

Faith Connection

June 2010

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 followers of Christ and as inheritors of the Anabaptist/Mennonite understanding of Christianity we belong to a faith tradition that is relational to its core. Our sacred text, the Bible, is not a story of personal enlightenment but of a God seeking intimate relationship with humanity. In the Old Testament God is the loving creator of the first human creatures. And like a parent, this Creating God is not content to simply watch human development and history unfold from afar; this God enters history, listening to cries for help, making covenants, wooing her children back when they go astray, and always holding out a vision of life lived fully in God's presence—shalom.

This relational love story takes on added drama in the New Testament when God moves beyond prophetic word and action of the Spirit and moves right into the human condition. As the writer of John 1 says (in a literal translation of the Greek): "God pitched tent among us." Anyone who has done any amount of tent camping knows how intimate that is! With very little between ourselves and the earth, and all the comforts of home stripped away, we very quickly show the best and the worst of ourselves to our camp mates.

Mennonites have taken this relationality seriously in our history. Scripture, we believe, is rightly interpreted not by individuals but in the gathered community, guided by the Holy Spirit. For many years in many communities, members did not take communion without serious self-examination and seeking reconciliation if relationships were strained. When calamity struck one family, others in the community banded together to rebuild. In the best of this tradition, Mennonites have extended this relational care beyond their intimate circles of fellowship reaching out to persons in poverty or suffering from disasters through Mennonite Disaster Service and Mennonite Central Committee.

In recent meetings of the Deacons Commission, we've talked about what relationality looks like at FMC. How do we build meaningful connections when many of us only see each other for one to two hours on Sunday morning when we gather for worship? How do we "pitch tent" with one another? Around our circle of six people we shared various ways that we experience a sense of connection: through the "Connections" adult education class for parents of young children; through the Tuesday morning lectionary discussion group; through relationships that are built over time; through monthly Birthday brunches; through borrowing and sharing of things we don't all possess; through musical ensemble practices. Beyond this group I've observed connections grow among the group that gathers for coffee at Seward Coop on Sunday mornings; the daily connections through Facebook; the sharing of meals when others are sick, homes opened in hospitality, and the sharing of our faith and our doubts in our adult education classes. Extending our hands each Sunday to offer and receive the peace of Christ can be a beginning or an affirmation of a connection. When we extend our hand to someone we've not met before several questions can help build a connection: What did you find meaningful in worship this morning? What are some of your interests? Once we find a shared interest we'll always have something to return to in a future conversation.

Beginning in June we will have another opportunity for connection. Bob Brown will begin leading an evening Bible study on the first and third Tuesdays of the month (see related article, page 2). We hope this will be a time of engagement with one another, the Spirit and the Word

--Joetta Schlabach

What's happening at FMC...

Outreach Ministry Update

STAR—Strategies in Trauma Awareness and Resilience

The STAR training effort is up and running! Donna Minter has been doing presentations to groups all over the metro area as well as in other states. She also co-facilitated a training out in Oakland, California and has continued to brainstorm ways to reach out to a variety of individuals and communities locally to encourage participation in STAR. Members of Missions and Service, along with Joan Kreider and Neil Okerlund, helped review and make decisions about granting scholarships.

Five members of FMC will attend the workshop at Augsburg June 23-27: Rich Deming, Mark Kaufman, Andi Kuenning, Candace Lautt, and Rhonda Martin. Kathleen Remund will also be participating, and Donna will co-facilitate the workshop with trainer Eastern Mennonite University's Elaine Zook Barge.

There are currently thirteen other people registered for STAR, in addition to the Faith Mennonite folks. Participants include people who work closely with battered women, troubled youth, prisoners, people receiving emergency services of various kinds, and refugee communities—to name only a few of the constituencies who will be touched by the healing work of STAR. The opportunities for deepened peacemaking and broadened outreach are great. We may need assistance with housing and food as we prepare for the workshop. Watch for announcements!

VBS—Meeting God on the Mountain!

Planning, volunteer recruitment, registration, and ordering of materials continues for this summer's vacation Bible school. We currently have 15 children registered for the week, and most of the volunteers have been recruited. *For the many members and friends who are volunteering to make this VBS happen, remember that volunteer orientation will take place on Saturday morning, July 5th, from 9:30-11:30am.* If you are not yet signed up to volunteer and are interested in doing so, contact Kathleen Remund at minstaff@faithmennonite.org or at the office. We still have some openings for willing workers! Also, if you have not registered but plan to, please do so right away. Registration forms are available online at www.faimennonite.org, or you can request one from the office.

