

Faith Connection

January 2012

Monthly Newsletter of Faith Mennonite Church
2720 E. 22nd St. Minneapolis, MN 55406
Ph: (612) 375-9483
e-mail: faithmc@faithmennonite.org
web: www.faithmennonite.org

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...

And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. (Genesis 2:2-3)

Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest, so that your ox and your donkey may have relief, and your [workers] and the resident alien may be refreshed. (Exodus 23:12)

Finding time for rest is one of the greatest challenges of our time. With so much of our work revolving around information, and technologies making that information all the more accessible at any time in any place, it can be difficult to extract ourselves from the world of work and truly rest.

This is not a rant against technology, however. I am writing this article from a coffee shop in Goshen, Indiana, on the day after Christmas precisely because of technology. This afternoon when we celebrate Christmas with Gerald's family, we will be able to include family members in California in real time because of technology. And I give thanks for the daily glimpses, between Sundays, of the joys and challenges of life of persons and families in our congregation that Facebook affords.

But we still get tired. And we have a spiritual tradition that makes space for and calls, even commands, us to rest. I feel very fortunate to serve in a congregation and denomination that recognize the need for rest and renewal. During the first 10 weeks of 2012 I will enter a time of rest, combining two months of sabbatical time and two weeks of vacation. During this time I will be entirely absent from congregational life, but I will be with you in prayer.

I have tried to create a sabbatical plan that includes opportunities for rest and growth. At the beginning and again near the end I will include time for silent retreat. For three weeks in January I will travel in Central America, accompanying Gerald and a class he will teach in Guatemala, and then travel alone to Honduras and Nicaragua to renew acquaintances from when we lived and served there with Mennonite Central Committee in the 1980s. The last week of January and the first week of March will be vacation time with family and a chance to catch up on home projects. During most of February I will be in Elkhart, Indiana, doing independent study at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, and visiting churches and pastors in the area. On my return home, I'll spend a weekend with Living Water, a multi-cultural Mennonite church in Chicago.

Although the sabbath guidelines in Exodus 23 were intended to provide rest for all, I realize that my absence will mean additional work for many in the congregation, especially members of commissions. I am thankful for the high level of engagement and commitment in our church, and hope each person will find ways to take needed breaks and extend each other grace if and when something falls through the cracks. With Phil Stoltzfus providing excellent office and ministry staff support, Donna Stucky supporting the deacons with pastoral care, and God's Spirit undergirding all that we do, I leave with confidence that the congregation is indeed in good hands. Happy New Year! I will look forward to swapping stories when I return in March.

--Joetta Schlabach

"I made no resolutions for the New Year. The habit of making plans, of criticizing, sanctioning and molding my life, is too much of a daily event for me."

-- Anaïs Nin

What's happening at FMC...

Outreach Ministry Update...

What do you do to live sustainably? Do you know how to make something rather than buy it? Recycle something rather than trash it? Fix something to make it last longer? Design something in a greener way? A team of us have started meeting to plan this year's winter forum—a neighborhood sustainability fair—which we've put on the calendar for Saturday afternoon, March 17, at FMC. Yes, we could get in a famous speaker, or we could have lots of organizations come and set up literature tables. But we're thinking of approaching our fair a bit differently. After comparing notes with our team partners from the Community of St. Martin, Missio Dei, and the Seward Neighborhood Group, we've started coming up with all sorts of ideas for making our fair interactive, and for primarily bringing together the resources, expertise, and creativity of our own communities in order to explore sustainability. This is where you could come in!

Can you fix bicycles (and do you have one to bring to fix)? Do you know how to recycle electronic equipment (or do you have some to bring to recycle)? Do you know how to design a garden? Or make a rain barrel? Or a composting bin? Or do native landscaping? Or grow chickens? Are there geothermal options in our neighborhood? Solar ovens? Wind power? What about alternative forms of transportation? How does the gas tax at the Community of St. Martin work? Do you know how to design an art or craft project, or make a particular kind of food, that supports sustainable ways of being? What can kids do to live sustainably? Well, you get the idea! How many different "interactive drop-in stations" do you think we could muster for our fairgoers to try out? Could you volunteer to organize or lead one of the stations? The FMC members on the sustainability team are Melissa Hochstetler, Phil Stoltzfus, Mike Okerstrom, and Dick Westby. Contact one of us with your fairly green ideas for St. Patrick's Day, March 17.

