

**2023 Report Book
Volume 66**

MCM Gathering 2024

Mennonite Church Manitoba

March 1 & 2, 2024

Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Winkler

Emmanuel Mennonite Church

Following a 1984 baptism service at the Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church (WBMC), Rev J. K. Klassen and WBMC leadership realized that their facility was no longer large enough for their growing congregation. They discerned that "birthing" another daughter church was the best option and discussions leading to the formation of the Emmanuel Mennonite Church began.

On March 2, 1986 a group of believers willing to commit themselves to this church plant met for their first worship service in a newly acquired building at 950 Pembina Avenue. Later that year, on October 19, 1986, Emmanuel Mennonite Church officially became a congregation when 102 adult believers committed themselves as members during a covenanting service. (An additional 102 children and youth were part of the church family.)

Emmanuel chose to affiliate with Mennonite Church Manitoba and Mennonite Church Canada shortly after beginning as a church and continues to be an active participant. Over the years we've also built partnerships with MCC (Mennonite Central Committee), Eden Health Care Services, Salem Home, The Bunker, Pregnancy Care Center and Central Station.

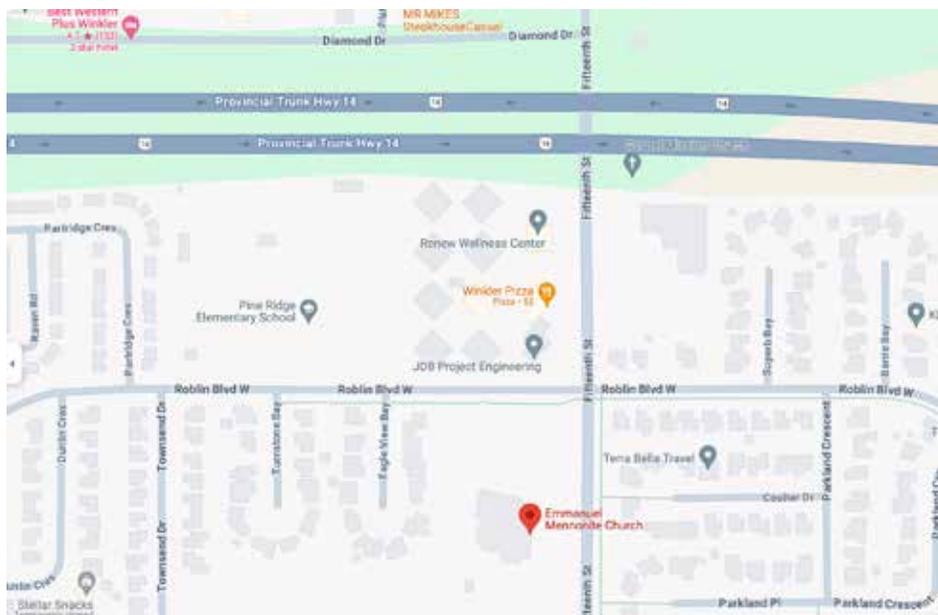
By 1994 the membership had doubled to 204 members (plus an additional 204 children and youth) and the church began exploring how to address the need for more space. A second service was established in 1997 and continued until the time when the Emmanuel membership made the decision to build a new facility. Land was purchased in the north west corner of Winkler (at that time) and the building project began.

On September 3, 2006 we moved to our present building at 750 15th Street. Our newer fully accessible building is serving us and the community in wonderful ways. Church growth continues at a steady pace, and after a number of years with fewer young families this demographic has re-emerged at Emmanuel and brought new energy to our church body.

Emmanuel has been blessed with long-term pastoral leadership. John Klassen served as pastor for over 20 years, and Corey Hildebrand has been serving us since 2007. In 2023, Lois Bukar joined our church, and she and Corey now serve as co-pastors. This pastoral stability has provided a foundation to explore new emphases such as a new model of youth ministry, an intentionality about being intergenerational in all phases of our church life, the willingness to explore additional ways of engagement and interaction in our worship services, and an emphasis on how we interact with and bless our community.