--Kathleen Remund

Bob Brown Begins Volunteer Internship

When Bob Brown and his wife Lauren began attending Faith Mennonite Church last summer, one of the first things he shared was his sense of call to pastoral ministry. He and Lauren had been active participants at Solomon's Porch for several years and he had done volunteer ministry in that setting while pursuing an MA in biblical studies at Luther Seminary. As he gave further thought to where he might best offer his gifts of ministry he found himself drawn to the Mennonite Church. This has been a year of discernment for Bob as he has completed the Ministerial Leadership Inventory, a requisite step in becoming a credentialed pastor in the Mennonite Church and seeking a placement. As he explores possible ministry options, he has decided he would like to volunteer some time at FMC as a way to gain experience within a Mennonite congregational setting.

Bob's involvement at FMC will be in three areas: he is part of the summer worship planning team; he will do some preaching; and he will help start a twice-a-month evening Bible study, beginning on June 1. We are grateful for Bob's willingness to share his gifts and we pray for his (and Lauren's) ongoing discernment process.

Summer Worship: Stories of God's People

This summer during our worship times we will "meet" various people who followed God, whose stories are recorded in the Old Testament. Each Sunday we will also hear a story from one of God's people who currently attends FMC. We are inviting a variety of people, including families to lead worship this summer. If you'd like to get involved, please contact one of the summer worship planning team: Barb Beers, Bob Brown, Gregg Richardson, or Joetta Schlabach.

Mid-Week Bible Study To Begin On June 1

We are beginning an evening Bible study on the first and third Tuesday of each month, beginning June 1. For the initial gathering, there will be an optional light supper of soup and bread at 6:30 p.m., followed by the Bible study beginning at 7:15. The group that convenes can help make decisions about the ongoing schedule and other details. If there are persons who are interested but cannot come on June 1, please contact Bob Brown, coordinator with any questions or suggestions (bobdbrown@gmail.com; 612-695-0531).

FMC Raises \$400 In Seward Garage Sale

The FMC garage sale on May 15 raised \$400 for Community Emergency Service as they upgrade their facilities to be more efficient to serve the needs of their clients. We want to thank all the people who contributed their time in preparing for the sale and helping during the sale: Leslie Minkler, Teresa Wasick, Matthew & Shelly Hendricks, Kathleen Harder and Sophia, Sandra and Richard Westby, Laurie Kaufman, Melissa Hochstetler, Andi Kuenning and Dan Leisen, Carol Wise, Julie Cross, Rich Deming, Kirsten Freed, and Karen Wiebe. And a special thanks to the many people who donated things.

-- Richard Westby



*June
Birthday
Brunch*

If you or a family member has a birthday in June, pastor Joetta invites you to her home, 248 Aurora Ave., St. Paul, for brunch on June 12. (This invitation is for whole families and significant others, not just the birthday person.) Please RSVP on the sign-up sheet in the fellowship area or email:

jschlabach@faithmennonite.org.

*Saturday,
June 12
9:30-11:30
a.m.*

Congratulations!

Anna Gambucci completed an M.Ed in Family Education and a second teaching license in parent education from the University of Minnesota this spring. Anna is now looking for employment opportunities that will allow her to work with families in ways that move away from the expert/learner model. Find a moment to engage Anna about her ideas of helping parents use intentional community to make meaning of their own life lessons and to become aware of the power of cultural norms so they can clarify their relationship and priorities with their child(ren), family, and community.

FMC Packs Meals for Feed My Starving Children

On Wednesday evening, May 12, eleven FMCers* and four from the Community of St. Martin joined other church groups to pack meals at the Feed My Starving Children location in Eagan. The well-organized packing system at Feed My Starving Children is impressive. With little on-the-spot training volunteers pack and seal pouches containing a nutritious mixture of rice, soy nuggets, vitamins, minerals, a vegetarian chicken flavoring, and dehydrated vegetables. The pouches are boxed and readied for shipping to various countries around the world where the need for the tasty, nutritious meals is high. At the conclusion of one fun hour of packing—to the beat of 80s music—we learned that we had packed approximately 10,000 meals. To learn more about Feed My Starving Children see www.fmcs.org.

*FMCers who packed meals at Feed My Starving Children: Kathleen Harder and Sophia Harder Kouay, Joan Kreider, Bob and Patricia Mack, Douglas Mack, Daryl Martin and Cynthia Miller, Leslie Minkler, Donna Minter, Hermann Weinlick.

