



Menno Focus

Monthly Newsletter of
First Mennonite Church of Denver

August 2016

Pastor's Perspective: Mission Statement

By Rob Burdette, Transitional Pastor

Proposed Mission Statement for First Mennonite Church of Denver:

Anabaptists building connections through compassion

This is the first iteration of our combined efforts to distill a mission or sense of direction for First Mennonite Church of Denver. We ask that you review what has been proposed and reflect on how and what we were thinking.

We began with your proposals from our May 15 family meeting and then our team met on five different dates to discuss and discern God's leading in terms of mission.

Below is some of our thinking and some context for our proposal.

- **Anabaptists:** core identity, broader than Mennonite, our Christian perspective/movement born out of the Radical Reformation in Europe.
- **building:** an active, expansive verb
- **connections:** this word was thought to be more inclusive than community and solidarity, encompassing the range from those thinly engaged to those deeply involved, describing both individual and corporate engagement; connections can be inward, outward and upward
- **through:** a word depicting a multidimensional approach, transformational
- **compassion:** this word was thought to be more active than peace, it describes an active, sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it; as in have passion with and for another; suffering with

People on the team that developed this mission statement included: Ruth Friesen, Debbie Reed, David Ammar, Tory Doerksen, Theda Good, Jonathan Moyer, Karen Martin, and Rob Burdette.

Our Leadership Council has reviewed this proposal and now we offer this to the congregation for your prayerful consideration. We are looking for a space in Adult Ed. to present and listen to your observations and feedback. In the meantime, perhaps you can discuss our proposal in your small group settings and if you'd like me or any other team members present, let us know. I'm also looking for an opportunity at our annual retreat to hear your comments. Additionally, I am certainly open for a discussion over coffee or lunch anytime.

Thanks for your anticipated engagement.

Small Groups Revisited

By Theda Good, Pastor of Nurture and Fellowship

We are on the cusp of a new school year and much of what we do as a church community follows alongside this rhythm to our seasonal living. As we contemplate our ever evolving community, we are continually looking for ways to engage in the strengthening of our relationships as well as the incorporation of new attenders into the life and vitality of this community. In this spirit, we celebrate who is here and those who are finding their way to us. Warm welcome and hospitality are key to our growth and life.

Nurture Commission would like to engage in new ways of forming small groups rather than the old way of assigning people to small groups. We are not looking to replace the groups which already exist. We do welcome everyone to consider how you may feel drawn to help create new spaces to learn to know current attenders as well as making room for new attenders to connect to this vibrant community.

Our goal is to create shorter-term (following the school year) small groups centered around a theme, even if that theme is to socialize. Creating space to invite new attenders to join throughout the year not only in September is a welcoming goal of this commission. We realize our homes can limit how many we can host. What would it look like to create an “always welcoming” spirit?

Our invitation to you is to consider whether you are willing to help host and facilitate a new small group. This would mean picking a theme, setting the date and time of the month for meeting, determining how many can you host, deciding if will your group include dinner or dessert/snack only and inviting members to host as well.

Sign-ups will happen at the OpEn Table in September.

Theme ideas could include:

Current Events (local, world or both)

Minority Issues; indigenous needs, #BlackLivesMatter or Race/Privilege, GenderQueer...

What does it mean to be a peace church?

What does it mean to be a Mennonite in Denver?

Living the Questions

Bible Study

Education

Creation Care/Environment

Book or Article focus

Socialize; I want to get to know others

Travel

Other – use your imagination

We would love to see new relationships fostered among current members as well as space for new attenders to plug into our community and feel like they, too, are welcomed.

Will you help us to invite others into deeper community?

Thanks for considering, and please contact either, Emily Gingerich, Nurture Commissioner emily.gingerich@gmail.com or Theda Good, Pastor theda.fmcdenver@gmail.com, by August 31st.

Congregational Notes

[Compiled by Karen Martin]

These are some highlights of our shared congregational life from the past month.

