that he has written. "

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

## **What's happening at FMC...**

### **Community and Faith**

In the past month, several community projects have been developing at FMC. Here is an update on some of those projects:

**Community Forum:** On the evening of March 28<sup>th</sup>, FMC will host a forum on “Immigration and Food Justice: A Multi-Faith Dialogue.” In this forum, we want to bring immigration issues alive, in personal ways, through the lens of the food sector of our society. In the production and distribution of food in the U.S., what impact do immigrants as people and immigration policy have? Who benefits from these impacts? Who suffers? How do the values of justice and respect apply to the connections between immigration and food? What do different faith traditions have to say about how we should approach these situations?

A great planning committee is putting together a panel, music, and plans for the potluck and snacks. They'll need your help! Please plan on coming that evening, and let me know if you have ideas for the forum and/or an interest in helping with outreach or snacks for the event.

**Pan-African Community Organization (PACO):** This fall, PACO approached FMC and asked us to help them launch a Learning Center in the Seward neighborhood. Many of PACO's constituents have been asking them to provide English language classes and tutoring in Seward. We are working jointly with PACO to plan a fundraising meal for the evening of April 25<sup>th</sup> at FMC. There will be music, a meal, and a presentation about PACO's plans for the Learning Center. Please plan on joining us!

PACO has tentative plans to start the center in May. Then, we'll help them recruit volunteers. They are planning to be open 4-6 pm, M-F, held at the Lighthouse Academy's building, a few blocks from FMC.

**Relationship with Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church:** A few months ago, the pastor of this African-American church, Rev. Agnew, approached FMC about the possibility of their congregation sharing FMC's building. Rev. Agnew also talked with us about other possible collaborations between his church and FMC. As a way of exploring possibilities, we decided to find ways for the congregations to get to know each other. This month, twelve of us from FMC went to a

community forum about race that Rev. Agnew leads. And five of us joined a worship service at Bethesda. We are now looking for a time when members from Bethesda could join a worship service at FMC. These interactions have been an opportunity for cross-cultural worship and dialogue, and we are listening for ways God might be leading us in this relationship.

Many other community activities are also in the works. Some of us from FMC are helping the Missio Dei community with the Common Root conference that will be at FMC on February 12 and 13. Neil Okerlund will be convening a meeting to discuss how FMC can share music with the community. There are discussions happening about doing a peace-oriented Vacation Bible School at FMC. Many other ideas and relationships are brewing. I'm grateful to be a part of the many good things that are emerging from FMC.

-- *Michael Bischoff*

### **Meet Wolf and Shelly Bartel**

Before there was Match.com, there was the “Pennysaver,” a weekly flier in London, Ontario. There Wolf found Shelly's personal ad, and the Bartel union began. Both grew up in Ontario, Wolf in St. Catherines and Shelly in Peterborough, but the trajectories of their lives led them further apart until their meeting in London. Wolf remained in Ontario, attending Waterloo University to earn a degree in systems design engineering before beginning work for 3M in London. Shelly completed work for her RN at a hospital nursing program and then took off to travel around the world for two and a half years, taking jobs occasionally as necessary to finance the next leg of her trip. If you buy her a coffee, she may tell you about some of her adventures.

Upon her return to Canada, she moved to Banff, Alberta, where she worked as a nurse before moving to Edmonton to earn her university degree. After moving to London, she earned another degree, in health promotion and education, worked as a public health nurse, and, of course, met and married Wolf. Together they produced Sam, and together all moved to Minnesota in 1997 when 3M transferred Wolf (now in management).

