

# Faith Connection

January 2014

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...

As I prepare to be gone during the months of January and February, I am looking back on 2013 with deep gratitude for God's work among us this year. And since God's work occurs through people, this gratitude extends to each person in the congregation and for the many ways each person contributes to the life of our church and the wellbeing of the communities in which each of us lives. Many of these contributions go unnoticed, but no task, however seemingly small, is ever insignificant. Someone is always touched by the things we do.

I am glad that Arlene and Glenn Geissingner have agreed to assist the deacons in providing pastoral care and support the worship commission as needed during my absence. If needs arise please contact Arlene and Glenn. You will find their phone and email information in the online directory on our church website.

Karen Peterson will be assisting Phil Stoltzfus in the office during the month of January when he is teaching a course at United Theological Seminary.

I pray that everyone had a meaningful celebration of Christmas and I wish you the joy of Christ as we enter a new year. I look forward to seeing you all again on Sunday, March 2.

--Joetta Schlabach

## Ministry staff report...

We've had two events over the past month with involvement by our middle school youth group. On Saturday and Sunday, December 7-8, six of our youth sold refreshments at the Seward Art Crawl in the FMC basement. Teaming up in shifts of two, we made cinnamon rolls in the church kitchen and heated up apple cider. Although it was unusually cold outside, the people who came to shop supported our efforts, and the

youth made \$100 total over the two days. We'll decide later how to apportion the earnings—toward a service project and/or future youth activity.

The second event was an ecumenical Advent Taizé service which we hosted at FMC back on December 18. Thanks to John Mayou who accompanied Taizé songs on violin, and Hannah Dirks who read a scripture passage in Russian. We were surprised that 65 people showed up on a cold Wednesday evening for the service!

The Missions and Service Commission recently made the rest of our decisions about apportioning "partnership and community" funds for FY 2013. We try to maintain a mix of local, national, and international organizations to support, and also try to represent a variety of approaches ranging from direct service to social justice advocacy. I'm encouraged to see strong support continuing from our congregation for local organizations such as Seward-Longfellow Restorative Justice Partnership, Community Emergency Service, St. Stephen's Human Services, and the Twin Cities Peace Campaign, among others. New items here are the Saint Paul Interfaith Network, as well as Sisters' Camelot, which provided free organic food out of a kitchen bus at our last two sustainability fairs.

Regionally, we have added support for Oyate Nipi Kte (The People Shall Live), a Dakota land justice advocacy organization based in Minnesota which John Stoes spoke about at FMC back in November. Nationally, we continue to support Brethren Mennonite Council and Fellowship of Reconciliation. Internationally, our support winds up this year for the multi-year assignment of Mennonite Mission Network workers Wayne and Lois Hochstetler in England. Christian Peacemaker Teams is strongly supported again, and we have added a new contribution this year to Mennonite World Conference, which recently moved its international headquarters for the first time to the southern hemisphere—in Bogotá, Colombia.

A complete list of all the organizations we have funded in 2013 will be outlined in our annual report and posted on the Missions & Service bulletin board in the fellowship area.

--Phil Stoltzfus

## What's happening at FMC...

### Adult Christian Education Update

In January, May, and September we offer Christian Education programming for all adults together. This January, we invite you to join in the following Sunday morning events after fellowship time:

**January 5:** Adam Nussbaum, pastor from Shalom Mennonite Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, will speak about what it's like to start a new church in a city that doesn't know about Mennonites, and how they "do church." Hermann Weinlick has been the FMC representative in our church partnership.

**January 12:** "Out of the Saltshaker and Into the World." Donna Minter and others will facilitate an interactive conversation about how we can be an invitational community.

**January 19 (or 1/26):** Extended fellowship time in deacon groups facilitated by deacons. Look for more information later in the month to see where your group will be meeting.

**January 26 (or 1/19):** Erica Sherwood, who served with MCC-SALT in India in 2012-2103, will share about her experience.

There will be no classes on February 2, which is the date of our annual congregational meeting after worship and brunch. Classes for February through April will begin February 9 and continue through April 27.

