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MENNO-LIFE
FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Transitions Part II

BY MARK J. SUDERMAN

In September 2021, I wrote my first article in the Menno-Life as church administrator. It was titled "Transitions." Little did I imagine that a year later I would still be in this position. It has been a wonderful year overall, serving in this role. I am humbled that the church would ask me to serve in this way.

I am grateful for the blessings of working with such great colleagues in the office. I am thrilled to see how the church has handled this transitional time without a lead pastor. So many of you have given even more during this year to care for the life and work of the congregation, plus many new people have stepped up to fill needs that have arisen. And now I am looking forward to seeing a new pastor come into our midst and lead us down paths yet to be discovered. So, we again will see new transitions to our church staff and congregational life. Already, starting this month, Carrie Mast has moved to full-time work and is the new Interim Pastor of Christian Education and Administration. Leadership Circle has determined that this interim title will remain in place for at least one year. She will be licensed during our September 25 worship service.



Phil Yoder will be starting his term as Lead Pastor on Monday, September 26. He will then be installed and licensed during the October 2 worship service. Jeff Boehr will transition out during the month of October, but will help orient Phil in connections with our church elders, as well as other pastoral care needs. And I will transition back to my quarter-time position as Director of Music. Thankfully, we have Trusty Schumacher and Don Burris to maintain their wonderful, steady work at the church. Both are starting their second year of work here with the congregation.

Job descriptions for Phil and Carrie are shared below. These descriptions are not set in stone, but guidelines to promote a starting place for tasks that need to be accomplished. As the church staff works together, we are hopeful for more clarity in how the church can best be served. This means certain duties may be adjusted for the gifts and needs of the staff, as well as for the congregation as a whole.

Lead Pastor (1 FTE, 45-50 hours)

The Lead Pastor will have a clear commitment to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology and be well-grounded in Biblical study. The pastor will support our Vision: Healing and Hope, affirm the welcoming statement and policies that have been adopted by the congregation, and partner with the congregation as we live into our stated values and priorities. They will help continue to promote development of a lay-guided congregational model, where gifts are identified and nurtured across the congregation. The Lead Pastor will model flexibility and the ability to thrive in an atmosphere of change, participating in a partnership with the staff and congregation characterized by mutual respect and trust.

Areas of Primary Responsibility:

- Pastoral Leadership
 - o Provide overall leadership for staff, with all staff reporting to the Lead Pastor; weekly staff meetings
 - o Lead staff in developing a Philosophy for Pastoral Ministry consistent with the congregational vision and priorities and Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective
 - o In collaboration with other staff and the Leadership Circle, give primary leadership to gift discernment and ministry development in line with the congregation's stated vision and priorities; identify, empower and provide resources for leadership of ministry teams
 - o Develop and maintain a sustainable plan for welcoming newcomers to the church and making contact with referred newcomers in the area; in collaboration with other staff, develop and implement learning opportunities for newcomers, new members, catechists
- Worship
 - o Preach at least 2 times per month or as scheduled; invite and encourage others to preach
 - o Give primary leadership to worship planning and seasonal/special emphases, in collaboration with worship ministry team, Director of Music, other staff

- o Acknowledge rites of passage and rituals in worship
- o Provide opportunities for individuals across the lifespan to participate in worship services, with special attention to participation by children and youth

- Pastoral Care

- o Develop and maintain a sustainable plan for providing pastoral care across the lifespan (crisis care, major life events, hospital/nursing home visitation, short-term counseling), with emphasis on developing lay leadership and empowering lay ministry teams to provide care to congregation and community
- o Assess and coordinate sustainable end-of-life care for members of congregation, including advance planning for ongoing pastoral care and person/family wishes for funeral or other services. Utilize the extensive pastoral care resources available in the congregation as needed.
- o Coordinate monthly gatherings of elders at Mennonite Memorial Home and Maple Crest; lead at least one of these gatherings quarterly and recruit/encourage other individuals or teams to lead in other months
- o With other staff and ministry teams, share responsibility for responding to assistance requests from the community

- Community and Denominational Engagement

- o Be an active and visible representative of FMC and provide an Anabaptist perspective to the local interfaith community
- o Serve as the FMC primary contact for Central District Conference (per CDC bylaws)
- o Nurture relationships and encourage ministry teams to enhance congregational connections to Central District Conference, MCUSA, MCC, Camp Friedenswald, and other connections as identified by the congregation

Interim Pastor of Christian Education (Children, Youth, and Adults) & Administration (1 FTE, 45-50 hours)

The Interim Pastor of Christian Education & Administration will have a clear commitment to Anabaptist/Mennonite theology and be well-grounded in Biblical study. The pastor will support our Vision: Healing and Hope, affirm the welcoming statement and policies that have been adopted by the congregation, and partner with the congregation as we live into our stated values and priorities. They will help move the congregation toward a ministry model of congregational life, demonstrating flexibility and the ability to thrive in an atmosphere of change, participating in a partnership with the staff and congregation characterized by mutual respect and trust.