Their lives have changed again this year with Sam's departure for college—his father's alma mater in Waterloo. As much as Wolf and Shelly dote on their son, they are enjoying their empty nest. They live in a beautiful home on the shore of Prior Lake and relish the

opportunities for boating, jet skiing, swimming, or just looking out over a beautiful winter scene. Wolf travels a lot for 3M, and now Shelly can go with him sometimes. Both love to travel for pleasure too, including, typically, a winter retreat south. Wolf also enjoys gardening and singing in the South Metro Chorale. Shelly enjoys reading and doing puzzles. Her love of fooling around with numbers led her to begin working for H & R Block nine years ago. She says she was also motivated by her desire to help people pay less in taxes so the U. S. military would have less money available. This tax season she'll be working for an accountant out of Shakopee. She also is a consultant for Arbonne International skin care products.

Wolf's involvement with Mennonites dates back to birth. His parents came separately to Canada as Mennonite refugees after World War II. MCC sponsored his mother, a widow with two small daughters. His father, conscripted into the German army at 18, was quickly wounded and spent the rest of the war in the hospital. He became a POW, forced to do rebuilding in Yugoslavia. After his release, he made his way to Canada, where he married Wolf's mother. Shelly is a sixth generation Canadian on her dad's side, while her mom was an English "war bride." She was raised in the Anglican Church and became Mennonite only after marriage to Wolf.

Both have been active at Faith, Wolf as moderator and a member of the retreat planning committee, Shelly as a deacon and member of the pastor/parish committee. Both are grateful to Faith for the church's involvement with Sam over the years. Shelly mentioned in particular the meaningful youth trips to the BWCA led by Mike Schrock.

--Arlene Holdeman

### **Note of Thanks From Floresta Mennonite Church, Buenos Aires**

Dear Hillary, I hope this finds you well. We received the Christmas card from Faith Mennonite Church. MANY THANKS. This Sunday I will share it with the brothers and sisters of Floresta. Please send our greetings to all who signed the card. We hope to someday meet them personally. I send you an embrace.  
(Pastor) Luis Maria

-- Sent via Hillary Richardson

### **Faith Mennonite Church Council Meeting December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008 @ FMC**

**Present:** Neil Okerlund, Moderator; Hermann Weinlick, Deacons; Melissa Hochstetler, M&S; Jenny Wandersee, Worship; Gregg Richardson, Secretary; Joetta Schlabach, Pastor; Barb Beers, Fellowship; Jerry Janzen, Treasurer; Glenn Geissinger, Trustees; Joan Kreider, Moderator-elect

**Absent:** Education representative, Pastor-Parish representative.

**Affirmations.** Joetta affirms Kami Blackwell-Kinney, Susan Weinlick, and Sandy Westby for covering the office secretary job in Dan's absence. Neil affirms Michael Bischoff for his respectful, caring work. Hermann affirms Ry Siggelkow for bringing family members to church on a number of Sundays. Joetta says attendance last Sunday was 104. Jerry says it was also the best offering in some time.

**Treasurer's report.** Payments for the heating project are starting to wind down, were \$12,000 last month. Joetta says Bernie Waibel is doing nice work on the project, currently fixing plaster under the windows. Jerry says he put \$25,000 into Calvert fund, and the checking account is still healthy. Joetta asks if we are using proceeds from the building sale for operating expenses? Jerry says yes, we will be for some time. Jenny asks why the rent is short of projections? Jerry says the parsonage accounts for most of the shortfall, and the Pan-African Community Organization tenant left too.

**2009 budget.** Jerry passes out the proposed 2009 budget. He says losing the rent from the parsonage will really affect the budget. Money from the building sale will help cushion that. Joan asks whether we should increase the travel and conference budget? There are few youth. Michael Bischoff's salary is included under pastor's salary line. Joan asks whether sales proceeds should go into capital where it can generate income, rather than operating expenses? Jerry says he did put much of it into capital. Joan asks what giving was last year? Jerry says \$124,000. Gregg says the temporary use of capital for operating expenses could be justified as this is a financially extraordinary year. Joetta suggests putting the rest of the capital in a separate money market fund where it can accrue some interest, and use it only when necessary. This seems to be the consensus among council. Jerry says he has faith in this congregation to meet the budget. This may be the "quiet" year after the big project.