--Kathleen Harder

June is Strawberry Time!

For the past two years, FMC has organized a trip to Natura Farm near Hugo, Minnesota, for an evening of strawberry picking. This has been a fun family and neighbor outing, with tasty rewards! Watch for details coming soon from Ry & Marcia Siggelkow, who are coordinating this year's trip.

Spirituality Journal...

Last fall I started practicing centering prayer. It is a form of prayer which is more about being in the presence of God than talking to God. It is about making time to be with this One in silence whom you love and who loves you. I have done it in groups in the past once or twice and always talked myself out of really committing to it because it was so challenging and I didn't think I did it "well enough." Then last fall someone I respected suggested it would be a good discipline for me to pursue and it occurred to me that I really wanted to try it. I realized that unless I made some commitment to it, I would never get more familiar with it. I also recognized that prayer is not about perfection but about my desire for God and God's desire for me. If you have ever tried

to do centering prayer you probably have experienced the challenges it poses—namely getting your own mind to quiet down long enough to be present to God. One of the tools used is a chosen word to focus on silently in your head that helps you stay centered on God’s presence. Also simply paying attention to your breathing is another way of focusing your mind. Here is an excerpt from my journal as I began this practice:

“I have begun to try doing centering prayer daily. So far it hasn’t gone well. Out of 10-15 minutes of it I might have an awareness of the presence of God for one or two minutes (and not in a row, but in a few second increments.) It seems practically impossible to keep my mind centered or focused in the least. I want to keep practicing this kind of prayer because I know it is something which takes time to feel comfortable with and to begin to offer up fruit. Right now I am just trying to begin it, to figure out the place, the time, the word, that will help me.”

This was a very early journal entry. Because after only a couple of weeks of engaging in this practice I did have a sense that it was bearing fruit, even with my extreme inability to focus. I had a couple of experiences at work with angry people in which I found myself to be less reactive, more solidly grounded, and able to respond with understanding. As I thought about these experiences, there was really nothing different in my life that explained my inner change except that I had been taking ten minutes a day to be conscious of the reality of God’s presence in and with me.

This continues to be a struggling practice for me. But one that I know is worth the struggle. It is not the only way I pray or necessarily the best way for many people, but I have come to believe that finding some way to pray which feeds our inner hunger for God is essential to the well-being of our spirit—both individually and collectively.

--Ruth Johnston

Faith Mennonite Church Council Meeting April 14th, 2010 @ FMC

Present: Scott Neal, Moderator; Arlene Holdeman, Secretary; Joetta Schlabach, Pastor; Glenn Geissinger, Trustees; Hermann Weinlick, Deacons; Melissa Hochstetler, Missions & Service; Kathleen Harder, Education; Jerry Janzen, Treasurer.

Absent: Worship and Fellowship commission representatives, Moderator-elect.

New Business.

Viewing of an MMA video, introduced by Joetta. MMA provides matching grants of \$250 per year for needs within member congregations. That amount can be increased through activities that promote MMA, which are reported on every quarter by the congregation’s MMA representative, in our case Teresa Wasick. MMA is changing its name to Everence. Dan Hagerty, MMA counselor for this region, will be in town April 30-May 1, and may be available to meet with individuals.

Appoint delegates for 2010 Central Plains Conference meeting—Scott. Nominated were Jerry Janzen, Leslie Minkler, Matthew Kinney, and DeeDee Stevens Neal as an alternate. Glenn moved and Melissa seconded that they be appointed. Carried. Matthew will be leading a workshop on Scripture reading at the conference and Scott will be the parliamentarian.

Consider Central Plains Conference Financial Assistance Request—Joetta. An article in *Scattered Seeds*, the conference periodical, discusses the financial straits of the conference, suggesting each church increase their contribution by 5%. Currently the budget is \$50,000 short, and the fiscal year ends at the end of April. Jerry said he sent FMC’s yearly contribution of \$6000 in March. Another 5% would be \$300 more, and that increase will be proposed for next year’s budget. **Additional action:** Joetta will put a notice in the midweek update about the current shortfall.

Discuss Scattered Seeds distribution strategy—Joetta. Past practice had been to receive only 12 copies, which were placed in the magazine rack in the back of the sanctuary. With the new format for the periodical, we were sent copies for each family in the church, which were distributed in the mailboxes. Council felt we didn’t need so many hard copies. **Action:** Joetta will inform Scattered Seeds to return to sending us our earlier 12 hard copies, and the church office will send out PDF files for people with computers.