--Phil Stoltzfus

The Heart of Mennonite Worship

The adult education hour during the Sundays of January 8th through 29th will be sponsored by the Worship Commission, and will feature conversations about the "five vital rhythms" of Mennonite worship:

- Worship is our response to a loving God
- Worship is rooted in, and shaped by, scripture

- Worship creates a new community, uniting believers as the body of Christ
- Worship forms us as followers of Jesus
- Worship and life are intimately connected.

The study guide for the sessions, produced by Faith and Life Resources of Mennomedia, leads us through four questions:

January 8: Why Do We Gather for Worship?

January 15: What Makes Worship Mennonite?

January 22: How Does Worship Shape Us for Life?

January 29: Why Do We Gather Songs for Worship?

Comings and Goings

During the month of December we were glad to get better acquainted with:

Andrew Jalani, a native of Pakistan, who is doing Clinical Pastoral Education at Good Samaritan Society University Specialty Center on 27th Avenue SE

Sam and Heather Reinert and their daughters **Lucy** and **Mimi**, Seward neighbors

We welcomed five people into membership on December 18: **Bruce Brunner** (associate; Bruce retains membership at St. Andrews Episcopal, Eden Prairie); **William Chittenden**, **Jim Kuebelbeck**, **Leah Otto**, **Terry Peterson**.

We give thanks for the gifts and experiences that each of them brings.

Deacons Report

The deacons met on Wednesday, December 21. Donna Stuckey joined the meeting and her role supporting pastoral care work during Joetta's sabbatical was discussed. In January, Beth Richardson will end her term of service as a deacon and Adam Nafziger will join the deacon commission. Seasonal giving and new parenting partner needs were discussed. The next meeting will be held on January 12th, 2012.

--Aryn Baxter

January Soup Groups

Monday, January 2nd at Joan Kreider's home

Tuesday, January 10th at Hendricks' home

Two soup group dates still need hosts:

Thursday, January 19th @ Gerber's home, host TBD

Friday, January 27th @ Location TBD

If you would like to host, please contact Aryn Baxter.

Thank You...

FMC community,
In celebration of 25 years of gifts and surprises at Wilderness Wind, thank you for your gift of light and the ways you have helped Wilderness Wind flower. It is clear that Wilderness Wind would be at a different place today if it wasn't for your support in volunteer hours, presence, financial support, and promotion. Thank you!

--With much gratitude, Kathy and the Wilderness Wind board

Dear friends at Faith,
We are privileged indeed to count you among our supporters of our ministry! Thank you. Thanks too for the thoughtful autumn card, and the thoughts and goodwill it represents. We have traveled a lot this year to provide encouragement, counseling, and pastoral care to mission workers. May the joy and blessings of Christmas come to you in surprising ways, now and throughout 2012.

--Peace, Lois & Wayne Hochstetler

Arrival of the Unexpected

This are two of three stories of the "arrival of the unexpected," shared by (anonymous) FMC members during advent. The third will appear in next month's newsletter.

Learning to Pay Attention

Growing up a farm boy meant lots of scrapes and scratches with brothers and cousins but it was all in good fun. When I was 10, I was thrown out of a car traveling at 50 miles an hour, ending up on the side of the road unconscious. Regaining consciousness a week later brought a shock; I was going blind in one eye. I began a journey that would take years of paying attention and learning new tricks to figure out how to adjust to the new circumstances.

Losing vision in one eye meant that I no longer had any real depth perception. One of the first awakenings came when Mom asked me to pour the water into the glasses as we all sat down for dinner. I poured water right onto the table, totally missing the first water glass. Whew! Paying attention was going to be required in a new way now.