Areas of Primary Responsibility

- Christian Education
 - o Provide overall leadership with ministry to children and youth; coordinate and align children and youth ministries and activities based on the Five Priorities (Following Jesus, Nurturing Faith, Connecting, Worshipping, Gifts Expression); nurture age-appropriate spiritual development that prepares them for life beyond our walls
 - o Coordinate youth mission/service trips and fundraising to support them
 - o Coordinate Sunday School classes, teachers, and curriculum for all ages (children through adults)
 - o Promote an understanding of and appreciation for Anabaptist theology and values of peace, service, and discipleship for all ages
 - o Promote intergenerational activities and relationships across generations
 - o Manage Christian Education budgets, approve expenditures, and make suitable spending plan requests and proposals
 - o In conjunction with the Lead Pastor, help with preparation of persons for membership, both catechism and adult membership classes; occasional short-term teaching assignments
 - o Develop and maintain a sustainable plan for spiritual formation which nurtures faith in the context of relationships, to include Bible study, Christian Education, and other creative opportunities for spiritual development; cultivate lay leadership and empower lay ministry teams to carry out this work

- Administration
 - o Encourage creative expression of faith by all ages through small groups and other connections within the congregation and local community, including local ecumenical and community organizations
 - o Be the liaison with Bluffton University, encouraging interactions with students and events
 - o Oversee financial aspects of the budget in conjunction with the treasurer
 - o Lead/assist with other administrative assignments in conjunction with Lead Pastor

- Worship
 - o Preach four times annually
 - o Assist in worship planning, seasonal/special emphases, and educational programming
 - o Assist in dedications, baptisms, and weddings, as needed

- Pastoral Care
 - o Assist as needed and designated by the Lead Pastor

THE CUTS AT BLUFFTON, THE NEW UNIVERSITY CAMPUS HAIR SALON, IS NOW OPEN! FMC HELPED COVER START-UP COSTS FOR THE SALON THROUGH INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS AND A GRANT FROM OUR OWN JUBILEE FUND.



Mennonite Voluntary Service Update from Cassidy Bush

Hello everyone!

MVS has been an absolute whirlwind so far! I arrived in SF directly from Munich, so I had a nine hour time difference to get over. :) I have had a fabulous time getting to know my roommates so far. I live with Eli, a recent Goshen grad who is working at a place that helps clients get affordable housing called DISH; Rachel, a recent Bethel/Hesston grad who works at the Homeless Prenatal Project; Claire, a former MVSer who is now an MVS associate and got hired on at DISH (and an EMU grad!); and Anna, who is doing her second year with MVS working at HPP.

I have really enjoyed getting my feet on the ground at this program. Living in San Francisco has been an absolute dream so far. I was fortunate to be able to spend some of my birthday, which was on the second day of orientation, at the beach! Also during orientation, we saw a mural in the Mission District depicting various social justice pictures. It was really powerful. Some images from the mural are shown here.

So far my job has been a lot of information, but my coworkers have been absolutely phenomenal and have been willing to answer all of my questions. Repeatedly. ;) As I write this, today is actually a pretty big day because not only is the Justice and Diversity Center (of the San Francisco Bar Association)'s fundraising gala tonight, but I'm meeting with my first client today at 2! Luckily, my supervisor, Katie, will be there to triple-check that everything is in order for him. I'm very excited for this meeting but a little nervous since SSI involves so much information.

All in all, I am enjoying myself immensely; mainly because of my incredible housemates and coworkers. The gorgeous, European-looking city doesn't hurt, either.

Miss you all!
Cassidy



Bluffton Senior Center Community Meal



The Bluffton Senior Center Community Meal was hosted by FMC this month. We catered for 78 people. JP Schumacher was in charge of the meal.