--Candace Lutt, Adult Christian Education Coordinator

### November Church Council Highlights

**Treasurer's Report:** Jerry distributed the proposed budget for 2014. It is proposed that we make various cuts, mostly to conference support, to pay for the work that is needed on our roof. Specifically, the cuts would be to Mennonite Church USA, Central Plains Conference, Mennonite Mission Network and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Some stated that they'd prefer not to see conference support cut drastically. Jerry emphasized the need to make our budget work. Various ways to avoid making deep cuts

to conference support were discussed. The issue is being tabled until January so that various financial options can be checked out before decisions are made.

**Ministry Staff Report:** Phil has been spending a lot of time on our youth. They will have had six events from August through December. The challenge is to have a cohesive group in light of the age range (5th through 8<sup>th</sup> grades). We have a group that could evolve into a strong high school group.

**Pastor's Report:** There has been follow-up regarding the review of Joetta's credentials in light of FMC's welcoming stance re: LGBTQ persons, including same-sex weddings. Susan Janzen/the Pastoral Leadership Committee (PLC) propose no preemptive action on Joetta's credentials and basically affirm the pastoral response. However, they also see their role as "conservator of organizational structure and guidelines." They will conclude the process before the annual meeting due to upcoming personnel changes in the PLC. Joetta pushed for the committee to consider a prophetic role in saying that we won't make this a dividing issue

--Jenny Wandersee, Secretary

### January-October Financial Statement

Income	Year to Date
Offerings	\$117,896
Rent	34,595
Investments	8,963
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$161,454</b>
Expenses	
Conference support	\$17,000
Deacons	3,565
Education	5,794
FICA	1,690
Fellowship	1,496
Missions and Service	1,624
Office	4,000
Pastor/Ministry Staff	75,578
Trustees/bldg expenses	29,927
Worship	1,248
Mortgage	5,498
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$147,420</b>
<b>Income minus expenses</b>	<b>\$14,034</b>
<b>YTD budgeted offerings</b>	<b>\$130,625</b>
<b>Actual offerings</b>	<b>\$117,896</b>
<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>(-\$12,729)</b>

## Year End Gift Toward 2014 Roof Repair

Following the December Church Council meeting, Bruce Brunner, chair of the trustee commission, and Joetta Schlabach shared with Dave Gagne, our liaison with the Community of St. Martin, that we are facing significant deferred maintenance projects in 2014. We need to repair the flat sections of the roof above the sanctuary and much of our exterior brick needs tuck pointing. We are anticipating a total cost of around \$33,000.

The Community of St. Martin, which rents worship and office space in our building, has many members who live in the Seward neighborhood. On December 20 we received the following message from Dave: "Members of the Community Council were unanimous in deciding that the Community of St. Martin would contribute \$10,000 towards the cost of the repairs of the roof and the tuck pointing. This decision is made with a strong commitment to our ongoing relationship and shared ministries with the Faith Mennonite Congregation. We look forward to further deepening and nurturing that relationship. We are really pleased to be able to support the members of Faith Mennonite Church in this way—and to say thank you for more than 20 years of support by Faith Mennonite for the Community of St. Martin."

--Bruce Brunner and Joetta Schlabach

## Dick Westby Feature

Make sure to stop at the bulletin board in the foyer as you enter the church and read the fine article about Dick Westby that was published in the Holiday Issue 2013 of the Longfellow-Seward Healthy Seniors *Senior Connections* newsletter. Dick (and Sandy) model a life of joyful service within our church and throughout the Seward-Longfellow community. Thanks be to God!

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

## Thank You, Thank You...

We want to send you a warm "thank you" for your hospitality last evening and for the Taizé prayer. It was particularly nice to have so many young people involved and to have them being truly involved, not just "there." And both during the meal before and during the prayer there was a real and solid sense of community. So, thank you, thank you. Blessings on you and your ministry to young people.

--Marilyn and Alan Youel, Westminster Presbyterian Church

## Remembering

And you wait, expecting the one thing  
that will make infinitely more of your life,  
the powerful, the uncommon,  
stones awakening,  
depths turning to face you.  
It dawns on you from the bookcase,  
the volumes glowing gold and brown,  
and you think of places you've traveled through,  
of photographs, of the clothing  
of lovers lost again.

And you know at that moment: that was it.  
You rise, and before you stands  
a past year's  
angst and form and prayer.

--Rainer Maria Rilke  
(translated, Gregg Richardson)

**The deadline for January newsletter items is noon, Wednesday, January 29<sup>th</sup>.**

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.