Back in school the next fall, we were out on the ball field and it was my turn to bat. The ball came in from

the pitcher; I swung and missed it --- same thing with the next pitch --- it didn't take but a few more seconds for me to become totally frustrated. Last year I'd been a pretty good hitter, but not now! It took all of the 6th grade year to regain some of my hitting ability. Paying attention wasn't enough on the ball field; I had to develop a whole new set of skills to judge where that darn softball was in the air.

When my best friend Ed would stop by to go fishing, I couldn't tie a fish hook onto the end of my line. I'd have to ask him to do it for me. I'd never had to rely on him for that before! Slowly, it began to dawn on me that I really didn't have the ability to see things in 3-D and the little things that we all take for granted that we "see normally" were the most troublesome.

When I got my driver's license, at age 16, I learned to pay close attention to other cars on the road and the speed other vehicles were traveling in front of me. It took a while to develop a technique, and to trust my judgments about how fast I was coming up on the cars ahead. I logged a couple of minor fender benders, which always brought painful looks from my Dad on my arrival home, but he figured that was the price to pay so that I could learn to be a safe, responsible driver.

I don't miss much in life and being aware of my limitation has taught me to ask for help when I need it from family, friends and God. When I was young, I was constantly frustrated by the things I couldn't do but as I grew up, I came to a deep appreciation of all the things that I can do. Limitations are like brick walls that are in the way; the walls are there so that I can figure out my way around, under, over or through them and move on to the next life experience around the next corner.

Changing the Landscape: A Story of Being Found

Faithfulness rising up; righteousness looking down from the sky --- the text from Psalm 85 reminds me of a landscape view I have carried with me for decades. As a young adult, I was given the great honor of being shown a glimpse of the glory of God in Creation, but I'm starting at the end of the story. Shall we start at the beginning?

One sunny June afternoon, my family had all been fishing together at a lake, deep in the woods, beyond the back 40. The small, unusual lake was a glacial-era remnant, surrounded and slowly being filled in by peat bog. The acreage was, in fact, a textbook demonstration of a geologic and forestation timetable, from bog to brush to soft wood to hardwood trees. We had hiked

the trails often, with my father stopping often to demonstrate how to keep track of where one was in the woods, to show where the trail was marked with cloth ties or to note a particular trail guide. The trails we used were a mix of deer trails linking to groomed and cleared trails.

I felt unwell and decided to head back on my own early. I assured all I knew the way, and set off through the bog and woods; an overly confident 20-something, oblivious of mortality. Before long, I had the sense I wasn't on the primary trail; I was on a trail, so I wasn't concerned. After awhile longer, I knew I may be lost, and concern now registered. A little while later, I knew I was lost and started to backtrack; panic was beginning to drive my decision-making. I recalled the local bear stories, the coming storm, and wondered how big 180 acres was and knew I was smaller.

I called out for help but my voice went NOWHERE in the midst of a dense pine forest. Intelligently, I stopped. I prayed; I looked up and my answer came quickly. If I climbed up, my voice would carry over the treetops. One should picture very tall mature pines trees everywhere.

I selected one and began the climb, ignoring sap and spiders. Resting on the highest bough that would hold my weight, with the breeze swaying the slender bit of tree trunk I clung to, I could see I wasn't high enough yet. I called out but words were swallowed whole by the trees around. A taller tree was just beyond---I'd have to climb that one. Undaunted, I climbed down and back up, only to learn I'd chosen the wrong tree. I climbed down again, hope fading with the light of day and panic rising with the incoming storm winds.

Climbing up once again, I made it to the top of the tree that soared above all the other treetops and there I saw a view of a sea of lush, green treetops, as far around me as I could see, meeting the stunning blue of a summer sky with artistically measured dollops of creamy white clouds scattered around. And from that glorious vantage point, I could see my fishing family on the edge of the backwoods lake, barely! I began calling for help, pushing my voice up over the treetops and, before long, an answer came back. "Keep calling!" my family encouraged me. "We'll find you if you keep calling out." (It worked.)

