

Faith Connection

October 2015

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...

First, a recent experience of privilege: Last week, at the request of ISAIAH, I joined a group of faith leaders on the steps of the Minneapolis City Hall for a press conference to express support for greater protection and benefits, such as paid sick leave, for wage earners. I took the light rail from Franklin Station so I wouldn't have to deal with parking, and wanting to travel lightly, I took only my driver's license and what I thought was my Metro Transit Go-To card. However, when I swiped my card at the light rail platform, I discovered I had grabbed my Car-2-Go card instead. Given the time constraint, I decided to take my chances and get on the train without paying. I mentally rehearsed what I would say if a transit police came in to verify payment. I was dressed in black to look like a member of the clergy(!) and assumed I would be treated with respect. No police showed up so when I emerged from the train I shared my story with Quaker friend Liz Oppenheimer, who was arriving at the same time. As I concluded my story of thinking how I would ask the transit police for mercy, she said, "And you should make sure to include that you hope they'll have the same mercy for the young person of color wearing a hoodie."

Her words had a sting, for in that moment I realized that I had been navigating that experience as a person of privilege. I had no fear of getting caught, of my ability to pay a fine if it were given, or of being believed by the police. Yet, I had just broken the law and I would do so again when I re-boarded the train to return to Franklin Station. But on my return trip I was rehearsing another response. This time, if the police would have appeared, I would have said something like: "Officer, I am a criminal. I boarded without paying the fare. Please treat me as you would treat someone who isn't professionally dressed and looks like they might not have the cash on hand to pay the fare." The police didn't appear, but I'm grateful to my friend Liz for turning this into a teachable moment.

Second, some thoughts on trust. Two weeks ago Adam Nussbaum, pastor of Shalom Mennonite Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, preached in our Psalms series about trust. Using Psalm 37 as his text, he highlighted the psalmist's call to *pray and wait* instead of our customary human response to fret in the face of uncertainty or threat. This year has been a year for our congregation to grow in trust as we've prayed and waited for the outcome of the co-pastor search process. Given the confidential nature of the work of a search committee, we needed to trust that they were working as quickly as they could within constraints beyond their control, such as waiting for applications to work their way through the denominational process. I am grateful for Katie Cuffey's lead in inviting the congregation to prayer during this time. Now that we are at the stage of considering a candidate and anticipating the actual transition to team ministry, the need for trust continues. All transitions include bumps and discomfort as things get rearranged to create a new reality. So keep "a-prayin' and a-waitin'"! As Isaiah wrote: "It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God for whom we have waited, so that God might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in God's salvation" (25:9).

Finally, a word about remembering. In many churches, November, which opens with the observance of All Saints/All Souls Day, is a month of remembrance, a time to recall especially those who have died in the past year, but more broadly to reflect on the whole "cloud of witnesses" who shaped us during their lives and who continue to comfort us through our memories of them. During the month of November we will have the "memory cloth" on our front table. Even if you do not have a name to add this year, I invite all of us to spend some time at the table, reading the names and giving thanks for the people who have blessed our lives.

--Joetta Schlabach

What's happening at FMC...

Search Committee Recommends Co-Pastor Candidate

Ry Siggelkow has accepted the Co-Pastor Search Committee's invitation to candidate at Faith Mennonite Church the weekend of October 31 - November 1. Ry will meet with various groups/committees that weekend and he will preach during the Sunday morning worship service on Sunday, November 1.

Following the co-pastor candidating process on October 31-November 1, we will hold a **special congregational meeting on Sunday, November 8 at 12:15 p.m.**, during which members will vote to determine whether to proceed with hiring Ry Sigglekow to be Faith Mennonite's co-pastor. According to the church's constitution, members and associate members are eligible to vote. Child care/children's activities will be offered during the brief meeting for all nursery through primary-aged children

We will offer the option of absentee voting prior to the congregational meeting for those who will not be available to vote on November 8. Absentee ballots can mailed to the church office or be dropped through the mail slot next to the education/office wing entrance between Sunday, November 1 and Saturday, November 7. Absentee ballots should be in a sealed envelope addressed to: Wendy Brunner, moderator, Faith Mennonite Church, 2720 E 22nd Street, Minneapolis, 55406. Ballots can simply say "yes" or "no."