Map

Emmanuel Mennonite Church
750 15th St. Winkler, MB



Acronyms

AMBS	Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary	MC Canada	Mennonite Church Canada
CMU	Canadian Mennonite University	MCCMB	Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba
CwM	Camps with Meaning	MCM	Mennonite Church Manitoba
DVBS	Daily Vacation Bible School	MCM Gathering	Mennonite Church Manitoba Gathering
EMC	Evangelical Mennonite Church	MEDA	Mennonite Economic Development Association
EMG	Executive Ministers Group (Mennonite Church Canada)	MDS	Mennonite Disaster Service
EMMC	Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference	MDS MB	Mennonite Disaster Service Manitoba
JC	Joint Council (Mennonite Church Canada)	MLC	Ministerial Leadership Committee
LM	Leadership Ministries	MMC	Manitoba Multifaith Council
MBCM	Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba	VS	Voluntary Service
MBBS	Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary	YMF	Youth Ministry Fellowship

Health Note

Covid, RSV, and other airborne illnesses are still prevalent in Manitoba. Please stay home if you are sick with symptoms such as an unusual cough, sneezing, or fever. You are welcome to wear a mask during Gathering, but masks are not required.

Giving Opportunities at Gathering

During the Friday evening worship service, a special offering will be taken to support youth and young adult initiatives within MCM during 2024: our February youth and young adult retreats, and piloting a new urban ministry discipleship program for young adults this fall in partnership with Little Flowers Community.

Gathering Video

Only the Friday evening worship from Gathering 2024 will be livestreamed. Video of staff reports and excerpts from plenary sessions will be made available on the MCM website after the Gathering.

MCM Update and Monthly

The weekly MCM Update is the best way to stay on top of MCM and MC Canada news, updates, and bulletin updates. The MCM Monthly newsletter shares stories from among our congregations, regional church, and nationwide church. Subscribe to these at the bottom of this page: www.mennochurch.mb.ca/contact



Guiding Statement from the MCM Board

As we come together in this shared space for Gathering 2024, we seek to be guided by the following statement from the MCM Board (see www.mennochurch.mb.ca/creatingspace):

"Mennonite Church Manitoba is a community of congregations covenanted together for fellowship, mutual support, and shared ministry. We encourage congregations to discern the Spirit's leading for themselves regarding their welcome and affirmation of LGBTQ+ people, and this has meant that our congregations are in different places theologically and practically regarding this. We continue "making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3), recognizing that our unity in Christ is not complete uniformity of belief and practice and that diversity can be a beautiful, if sometimes surprising, gift from God.

"In our shared spaces as Mennonite Church Manitoba, we strive to provide a welcoming and safe place for everyone. These shared spaces include our annual Gatherings, our Mennonite Church Manitoba office, our Camps with

Meaning camps and programs, our committees and working groups, and our resourcing workshops and events. To make these shared spaces safe for all, we will avoid disparaging remarks about one another's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, and we will respect chosen names and pronouns. We will also avoid disparaging remarks about one another's perspective on LGBTQ+ welcome or affirmation, and we will not promote our congregation's position as normative for all congregations."

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77th Annual Gathering Program

Friday, March 1, 2024

- 6:30 pm: **Registration**
7:00 pm: **MCM-Wide Worship Service with Communion**

Saturday, March 2, 2024

- 8:30 am: **Registration**
9:00 am: **Plenary Session**
Welcome, Music and Prayer
Keynote Address by Fanosie Legesse - Intercultural Mission Minister (Mennonite Church Eastern Canada)
9:40 am: **Table Discussion**
10:30 am: **Break**
11:00 am: **Plenary Session**
Introduce CAWG Resolution
Board: Agenda, Minutes, Board Actions
Program Reports
12:15 pm: **Lunch**
1:15 pm: **Plenary Session**
Greetings
Application by River East Church for affiliate membership
2:00 pm: **Breakout Sessions**
2:45 pm: **Plenary Session**
Approval of 2023 Budget
Vote on CAWG Resolution
Closing Worship
Adjournment

Foreword

Welcome to the Mennonite Church Manitoba report book, looking back at 2023. In this book you will find a representation of the work that our MCM staff, our MC Canada staff, and the staff of many related organizations provide for our constituency. Of course, there is much more that goes on among us as MCM than is reflected in this book. The vast majority of MCM's work is done among us and through us as congregations seeking to follow Jesus within our communities toward greater faith and hope and love. To get a fuller picture of the ministry we share as MCM, we would need to include the annual report book of every congregation!