Hats for Roberta: On Sunday, July 9, we bid farewell to Roberta Stutzman by wearing hats to church. That Sunday was Leon and Roberta's last Sunday before moving out of state. Roberta often wore a hat to church. They were also honored by family with a cake reception after worship.



Pastors on the Road: All three of our pastors traveled to Glenwood Springs in July for a gathering of the pastors in the northern part of Colorado. Here is a view from the back of the van as area



pastors rode together to Glenwood.

Sunday afternoon worship in the park: Instead of morning worship, we gathered in Sunken Gardens Park in the afternoon on Sunday, July 17. We sang hymns with Nikki Kandelind and enjoyed a getting to know you activity crafted by Jeremy Garber. It was a very warm day so we moved our potluck inside after worship. It was a fun afternoon!



Glenn Balzer, National Director of DOOR, spoke on Sunday, July 24. He highlighted an urban tour he took in 2009. Glenn gave an overview of the report that was done for Mennonite Mission Network and MC USA leadership. The church in the US is changing all over and urban churches in MC USA are strikingly different. He challenged us to dream the church of the future.

Workshop: Richard Wyse, Karen Martin, Rob Burdette, Tory Doerksen and Theda Good participated in a workshop sponsored by Mountain States Mennonite Conference in June, "Organizational Culture." It was held at Beth-El Mennonite Church in Colorado Springs.

Mennonite Education Fund Update: College Student Experiences

[The Mennonite Education Fund Committee received these notes from Ellen Conrad and Emma Schrock. Thank you for your continued support to the MEF.]

Ellen Conrad

Hello FMC family! This fall I'll be going into my senior year at Goshen and --lemme tell yah-- these years have flown by! I love being an Environmental Science major and am really passionate about sustainability and community resilience. I can't imagine doing Environmental Science anywhere else but Goshen. My independent senior research is at Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center (a place for sustainable agriculture, research, and general nature loving). I'm testing the effect of soil conditions on currant plant growth. It's so cool that I get to plan and lead my own research, which I'll write a paper on eventually and give a formal presentation. I like spending as much time as possible at Merry Lea, which is a big reason why I'm looking forward to my ecology classes in the fall because I'll have labs there twice a week. I'm also doing an internship this summer as a Community Garden Coordinator, which means I'm providing support for community gardens to help them succeed.

This May, I went to India with David Leaman-Miller for a sustainability course. What an incredible experience! We learned about the ecology of India and learned about how Indian people interact with their land, which is fascinating. My favorite part was the five day trek in the Himalayas (which makes me home sick for the Colorado mountains!) and then a safari in Rajaji National Park. My jeep saw a leopard! After that, a few of my friends and I traveled to Nepal together to visit my friend, Binod, that I met at Drift Creek Camp last summer. They were so hospitable and the mountains around Kathmandu were beautiful. I definitely would go back there to do another trek in the Himalayas.

Other than school and travel, last year I was in Women's World Choir, the play Julius Caesar, and Parables. Parables is an eight person acting and singing group with a faith story component, where we traveled to churches around the mid-west and one long trip to Hesston. I tried to convince them to come to Denver, but for some reason they weren't up for another 7.5 hour drive. But another time I guess! This year I have a job at Pizzeria Venturi as a server and am looking forward to traveling with my best friends in Europe next summer. As for after graduation, I don't have any major plans yet, but I can't wait to explore jobs in my field and maybe travel to South America.

As always none of this could happen without your support as my faith community. Thank you for your love and support as I head into my last year! Love, Ellen

Cassie Voth

I went into my first year at Bethel College with very high expectations. I had been imaging and idealizing what life would be like at a small Mennonite liberal arts college would be like for years; a strong sense of community, plenty of opportunities for involvement, the chance to learn from professors who not only take interest in my academic development, but also my growth and faith as a person, etc. I am pleased to say that my first year did not simply meet these expectations, it exceeded them.

