

Faith Connection

October 2012

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...

On September 23 during our morning worship, Tyler Zabriskie shared a response to the sermon in which he spoke of his early adult experience living with an Anglican bishop and his wife in Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo. Tyler's bishop friend had been part of the East African Revival, which was characterized by the widespread practice of confession. Tyler said that during the family's daily devotional time after dinner, it was not uncommon for the bishop to confess impatience or dissatisfaction he may have felt toward members of his family or with Tyler. Tyler had never experienced this kind of honesty, especially from an esteemed leader.

It's not surprising that such action might ignite a revival! It takes great humility and vulnerability to own up to one's shortcomings and to ask forgiveness of others. In our adult education session that followed, I invited our circle groups to begin their conversation by making a confession to each other. I sensed a bit of uneasiness and heard a few deep breaths. But then people began to talk. In the circle I was in, we shared some very personal things we probably wouldn't have offered during our regular fellowship time conversations. The thing that I shared—having walked away from someone who asked for money the night before—had kept me awake during the night. Now I was able to unburden this feeling of failure and indifference. Someone else shared a similar experience that had happened that very morning. Another confessed being drawn into the divisive, polarized fray of the election season. Others shared challenges with colleagues and the struggle to take the extra time that some work assignments demand because of special needs of people.

Our topic for the morning was "living truthfully." In very short order we had begun to practice the first step of truthful living—being vulnerable with one another and sharing something that we weren't proud of. In

doing so, we realized that we were not alone. Further, we were able to care more deeply for one another as we realized this fact, and we were able to relieve ourselves of carrying a burden.

I have enjoyed the Sunday morning adult education conversations we've had about the practices that strengthen community: gratitude, promise keeping, truth-telling, and hospitality. I'm looking forward to the relaxed atmosphere of the fall retreat at Camp St. Croix next weekend to continue these conversations. For those who are unable to join us, or who haven't been able to participate in the Sunday morning discussions, I encourage you to find time over a meal or coffee to get better acquainted with others at FMC by venturing into this topic. A good place to begin is with a confession!

--Joetta Schlabach

What's happening at FMC...

Ministry Staff Update

There has been a lot of activity in the church building over the past two weeks or so. One Voice Mixed Chorus, some 100 voices strong, has descended on FMC on Monday evenings for rehearsals. The sanctuary and education wing are filled with energy and song. Also, last Saturday the choir used the church as a retreat space for rehearsing as well as for holding a MN United for all Families "conversation" training afterwards. One Voice's concert in the FMC sanctuary, on the theme of "And Justice for All," is coming up on October 13—don't miss it!

Also in the past week Isaiah has been busy moving to their new, expanded offices on the corner of University and Raymond in St. Paul. So we are taking the opportunity to have some renovation work done on the walls in the lower level of the education wing, and Bruce Brunner is heading up some additional painting, etc. work at the end of the week. One of our new

tenants is moving in already next week—the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, “a nonprofit working to support strong, community rooted, environmentally sound and equitable local economies.”

We had a small good-bye party for the Isaiah staff this past Monday in the chapel. I was struck by the comments of Isaiah executive director Doran Shrantz, who spoke movingly about her work with Isaiah over the years, beginning as an intern. She specifically commented on all of the ideas and organizing energy in the past decade that had been generated out of the room we were sitting in. It had never occurred to me to think of our humble, cement-construction Mennonite chapel room as the center of organizing for social change here in the Twin Cities, but from Isaiah’s perspective, it has been!

--Phil Stoltzfus

Fall Soup Groups are Back!

Joan Kreider will host the first weekly Soup Group on Monday, October 1. Soup Group is an opportunity for our church community to come together to share a meal on a regular basis. A simple soup and bread meal provides a setting for informal conversation. This is a great opportunity to invite a friend who has never visited our church. Joan will host the group at her home, 2162 Carroll Ave., St. Paul, at 6:00 p.m. Please RSVP to Joan today (September 30) if you plan to attend: Joan.E.Kreider@gmail.com or 651-645-2660. For future weeks, we are looking for a volunteer to sign up to host at your home or at the church, and/or prepare a simple soup and bread meal. Times are the first Monday, second Tuesday, third Wednesday, and fourth Thursday of each month. A sign-up sheet can be found in the fellowship area or speak with Cleta Roth Gingerich.

