



**Mennonite  
Church  
USA**

**Mennonite  
Church  
Canada**

## Congregational Information Form

*To be completed by congregations seeking new pastoral leadership.*

### ***Purpose of this form***

This form is to assist a congregation to present information concerning itself to prospective candidates for a pastoral leadership position. Completing the form will also assist the pastoral search committee in self-understanding as they assess the strengths and weaknesses which may exist at the time of pastoral transition.

### ***I. Information***

#### **A. BASIC INFORMATION AND CONTACTS**

1. Name of church

*Faith Mennonite Church*

*2720 East 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Minneapolis, MN 55406*

Church telephone      612-375-9483      Email      *faithmc@faithmennonite.org*

Website      [www.faimennonite.org](http://www.faimennonite.org)

2. Chairperson of search committee

*Andy Martinson*

*2409 34th Ave S, Minneapolis 55406*

Telephone: (612) 562-0593

Email [vectorsandfields@gmail.com](mailto:vectorsandfields@gmail.com)

3. Area church/conference *Central Plains*

Name of area church/conference minister assisting your church's search committee:

*Susan Janzen*

*Central Plains Mennonite Conference*

*PO Box 352, Kalona, IA 52247*

Telephone: 319-610-1007

E-mail: [susanjanzenr@centralplainsmc.org](mailto:susanjanzenr@centralplainsmc.org)

4. Year in which the congregation first began meeting or was organized: 1961

## **B. MEMBERSHIP**

*We have 47 households currently participating in our church, with about 12 of those households attending with children and youth. Our church has 20 children under 12 and 10 teenage youth attending. Since Covid began 42 individual households have joined online services by personal device on average. We moved to hybrid service in the summer of 2021 with a fair number of households remaining exclusively online. Since a return to online-only worship in late December 2021, due to the Omicron surge, 32 households on average have been participating. At the start of Lent, we resumed worshipping in a hybrid format.*

*We have one person attending church in their 20s. We have 3 households that are aged 30 to 45, 9 households ages 46 to 60, 28 households over 60 (with 1/3 of those households being single individuals living alone). Our location is very near a number of universities, particularly the University of MN, and the neighborhood has a lot of rental property, attractive to graduate students who have often found our church during their extended time studying here. Thirty households live in Minneapolis, and 10 live in the church's immediate neighborhood.*

*Occupational profile:*

*The majority of the congregation works in professions that are social/helping (counselors, teachers, professors, medical professionals, social workers) or work in public and non-profit sectors (HR, city finance, non-profits, county/regional parks). In our over 60 group, 2/3 of households have at least one retired person.*

*Educational level:*

*High School, HS equivalent, and some college: just a few at any given time.*

*College grads: approximately 50%*

*Graduate school: approximately 50%*

*(Most members of FMC are college educated)*

*Ethnic composition:*

*The church is mostly Euro American/white. It is approximately 50% ethnic Mennonite. A few members of our church assist with translation for our two Spanish-speaking families, but we are not a bi-lingual church.*

## **C. LEADERSHIP**

1. Identify the present staff position for which you are seeking a candidate. *Pastor*
2. Two previous persons in the above position:

*Current Transitional Pastor: thom bower Dates of service: August 2020 to present.*

*Previous Pastor: Ry Siggelkow Dates of service: June 1, 2015 – June 1, 2020*

*Previous Pastor: Joetta Schlabach Dates of service: 2006 – June 1, 2018*

3. Comment on the transitions experienced by the above staff persons. What were the reasons for their assignments ending? How were the transitions handled?

*Joetta Schlabach, a member of the Faith congregation, was hired half-time in 2006 to support the co-pastors, as one was stepping back to pursue other professional options. Joetta became full-time pastor when the co-pastors left in 2008. Joetta asked to reduce to half-time in 2015 so we posted a 0.5FTE and hired Ry, another member of our congregation. Joetta retired from pastoral work on June 1, 2018.*

*Ry Siggelkow, who was a member of Faith Mennonite, became half-time co-pastor from June 1, 2015 through Joetta's retirement June 1, 2018. Ry was invited to become full-time pastor after a search process in 2018. At the end of February 2020, Ry announced that he would resign effective May 31, 2020 in order to take a full-time teaching position at St. Thomas University, in St. Paul, MN.*

4. Did your congregation follow the Pastor Salary Guidelines recommended by the denomination for the previous pastor?

Yes.

