

# 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...**

This week feels like fall! Our annual church retreat at Camp St. Croix last weekend, when we enjoyed more summer-like weather, felt like a perfect ending to summer. And the lunar eclipse and blood moon that followed on Sunday evening were icing on the cake.

The retreat planning group (Wendy Brunner, Melissa Hochstetler, Leslie Minkler, and Karen Wiebe) led us in a reflective activity using Psalm 104 on Saturday morning. This Psalm celebrates God as Creator and contemplates the various parts of creation. We will hear parts of this psalm again on Sunday, October 4, and you will find some of the creative re-writing of this Psalm that we did at retreat later in this newsletter (p. 3-4).

We use a portion of a Psalm on most Sunday mornings as our Call to Worship. The many words of praise in the Psalms lend themselves to this use. But Psalms are much more than praise. As poetry, they give voice to all aspects of the human condition: gratitude for abundance, pleas for sufficiency and protection, lamentation and despair, anger and rage.

After spending our summer worship exploring the parables (Stories Jesus Told), the Worship Commission has decided to focus our fall worship on the Psalms (Prayers Jesus Prayed). In the gospel, Jesus quotes from the Psalms more than any other part of the Hebrew scriptures, indicating his deep familiarity with them. While we tend to read the Psalms silently in our personal devotional times, or just a few verses in corporate worship, our spiritual ancestors—and some ongoing religious communities such as the Benedictines—sing and pray whole Psalms several times a day. The repetitive singing and recitation imbed the words and images in our psyches, minds, and hearts.

As we continue through this time of transition in the life of our congregation, anticipating the addition of a half-time co-pastor, I encourage us to turn to the Psalms as a

guide to prayer. Let them aid us in expressing our anticipation, our fears and impatience of not knowing what is coming next, and our trust that “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (46:1) and “When you [God] send forth your Spirit/breath...you renew the face of the ground” (104:30).

--Joetta Schlabach

## **Ministry staff report...**

With the ending of the Ministry Staff position, I thought I'd take the opportunity to look back over some of the things we accomplished over the past four years. A central task of mine was working with the Missions and Service Commission to promote activities which connect the life of the church to our community. This has involved thinking strategically about which organizations we would support financially, and promoting avenues for the church and church members to be involved with community partners in an ongoing way, from Community Emergency Service food drives, to planning detention center vigils for the Interfaith Coalition on Immigration, to collaboration with the emerging Shalom congregation (Eau Claire), to connection to our Mennonite mission and service workers around the world.

I've been particularly encouraged by the guest speakers we've been able to arrange at the church on pressing public policy issues over the past few years: Occupy Homes Minnesota, Discussions that Encounter anti-racism work, access to MNsure, the Taliban in Afghanistan, Dakota land recovery, interfaith dialogue, and Black Lives Matter. Through the Minnesota Council of Churches, we organized a Respectful Conversation on Guns evening for community members at Matthews Center. Other organizations I've had some collaboration with: CTUL (Center for Workers United in Struggle), MCC, CPT, Saint Paul Interfaith Network, and Longfellow Faith Forum.

We promoted peace and justice concerns through co-leading 20-hour Creating a Culture of Peace nonviolence trainings at the church—involving not only people within the congregation, but others from around the Twin Cities and even out of state. We continue to support STAR trainings, as well as Donna Minter's monthly peacebuilding film series at the church (which we advertise in the *Southside Pride*). Collaboration with the Mennonite Worker has taken many forms, such as co-sponsoring evening community meals at the church for parts of two years, as well as Thanksgiving meals and fundraisers for the opening of the Simone Weil House.

We sponsor arts events, such as concerts by visiting college choirs and the Summer Singers, the Seward Art Crawl and accompanying Community Sing in December, benefit concerts for neighborhood restorative justice work, periodic ecumenical Taizé services, and many rehearsals by neighborhood theater groups. In the early spring, some two months of my time was typically taken up with environmental concerns—planning and putting on the Neighborhood Sustainability Fair, which we started in 2011 and has now gone four years in a row. This involves FMC collaboration with 20-30 community organizations each year.