Discuss creating a statement of values from FMC—Matthew. In Matthew’s absence, this was postponed.

Discuss establishment of marriage ceremony guidelines—Joetta. Joetta asked the council to discuss the question of blessing same sex unions. There have currently been no requests, but should it be processed by the congregation before a specific request is made? She said some clergy are refusing to sign state marriage

licenses for heterosexual couples if they can't for homosexual couples, only performing church blessings.

In MCUSA today pastors' credentials will come under review if they perform a same sex commitment ceremony. This has become a contentious issue in the Southwest Conference. Council wanted to know what would happen in the Central Plains Conference if Joetta would say she was open to performing same-sex ceremonies. Can FMC address this question without becoming bogged down and its energy depleted? Is this something to be pursued now? Who should decide? Should the council make a recommendation to the congregation?

Action: Look for more information on what other congregations are doing. Put on the agenda for the May meeting. Joetta will forward to council members a presentation by Loren Johns, New Testament professor at AMBS, in which he responds to Willard Swartley's book on homosexuality. Johns believes the work of the Spirit in the church today is leading the church to blessing these marriages.

Treasurer's report. The local budget income for February was \$10,557, and for March \$8,030. \$10,000 per month is needed to meet our budget, but Jerry said he is not worried. The Calvert fund is recovering nicely. \$12,500 in conference support was paid out in March.

Pastor's Report—Joetta. Church attendance continues to be strong—149 on Easter, bringing average attendance for the year so far to 94. The Zabriskie family is relocating from Pasadena, California.

She attended the Pastor/Spouse gathering over the past weekend where Loren Johns spoke on Anabaptist perspectives on Biblical interpretation.

She has agreed to write an article for *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology*, jointly published by Canadian Mennonite U and AMBS, about how the Bible has touched, or not touched, the congregation.

She has distributed info to area churches about the MMA Stewardship University.

Ministry Staff Person Kathleen Remund is working well—with STAR, VBS, Refugee resettlement. She will begin on planning a peace curriculum for post-VBS. There is a group of six who will be working with refugees. The newest wave of refugees are without family in the area.

Her upcoming schedule follows:

April 23-26 Goshen for Jacob's graduation (Greg Renstrom will preach)

May 9-14 vacation

May 15 Unity Task Group with Conference Council—Omaha (May 16, guest preacher)

June 24-27 CPMC

June 29-July 1 Interchurch Relations Biennial Consultation, North Newton, KS (approximate cost \$500, which they ask the congregation to assume if possible.) The rest of the meetings are conference calls. There have been a dozen applications for the advertised office staff position. Three will be interviewed.

Commission reports.

Missions and Service—Melissa. They met three weeks ago for an informational meeting with ISIAH. The MDS trip to New Orleans went well. They worked on 4-5 houses. Hermann Weinlick and Karen Wiebe participated in Day on the Hill. STAR needs to have 12 registered by June 1 to advance with plans. Four scholarships are available to help FMCers with enrollment costs.

Action: Council requests a newsletter report on the New Orleans trip

Trustees—Glenn. They plan to have a new administrative coordinator for the church office in place by the first week of May. There is now a working sink and water in the sacristy. The trustees toured through the church with Darrell, looking at heating, plumbing, electrical panels, etc. They are developing a list of prioritized projects to work on this year. Nikki will lead the sanctuary redecorating project. Mark and Glenn will themselves do all the repair projects they can in order to keep costs down. Families with young children have proposed to build a 4 by 8 foot raised-bed garden in front of the education wing to plant and raise veggies to help their kids learn and to share the produce with local food shelves. The trustees said yes, and the council agreed.

Action: Melissa volunteered seeds. Glenn will ask the young gardening families to write about their project for the newsletter.

Education—Kathleen. VBS planning is underway. Planning is ongoing for Children's Day. At their next meeting on May 4 they will discuss the council's proposal for more structure for children's music.

Deacons—Hermann. The deacons have met with the two people who recently joined the church and the one who was baptized.

--Arlene Holdeman, Secretary

Monthly Church Budget

	February	March	April
Total expenses	\$15,533	\$21,878*	\$14,359+
Total income	\$14,108	\$10,297	\$9,431
Monthly budget	\$12,775	\$12,775	\$12,775

*March expenditures included \$12,500 annual contribution to Central Plains Conference and Mennonite Church, USA.