5. Identify other staff: (assistant/associate minister, lay ministers, administrative assistant, custodian, musicians, youth)

*The administrative staff person is responsible for building and property management, website updates, newsletter, bulletin, general communications, and all office and clerical support, including database management.*

*Our custodian is a long-term member of our church, who offered to be our custodian after retirement. He has done this work for about a decade. The Oromo church that uses our sanctuary, and has service on Saturday mornings, barter some of their rent by doing custodial work in the sanctuary. All together, we budget about 12 hours of custodial work a week.*

6. Describe housing options for the above position: Is there a parsonage or a housing allowance (US) or housing credit (Canada)?

*We no longer own a parsonage. Our pastors do receive a housing allowance as a part of their compensation package. We are aware of the high cost of housing in Minneapolis and consider that alongside the general Central Plains guidelines.*

## **II. Interpretation**

The answers to the questions in this section are more difficult but probably more important in determining the qualifications needed by pastoral leadership. Use a small group to test for consensus on the answers given in this section. (Would recommend that the governing board of the congregation review and sign off on this section.)

- A. Describe the commitment of your church to Anabaptist/Mennonite faith. How does this contribute to strengthening your ability to join God's mission in the world?**

*We have a strong commitment to Anabaptist theology and recent conversations within our community show a desire to nurture and deepen our identity as Mennonites. We believe that Jesus calls us to provide love and caring within our congregation, and to be engaged in the world, locally as well as internationally. Beyond the four walls of our church, many of our members are involved in service occupations or volunteer activities that reflect our theological beliefs. Members participate in mission trips with Mennonite organizations like Mennonite Disaster Service and with other organizations, and members are actively involved in a variety of local causes that align with Anabaptist/Mennonite faith. Our faith provides spiritual grounding for these efforts, and Faith Mennonite Church at times also offers tangible support to the missional callings of members.*

- B. What is the vision for your church? What are your priorities that shape the church's ministry?**

*The vision of Faith Mennonite Church is that God's abundant love is meant for everyone. Our ministry as a church has been shaped by three priorities:*

- 1) **Inclusiveness.** *Based on the inclusiveness of Christ's ministry, our congregation has intentionally sought to be a spiritual home for people who are marginalized by the broader church and society. This priority has*

been lived out in our inclusion of LGBTQ+ members and our church's support of Brethren Mennonite Council, in our welcoming and support of refugees, and in international giving that seeks to support people and communities at the margins. Through our Christian Education program we have been exploring our legacy as white settlers in this land and as a white community wrestling with our racism. We desire to be a more diverse congregation, but we still have a lot to learn and reckon with, and we remain a primarily white congregation.

- 2) **Rootedness in the Mennonite tradition.** Even when our inclusiveness has put us at variance with policies of the broader Mennonite Church, our congregation has worked to maintain relationships with our Conference, and we are grateful that conference leadership has been committed to ongoing dialogue and connection as well. Mennonite cultural traditions of simple living, community, and mutual support are also central to our congregational life. For several years our congregation provided financial support to a new Mennonite church in Eau Clair Wisconsin (Shalom Mennonite).
- 3) **Support for spiritual callings.** Many members of our congregation bring their priorities to the congregation and invite broader support for their missional work. This ranges from mission trips to Haiti to improve clean water access, to supporting immigrant & refugee families, to promoting zero waste, to supporting local farmers, to pursuing land restoration to indigenous people, to sponsoring educational expenses for youth in Kenya through a partner organization and founding and leading the Minnesota Peacebuilding Leadership Institute. This list is far from comprehensive, and the richness of personal callings is a blessing for our church. Our congregation has been challenged at times with discerning how and when to elevate a personal calling to a congregational mission focus. This is an area where we seek to grow, balancing an openness to new ideas with a deeper commitment to a few congregational priorities.

Other important commitments have also informed our congregation's life, but the three priorities outlined above capture much of our congregation's ministry during the past few decades.

**C. What is your view of the pastor's role in the church? Are there special gifts in ministry which you hope will be fulfilled? How do you expect the pastor to be a representative of the congregation beyond the congregation?**

We hope to call a pastor with a balance of ministerial gifts who will be an inspirational communicator of God's nurturing love. We seek a pastor to be a spiritual leader to guide the congregation, to help us grow in our faithfulness to Christ's calling. We seek a community-builder to help us reconnect with each other and engage new members as we emerge from the isolation of the pandemic, and an administrative leader who coordinates staff and church lay leaders in managerial tasks and discernment.

Previous pastors have developed relationships with other neighborhood churches like Impact Living and St Francis Cabrini Catholic church. We have met with Cabrini for Taize services every year during Lent for more than a decade, other than during 2020 and 2021.

We expect the pastor to engage with both the local community and Central Plains Conference. The focus and purpose of pastoral engagement has varied in the past, depending on pastoral and congregational needs and advocacy. We expect this engagement beyond the congregation to be shaped collaboratively by our pastor's interests and our congregation's mission.