For parts of two years around 2012-2014, I helped us start up our junior youth program at FMC. This involved working with our kids (those both attending on Sunday mornings and not attending) to plan group-building activities, such as a tubing expedition and roller skating evening, and service projects, such as packing vegetables at Second Harvest Heartland and clearing leaves from the street in the fall. We have also pulled together an occasional planning committee which has looked at, for example, our long-term strategy for service, Wilderness Wind, and church convention trips for our growing youth group.

In relation to that part of my work that has involved administrative support for the church, I have managed short-term renters of our church space, such as one fall when we provided rehearsal and concert space for One Voice Chorus, this summer when we provided space for the Woody Harrelson film crew, and countless times Joetta and I have worked with congregations and faith groups (e.g., Oromo, Ethiopian, African American, Walker UMC, many overnight youth groups) who had a need for affordable meeting places. In the church office, I helped change over our digital processes to new systems, such as our email and listserv interfaces through Gmail, new online Google calendars, church directory management, OneDrive cloud capabilities, and

the rebuilding of our church website on the WordPress platform through Mennonite.net. Care of the building has taken many forms, from micro-managing our thermostat settings to attending to things that break.

Although my Ministry Staff work has by design been explicitly defined as non-pastoral ministry related, I have nevertheless felt a sense of vocation for what we've done and have been grateful for the opportunity, as a theologian, to serve the congregation—helping to build a robust, progressive Anabaptist presence in the Twin Cities.

--Phil Stoltzfus

## **What's happening at FMC...**

### **Fall Adult Education News**

Our fall classes will begin October 4 and continue through December 20 (no class meeting on November 29, Thanksgiving).

Before moving to the new book and topic for this fall's Adult Ed class, the class which read the book *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Conversations on Creation, Land Justice and Life Together*, will meet on October 4 to conclude their discussion from the spring. On October 11 we will have a talk back time with Elaine Enns who will be preaching that morning. She will be sharing about barriers within her Canadian Prairie Settler Mennonite community in building relationships of solidarity with Indigenous neighbors.

October 18 will then begin a book study by James Cone, led by Ry Siggelkow. His comments: "In the spring our Adult Education group explored questions related to the legacy of settler colonialism and Christianity in the United States and Canada, engaging in a study of the book *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry*. In the fall we will transition to a new subject. In light of the growing awareness of the persistence of white supremacy and anti-black racism in this country, and in light of the Black Lives Matter movement, our group will explore the theological tradition known as 'black theology.' More specifically, we will read a book by James Cone, who is often called the 'father of black theology.' Our text for this fall will be James Cone's classic 1969 text, *Black Theology and Black Power*. We will read and study it with contemporary events in mind, as we seek to discern what God has given us to say and do as individuals and as a congregation. Please join us!"

Beginning October 4 a new class will meet. In October and November the theme in worship services will be the

Psalms. This class will complement the worship focus with a Bible study and devotional focused on the Psalms from an Anabaptist perspective. The book comes from a series from MennoMedia called *With the Word*. Each session involves study, discussion, and reflection before ending with seven short devotionals which you can read throughout your week. This class will have shared facilitation. The material is designed for groups or individuals, so if you are not able to join the class but would like to study on your own, please let us know to include you in the book order.

If you would like either book, *Black Theology and Black Power* or *With the Word: Psalms*, please add your name to the sign-up sheet at church or contact the church office at [faithmc@faithmennonite.org](mailto:faithmc@faithmennonite.org).

--Candace Lautt, Christian Education Commission

## Worship Commission Update

We are pleased, as fall begins, that we have some new and returning musicians to help lead and accompany our singing on Sunday morning. New to our roster are Miriam Augsburg, a middle school music teacher who recently completed her MA in choral conducting, and Jean Hendricks, a retired pastor and mother of Shelly Hendricks who with her husband Francis will be resident with us several months of the year. Gregg Richardson and Adam Nafziger are returning to the piano after some time out, and Jenny Wandersee, who faithfully coordinates our musician schedule, will make an appearance at the piano once this fall. We are grateful for our generous group of musicians!

