

Faith Mennonite Church

Annual Reports 2024-2025

Trustees' Commission Report

Deacons Commission Report

Mission and Service Commission Report

Repair Team Report

2025 Annual Meeting – Trustees Report

The Trustees continue to focus on the physical condition of our buildings and our financial health. Some of our recent and current efforts are focused on the following:

- Updating the sanctuary sound system
- Working with the ad hoc library committee (Mary Friesen, Arlene Geissinger, Cynthia Miller) to update the library area (notice the new furniture!)
- Repairing the east wall of the church kitchen.
- The fluorescent light fixtures in the Education Building are (slowly) being retrofitted with LED bulbs.
- If our giving allows, we would like to replace one of our five furnaces on the Sanctuary side. (Two have already been replaced in previous years).
- Support the treasurer and financial team.

In addition to these physical aspects of our work we also attempt to maintain good relationships with our tenants and neighbors. Keeping up this old building is often painful but that is far outweighed by the worship and fellowship it makes possible.

Trustees: Bruce Brunner, Glenn Geissinger, Darrell Martin

Annual Report of the Deacon Commission (April 2024 - March 2025) DRAFT

Deacons were:

Minke Sundseth (chair), Donna Stucky, Pat Eliason, Roberta Malles, Dan Leisen

The Deacon Commission at Faith Mennonite Church (FMC) has worked throughout the year to foster community, provide pastoral care, and support the church's overall mission. Here is a summary of our key accomplishments:

1. **Deacon Role Specialization and Organization:** The Deacon Commission organized itself into specialized roles to improve our service to the congregation:
 - **Chair** (Minke) facilitate meetings, track progress on goals, maintain written processes, and ensure smooth onboarding of new deacons.
 - **Hospitality Deacon** (Roberta) work on greeting, follow-up with newcomers, and coordinate Sunday morning tasks.
 - **Kids and Families Deacon** (Pat) organize mentorship programs, assist with youth events, and coordinate parenting partners for families.
 - **Pastoral Care Coordinator** (Donna) maintain deacon care groups, organize pastoral care, and ensure follow-up on joys and concerns.
 - **Small Group and Newcomer Coordinator** (Dan) support small group coordination, welcome newcomers, and facilitate connections within the congregation.
2. **Small Group and Fellowship Initiatives:** The Deacons led various small group initiatives to enhance fellowship and mutual support. These included:
 - Supper groups, book groups, and informal gatherings
 - Dan Leisen organized three summer picnics at Powderhorn Park
 - Roberta facilitated an LGBTQIA picnic
3. **Welcoming and Engagement:** A significant focus this year was welcoming newcomers and integrating them into the FMC community:
 - A clear process was established for welcoming visitors, including collecting contact information, inviting them to join small groups, and providing follow-up communication after several visits.
 - Pastor Caleb launched a visitor log and an archive system to track engagement and ensure that visitors felt included. This is reviewed monthly.
 - In coordination with Worship, efforts were made to include children in worship services, with a dedicated effort to create space for children to participate in scripture reading and musical contributions.
4. **Support for Families and Children:**
 - The **Kids and Families Deacon** role was created, and so far, there has been a focus on intergenerational gatherings.
 - To that end, the deacons hosted two very well attended **Family Fun Nights**, encouraging families to connect and enjoy games and healthy snacks together.

- **Pat Eliason** worked to bring together FMC families with other building tenants (Community of St. Martin and the Oromo church), planning a gathering to foster deeper relationships. This was well attended and much enjoyed.
5. **Retreats and Special Events:**
- The **Women's and Non-Binary Retreat** was organized at Carondelet Center In St. Paul for March 1-2, 2025, with the goal of offering self-care and spiritual growth in a supportive and inclusive environment. 24 attended and shared well-received sessions, fellowship, humor, inspiration, rest and meals. Several indicated they were willing to help with the next retreat.
6. **Deacon Fund and Support for Congregants:**
- The **Deacon Fund** continued to be an essential resource for supporting the congregation in times of need. This year, the fund had a balance of \$5,000, with funds used to support members in financial difficulty. Deacons reviewed the use of the fund guidelines for assistance, including the distinction between care for those in our larger community and care of the congregation.
 - Additionally, discussions were held regarding providing resources such as gas cards and grocery cards to those in need, with plans to formalize a policy for offering assistance to both FMC members and external community members.
7. **Leadership Transitions and Future Planning:**
- The Deacons prepared for upcoming leadership transitions, as **Dan Leisen** and **Donna Stucky** prepare to retire from their roles, with new deacons being selected to fill those positions. To avoid having 3 of the 5 deacons depart at once, **Minke Sundseth** has agreed to stay on for one more year. We are grateful that Barb Beers is joining us. We are still looking for at least one more deacon for this year.
 - Deacons also discussed future areas of focus, including expanding outreach to families with disabilities and exploring more inclusive practices for communion.
8. **Membership and Baptism**
- On April 28, 2024 we welcomed Carter Morrisette, Sid Drees, Karin Larson Krisetya, and Mat Larson Krisetya into formal membership at Faith Mennonite Church.
 - On January 19, 2025, we welcomed **Riley L. and Mercury J.** into formal membership at Faith Mennonite Church, as both received baptism. Pastor Caleb had multiple meetings with people interested in discerning a formal connection to Faith.
 - On March 30, 2025, we had parent-child dedications for Oscar Lee and Eldon James Waltz Knudson (Kevin Waltz and Kristin Knudson) and Benjamin Josue Vidas (Dylan and Elena).