**D. Recognizing our differing theological orientations as persons and as congregations, make a brief statement about your congregation and the overarching theological commitments important to you.**

Our theological commitments tend to focus on the inclusion of all people in our community. For decades, our work supporting and including LGBTQ+ individuals has been central to our identity as a church. We identify outwardly (literally with signs in the neighborhood) as a "Peace Church". Our inclusive approach has also led us in recent years to work with marginalized people, particularly immigrants. While many members come

*from other Christian backgrounds, we have a desire to increase our practices of biblical focus and Mennonite principles through worship and faith formation.*

**E. Church morale: Assess the spiritual and emotional health of the congregation. Are relationships among members wholesome and harmonious? Is there openness to new ideas and ways of doing things? Would everyone agree with your answers?**

*We are a church in transition for multiple reasons. First, COVID has temporarily eliminated some of our most cherished and central forms of building and strengthening our community ties. We have not gathered in our church as a whole body to sing or share a meal for approximately two years. Singing together and sharing meals together bring a lot of joy to our church members.*

*The onset of COVID was happening at the same time our previous settled pastor (Ry) resigned. A few months later, George Floyd was killed by police. The trauma of the pandemic was thus combined with the disruption of a departing pastor and the trauma of the murder of George Floyd.*

*Online worship has been essential for a few, meaningful for some in our community, but not desired or possible for all. In-person worship has been partial, because not everyone in our community feels comfortable gathering in person yet. The days of 10-15 children gathering in the front of the sanctuary for children's time seem very distant, though it's only been about two years. One exception was a fairly well-attended day-long church retreat in a county park this past fall, which involved singing, fellowship, intergenerational discernment activities and play.*

*As we emerge from the current state of COVID response, we hope to renew our sense of community and spiritual connection. We also see this as an opportunity to be intentional about new ways of nurturing our community, rather than simply returning to pre-COVID patterns.*

*Second, as an urban church, we are accustomed to membership change as people move to the Twin Cities and join the church while others move away. Rather than being intentionally evangelical, we have tended to welcome new households when they find our congregation. Welcoming new families or individuals to our homes for meals and including new members in other ways has been a strength of our congregation. This welcoming has fostered church growth and renewal even as there has been attrition due to moves.*

*However, from 2015 to 2020, the loss of membership has been more pronounced, and has included families leaving the church for reasons other than a move. Supporting families and engaging youth and children has been both a focus and a challenge in the past five years. This is an area where we see an opportunity for more intentionality and investment as we emerge from COVID-related restrictions.*

*The combination of pandemic exhaustion, extra work needed to accommodate virtual worship, and loss of members has resulted in some feelings of tiredness and overwork. Members work hard to keep our community functioning, and we are aware that some restructuring may help lessen the workload.*

*Third, we are in transition due to the aging of the church population. Many households are in their 60's and 70's, and our cohort of 'young parents' is now mostly made up of people in their 40's. Very few of us are in our 20's and 30's. About ¼ of our households have school-age children.*

*Relationships within the congregation are primarily wholesome and harmonious. We share a deep love for our church and a commitment to its healthy future. Leadership is dispersed among many in the congregation, and there is an appreciation for the fact that the church is enriched by the varied gifts and talents of members. At times we have sidestepped conflict when healthy-but-challenging conversation might create stress, but also deepen our relationships.*

*There is openness to new ideas and innovation, and the congregation is currently exploring a new administrative lay leadership structure to better fit the energy and capacity of members.*

*There has been general agreement with the responses to this question, and this response (along with the entire CIF) has been reviewed by many members of our church to confirm that our search committee has accurately described the congregation.*

**F. What changes or trends do you envision for the congregation over the next five years? Do you have any other comments significant in the process for looking for new pastoral leadership?**

- 1) *The current pandemic has challenged us to creatively change our usual mode of worship. We have been broadcasting Sunday morning worship services online via Zoom followed by fellowship with break-out rooms. Our technology and practices continue to improve, but we are stretched a bit thin in those who can help with those tasks. The next few years may involve more transitions in our services. We learned that former members who moved elsewhere signed on to our Sunday morning services. How might we keep them involved? Our new modus operandi will evolve and hopefully attract new people to our community.*
- 2) *There is a desire to deepen the intimacy of our relationships, encouraging one another to deeper faith and commitment within the church. There is an ongoing desire to be engaged in our neighborhood and community, and recent years have seen initiatives in sponsoring and housing two undocumented families, supporting a local Latinx immigrant rights coalition, various projects coordinated by our eco-justice committee, and various smaller, more traditional efforts via our Missions and Service Commission.*
- 3) *We have diversity among members in terms of sexual orientation, language, economic status and faith experience (ethnic Mennonite and non-Mennonite). We currently provide Spanish interpretation of worship services for two Spanish speaking households who attend. We would like to see our faith community reflect more of the ethnic diversity of our city.*
- 4) *Continuing to provide financial support for the two refugee families we currently support via our Emergency Migrant Fund. Our intent is to maintain this support as long as needed, with a gradual reduction as the families become more self-sufficient financially.*
- 5) *We would like to examine and articulate our group values and create programs and worship stemming from those values.*
- 6) *We would like to revitalize and reconnect to our Anabaptist roots.*
- 7) *We would like to better support and integrate our families and children through intergenerational practices and activities.*