In October we will have several guest preachers. Elaine Enns, one of the facilitators of the October 9-11 conference, "Identity, Theology & Place: Reinhabiting the Mississippi Watershed," will preach and participate in an adult education conversation on October 11. Adam Nussbaum, pastor of Shalom Mennonite Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, is scheduled to preach on October 18, as part of our congregational partnership agreement. We also anticipate the weekend visit of a co-pastor candidate, which might happen in October.

The worship commission is interested in receiving feedback regarding all aspects of worship. To this end, the commission is partnering with the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee to prepare a brief online survey that you should receive sometime during the month of October.

-- Worship Commission (Alisa Bardo-Martinson, John Hershey, Joan Kreider, chair, and Kristi Zabriskie)

## Orv and Clea "On the Camino"

Members-at-a-distance Orv and Clea Gingerich are on the "Camino de Santiago," a pilgrimage route in Spain. They are walking for five weeks between their volunteer positions as hosts of the Mennonite International Guest House in Washington, DC (past two years) and as interim country director for Mennonite Central Committee in Jos, Nigeria for a year beginning in November. They had intended to begin a blog of their time on the Camino and in Nigeria, but have not been able to begin yet. So here is a brief update that came via email:

*Day 10 of our Camino. We discovered blogspot does not work for us on our journey! We are in Santo Domingo de la Calzada for two days. Giving our feet a rest and tapping into electronics is a new adventure for us and probably will be our last one until we end the Camino October 20th. Our blog will begin after we arrive in Nigeria which will be November.*

*Everyday we walk and as we walk we pray for you and we enjoy the quietness of the journey. In the evening it is a different story. Two nights ago we slept in a hostel with 100 people. Bulgarians at our head, Germans at our feet, French above us, and Koreans and Swiss and Finnish scattered all around. I could hear the gentle snoring and breathing of all humanity! The last two nights we have been in a hotel run by Catholic Sisters. Quietness has been a gift! We attended Mass with a choral concert a capella in an 11<sup>th</sup> century Cathedral. This journey is a gift. Peace and love, Orv & Clea*

--Andi Kuenning

## Fall Retreat Participants Re-write Scripture

As we gathered at YMCA Camp St. Croix last weekend, September 25-27, to consider the theme "And It is Good! Hope for God's Creation," we had various resources close at hand: a beautiful camp setting overlooking the St. Croix River and a bible with Psalms (poems) that describe the beauty of creation. On Saturday morning our facilitators led us in an activity where we re-wrote portions of Psalm 104 to make the language reflect our setting. Here are a few of the revised verses.

### Psalm 104:10-11

You make springs gush forth in the valleys;  
rivers that flow under our cities and cascade into the Mississippi River,

giving drink to every wild squirrel, raccoon, bear,  
wolverine, moose and wolf,  
the wild deer and wild turkey quench their thirst.

#### **Psalm 104:16-17**

The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly,  
the white pines of Minnesota that God planted.  
In them the eagles build their nests;  
the squirrel has its home in the maple trees.

#### **Psalm 104:18-20**

The wide prairies are for the prairie dogs;  
the river caves are a refuge for the bats.  
You have made the Harvest Moon to mark our fall  
retreat;  
the sun knows its time for setting.  
Your eclipse turns the moon blood red;  
when the animals of the forest welcome us to camp.

#### **Psalm 104:21-23**

The squirrels chatter for their walnuts,  
seeking their food from God.  
When the sun sets they withdraw  
to lie down in their nests.  
People go out to their jobs and come home  
to their home tasks until the night is late.