Volunteers: Ron Headings, Tim Schumacher, Linda Headings, Monica Harnish & Louise Matthews



Phil & Chaska are here!!



A Missed Opportunity

BY LOUISE MATTHEWS

I filled my plate from the picnic buffet,
Searched the grounds for the familiar faces of my people
And looked for a comfortable place to sit.
Noticing two unfamiliar people sitting alone,
And sensing their discomfort in this new setting,
And, because it's just what I do,
I smiled and said hi.
I went on my way past them,
Avoiding the discomfort of engaging them further,
Not even to introduce myself or welcome them.
I didn't know who they were.

This incident still haunts me;
Despite my empathy in the moment,
Awkwardness, discomfort and inconvenience
Caused me to ignore my urge to reach out,
To assure them that they were seen,
That they belong.
I didn't even know who they were.

Hospitality, Community, Belonging ...
To be exact, these words are
Nouns that represent a person, place or thing.
But isn't it also true
that these things cannot exist without action verbs?

A case in point:
When I am acknowledged,
I feel seen and validated.
When I am welcomed and actively included,
I feel a sense of belonging.
When others make genuine connections,
I become part of the community.
When someone reaches out with hospitality
and draws me into an open circle of connection,
I know I belong.

I did smile - that's a start and the least I could do.
I did say Hi - that's simply friendliness.
I hardly made a difference.
I don't know if anybody else did either.
I still didn't know who they were.

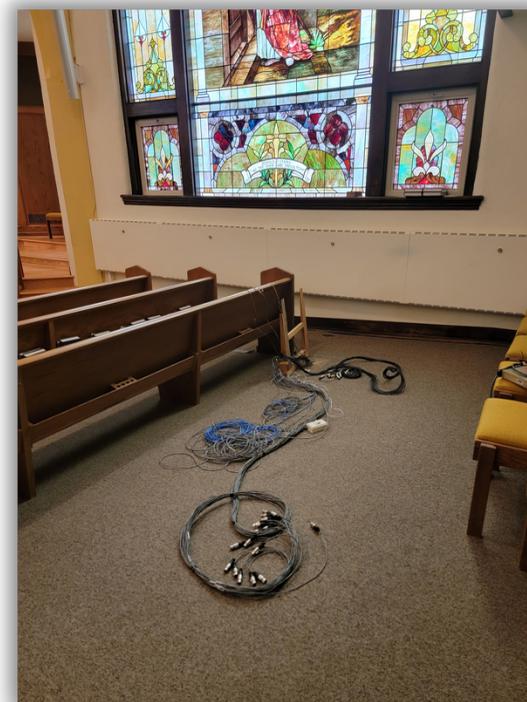
Two new people, sitting outside the circle of belonging and
Regretfully, I listened to the voice inside my head that said
"Someone else will do it."
I ignored the tug within my own heart
That reminded me that
"I, too, have felt invisible."

I missed that opportunity,
And so did the rest of us.
I may never know who they are.
But, today is a new day.
I choose to listen with my heart
When it points me in the direction of opportunity.
May it be so!

Can you hear me now...