--*Kathleen Harder, Chair, Co-pastor Search Committee; Wendy Brunner, FMC Church Council Moderator*

Canadian Musical Duo and Storyteller Coming on November 8

Whether or not you are able to attend the November 7 fundraising event for Mennonite Central Committee, we will be able to enjoy the guest musicians and speaker from that event during our worship on November 8. The popular Canadian musical duo Kim Thiessen and Darryl Neustadter Barg, and story-teller Abe Janzen, will share music and stories in our morning worship. Thiessen and Neustadter Barg have raised more than \$700,000 for MCC during the past decade through CD sales and concert appearances. Janzen, the executive director of MCC-Alberta, has worked internationally and will tell stories about MCC's efforts to break down walls, both literal and figurative, that separate people from each

other and represent barriers to Christ's Kingdom on earth. MCC workers seek to replace those barriers with communities of mutual respect and support.

An Invitation from Shirley Leckie Reed and Maria Gabrielle Swora

On Sunday night, November 22, I and my daughter Maria, are hosting a "Welcome Back to the Twin Cities" event for my son and daughter-in-law, Mathew and Becky Swora. Faith Mennonite Church is the church where they first became Mennonites. Mathew went on to become the pastor of Emmanuel Mennonite Church and members of his former congregation will attend this event. He is presently the pastor of Zion Mennonite Church in Hubbard, Oregon.

Even if you never met Pastor Mathew Swora this welcome home will be an opportunity for members of Faith Mennonite to mingle with members of Emmanuel Mennonite. In that spirit Maria and I are extending an invitation to all members of Faith Mennonite Church. Time: 5 to 7 pm; Place: 808 Berry Street Apartments, St. Paul in the Events Room on the First Floor,. Refreshments will be served. RSVP: 407-54-8401 or slreed4878@gmail.com.



If you or a family member has a birthday in November, pastor Joetta invites you to her home, 248 Aurora Ave., St. Paul, for brunch on November 14th. (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.

November
Birthday
Brunch

Saturday,
November
14th
9:30-11
a.m.

Comings and Goings

We are always grateful when people visit and/or stay awhile. Our most recent newcomers include:

- **Doug Addleman**
- **Terra Wiens**
- **Hayley Brooks**
- **Lea Graber**

Solar Garden Project Delayed

Earlier this year the Community of St. Martin contributed \$900 to Faith Mennonite, to be forwarded to the Solar Gardens Project to reserve space in the planned Solar garden, with an expectation that eventually CSM will contribute another approximate \$2100 to Faith Mennonite to complete the “buy-in” into the program. A recent email from CSM friend Dave Gagne informed us of a legal situation surrounding the project, reported in a November 8 Star Tribune article, that is causing delays and may end up in a prolonged court process. The expectation was that once the project gets underway, Faith Mennonite Church would see a reduction in electricity costs as a result of this project. But for now the whole project seems indefinitely delayed. Following is an excerpt from the Strib article, by David Shaffer, Star Tribune:

“Sunrise Energy Ventures, a solar power developer that intended to build large-scale projects with industry leader SolarCity, is posed to appeal Minnesota utility regulators’ recent imposed size limits. Such a move, which would be filed with the state Appeals Court, likely would take months, bringing further uncertainty to the program.

“ ‘I think we will likely appeal,’ said Dean Leischow, managing director of Minnetonka-based Sunrise Energy.

“Leischow was reacting to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission’s 4-0 vote Wednesday not to reconsider its June decision allowing no more than five solar gardens per site. Sunrise, which wants to build large footprint solar parks, opposed the size limits which Xcel sought after getting a flood of applications to build big, ground-mounted solar clusters on the fringe of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Spirituality journal...

My husband left home extra-early one morning last week. While I was still sleeping, our eight year old son ran to him at the front door as he was about to leave, grabbed his waist in a hug, and said, “I won’t let you go until you give me ten kisses!” My husband happily complied with this demand, and went on his way to work.

When I heard this story later, I thought about Jacob. The man who stole his brother’s blessing from their father

and later, after a night of wrestling, insisted on a blessing from God. In looking at these texts again, it is Esau, from whom the blessing was forever stolen, whose words broke through to my heart. When he realizes his father won’t bless him, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?” “Have you only one blessing, Father? Bless me also, Father!” And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.’

Our son wanted to be blessed with kisses, and he wasn’t about to let go until he got them. We are all starving to be blessed. The anger and sadness, fear and loneliness we feel could often be cut in half by one gesture of love, one sign of blessing from another.

