

Pastor Annual Report

May 3, 2026 congregational life meeting

I am blessed to serve as pastor of a caring, inclusive, and thoughtful congregation. I have been with you now for two and a half years, and my family deeply appreciates the relationships we have formed.

My day-to-day work includes worship planning, sermon preparation, collaborating with the deacons, church commissions, and Mennonite Action MN; coordinating and leading Christian Ed, coordinating church communications with Brianna, pastoral care, participation in church events or actions, and pastoral care.

Preaching and worship services is a large part of what I do. This year we continued using the narrative lectionary, beginning in September, but I also enjoyed the opportunity during the summer to have special series, such as the book of Job, which is particularly significant to me.

We also had a number of unique services, such as the outdoor service at our Summer Day at the Lake, our Pride Sunday, Longest Night service, Maundy Thursday Service, hymn sings, and a number of services with guest speakers from our congregation.

This year I led a parent-child dedication for one child in October, and I look forward to the baptism of one of our young people this summer.

I supported coordination of our Christian Ed classes, and enjoyed leading a series on how the Bible came to be in the fall, and more recently discussions around the timely devotional *For Such a Time as This*.

I continue to meet regularly with our Twin Cities Anabaptist pastors and leaders cluster that has had representation from all of the Mennonite congregations, as well as Mennonite pastors on staff at congregations of other denominations.

This year I was enriched by a Men's spiritual retreat called "Men's rite of passage" through the Illuman organization. I also attended a theology conference called "Theology Beer Camp," participated in the Central Plains conference annual meeting, and recently Beth and I went on a Central Plains pastors and spouses retreat.

This has been a challenging year that was stressful for many folks on a personal level as well as for our congregation. Several members have had major events and transitions in their lives in which they have needed pastoral care, including the major changes for the Westbys after Dick's stroke.

Much of our shared stress as a community comes from our political environment with our country's authoritarian turn. This came to a head during the months of the ICE surge, where we witnessed an increasingly dystopian reality, along with the solidarity and resistance of the people of our cities.

Many of you were involved in a variety of efforts including transportation, delivery of groceries, mutual aid efforts, protests and vigils, observer training and serving as observers. We communicated via Signal groups. On Palm Sunday we took our palm branches out into the streets to make public witness to a Christian faith that believes in healthcare and welcoming the immigrant. In the months following the surge, we received financial contributions and distributed \$13,000 for rent and other assistance to families, neighborhood funds, and food shelves.

I did my best to support these many efforts and provide pastoral encouragement during this particularly dark and inspirational season. I spoke during a Mennonite Action call and also contributed to Anabaptist World articles, and the short film that Rachel Ries spearheaded to share our stories and voices with the broader Mennonite world.

I have supported the deacons in continuing in community-building efforts, including family and friends night, fellowship events, and our focus on accessibility and inclusion. Thank you for entrusting the task of pastoral leadership with me. May we find joy as we continue to support one another and work together.

Respectfully submitted - Caleb Yoder