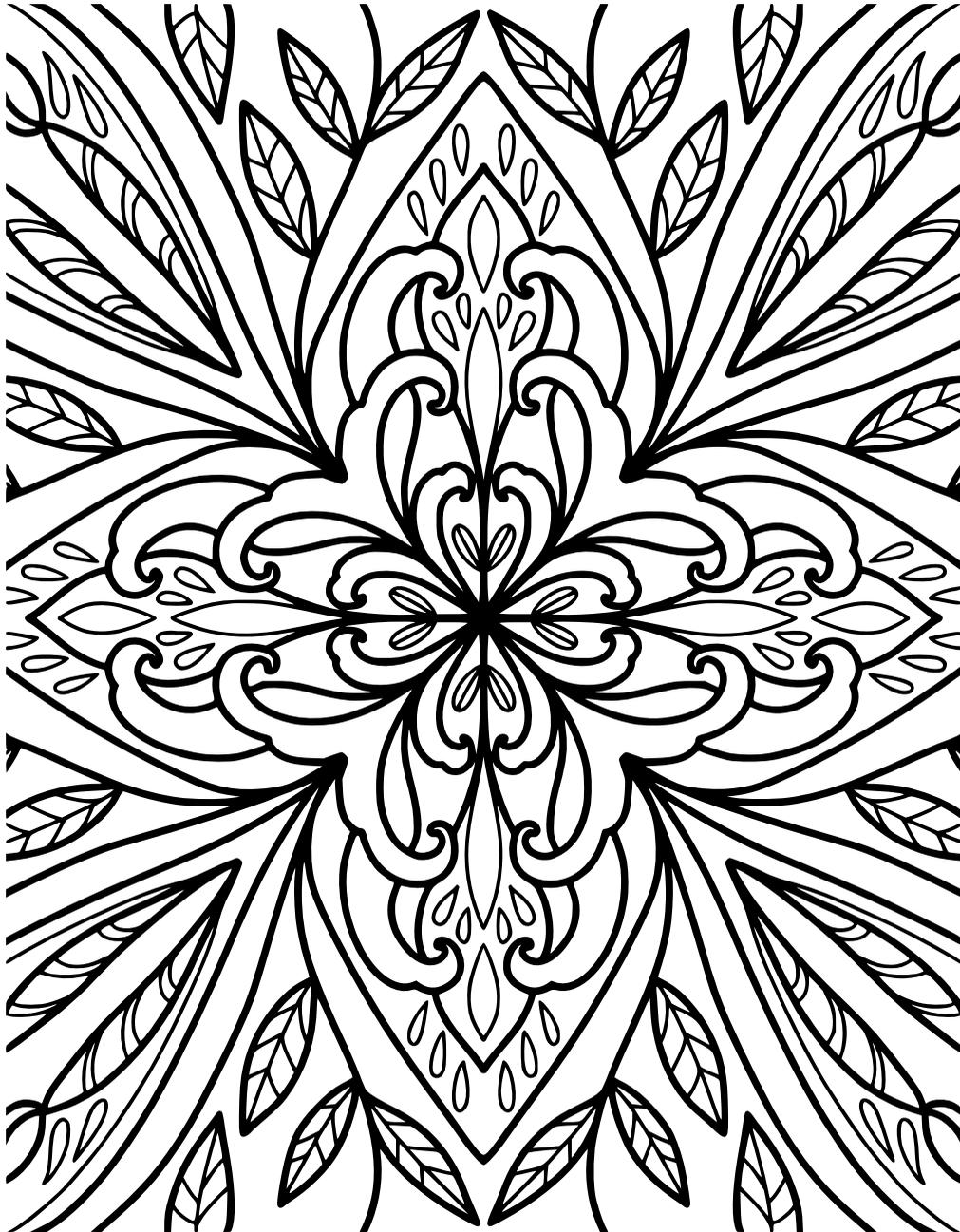
It is no secret that the ability to hear and understand many aspects of worship has been difficult recently. (Years?) The decision to upgrade the sound system started at the beginning of 2022. After a long delay, mostly because of equipment availability, our new sound system is in place and operational.

Many changes occurred with this upgrade. Some of the most impactful changes were new microphones for the choir area, new microphones in the seating area, and Don Burris made a platform to eliminate the slope of the floor so everything could be level. Other changes include a new sound board, new rolltop cabinets to hold everything, and, of course, new speakers. There was a concerted effort to make sure these changes would make as minimal of an impact on the worship service as possible. We anticipate that there will be an immediate improvement for all of our listeners. But, just in case, please be patient as all of our sound technicians learn a brand new system over the next several weeks. 😊



"And the sun took a step back, the leaves lulled themselves to sleep and autumn was awakened."

-Raquel Franco



**FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH
DEACON'S BENEVOLENT FUND ACTIVITY
JANUARY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2022**

This is a summary of the use of the Deacon's Benevolent fund in support of persons in the congregational community and for those nearby that request support. This information covers the activity for the first six months of 2022.

GAS CARDS	\$730.00
GROCERY CARDS	\$250.00
UTILITIES SUPPORT	\$439.21
FUNERAL SUPPORT	\$500.00
HOUSING SUPPORT	<u>\$4,839.00</u>

TOTAL SUPPORT EXPENDITURES \$6,758.21

The balance in the Deacon's Benevolent Fund as of June 30, 2022 was \$13,365.41. First Mennonite participates in the Everence Sharing Fund Grants available. We are grateful to Rich Bucher for being our representative. This year we have received grant funds of \$2000 based on funds supporting persons through the Deacon's Benevolent Fund.

Jeff Boehr
Interim Pastor of Pastoral Care