#### **Psalm 104: 24-26**

O LORD, we are surrounded by your creation.  
In wisdom you have made them all;  
The lakes and rivers are many, full of  
fish, turtles, otters, beavers, snakes, birds and bugs.  
There go canoes and kayaks, and muskies, northern  
pike,  
carp, sturgeon, snapping turtles, bears and moose—  
All of this for them to play in.

### **Comings and Goings...**

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

**- Andrew, Rebecca, Evie, Ezra, Titus Wright**

### **Phil Stoltzfus Performs Mendelssohn**

Phil Stoltzfus has been a member of the Cannon Valley  
Regional Orchestra for a number of years. This fall he is  
the featured soloist for their fall concerts when he will  
play Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto. Concerts are  
on Saturday, October 24, 7:30 p.m. at Divine Mercy  
Church in Faribault and Sun, October 25, 3 p.m. at St.  
John's Hall, Northfield. Suggested admission is \$15 for  
adults; \$10 for students and seniors. Those who  
attended the fall retreat were treated to the third  
movement of the concerto during an evening talent  
show. Consensus says: "You don't want to miss this!"

### **FMCers Got Talent!**

Who among us does Scottish dance? Speed drawing?  
Skateboarding? Cool soccer moves? Sings recent show  
tunes? Recites poetry? Plays xylophone? Swoons with a  
guitar in hand? Does magic? Plays guitar and mountain  
dulcimer? Crunches numbers quicker than a calculator?  
MCs like the best of the television late night hosts?

These were just a few of the talents unveiled at the FMC  
talent show on the Saturday evening of the fall retreat.  
Sorry to have missed it? They'll probably be back at  
next year's retreat ... start planning now to attend! (Oh  
yes, and you might want to ask around about the  
centipede races!).

*--Retreat Committee (Kristin Green, Matthew  
Hendricks, Leslie Minkler, Adam Nafziger, Joetta  
Schlabach)*

### **Everence Introduction and Long-Term Care Webinars**

Faith Mennonite is part of a fraternal organization called  
Everence, which is offering a couple of free webinars in  
October. If you are interested here are the details:  
Understanding long-term care insurance: (October  
21 at 2 and 8 p.m.) In this webinar, designed for people  
ages 45-70, we'll discuss how long-term care insurance  
can help families cover the high cost of long term care –  
without wiping out their life savings. To register  
contact Melissa Short at 800-222-5054 ext 3392, or:  
melissa.short@everence.com.

Meet Everence: (October 27 at 2 and 8 p.m.) Designed  
for a general audience, this webinar will provide an  
overview of Everence; how our unique financial  
services organization helps people incorporate their  
faith values into their financial decisions through faith-  
based financial planning, charitable giving and grants  
and other benefits that help members in need. To  
register contact Melissa Short at 800-222-5054, or  
melissa.short@everence.com.

### **FMC Participant Feature: Andi Kuenning**

Andi Kuenning's parents were active not only in peace  
and civil rights, but they also lived their convictions  
whatever the cost. Her father, a conscientious objector  
in World War II, spent two years in prison and later  
became a Quaker (Society of Friends). Her mother  
joined the Church of the Brethren so that Andi grew up  
“with both influences in my life.” With this background

and her participation in the Society of Friends in high school and her later activity in Young Friends of North America, she knew the “importance of working for peace and justice.” Because Andi was raised in a housing co-operative that was the sole integrated area in Chicago’s western suburbs, it was a surprise to her when she discovered that most people did not reside in multiracial and religiously diverse neighborhoods.

At Earlham College, a Quaker school in Indiana, Andi began her higher education and through its foreign study program, she spent a year in Bogota, Colombia. She also lived for a while in “a Quaker communal house in upstate New York,” before completing her bachelors at the National College of Education in Chicago.

When Andi moved to Philadelphia and began working in early childhood special education, she found her calling. Through her attendance at the house church Jubilee Fellowship, which was connected to *The Other Side* magazine, she went to Recife, Brazil with the Mennonite Central Committee in 1980. She returned home early to Jubilee Fellowship to give birth to her daughter Elena in Philadelphia and went on to finish her masters in early childhood special education at Temple University. During this time, she recalls that in addition to “working in early intervention programs I worked for a while as the preschool teacher in a shelter for battered women.” When Jubilee Fellowship disbanded, she, like many other members, “began attending the Germantown Mennonite Church, as it was important for me to be a part of a church with a peace testimony.” Not surprisingly she and Dan Leisen married in that same church.