One of many highlights of my year was starring in Bethel's Fall Fest play, *Brooklyn Bridge*. I have always loved theater and I am very thankful for the opportunity I have at Bethel to be involved in a variety of activities. Another highlight has been working at Mojo's, our campus coffee shop. It's a really fun environment to work in and I have found great community with my fellow baristas. I also had the chance to assist a preschool teacher two days a week, as a part of a service and learning experience. Spending my Tuesday and Thursday mornings with three and four year olds always brightened my day and helped give me perspective on the simple joys in life. I am also very pleased with the academic opportunities I have at Bethel. I am double majoring in Biology and Chemistry and minoring in Spanish, with the hope of going to medical school when I complete my studies at Bethel. My professors are both knowledgeable and approachable, and I have formed good relationships with them.

Overall, I am very happy with my experience thus far at Bethel. I can't emphasize enough how much I love the community at Bethel. I have found great opportunities and even greater people. I want to thank the supporters of the Mennonite Education Fund for making my experience at Bethel affordable. I am looking forward to the rest of my time at Bethel; in fact I can't wait to return this fall. Thank you for supporting my Mennonite college experience!

Parting and Change

By Norm Dewhurst, Vice Chair

“Parting is such sweet sorrow”, according to Shakespeare. It is said that his meaning was that there exist both positive feelings along with sad and melancholic feelings in parting.

Parting and change are part of our human condition; they happen all the time. Churches also experience partings, as members leave, often after many years of participation. If a departing member is still available the friendships made in the church setting may possibly persist, even for life. We have all experienced relationships that supersede distance and geography, particularly in this age of instant communication.

When a minister leaves the feelings are the same. The wish to maintain the relationship may be very active for the congregant and the departing minister.

The Council has become aware that there are agreements that a church enters into with a Pastor when she/he is hired. This agreement/understanding details what should happen when there is a parting. FMC is considering adopting this approach.

The intent of such an agreement is to care for both the departing pastor and the congregation. It can provide a framework for both parties to understand what is expected and desired. It doesn't mean that the relationship is ended, that, after all, is up to both people. It does mean that there should be limits expected in terms of church functions and participation. The church functions/services are to be handled by the existing pastors. It is to be expected that the departing pastor has no part in these functions/services.

The agreement/understanding is not written in stone and no one is being told what to do. The spirit of such an agreement is to provide a framework for understanding our expectations of one another.

Here is the proposed Parting Agreement/Understanding:

This parting agreement will guide the future relationships between _____ and First Mennonite Church of Denver. It is designed to strengthen the process of separation from any further pastoral responsibilities beginning on (date). It is important that members and friends of First Mennonite Church of Denver understand the terms of this agreement in order that new relationships with pastoral staff are developed in positive ways. The agreement is mutually agreed upon by _____ and the Leadership Council of First Mennonite Church of Denver.

- 1. On (date), _____ will relinquish all pastoral and administrative duties.*
- 2. The current ministerial staff will assume all preaching, teaching, child dedications, weddings, funerals, baptisms, hospital and pastoral visitation or counseling. It is important that the new pastoral leadership bond with the congregation through these ministry functions. In order to foster growth and change, the departing pastor and family will not participate in First Mennonite until a transition is complete (it is suggested that this separation last 12 months).*
- 3. If any FMC members/participants contact _____ for pastoral purposes, it is expected that _____ will redirect them to new/current FMC pastors and leadership.*

This agreement is offered to the people of First Mennonite in a respectful, loving and grateful manner. The intent is to allow both the congregation and _____ to separate and start the process of growth and change.

(name), Congregational Chair

(name), Vice Chair

Departing Pastor

MHF Gathering in Estes Park

By Glenda Kauffman

Last summer I saw a request in the church newsletter for volunteers to help plan the Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship for this summer in Estes Park. I wasn't very familiar with the Fellowship, so I felt this was a good opportunity to be involved and learn more about the organization.

In the past, there were separate nursing and medical organizations. In 2011, they were combined into the Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship. The mission of Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship (MHF) is "to be an interdisciplinary community of Anabaptist health professionals that seeks to nurture the integration of faith and practice, provide opportunities for dialogue on health-related issues, and address specific needs through education, advocacy, and service".