+April expenditures included \$5000 annual insurance payment.

At one-third of the budget year our total income has been \$42,447.95 (including rental income), and total expenses \$62,199.55 (including our one-time annual payment of conference support). Total congregational giving has been \$33,320, about \$10,000 under budget for this point in the year.

What's happening here and there...

Interfaith Immigration Action Vigil, June 6

In October of 2009 the Minnesota Department of Public Safety signed a 287(g) agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), delegating authority to Minnesota DPS officers to enforce immigration laws. The 287(g) agreement is the same legal arrangement that set the stage for Arizona's Senate Bill 1070. Undocumented immigrants have since been detained alongside criminals in detention centers around the state. Since last October, the Interfaith Coalition on Immigration has been holding Faith Action vigils every first Sunday of the month from 2:30-3:00 at the Ramsey County Detention Center (425 Grove Street, St. Paul). The Faith Action on June 6 will be sponsored by Faith Mennonite Church and the Missio Dei community. Please join us to call attention to the injustice of an enforcement-only approach to the immigration dilemma.

-- Eric Kasper

Welcome A Stranger, Inspire Hope: Refugee Sponsorship

For the first time in nearly a decade, Minnesota is welcoming refugees without family or friends in Minnesota. These "free case" refugees need extra support for tasks like finding an apartment, registering

their children for school, going to the grocery store, and connecting to their new community. The Minnesota Council of Churches' Refugee Services program is set up to support new arrivals, but is not able to provide social support and friendship in the same way as faith groups, who are uniquely gifted in offering hospitality.

Refugee Services is currently awaiting the arrival of 12 Somali families and is interested in partnering specifically with South Minneapolis/Seward churches to support these families. Refugee Services provides families with caseworkers to assist them with the basics of finding an apartment, jobs and schools, but needs help from faith communities to support families in these processes. Refugee Services requests sponsoring groups organize a 6-8 person committee around five needs areas: Social Support, Resources, Transportation, Employment and Housing, appointing a contact person for each of the five areas and a chairperson to oversee. Refugee Services facilitates monthly committee meetings and weekly phone check-ins with the chairperson to provide guidance and resources, including interpretative services when needed, from the pre-arrival planning stage to the closing ceremony at the end of four months.

Members within the Community of St. Martin have indicated an interest in partnering with Faith Mennonite to sponsor a family. In addition, the MN Council of Churches offers a program "Taking Root" which brings together Christian and Muslim faith groups to sponsor a refugee family. With the Seward neighborhood being home to an established Somali community, we have a unique opportunity to offer support to a Somali family wanting to make a new home here.

Refugee Services has offered alternative ways to get involved such as providing a welcome basket to new families, or participating in a one-day apartment set up. They would also be happy to connect us with a member of a past sponsoring group to share their experiences and answer questions if we want to learn more about sponsoring a family. Please talk with Kathleen Remund (minstaff@faithmennonite.org) or Karen Wiebe (wiebedennismn@gmail.com) to get more information.

News from Central Plains Mennonite Conference

Executive Committee announces next Executive Conference Minister. It is with gratitude to God and enthusiasm that we announce the hiring of David Boshart as the new executive conference minister for Central Plains Mennonite Conference. David is well acquainted with the issues facing Central Plains, having

pastored within the conference for over 20 years, most recently at West Union Mennonite Church in Parnell, Iowa. David is an articulate, visionary leader; a theologian firmly committed to Mennonite Anabaptist faith; and a profound missional thinker. David is also the scheduled keynote speaker for Central Plains Annual Meeting June 24-27 in Mt. Lake, Minnesota. He is married to Conference Youth Minister Shana Peachey Boshart; they have three grown sons and one granddaughter. Plans are for David to begin with conference September 1. We expect to retain the office in Freeman, South Dakota, as well as the services of Monica Clem, office manager, at this time.

2009-2010 Financial Wrap-Up. CPMC completed another fiscal year on April 30. For the month of April, income totaled \$67,669.53. Expenses were much less for April at \$44,164.34. This much-appreciated surplus of \$23,505.19 provided a good push toward breaking even for the fiscal year. Total income for the year was \$435,521.69 (90% of our anticipated budget of \$480,326). Expenses totaled \$438,566.41 (91% of our anticipated budget). As a result, the year closed with a deficit of \$3,045.12.