**Gifts discernment.** Joetta passes out proposed slate, Council reviews two constitutional positions (deacon, treasurer), and approves.

**Annual meeting.** Neil proposes a visioning session again during the Sunday school hour, then a potluck lunch before the business meeting. Council agrees. Visioning will be arranged by Joetta, Michael, and Missions & Service. Council will finalize the agenda at the January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commission reports will include a review, the year ahead, and the commission job description. Four descriptions are already prepared, and Joetta passes them out for discussion next month. She will send out the rest via email before the January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commission reports are due January 14<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Commission reports.**

**Trustees.** Working on convening an interior decorating committee, made up of Nikki Fitch, Cleta Roth, Arlene Geissinger, Mike Okerstrom and Bob Mack. Joetta says Missio Dei is interested in office space, but short of money. Could we provide them free space? Council consents to this. It could help them get started and create some synergy between our groups.

**Fellowship.** Needs to change the next potluck which was to be January 11<sup>th</sup>. Joetta says they will be trying a New Year's Eve game night at the church. A discussion of sign-ups to coordinate activities like potlucks and fellowship time. Decision that it works better for Fellowship to just assign people, and let them trade if they can't do it.

**Education.** Going to clean the nursery and paint and rip out carpet. They intend to involve the youth, and will also be renovating the library. Not sure whether there will be any seniors going to the youth convention.

**Deacons.** Met with prospective new members. Currently reviewing the retreat. May do Saturday only next time, so we don't miss a Sunday service at the church. Discussed whether we need a separate retreat committee. Cleta Roth has joined the Deacons.

**Worship.** Organizing Advent. Jane Ramseyer Miller, director of One Voice Choir, and a former FMC member, will do a January session on worship and music and a March workshop for music leaders.

**Missions and Service.** Discussed its budget, and is restructuring how they donate to organizations. They intend to give more money to fewer organizations. Some of the money is just dues. Considering a request from the Pan-African Community Organization for \$2000 to help establish a learning center for new immigrants. We may faze out giving to Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia, as we no longer have any real connections with them. Also discussed support for

Melissa Hochstetler's parents in Mennonite Mission Network. Also working on a spring community forum on the topic of immigration policy and food.

--Gregg Richardson

### **What's happening here and there...**

#### **Two Local Mennonite Events**

##### **Goshen College Chamber Choir to give Twin Cities Concert**

All are invited to a worship service in song with the Goshen (Indiana) College chamber choir on Thursday, February 26, 7:30 p.m., at Messiah Lutheran Church, 2504 Columbus Ave, Minneapolis. The 32-student ensemble, directed by Dr. Debra Brubaker, will present a sacred music journey through time and culture with the theme of "Encountering God's Hope." Emily Swora of Shoreview, MN, is a member of the choir. This program is jointly hosted by Emmanuel Mennonite Church and Faith Mennonite Church. You can follow the tour at <http://www.goshen.edu/blog/chamberchoir09>.

Our congregation is being asked to provide overnight hosting for half (about 15) of the choir members, the director and college staff accompanying the tour. This will include providing breakfast and a sack lunch the next day before they leave. We will have a sign-up sheet available soon for people to indicate if they able to host.

##### **Mennonite Artist Soiree and Hymn Sing**

Sunday, March 1

Hosted by the Saint Paul Mennonite Fellowship

4:00 Soiree and Hymn Sing

5:30 Appetizers & mingling

Location: Cherokee Park United Church

371 West Baker Street, St. Paul

More information at 612-388-5016 or

<http://saintpaulmennonite.org>

Join us for a spring afternoon of music, poetry and original writing by Mennonites in the Twin Cities. In addition to the soiree, the event will include lots of hymn-singing in true-blue Mennonite a cappella style.

#### **Volunteer Opportunities**

**Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice Partnership** builds community by bringing youth offenders, victims,

community members and trained facilitators together in a conference to repair the harm done by the youth offender and promote healing, accountability and reconciliation. We need people who have a stake in Seward or Longfellow neighborhoods to volunteer at the conferences as a community member or a trained facilitator. Our next facilitator training will be April 24-26. Please contact Michele Braley at 612-338-6205 x108 or [michele@sng.org](mailto:michele@sng.org) for more information about the program and how you can become involved.