The planning committee was headed up by Indigo Miller, who attends Beth-El Mennonite Church. Other members of the planning committee were Lisa Allison, Jan DeCourtney, Mel Stjernholm, Erica Stoltzfus, and myself. We were assisted by Paul Leichthy, Executive Director of MHF.

The MHF met at the YMCA facility in Estes Park in June from the 17-19. There were 63 people who attended the conference. There were mostly nurses and doctors, but there were also a mix of social workers, dentists, chaplain, massage therapist, psychologist, students and retired professionals.

The title of the weekend was "Wholeness and Holiness: Views From the Mountaintop". Our worship leaders were Lauren and Kim Martin, and the song leader was Kaleem Kheshgi. We had a couple of hymn sings that were wonderful, and received thanks from other guests at the YMCA.

There were a lot of different seminars to choose from on Saturday including topics related to Dreams, Holistic Care, several End of Life topics, and stories from some MVS'ers and another session with stories from several people who have served overseas – including Ernie Kandel and Sonia Graber.

There were also several group sessions over the weekend including "Spirituality of Illness" by Nancy Trottner, an update on the future of MHF by the board and a discussion regarding RAWtools.

The best presentation, in my opinion, was given by Dr. Abraham Nussbaum on Sunday morning. His talk was called "Tinkering in Today's Healthcare Factories: Pursuing the Renewal of Medicine." Dr. Nussbaum practices in the Denver area. He discussed how he has been influenced in his life by the Mennonites; especially through the "More With Less" cookbook, and "Discipleship as Political Responsibility". He felt that the patient centered and community-centered approach in the work of Mennonites after World War II in setting up community mental health centers in various parts of the country was a model that modern health care could learn a lot from.

I am really glad that I took this opportunity and attended this year's Fellowship. I even was able to take my mom, Reberta Shirk, with me, as she is a retired nurse. I enjoyed being a part of the planning committee and it was a great opportunity to meet other healthcare professionals from around the country.

If you consider yourself a healthcare professional, I would suggest that you check out the Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship website, and if you are able, consider attending in the future.

Everence Scholarship Recipients for 2016–2017 Announced

[News release from Everence]

Forty-two winners getting help with college expenses

Money can be a tool to make a difference in the lives of others, **Corrin Osborne** wrote in an essay that was part of her application for an Everence® college scholarship.

Everence asks scholarship applicants to write about how their faith influences the ways they earn, save, spend, borrow or invest their money.

Corrin, of North Manchester, Indiana, is the recipient of the top Everence scholarship for the 2016-2017 academic year. She plans to use her \$2,000 award toward her studies at Goshen (Indiana) College. Her home congregation is Manchester Church of the Brethren.

“Using my money in order to gain experiences has been an incentive to work two jobs, deposit that money into a savings account and watch it grow full of potential,” Corrin noted. “Starting with small decisions like buying fair-trade chocolate at our local store, I learned how money can affect the lives of other people and that the extra cost for me is worth the positive ramifications for someone else.”

Now that she’s older, Corrin has larger expenses to think about, including college tuition. She would like to help others by becoming a physician.

Courtney Kauffman of Westminster, Colorado, is one of our \$1,000 scholarship recipients. She plans to attend the University of Colorado and work toward a degree in medicine or engineering.

Courtney said her Christian faith “compels me to consider those in need and spend my money in ways that promote peace and build community.” Her home congregation is First Mennonite Church of Denver.

Mark Kreider of North Newton, Kansas, is our other \$1,000 scholarship recipient this year. He was a \$1,000 scholarship recipient a year ago as well. Mark attends Goshen College; his home congregation is Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Mark said, “Resources should be managed with integrity and justice – recognizing that how I spend my money is as much a conscious choice as how I treat others.”