Conference Council endorses work of Unity Task Group. On May 19, Conference Moderator Diane Zaerr Brenneman wrote to CPMC delegates: I recently was blessed to witness the Holy Spirit at work in Central Plains conference. Twenty conference leaders gathered in an upper room at Turning Point, Omaha, Nebraska, to hear the recommendation from the Unity Task Group and its year of work.

You may remember that the intention to form this group was shared at last summer's annual meeting, with the goal of increasing the unity of the conference even when we disagree and to foster a way of living together that empowers our fellowship, worship and mission, rather than being about an absorbing focus on differences. Last fall, Conference Council intentionally chose members who represented the broad range of beliefs about homosexuality, as well as geographic and gender diversity. The group met twice at Manson, and then worked electronically this spring. We enlisted the services of John Gehm from RESTORE in Sioux Falls as group facilitator. You will have a chance to meet John this summer at annual meeting.

Members of the task group shared the holy moments in their time together, and Conference Council witnessed the work of the Spirit among them. Scriptures that touched them during their work include Isaiah 41:19 I

am about to do a new thing.. And Colossians 3:17 Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.... And the theme verse that leads the recommendation from John 17, May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Conference Council also experienced the moving of the Holy Spirit in this work, and with gratitude to God, will bring the attached recommendation as an action to annual meeting in Mountain Lake, June 24-27. The recommendation to delegates supports and calls for the entire recommendation as a unit as each step arises from and supports the other. This means the action will include:

1. Four central affirmations define our membership in the conference.
2. Conference Council's intentions to organize a process that fosters understanding between diverse churches in our number.
3. For a period of three years, reserve the use of the variance policy for serious violations of number 1 above, followed by a review of conference policies to determine future direction.
4. Acknowledge that the variance policy, as it has been applied to St. Paul Mennonite Fellowship, has not achieved its redemptive goal and reinstate St Paul to full membership with the hope of restoring open conversation and moving our conference toward a unity of the Spirit.

Conference Council now prayerfully sends this recommended action to delegates for your discernment with your congregation. At annual meeting, discernment time around tables is planned. Please join your conference leaders in prayer for the blessing of the Holy Spirit in a fresh way as we submit ourselves to the risk of being in relationship with each other.

The Practice of Sabbath – June 26

Summer is a Sabbath time for many of us: we break out of certain routines, take time for vacation, leave our homes to seek solace in the wilderness, attend family reunions. The point of all of these activities is renewal, to re-energize us for our life at home and in the world.

We have a similarly renewing tradition at the very center of our Judeo-Christian heritage. It is the weekly practice of Sabbath. It derives from the Genesis 1 story

of creation where God works on six days to bring the world into being and then rests on the seventh. While Sabbath observance remains an important element in most Jewish communities, it has steadily eroded within many Christian churches. Few of us know what it means, or how life-giving it might be, to truly rest from all work one day each week.

The Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls have dedicated their community house at 3228 Portland Avenue South to the recovery of Sabbath. They offer their home as a place of prayer in the city, and several times each year offer a day for people to explore the roots and the practice of Sabbath. On Saturday, June 26, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. they will offer a "Day of Sabbath." In the morning Barbra Wiener of the Shir Tikvah Congregation, a reform synagogue, and her sister Phyllis, will present "The Practice of Sabbath." In the afternoon Sr. Joan Tubberty will give a presentation on Centering Prayer. The cost for the day is \$25, which includes lunch. To register call 612-822-2623 or email sabbathhouse@fslf.org at least one week before the program date.

Wayne Muller, author of *Sabbath*, wrote: "Remember the Sabbath' means Remember that everything that you have received is a blessing. Remember to delight in your life, in the fruits of your labor. Remember to stop and offer thanks for the wonder of it."

The deadline for July newsletter items is noon, Wednesday, June 23rd.

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.

Ripening

The longer we are together
the larger death grows around us.
How many we know by now
who are dead! We, who were young,
now count the cost of having been.
And yet as we know the dead
we grow familiar with the world.
We, who were young and loved each other
ignorantly, now come to know
each other in love, married
by what we have done, as much
as by what we intend. Our hair
turns white with our ripening
as though to fly away in some
coming wind, bearing the seed
of what we know. It was bitter to learn
that we come to death as we come
to love, bitter to face
the just and solving welcome
that death prepares. But that is bitter
only to the ignorant, who pray
it will not happen. Having come
the bitter way to better prayer, we have
the sweetness of ripening. How sweet
to know you by the signs of this world!

Wendell Berry