### **Volunteer Opportunity Provides Free Theatre Tickets**

Several years ago I began volunteering as a driver for Project SUCCESS, a non-profit program that encourages high school students to set goals for their future and to attend college. One aspect of the program is a collaboration with Twin Cities theaters, which provide tickets to students and their families for theater productions. Since some families do not have their own transportation, volunteer drivers are needed. Volunteers receive up to 4 free tickets for any production they do volunteer driving for. I recently received the following request for additional volunteers. If you enjoy theatre, this is something you might want to consider:

This year, Project SUCCESS has expanded into new Minneapolis and St. Paul schools. We now serve 18 public schools!! As we grow into new schools, so does our need for more volunteer drivers. If you know of anyone who would be interested in volunteering to drive for Project SUCCESS, please put them in touch with us. We especially need drivers for our St. Paul students. Sign up by going to [www.projectsucces.org](http://www.projectsucces.org) and clicking on the "volunteer" option. Please spread the word to friends and family and if they have any questions, always feel free to contact Cassie Karan, Theater Coordinator, Project SUCCESS, 612-874-7710.

--Joetta Schlabach

### **Café Intifada**

"Café Intifada" is described as an intellectual salon where the audience becomes the occupied and the occupier." Meet Ghassan, a Palestinian man imprisoned on a regular basis by the Israeli military; attempt to dine in what would be a 5 star hotel if it weren't located in the Gaza Strip; and lose your access to water for 'military security' reasons. Join us for this unique evening of interactive political theatre relaying the situation of life on the ground under Israeli

occupation. Taken from personal narratives, human rights websites and one on one dialogue, the story unfolds amongst and with the audience, leaving no one unaffected. Written and directed by Flo Razowsky with stage production by Josina Manu Maltzman, the Café speaks from the voice of the outsider allowed in for a glimpse.

February 5,6,7 at the Bedlam Theatre  
<http://www.bedlamtheatre.org/display.php?event=303>  
Doors open at 7 pm, show starts at 7:30 pm.  
Admission \$10+ on a sliding scale, no one turned away.

--Pat Eliason

### **Spirituality Opportunities**

**Celtic and Nordic Contemplative Evening Prayer** at Pilgrim Lutheran Church, 1935 St. Clair Avenue, St. Paul, [www.pilgrimstpaul.org](http://www.pilgrimstpaul.org) .

February 8, 6:51 p.m. "The World Asks of Us" (Celtic contemplative communion service)

February 22, 6:51 p.m. "Reimagining" (Nordic celebration of the rich and haunting music of the Scandinavian peoples)

### **Spirit Film: *Into Great Silence***

On the first Friday of Lent, Feb 27, Wisdom Ways Center for Spirituality will present the Zeitgeist Films documentary *Into Great Silence*, called "cinema at its purest and most exalted." Writer and director Philip Groning spent six months living among the Carthusian monks of the Grand Chartreuse Charterhouse in the French Alps, documenting their way of life in absolute silence. The film visually describes their pursuit of meaning, ritual and tradition through the rhythm of work and prayer, night and day, winter and spring. The reviews call this film, "Breathtaking! "Euphoric! Graceful!" 7 pm., Carondelet Center, 1990 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul, free and open to the public.

### **"Race: The Power of an Illusion"**

St. Olaf Catholic Church is offering a special viewing of the award-winning PBS video series "Race: The Power of an Illusion." All are cordially invited to a free presentation of this widely-acclaimed and stimulating three-part film series, produced for PBS. Each week, one 60-minute episode is viewed and discussed at 11 am, 1pm and 5pm in St. Olaf's Cowley Hall. All events will be held at St. Olaf Catholic Church, 215 South 8th Street, Minneapolis