In 1988 the couple moved to Minnesota so that they could live close to Dan’s children from his first marriage. The reputation that Faith Mennonite Church had as “a welcoming church” drew Andi and Dan to become members of this congregation, and they also joined the Community of St. Martin where Andi retains membership.

Andi’s family includes Elena; Dan's children, Rebekah and Jonathan; and, Vicente, adopted from Ecuador at age five. Andi has been an early special education teacher in the Osseo School District since 1989, and considers herself “blessed to ... find a career that I enjoy and can feel that I am helping people.” After twenty six years, however, she is “looking forward to retirement!” That would enable her and Dan to spend more time in their favorite pastimes, which include camping and hiking in places such as the North Shore and in the Boundary Waters, as well as permitting them

to explore more distant places. Andi’s present volunteer activities include Ten Thousand Villages, where her long time involvement now leads to training new volunteers. She currently describes herself as “excited to be a grandparent,” and is especially grateful that she and Dan have three grandchildren all in Minneapolis, Enoc, age six, and Thiago and Lorelei, both a year old now!

---*Shirley Leckie Reed*

## January-August Financial Statement

Income	Year to Date
Offerings	\$ 87,081
Rent	25,710
Investments	2,964
Miscellaneous	0
Designated offering	2,806
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 118,561</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Church Council	\$301
Conference support	15,000
Deacons	2,750
Education	4,164
FICA	1,037
Fellowship/Retreat	1,103
Missions and Service	3,625
Office	2,349
Pastor/Ministry Staff	51,025
Trustees/bldg expenses	22,763
Worship	956
Mortgage	4,529
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 106,262</b>
<b>Income minus expenses</b>	<b>(\$12,299)</b>
<b>YTD budgeted offerings</b>	<b>\$99,800</b>
<b>Actual offerings</b>	<b>\$87,081</b>
<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>(-\$12,719)</b>

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

#### **Ecumenical Collaborations: Blessing of the Animals / Taizé prayer**

During the past several years we have participated in an ecumenical collaboration with several neighboring churches to offer Taizé prayer several times in the fall, winter and spring, and a joint Thanksgiving service. Faith usually hosts one or two of these events. An optional soup supper precedes the Taizé prayer and is a

nice way to get better acquainted with some of our neighbors of faith. The first Taizé service is scheduled for Friday, October 23, at Prospect Park United Methodist Church, 22 Orlin Ave SE.

This fall one additional event is planned, a "Blessing of Animals" that will take place on the Cabrini Catholic Church lawn at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, October 4. Everyone, young and old, who enjoys animals (tame or wild) may come to this joyful, outdoor occasion to share blessings with the creatures who bless us!



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 17<sup>th</sup>.

(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](mailto:jschlabach@faithmennonite.org).

*October  
Birthday  
Brunch*

*Saturday,  
October 17<sup>th</sup>*

*9:30-11  
a.m.*

## Anyone Can Study At AMBS!

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary isn't just for people studying to become a pastor. or for those who live nearby to the Elkhart, IN campus. AMBS is increasingly offering webinars. I have participated in several and find them very worthwhile. One that people might enjoy is being offered on Thursday, October 29 from 1-2:30 p.m. New Testament Professor Loren Johns will lead a session titled "How We Got the Bible." Webinars are \$45 per person, but the first is free and participants who take part in five webinars get one free. Check it out at:

[www.ambs.edu/churchleadershipcenter/Webinars.cfm](http://www.ambs.edu/churchleadershipcenter/Webinars.cfm) -

--Joetta Schlabach

## Wilderness Wind To Cease Operations In 2016

The board of directors of Wilderness Wind, Inc., Ely, Minnesota, has determined that it will cease operations no later than December 31, 2016.