### III. Organization/Ministry

#### A. CHURCH STRUCTURE

**Identify the primary governing body (council, board, elders) which represents the church**

*We have historically been run by a church council meeting monthly as a governing body. The council is made up of a moderator, moderator elect, secretary and a representative from each of the following groups; trustees, worship commission, missions/service commission, education commission, fellowship commission and deacons. We are currently working on restructuring our various commissions to make them more manageable for our congregation size. This is an exploratory, experimental process of revising our structure.*

*Identify five other significant leadership/programming bodies: e.g. trustees, deacons, elders, commissions, council, boards, committees.*

*We are expanding our trustees from 3 to 4 individuals. They take on the roles of managing the budget and finance, building use and renter oversight, repairs and grounds. They also manage the human resources processes for staff.*

*Other major commissions we currently fill are:*

- *Worship Commission with 4 members*
- *Education Commission/Faith Formation with 3 individuals*
- *Deacons, with 5 individuals, meet monthly and attend to the spiritual and other needs of the congregation*
- *Missions and Service has 4 members and meets monthly, mainly to guide our church's giving to organizations and to direct the outward activities of the congregation.*
- *Gifts Discernment Commission consists of the pastor plus 3 members and completes the annual process of gathering nominations and filling commission positions.*

*Ad Hoc committees also play a key role in the life of the church. These include an Eco-Justice Committee, a Refugee Support committee, a monthly Sewing Group, and a group focused on Native American Land Reparation. These groups provide helpful specific focus areas for living out God's call, and also give members a venue for closer connections with each other.*

**B. WORSHIP AND MUSIC**

1. Describe your worship service.

*Our services involve lay participation, with the pastor co-facilitating with a different worship leader each week. Deacons mainly facilitate the sharing of joys and concerns which is an open floor format for anyone to share. We follow an order of service that includes opening songs, a call to worship, scripture reading, a time for children, a sermon, sharing and prayer time, offering, announcements, and introduction of guests. During the seasons of Advent and Lent and in summer the order can vary somewhat.*

2. What role does music play in your congregation?

*Our service puts music and singing at the center of worship. Many members find deep joy in singing four-part harmony together each week. Additionally, we have many members who bring musical talents to our community. We have a number of children who play piano and other instruments and often play preludes or post-service pieces.*

2. What song books/collections of music does your congregation use?

*We use the Voices Together hymnal (which recently replaced the 'Blue Hymnal' and 'Sing the Journey' songbook). We also have a small booklet of songs written by local songwriter Bret Hesla for the congregation on the occasion of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.*

3. Name the musical instruments used in worship and other events:

*Piano, pipe organ, violin & viola, flute, guitar, recorder, French horn, drums and other percussion instruments. The primary accompaniment for most songs is the piano, and this is supplemented by organ accompaniment about once per month. Other instruments are also included about 1-2 times per month as arranged by the worship commission.*

4. Identify choirs and/or music groups

*We do not have any ongoing choirs. We sometimes have a choir during Advent or Lent and someone sings with our children and helps them prepare music for special programs such as Christmas. We have various ensemble groups that play together from time to time, and children and youth sometimes play for offertory or at other times during the service.*

**C. CHRISTIAN FORMATION – Describe your approach to Christian Formation**

1. What curriculum resources are used by these classes?

*Children and Jr. High used Shine during traditional learning in Sunday School classes prior to the pandemic. Adult classes are often book studies centered on topics like racial or environmental justice, preparing for death and dying, or dismantling the doctrine of discovery. Past practices were interrupted by COVID, and post-COVID practices are still in formation.*

2. How does the congregation attend to the formation needs of persons of all ages?

*Prior to March 2020, we held adult education classes and Sunday School for school-aged children. Children and youth met in age-based classes while adults met in small interest groups, mainly built around book studies and occasionally bringing guests in to help lead discussions. During hybrid worship we have begun to explore intergenerational faith formation activities. This is a work in progress and something we would like to continue refining.*

What other opportunities are there for growth and transformation?