The year was marked by significant growth in our community-building efforts, with a focus on pastoral care, inclusion, and fellowship. We look forward to continuing these efforts in the coming year, strengthening the bonds of our church family, and serving those in need both within and beyond FMC.

Respectfully submitted by Minke Sundseth

Mission and Services annual report 2024-25 (Submitted by Andi Kuenning)

MCC kits: in coordination with the FMC sewing group we participated in the MCC School Kit Challenge in August/September. We packed 109 school kits which Donna Stucky took to the MCC Central States material resource center in Kansas.

The comforter-making group made close to 80 comforters to be sent around the world and were excited to learn that some of the comforters we made were in the first shipment of material aid from MCC that was delivered to Gaza in February.

Advent Collection: In December we sponsored a hat and mitten drive for Community Emergency Services and Soup for You as well as collecting money to purchase hygiene kits and winter gear in bulk for Nenookaasi Ozhige. In all we gave :

To Community Emergency Services: 14 pairs of gloves/mittens, 12 hats, 1 coat, 1 pair of snowpants (all children's)

To Soup for You: 13 hats, 4 scarves/neck gaiters, 8 pairs gloves/mittens, 5 coats/jackets

To Nenookaasi Ozhige: We raised \$790 and purchased 100 deluxe hygiene kits, 100 basic minimal hygiene kits, 20 pairs of ski gloves, 10 pairs of ski mittens, 25 full face ski masks, 36 lined knit hats, and 13 pairs of socks.

Food drive: In March and April during Lent we sponsored a food drive for Community Emergency Services, with the theme of culturally specific items. We donated 133 pounds of food and \$120.

Financial Giving:

We gave to the following organizations:

Community Emergency Services	\$600
Soup For You	\$600
Community Peacemaker Teams	\$700
Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice	\$500
Pueblos de Lucha y Esperanza	\$300
Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light	\$500
Conversations With Friends	\$500
Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center.	\$500
Wayside Recovery Center	\$500
Agate Housing and Services	\$500
Total	\$5000

The Commission recommended to Council that the church signed on to become a sponsoring organization with Trans Youth Coalition Support: Transforming Families, MN Strong for Trans Youth. This includes a \$100 donation.

Service Projects: We have continued to plan some service projects to do in conjunction with potlucks. We did a laundry pod project for Community Emergency Services in January. Packing school kits was also done.

Other activities:

The commission co-sponsored a showing of the movie Christpiracy in December, initiated by Sid Drees.

The commission initiated having the congregation sign on to the North Star Firewall for Freedom, a letter to the MN legislature and governor from the ACLU detailing legislative and executive actions that could help protect immigrant, LGBTQ, and other marginalized communities.

Members of the commission helped coordinate having members of the congregation participate in events including hearings about immigration law at the Minnesota State Capitol and an action at Senator Klobuchar's office in February, sponsored by MARCH (Multifaith Anti-Racism, Change, and Healing). A Signal group has been created to enable time-sensitive information to be sent out to those interested, regarding actions and events.

FMC Repair Team Annual Report 2024-2025

The Repair Team at Faith Mennonite Church is part of a larger network of Repair Congregations and Communities connected to the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery. <https://dismantleddiscovery.org/get-involved/repair-network/>

Since our last report in April 2024, we have continued to build relationship within the DDoD Coalition, give reparations to Indigenous Organizations, respond to calls for solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and engage in climate justice action. We met together as a team at least six times with a core group of about eight FMC members.

In May three of us met with three members of St. Francis Cabrini Catholic Church and learned about their Indigenous Learning Advocacy & Building Relationships (I-LABR) Committee. This group has similar values and intentions and we have encountered them at gatherings of common interest since then.

The DDoD Coalition held the Annual Gathering in the Twin Cities June 28 – July 1, 2024. Throughout the weekend 3-12 FMCers participated in each portion of the gathering:

- Hosting out of town guests our homes
- Field trip to Makoce Ikikcupi's Zani Otunwe site for a work and learning experience
- Singing Circle in the FMC Fellowship Hall
- Learning sessions and Coalition business meetings at Unity Unitarian Church in St. Paul
- Preparing and serving Saturday lunch for approx. 100 participants
- Book Launch for Sarah Augustine & Sheri Hosteler at New City Church in Minneapolis
- Organizer Training

Donna M. connected with Minnesota Inter Faith Power & Light (MNIPL) in preparation for her cross-country Climate Ride and got FMC signed on as a Climate Justice Congregation.

Kristi Z. keeps the team up to date on the work of the Apache Stronghold to Protect Oak Flat. In September she met up with the Prayer Journey to the Supreme Court for 2 days in Kentucky and then in October went back to Oak Flat, AZ, for 9 days on the Accompaniment Team. She also facilitated FMC's signing onto the Amicus Brief.

Dick W. and Pastor Caleb and others coordinated with Nicole (an Indigenous woman whose family Dick knows from many years ago at FMC) to provide hygiene kits for unhoused Indigenous Women. The Missions and Services Commission coordinated a donation drive during Advent (see Mission and Services report).

Several of us continue to participate in Zoom gatherings with the Twin Cities Repair Communities for Makoce Ikikcupi. We helped in the planning of Sarah Augustine's visit to Minnesota in early April, including a potluck with local Repair Community folks and a large speaking event at United Seminary.

Kristi Zabriskie