--The Deacons

October 7 Worship at Camp St. Croix

We are pleased that about 65 people, including our speaker and childcare providers, will attend the Fall Retreat next weekend. The weekend will culminate with a worship time on Sunday morning that will be a Celebration of Community. Our resource person for the weekend, Phil Lindell Detweiler, will preach. Worship will begin at our regular 9:30 time and everyone is welcome to join us, even if you are not attending other parts of the retreat. The camp is located at 532 County Road F, Hudson, WI 54016, about a 30-minute drive from Faith Mennonite Church. Come join us! http://www.ymcatwincities.org/camps/camp_st_croix/

Gifts Discernment Process Begins for 2013

Each fall the Gifts Discernment Committee works with the congregation to affirm and call out leaders and volunteers to fill the variety of roles in our church for the coming year. This year’s committee is Kristin Green, Shelly Hendricks, Gregg Richardson, and Joetta Schlabach. Gifts Discernment forms will be distributed at the fall retreat and in church mail boxes for those who will not be at retreat. We will collect the completed forms during three Sundays in October, culminating on October 21. We invite your prayerful participation as you consider how God might be leading you to be involved, and as you take the opportunity to affirm the gifts of others. Our community depends on the generous participation of everyone and we value the gifts of each.

-- Gifts Discernment Committee

New Adult Christian Education Classes for Late Fall

The following Adult Christian Education classes will begin meeting again on Sunday, October 14:

Parenting Class will continue to meet this fall. Annette Semanchin Jones will coordinate the class.

Theological Explorations will choose to study one of the following three books: (Please cast your vote on the sheet on the back table.)

- *The New Jim Crow*, by Michelle Alexander— Iris de Leon-Hartshorn, director for transformative peacemaking for Mennonite Church USA, recommends this book. Alexander “considers the evidence and concludes that our prison system is a unique form of social control, much like slavery and Jim Crow, the systems it has replaced,” according to one reviewer. As followers of Jesus committed to undoing racism and advocating on behalf of the vulnerable, this book is a call to action and compassion (text excerpted from a 6/12/2012 Mennonite Church USA publication).
- *Healing the Heart of Democracy*, by Parker J. Palmer—Krista Tippet, host, American Public Media’s Being, writes “The book we need for recovering the heart—the very core—of our selves and our democracy.”
- *Electing Not to Vote*, edited by Ted Lewis— The essays in this book raise issues that are often not discussed. Articles relevant to patriotism will also be read and discussed.

Living into Community will focus on the 150th Anniversary of the Dakota Indian War. Donna Minter will facilitate. Please speak with her if you would like a copy of the course book.

--*Kathleen Harder*



If you or a family member has a birthday in October, pastor Joetta invites you to her home, 248 Aurora Ave., St. Paul, for brunch on October 20th. (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.

*October
Birthday
Brunch
Saturday
October
20
9:30-11
a.m.*

Comings and Goings...

We extend a warm welcome to those who have recently visited or begun attending worship:

- **Russell, Camille** and **Hannah Adrian**. Russell is beginning a PhD program in music at the U of M.
- **Steve Wall**, who first attended in summer 2011, is with us again.

Naing Po, Hsar Hel (pronounced Sah Heh), **Lah Ku Shee**, and **Eh Ku Pah**, recently moved to St. Paul from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. They attended a Mennonite Church there and were glad to make a connection here.

Congratulations! to **Casey** and **Shawn Englund-Helmeke** who were married at Faith Mennonite Church on September 2. We wish God's blessing on their life together.

...and to **Corey** and **Karenza Mamchuk** who welcomed **Annika Macy** into their lives on September 26. We give thanks for her safe arrival and look forward to being part of the "village" that provides care and nurture as she grows.

Seven from FMC Participate in First CPMC Regional Discussion

On Saturday, September 29, Jerry Janzen, Donna Minter, Joetta Schlabach and Karen Wiebe shared the FMC story of welcome for lgbt persons, which led to the clarification of our marriage guidelines adopted earlier this year. Orv Gingerich, Joan Kreider, and Phil Stoltzfus represented the congregation in the listening and conversation process that followed. They joined participants from Bethel Mennonite-Mountain Lake, Emmanuel Mennonite, Hmong Mennonite, Missio Dei, Third Way, Rochester Mennonite, and Shalom Mennonite-Eau Claire. In addition, members of the Pastoral Leadership Committee and the Conference Board were present as observers.

Participants will present a debriefing session on Thursday, October 4, at 7:30 p.m., following the weekly 30-minute prayer time. Anyone is welcome to attend this session, which will be held in the chapel.

-- *Joetta Schlabach*

What's happening here and there...

Taizé Community Prayer

For several years Cabrini Catholic Church and Prospect Park United Methodist Church have jointly hosted a series of Taizé prayer services during the fall, winter, and spring months. This year they are changing the format, shifting from Wednesday to Friday night to allow for a more relaxed time. The evening will include a simple meal and a time of biblical reflection using *Lectio Divina* (a way of listening with the heart), before transitioning into the Taizé service of music, readings and silence. The meal and reflection will begin at 6:30, following by Taizé prayer at 7:30. The first date is Friday, October 26 and will be held at Cabrini. A second date is set for Friday, December 7, at Prospect Park UMC. They welcome the participation of FMC people.

-- *Joetta Schlabach*

The deadline for November newsletter items is noon, Wednesday, October 24th.

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.