*In 2006, Pastor Joetta Schlabach created a lectionary study group that met during the week over coffee. This small group is composed primarily of retired members, some of whom have been pastors. This group continues to meet and could be a weekly resource to our next pastor.*

*Members often share opportunities for growth or service that are happening in the city, and are joined by others. Examples include volunteering with a Native land recovery project that our church supports, birdwatching and blueberry picking together, and cleaning up litter along the river.*

*There are also many spirituality-related offerings through the Twin Cities area. Congregants often briefly report to the congregation highlights of seminars, workshops, and classes they attend.*

3. Describe the involvement of youth in the life of the congregation.

*We have 9 youth aged 12-18, most of whom participate in church life on various levels. Our youth have performed music during service, have hosted online services, read during services, and participate regularly.*

Does your church support and send young people to Mennonite camps, area churches/conferences and colleges?

*We have sometimes sent youth to a national annual conference, or to a regional summer gathering in Iowa. Since March 2020 we have planned a variety of outdoor social events since that have been attended by a core group of 7 youth. We have had occasional combined gatherings with youth from Emmanuel Mennonite Church (another local congregation) over the years.*

4. Does your congregation have active small groups? If so, describe the number of groups, focus of the groups and how often they meet.

*We have had many variations of small groups over the years, from ones assigned to subsets of the entire congregation to more interest-based groups. During the pandemic, this has largely been on hold, though it is a current matter of discussion among deacons, and there has been an active group of members supporting one another while living alone during the pandemic.*

5. What men's/women's groups are active?

*Men and women have both had independent yearly retreats prior to 2020. Prior to COVID, a men's group met monthly for breakfast and discussion focused around church topics; this group is planning to start again in the near future as COVID recedes. Prior to March 2020, a 65+ group had been meeting semi-regularly for local cultural/educational experiences and conversation on a variety of topics.*

6. What ministries do you have for children, youth and young adults over 18, etc.?)

*We aspire to rebuild a strong mentor-mentee program. We have had a robust Sunday School offering for children in several age groups, but this has been dormant during COVID. Also pre-COVID, we had monthly gatherings of youth to discuss biblical and theological topics with Pastor Ry.*

7. In the next five years, do you anticipate a membership increase? Why?

*We are located in an urban neighborhood that attracts left-leaning, politically engaged people. Advertising that we are "Peace Church" has brought many people to our services to see what we are doing. Many have stayed for the music, the community and the peace-oriented sermons and actions of members.*

*Our church, like most in our world, has suffered during the pandemic. We have lost a number of long-term members. We are looking forward to re-engaging with each other and the community and inviting visitors again. We do hope to see a membership increase as people seek to reconnect with faith communities as pandemic-related restrictions are lifted.*

#### **D. OUTREACH AND EVANGELISM**

1. Describe how you cultivate the visibility of your church in the community.



*We have recently built a new website that will hopefully be an avenue for people to get to know us and hopefully join us.*

*“Passive” visibility happens through a sign at the end of the block announcing, “The Peace Church,” and an outdoor church sign on which we post upcoming events, which is seen by pedestrian traffic in the neighborhood. The area around the sign is landscaped with a seating area that invites people to rest and sit. More active visibility has come through hosting events such as a monthly Peace and Justice Film Series, occasional community events, and a summer worship service in the nearby park. We post fliers about church events at nearby stores and coffee shops. The pandemic has greatly curtailed these efforts.*

2. Describe how you connect to seekers and make new disciples.  
*Through personal relationships and by extending a warm welcome to people who seek us out—some live in the neighborhood and/or are looking for a church with a focus on peace. While visitors receive a warm welcome after the service, we have struggled to set up a robust welcome program with predictable follow-up to these visitors.*
3. Describe your congregation’s ministry in and with the community.  
*We are continually working to identify and respond to needs within our Seward neighborhood as well as the metro Twin Cities area. These include efforts to address hunger, homelessness; peacemaking and restorative justice; mental health; racial equity; and environmental/sustainability issues. For specific examples of our ministry initiatives and collaborations, see IV.A.9&10, below.*

**E. HOW DOES THE CHURCH UTILIZE TECHNOLOGY IN WORSHIP, IN TEACHING, AND IN OUTREACH IN THE COMMUNITY?**

*Since March of 2020, we have used the Zoom platform to connect congregational members and attendees when we are exclusively online. People play various roles during the service similarly to how they would in person, but the platform is facilitated by an assigned tech person. This person shares videos, hymn texts and other applications as applicable. The Zoom platform is also how post-service fellowship is conducted, typically using breakout rooms.*