"Wilderness Wind has had 30 great years of ministry, introducing thousands of people to the Boundary Waters," said Paula Northwood, a current board member and one of the organization's founders. "But all things have a natural lifecycle, and we have decided to end with grace and integrity."

Wilderness Wind began in 1986 and has offered programmed canoe trips into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area for church groups, youth groups, and families. Its mission is to nurture peoples' relationships with God and nature through wilderness living that promotes spirituality, cooperation, and environmental sustainability. It is a member of the Mennonite Camping Association.

The last decade has seen a steady decline in both the number of group trips and lakeside cabin usage. This, coupled with increased operating expenses, has made the fiscal model for Wilderness Wind increasingly unsustainable. The decision to wrap up operations was made at a meeting of the board in Minneapolis on September 26, 2015. The organization hopes to run a full season of trips in 2016, depending on various factors, including year-end donations, and the number of groups who commit to trips.

Individuals interested in organizing a trip in 2016, volunteering as staff, or making tax deductible donations can find information at: [www.wildernesswind.org](http://www.wildernesswind.org)

For further information about this press release, contact the Board Chair, Gretchen Nyce, at 434-989-3873, or [nyceking@comcast.net](mailto:nyceking@comcast.net)

--Adam Nafziger

## Save the Date: Twin Cities Fundraising Event to Support Mennonite Central Committee

Saturday, November 7, hors d'oeuvres and mingling beginning at 6 p.m., program begins promptly at 7:00 p.m., Valley Community Presbyterian Church, 3100 Lilac Drive N., Golden Valley. In lieu of an all-day sale, the local MCC Festival and Sale board is planning an evening of music and storytelling, to benefit the MCC's work in behalf of relief, development, and peace, all undertaken in the name of Christ. Hear Canadian musical duo Kim Thiessen and Darryl Neustadter Barg, plus stories of MCC's work from Abe Janzen, and mini auction and bake sale. Bring your check book. RSVP

soon; seating is limited! info@tcmccreliefsale.org; 763-427-4468. Visit tcmccreliefsale.org for more information.

## Listening for Grace

Ted Swartz's newest show, *Listening for Grace*, is coming to Minneapolis (Solomon's Porch, 100 W. 46th St., Minneapolis.) at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 21, 2015. In *Listening for Grace*, Ted Swartz uses his distinctive humor to give voice to our fears and hopes when a faith community engages in questions around sexuality and same-sex relationships. It's about a father's journey, a church's struggle and a search for commonality.

*Listening for Grace* follows the story of a widowed father whose son has just come out as gay. Through his relationships with his son, an estranged cousin, people in his church and a pastor who deals with issues of sexuality in the Bible, the main character is challenged by many different viewpoints and experiences.

It's a piece about church. It's a piece about fatherhood. It's a piece about community. It's a piece about our sexuality. And it's an entertaining and enlightening piece about openness and love.

This event is open to the public and an offering will be taken. It was featured on the program at the Kansas City MCUSA convention this past July.

**The deadline for November newsletter items is noon, Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>.**

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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.

## Cut the Grass

The wonderful workings of the world: wonderful,  
wonderful: I'm surprised half the time:  
ground up fine, I puff if a pebble stirs:

I'm nervous: my morality's intricate: if  
a squash blossom dies, I feel withered as a stained  
zucchini and blame my nature: and  
when grassblades flop to the little red-ant  
queens burring around trying to get aloft, I blame  
my not keeping the grass short, stubble

firm: well, I learn a lot of useless stuff, meant  
to be ignored: like when the sun sinking in the  
west glares a plane invisible, I think how much

revelation concealment necessitates: and then I  
think of the ocean, multiple to a blinding  
oneness and realize that only total expression  
expressed hiding: I'll have to say everything  
to take on the roundness and withdrawal of the deep  
dark:  
less than total is a bucketful of radiant toys.

--A. R. Ammons