Changing the landscape, in a way I have never done again, saved me from possibly being quite lost for a long time, or worse! The decision to climb the trees---

despite the risks, the first and second failures and the spiders and sap along the way---opened the way for me to find the help I needed. And the gift of an extraordinary view of the forest was given for me to keep forever.

What's happening here and there...

The Jesus Dojo Workshop

How do we close the gap between how we want to live and how we actually live? Too often our methods of spiritual formation are individualistic, information driven or disconnected from the details of every day life. If Jesus of Nazareth demonstrated and taught a revolutionary way of love that is actually possible, alive with healing and hope, then we need paths for experiencing that revolution in the details of our daily lives. Perhaps what we need is a Jesus Dojo, a shared path for action that is more like a karate studio than a college lecture hall.

In this 180 minute workshop, on Saturday, January 14, 2012 from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm, Mark Scandrette will teach from his extensive experience leading groups in shared experiments and practices. Participants will be invited to:

- Explore the role of embodied practice in the life and teachings of Jesus.
- Connect shared practices with a vision for life in God's kingdom.
- Identify areas of life and issues in our world that you would like to address through a shared experiment.
- Generate a list of people that you might experiment with.
- Imagine tangible steps you can take to invite others into shared experiments and formation practices.
- Commit to doing a shared experiment over the next 30 days.

A copy of Mark's new book, *Practicing the Way of Jesus*, is included with \$20 registration fee (\$15 retail). The event will be held at Mission Dei's Clare House, 2717 South 8th Street, Minneapolis. You can find out more (and register) at jesusdojoplms.eventbrite.com/

Mark A. Scandrette is the founding director of ReImagine, a spiritual formation center and intentional community based in San Francisco. He has extensive

experience providing leadership in churches and community-based organizations and has been a minister, writer and spiritual teacher for twenty years. Mark speaks nationally and internationally, leads retreats and provides mentoring and coaching to leaders. He is also the author of *Soul Graffiti* (Jossey-Bass, 2007).

Sponsored by The Rootworks (an education initiative of the Central Plains Mennonite Conference) and Missio Dei, a Mennonite intentional community in the Twin Cities .

New Missio Dei Project

Since 2003, Missio Dei has welcomed guests from all different backgrounds, each with their own story. Some have been young (newborns), others have been old. Some of them moved on, never to be seen again. But others have remained as members and long term residents. Recently, however, we have been at capacity. We've had to turn people away. Yet we believe, through experience, that Missio Dei can be a place where people find much more than food and lodging--it is a place of healing. Not only for our guests, but also for the rest of us.

In February, Missio Dei will begin a campaign to raise \$100,000 for another hospitality house to provide food, shelter, and healing that comes from belonging to community, to folks on the margins of society. Our goal is to find a large fixer-upper that can house 7+ rooms for guests and members, provide a large enough dining room for our large community meals, and also house the Michael Sattler Center for Peace and Justice--a community resource center that will seek to nurture the peace witness of the Twin Cities faith community by offering educational initiatives and provide a safe drop-in environment for neighbors.

There will be many ways to support this campaign; we'll need money, volunteer labor, building materials, and spiritual support. Next month, we'll release our first newsletter of the year, which will include announcements of upcoming events and various ways you can support us in the next season of our ministry.

Climate Change Dialog Breakfast

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2730 E 31st St, Minneapolis, invites you to a dialog breakfast with Dr John Abrahamson of the University of St Thomas, a leading researcher in the area of renewable energy and climate change. The dialog, "Climate Change: What Do We Really Know and What Can We Do?" will happen on Thursday, January 5 from 8 am to 9:30 am at the church. A light breakfast will be served, and a donation of \$4 is requested. Reserve a place by calling the church office at 612-729-8358, or emailing office@htlcmpls.org.

The deadline for February newsletter items is noon, Wednesday, January 25th.

Faith Mennonite Church publishes our official monthly newsletter Faith Connection. The purpose of this publication is to enhance communication about the various types of the ministry of our congregation among the members and also with the community. Due to the space limitation, the editor may edit, modify, and change the submitted documents.