*When we are conducting service both in-person and online (hybrid), we use Zoom to connect those online with those in person. The in-person service is the “host” and in this scenario, the online attendees are merely observers for the first portion of the service. We split the two groups mid-way through the service so the online group and the in-person group can share prayer concerns within each respective audience. This facilitates both privacy and technological logistics.*

*We have also used Zoom for hosting Bible Study and topic-specific Talking Circle meetings.*

*The in-person technology consists of two handheld microphones and one lapel microphone, two video cameras, and all applicable interfacing equipment to allow for both audio amplification within the sanctuary and simultaneous audio/video broadcast over Zoom.*

**F. CHURCH BUILDING AND PROPERTY**

1. Do you own or rent your facility? If rent, describe the type of space.

*Faith Mennonite owns its church building, which includes a sanctuary of approximately 2200 square feet and a lift which services the main and basement levels of the main church building. We rent out the lower level of the education wing to a nonprofit, and two offices on the upper level to two additional organizations. The church building is paid off, but we have one outstanding loan: we owe \$95,000 for a new roof put on three years ago. Payment is about \$3000 annually on a 30-year mortgage.*

2. Seating capacity of sanctuary or worship area:  
*252 (325 with balcony) These numbers are based on simple fire-marshall capacity.*
3. Date of construction of church building:  
*The main church building, a brick structure, was built in 1925. In 1956 a two-story wing was added to provide education and office space.*

4. Date of last renovation. Describe what was done.

*Major renovations were completed in 2009, 2011, and 2013. In 2009 the old boiler and radiator heating system was removed and replaced with a forced air, zoned heating system. In 2011 the sanctuary was repainted, with large crosses incorporated into the design, provided by a congregation member who is a professional muralist.*

*In 2013, we renovated the lower level of the education wing in preparation for new renters. This included painting, some new wiring, new carpeting, and sound proofing. A tuck-pointing project was done in 2015 and the fellowship hall was painted and carpeted in 2016. Our roof was replaced in 2019 and we replaced the commercial oven in the kitchen adjacent to the fellowship hall.*

*Currently, we are reconfiguring the library, adding walls to create a storage room for chairs and tables and improving the layout for the library.*

*All this is to say, we have updated the majority of the mechanicals and outer structure of the church and it's standing in very good condition.*

What if any building/renovation program is needed or projected?

*At our recent congregational annual meeting, the trustees reported that the building's basic stability is good. We are in the process of renovating the two bathrooms in the education wing where a nonprofit rents space. These were very outdated restrooms. They are being remodeled to become gender neutral restrooms with one meeting current accessibility standards.*

5. Describe the educational facilities.

*The upper floor of the education wing includes 4 classrooms, a nursery (care is provided during worship and education hour), and a small chapel that doubles as meeting and classroom space. The lower floor is rented to a nonprofit organization.*

6. Describe the fellowship and/or recreational facilities.

*Our basement fellowship hall is 1200 square feet. The basement also contains restrooms, a full kitchen with a commercial oven with a hood. We have a small library off the fellowship hall that functions as a meeting room or a Sunday school classroom. We do not have recreational space or a parking lot, but a city park and school with a parking lot are located one block south of the church. On-street parking is also available around the church, and parking has never been an issue for us.*

7. Describe the church office location and equipment: Computers, phones, other.

*The church office is located in the office/education wing attached to the main church building. It has two adjoining offices which are shared by the pastor(s) and a part-time administrative assistant. The office has two computers (1 PC and one laptop) and two printers.*

8. Are buildings and equipment adequate for the needs of the congregation? Describe any special assets or liabilities of the building.

*The church facilities are able to accommodate all the needs of the church and we share the space with other organizations to be welcoming to the community and for income. Three non-Mennonite congregations meet in our facilities. One meets on Saturday morning, a second meets Sunday afternoon and the third meets Sunday evenings.*

9. Name the insurance company and describe the coverage for church liability, property, pastor's liability, etc., for the church.

*We have full liability, property, and director coverage through MAX insurance agency.*

10. Are there community programs or groups who also utilize your church facilities? Who are they and how often do they use the building?

*Most of the groups listed below are provided with space in our building at a below-market rate, or for free. This hosting of other groups is a form of community engagement and missional outreach.*

- Community of St. Martin, an intentional community in the neighborhood – Sunday evening worship; weekly meetings on Tuesday; monthly Council meeting.*
- Oromo (Ethiopian) Seventh-Day Adventist congregation – Saturday morning worship and occasional other meetings.*
- Renters with offices in the education wing: Institute for Local Self-Reliance (environmental*

nonprofit), Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBTQ Interests, Community of St. Martin/MN-Arms Spending Alternatives Project.

