Caleb Yoder

Caleb is currently the lead pastor at Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church in Goessel, Kansas and has been pastor there going on seven years. He lives in Newton, KS with his wife Beth and their children Josiah, 6 and Austin, 3. Caleb attended undergraduate university at Eastern Mennonite University and later Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart. He speaks fluent Spanish, and has worked with Mennonite Central Committee in Honduras as well as serving a two-year term in Ecuador with Mennonite Mission Network.

Caleb's many gifts have become clear in our extensive meetings together in recent months. In his own words, "I understand myself as introverted, thoughtful, and compassionate. I am energized by engaging ideas, but also have a caring heart, which orients me well to teaching roles." One gift that attracted us to Caleb immediately was his deep interest in our congregation's journey of being open and affirming.

In our discussions, and through his MLI, Caleb has shared a thoughtful, nuanced approach to the Bible. In his own words:

> *We need to approach the Bible with both freedom and accountability. We do our best to understand the meaning of biblical texts in their original context. Yet Jesus, Paul, and other NT writers creatively re-interpreted their scriptures for their day beyond the likely intent of the first authors. As we interpret it in community, we are accountable to each other, to the law of love, and most of all to the story, teachings, and person of Jesus. Then the Spirit speaks in unexpected, and challenging ways.*

On Anabaptism, Caleb shared:

> *The first Anabaptists were a diverse group, and very human. They are an example and inspiration for us, not by enshrining everything they said and did, but by noting the great personal cost they assumed to witness to a different kind of faith than the dominant expressions of Christianity of their day. We are Anabaptist insofar as we are willing to do the same today.*

Caleb's experiences and comments from his references point to strong leadership in challenging situations. When discussing our transitional work Caleb was encouraged by the work we have been doing with thom. Caleb also shares our passion for building community.
Through our discussions, we have gained appreciation for Caleb's spiritual practices and commitment to self-awareness and emotional health. He is an honest, intelligent, gentle, yet powerful communicator. His pastoral priorities align well with the priorities FMC identified through our discernment work, and his theology centers on the love and example of Jesus.