Loving God,

We are greatly relieved to know you have more than one blessing to give. Thank you for blessing each of our lives with everything we have that is good. You come to us in mountain top moments and in the darkest desperation of night. You hold us in your hands, bless us with your presence, and redeem us with your love. May we each, in our own way, our own place, and our own time, bless those around us who need a sign that someone cares. In Christ’s name we pray, Amen.

--Ruth Johnston

What’s happening here and there...

Everence Webinars

There are two webinar information sessions that are available to us in November. To register, contact Melissa Short: melissa.short@everence.com, (800) 222-5054; or online at everence.com/direct. For more information call Thaine Dirks.

Charitable gift annuities webinar: Wednesday, November 18

Your choice: 2 or 8 p.m. (Eastern Daylight Time)
Learn how you can:

- Make a significant gift to your church or charity and receive payments for life
- Give appreciated assets, such as mutual funds, and bypass capital gains taxes so more can go to your church or charity
- Receive an immediate income tax deduction
- Get competitive rates compared with CDs

Estate Planning Basics: Thursday, November 12

Your choice: 2 or 8 p.m. (Eastern Daylight Time)

We'll discuss:

- Minimizing taxes while maximizing what goes to your heirs or charity
- How planning can keep you in control of who gets what
- How you can direct medical and end of life decisions

Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service on November 24

For the past four years FMC has participated with several neighboring churches in a joint ecumenical Thanksgiving Service on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. This year's service will be at 7 p.m. on November 24 at the Prospect Park United Methodist Church, 22 SE Orlin Avenue, Minneapolis. Watch for more details, including an invitation to sing in a choir that will rehearse one time—just before the service. The planning group is highly creative and also prepares a very moving service. We hope you can come!

Minnesota Faith Summit to Prevent Gun Violence

The Summit will bring together leaders of all faiths across Minnesota to join together to learn, discuss, pray, and act to prevent bloodshed.

This is the kick-off event to an organized effort to pass criminal-background-check legislation in Minnesota. Eighteen other states have passed this legislation and have seen significant reductions in the level of gun violence. The event is sponsored by Everytown for Gun Safety, a nonprofit organization that takes a public-health approach to the problem of gun violence. As such, it is supportive of gun rights, but advocates that rights also carry responsibilities, including making sure that as a society, we keep guns out of the hands of people who will misuse them.

The Summit will provide an opportunity to learn about the public-health approach to reducing gun violence from Dr. Cassandra Crifasi, Assistant Scientist with The Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research. A representative of Everytown will explain what criminal background checks are and the experience of other states that have legislated them. There will be ample time for Q & A. We will also hear from and be able to interact with survivors to deepen our understanding of gun violence and how devastating it is for those who lose a loved one or survive a shooting.

The Summit is on November 12 (Thursday), from 6 to 9 pm at Richfield Lutheran Church in South Minneapolis. Dinner will be provided.

To attend the event, you need to pre-register at act.everytown.org/signup/mn-faith-summit/.

Winter Clothing Urgently Needed for Refugees

Temperatures are forecasted to drop in the coming weeks, and refugees from warm climates do not own any winter coats or accessories. Because of this, we regularly bring warm clothes directly to the airport when we greet new arrivals. Please help us share a WARM welcome with new refugees by donating new or gently used warm coats, hats, mittens, and gloves. We are especially in need of large boys' sizes and small-medium adult coats. Donations can be brought to the Church Center at 122 West Franklin Ave, Minneapolis 55404. Questions? Email: rsvolunteers@mchurches.org or call at (612) 230-3219.

Wind in the Willows at FMC

A special retirement project of Greg Renstrom has been the creation of the Riverbank Players, a readers' theater ensemble that performs portions of the beloved book *Wind in the Willows*. The Riverbank Players have performed in churches, school, and public libraries and now they will bring their program to Faith Mennonite Church in a program for the whole family to be held in the sanctuary at 4 p.m. on Sunday, November 22. The one-hour program will be followed by a brief time of fellowship and then anyone who wishes to stay, may join the Community of St. Martin education hour when Greg will talk about his interest in, and the importance of, this literary work. The event is free and open to the public. Invite your friends for a heart-warming program on a cool fall evening.

The deadline for December newsletter items is noon, Monday, November 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.