- Twelve-step groups—one meeting weekly, two meetings monthly.
- Pueblo de Lucha y Esperanza – immigrant rights group that rents office space.
- Occasional: ecumenical Taizé services, workshops or events/fundraisers for community organizations, drama or choir rehearsals, non-congregational weddings, funerals, gatherings
- Annual: Seward Art Crawl.

11. What interaction do you have with them?

- We sometimes cosponsor events with the Community of St. Martin since they are also a peace-oriented community.
- The Oromo Seventh Day Adventist congregation provides custodial service in exchange for the use of worship space.
- One of our members who is an artist is responsible for having our church basement used as a site for the annual neighborhood Art Crawl each December.
- We do not have much direct interaction with the twelve-step groups since they are independent of the church and meet evenings or weekends; however they have communicated that our building is like a spiritual home to them.

## **G. CHURCH STEWARDSHIP/FINANCES**

1. Based upon your last report, identify the previous year's giving of your church.

*Local giving is approximately \$170,000 annually, including earmarked money to support our migrant fund. We additionally collect approximately \$45,000 in rent from various groups who use our building. The rental income supports building operational costs.*

*Last year Faith Mennonite Church gave approximately \$22,000 to outside organizations, and gave \$15,000 to our refugee family support fund, for a total of approximately \$37,000 in giving.*

2. Church budget

*The trustee committee proposes the budget to the council. Once approved by council, the budget is presented to the Congregation for discussion and approval at a special meeting. Pastoral and staff salaries are determined by the trustees. Trustees are committed to an equitable wage that accounts for the local cost of living.*

*2022 Income is expected to be approximately \$210,000. Current savings is approximately \$175,000.*

*2022 expenses are expected as follows: staff \$116,000, giving \$38,000, programs \$10,000 and structure \$79,000.*

3. Is there church indebtedness?

*Yes: \$95,000 for a new roof put on three years ago. Payment is about \$3000 annually on a 30 year mortgage.*

## **IV. Relationships**

### **A. COMMUNITY**

1. Character of community your congregation serves or in which it is located:

*Faith Mennonite Church is located in Minneapolis a few blocks from the Mississippi River. The river is the dividing line between the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, which are surrounded by a metropolitan area of approximately 3 million people. The church is also located in the Seward neighborhood of Minneapolis.*

*The Seward Neighborhood has a long history of attracting politically left, social-minded people. It is also home to a significant East African immigrant community. The Seward Coop grocery store just a block north of the church is one of the oldest and most successful cooperative grocery stores in Minnesota. Franklin Avenue, one block north of Faith Mennonite, is home to many Somali-owned businesses, including grocery stores and restaurants. Seward is a great neighborhood for biking, with paths that connect to the Minneapolis Grand Rounds and the extensive regional bike trail system. Many members of Faith bike for transportation and recreation.*

*Seward is also bordered by the University of Minnesota and Augsburg University. The universities have performance venues and art galleries within walking distance from the church. Many artists live in the neighborhood, which is why we have the Seward Art Crawl every December. Our church is one of the host sites for this annual community celebration.*

2. Which best describes this community?

*Dynamic and in transition.*

3. Describe racial or ethnic composition of the community.

*Seward/Cedar Riverside neighborhood is primarily a mix of Euro-American/White and East African immigrants. The elementary schools in Seward are attended mainly by white children and East African immigrant children. Minneapolis as a whole is:*

*White: 63.6%*

*Black or African American: 19.2%*

*Native American: 1.4%*

*Asian 5.9%*

*Two or More Races: 4.8% Hispanic or Latino: 9.6%*

*Minneapolis is home to a significant population of Native Americans, and this community is centered in the Phillips Neighborhood, which is about one mile west of the church.*

*The church is also located about one mile from the Third Precinct Police building, which was the focal point of civil unrest in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd at the hands of police. Many buildings in the area were destroyed or vandalized, and the killing, unrest, and legal trials were all traumatic for our community.*

4. List two or three primary business/industries in the community.

*Touchstone Mental Health, Augsburg University, University of Minnesota, Fairview Riverside Medical Center, and Seward Community Coop are all significant employers in the neighborhood or nearby.*

5. Identify other Mennonite/Anabaptist churches in the community, if any.

*There are four Mennonite/Anabaptist communities in the Twin Cities other than FMC. Emmanuel Mennonite, Third Way, Hmong Mennonite, and St. Paul Mennonite Fellowship. All but St. Paul Mennonite Fellowship are members of Central Plains Mennonite Conference; SPMF is a member of the Central District Conference.*

6. What other churches and faith groups are in the community?

*Closest churches are, Church of God in Christ, Impact Living (non-denominational), Seward Church (Pentecostal), St Albert the Great (Catholic), United Methodist, Common Ground Meditation Center, Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, and an Ethiopian Orthodox church. A large Somali Muslim community lives in several high-rise apartments a few blocks from the church—as a result, there are a few Mosques and East African community centers in the Seward neighborhood.*