Corrin Osborne



Courtney Kauffman



Mark Kreider

In addition to these three national scholarship recipients, Everence is awarding \$750 scholarships to 39 regional winners for 2016-2017. A full list of all of our scholarship winners, with photos, is posted on our website and will appear in the next issue of *Everyday Stewardship* magazine.

Mentoring Program Reflection

By Elizabeth Friesen Birky (mentor was Aimee Voth Siebert)

My high school mentoring experience with Aimee Voth Siebert was one that I will never forget. Aimee and I instantly hit it off as a pair. I quickly found that issues important to me were also important to her. Some of these topics included equal rights (regardless of gender, sex, or race), traveling, music, and education. Because of our shared interest in activism, equality, and service, Aimee and I chose to participate in several events throughout the city that reflected this interest. Two events I would highlight included the Denver Pride Fest and the Denver Urban Ministries Thanksgiving food drive. We worked together to support a greater cause, bonding while doing so. These events inspired rich conversation.

I am so thankful for Aimee and for our many conversations. Most of our lengthy chats took place in small, intimate, landmark Denver coffee shops. We talked about our pasts and our plans for the future. Aimee was always eager to share her travel experiences with me and I was interested to hear of her adventures. I admired her independence in going to work by herself to help others in Sierra Leone.

Additionally, Aimee supported me and all of my vocal performances, showing herself at countless choir concerts, pops shows, and my senior recital in April. It felt good to know that someone was interested in sharing my musical passion with me and encouraging me through her presence and feedback.

The FMC mentor program taught me the importance of building strong, potentially lifelong relationships with individuals in our church community. It was important for me to create a relationship with a strong, independent, intelligent, and kind woman and role model. I am so glad I connected with Aimee!

Church Neighbor Named Finalist

[News release submitted by Norm Dewhurst. Teresa is one of the church neighbors living on our block.]

Recently Teresa Castaneda / ReArranging Denver was selected as a finalist in the Play Everywhere Challenge, a \$1 million national competition that will award outside-the-box ideas to make play easy, available, and fun for kids and families in cities across the U.S. The Challenge is hosted by KaBOOM!, a national non-profit dedicated to bringing balanced and active play into the daily lives of all children, particularly those growing up in poverty in America.

Teresa Castaneda created an innovative plan to create double sided storyteller/ mural / photo booth made from repurposed materials built by participants in community workshop. The project, named "You are here" was selected as a finalist out of a pool of more than 1,000 applications nationwide. Winners will be announced in early fall, 2016. "I have been fine tuning this concept for seven years the project was posted on the National Endowment for the Arts for my positive impact on my community" said Teresa Castaneda.

The Challenge, developed in collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Target, Playworld, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the National Endowment for the Arts, attracted an outpouring of creative ideas to spark kids' imaginations and get their bodies moving. Teresa Castaneda's idea came from a passion of creating guided play and teaching beauty your surroundings regardless of age or income. This has bridged the gap between local business, schools, churches, and neighboring communities.

"We're thrilled at the possibility that La Alma kids could win this fantastic new opportunity to learn and develop from play," said Teresa Castaneda. "If we're selected as a winner, we hope it will be just the beginning of a larger effort to make play a way of life for kids and families in our community as well as others!"

Winners for the competition will be selected in fall 2016. To learn more about Teresa Castaneda ideas for making play happen everywhere in La Alma, contact Teresa directly at www.paintbrush44art@hotmail.com and To learn more about the Play Everywhere Challenge, including a gallery of ideas for what Play Everywhere could look like across the U.S. please visit <http://kaboom.org/playeverywhere>.

Highlights of the Council Meeting

By Karen Martin, Congregational Administrator

The Council did not meet in July.

First Mennonite Church of Denver
430 West 9th Avenue, Denver, CO 80204
Phone 303-892-1038
Fax: 303-892-6106
e-mail: fmcdenver@aol.com
website: fmcdenver.org

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Contributors: Elizabeth Friesen, Birky, Rob Burdette, Ellen Conrad, Norm Dewhurst, Theda Good, Glenda Kauffman, Karen Martin, Cassie Voth

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