7. Name of nearest college or university

*Augsburg University and the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities are both less than a mile from the church. University of MN graduate students often fill the apartments throughout the neighborhood surrounding the church.*

*In what way does your church relate to this academic community?*

*Aside from members who attend or work at these institutions, Faith Mennonite Church has no formal*

*partnerships with these colleges.*

8. Identify significant issues confronting your community.

*In addition to cultural diversity, Seward has socioeconomic diversity, from homeless to near homeless individuals to wealthy upper-middle-class families. In recent years, encampments have been common in Seward and the surrounding neighborhoods. We have occasionally had individuals set up a tent in our courtyard. We have worked to connect these individuals with housing and other resources; and addressed specific needs and requests on a case-by-case basis.*

*More broadly, the killing of George Floyd has made it plain that there is a need for transforming the way our community treats people of color.*

9. Describe what you believe to be distinctive assets of your community.

*The diversity of our community is an asset. Community involvement is also an asset. Many people, both residents and business owners, are involved with and dedicated to the Seward neighborhood. Additionally, Seward has public schools and other institutions that are committed to the community's well-being.*

10. Describe your congregation's ministry in the community.

*From 2001 until 2020, our congregation planned and ran the Twin Cities MCC Relief sale alongside the other Minnesota Mennonite churches. In December 2020, the board disbanded and no future events are planned. We have ongoing relationships with organizations such as Community Emergency Service, a local food shelf. We are a major hub for the annual Seward Art Crawl. For a number of years we coordinated and hosted a Sustainability Fair in our church. This event included a variety of neighborhood organizations and individuals who do not attend our church. Before the pandemic we hosted several Community Sings, and we hope that these can resume. An FMC sewing group creates school kits for MCC donations on a yearly basis.*

*Historically, the congregation protested Honeywell's production of land mines and cluster bombs and helped get a local Ten Thousand Villages store established.*

*In the more recent past we have hosted weekly/monthly meals in our fellowship hall that were open to anyone in the local community. We installed and dedicated a Peace Pole in spring 2019. Local community members and officials attended. The pole hosts the word "peace" in four different languages reflecting our diverse community. We undertake projects with the Seward Neighborhood Group, such as picking up trash around Earth Day. There is a garden on the front lawn of the office building that a family in the church maintains. Our church building is used throughout the week by a diverse mix of organizations and other congregations.*

*We have been sponsoring two refugee families for the last two years.*

11. How does your congregation work with ecumenical and interfaith efforts?

*We are a member of the Minnesota Council of Churches. We co-sponsor periodic ecumenical Taizé services in our sanctuary as well as peace and justice initiatives in the community such as participating in the monthly ecumenical immigration rights vigil at the local detention center and neighborhood peace vigils on the Marshall Avenue Bridge. We also have a connection to the St. Paul Interfaith Network and have hosted interfaith events in the past.*

## **B. AREA CHURCH/CONFERENCE**

1. Describe your relationship with and your participation in the area church/conference.

*We are a member of Central Plains Mennonite Conference and have been active participants with our members serving on conference committees and task groups and we have representation at annual meetings and other events. We went through a period of discipline (1998-2003) when we began to welcome gay and lesbian Christians into membership, and our pastor's credentials were reviewed (with no action taken) in 2014 following our adoption of marriage guidelines that allowed for same-sex weddings. Throughout these processes, we focused on maintaining a positive relationship with the conference. We believe we are called to follow Christ and while this may not look the same in every congregation, we value our relationship with the broader conference. Though the relationship has been bumpy at times, we appreciate the role conference leaders have played in facilitating dialogue.*

### **C. WIDER CHURCH**

1. Describe your relationship with and your participation in Mennonite Church Canada/Mennonite Church USA.

*We send delegates to the biennial assemblies and use MCUSA-produced resources such as hymnals, the Leader magazine and its worship resources, Anabaptist World, Sunday school curriculum, etc. We host visitors from MCUSA and the denominational colleges when they are in the area. We hosted the MDS Region 3 annual meeting in 2019. We currently have a committee looking at the new proposed guidelines to be voted on in Kansas City. The committee is working with our delegates to prepare them to represent our congregation on this important matter*

### **V. Conclusion**

*In conclusion, we are a congregation in transition, excited to call a pastor to lead us as we seek to follow Christ and serve our community together.*

Name of group or persons responsible for completion of this form:

*Andy Martinson (chair), Melissa Hochstetler (secretary), Minke Sundseth, Rachel Geissinger, Matthew Hendricks*

Date of completion: *April 2022*

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