As you prepare for Gathering 2024, please use this report book as your guide to what has happened this past year in our shared and related ministries. The Gathering will focus not as much on the past as it will on exploring what God is doing among us now what we can anticipate God doing among us in the coming months and years. We trust these reports will give us a common understanding of what God is already doing in our midst, what we are facing, and what opportunities lie before us.

We are grateful to Emmanuel Mennonite Church for hosting Gathering 2024. It will be wonderful to worship together on the Friday evening (March 1) as a community of congregations, and then to discern and be inspired together on the Saturday (March 2) as delegates and guests. We are looking forward to having Fanosie Legesse join us as our guest speaker. Fanosie serves as the Intercultural Mission Minister for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, and he brings years of education and experience in intercultural ministry—and a dynamic passion for intercultural church.

This report book and our Gathering are made possible because of the collaborative effort of many people. Thank you to all who have submitted material for this book, and to those who have prepared to contribute to our Gathering. Special thanks to Darryl Neustaedter Barg, our Communications Director, for producing this book, and to Naomi Ewert, our Administrative Assistant, for coordinating our Gathering.

I am excited for us to come together for Gathering 2024, as we explore what it might mean for us to become a truly “intercultural church” as congregations and as a regional and nationwide church. May we live more fully into the vision of Revelation 7, becoming a church “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” (Rev 7:9).



Michael Pahl
Executive Minister
Mennonite Church Manitoba



Michael
Pahl
Executive Minister

Vision and Mission

VISION

Our vision is to be a community of congregations unified in Jesus Christ, living a biblical Anabaptist faith, together presenting Jesus Christ to the world.

Our Vision is the ideal we want and hope to become. We see ourselves growing in size and faithfulness, and building up our community of churches. Our reason for being is our faith, lived and known and, specifically, articulated in the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. As a community, we will strengthen each other and our member congregations, to follow Jesus Christ and present Him to all people.

MISSION

Our mission is to resource and empower each other, and to facilitate spiritual growth, service and evangelism.

To fulfill our mission, we are committed to ministries such as:

- proclaiming the gospel of Christ
- promoting Christian education
- planting and nurturing new congregations
- dialoguing and working with congregations, conferences and other denominations
- fostering relationships of mutual accountability
- calling, nurturing and providing leadership
- planning joint worship and faith celebrations

Values

COMMUNITY

MCM is a covenant community whose sense of togetherness flows from common vision, understanding of scripture and confession of faith. Our commitment is to be together and to grow closer in love without insisting on uniformity.

LOVE, CARE AND NURTURE

God's message of love motivates us to nurture and care for others and each other.

MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

MCM and member congregations are accountable to each other in matters of doctrine and discipleship.

DOCTRINE

All doctrine is grounded in the holy Word of God as found in the Bible. The core of our doctrine is articulated in the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.

DISCERNMENT

As a community and as individuals, we seek the will of God for the church through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, by searching scripture, discerning the culture and the times in which we live, and waiting patiently for God's revelation.

DISCIPLESHIP

We encourage churches and their members to be obedient disciples of Christ, living holy and God-honouring lives.

EVANGELISM

We proclaim and witness to the good news of salvation in Christ, and God's kingdom.

SOCIAL CONCERN

We reach out to, and walk with, people afflicted by poverty, conflict and injustice.

PEACE

We believe that peace is the will of God, and that we are called to live and work as Christian peace-makers.

STEWARDSHIP

We embrace the biblical message about the management of all we are and have been given under God's creation.

—as adopted at delegate meeting @ Bethel Church, June 17, 1998

From the Moderator

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you (in us) will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.
Philippians 1:3-6

These are the words printed at the top of my Moderator folder filled with lists and notes and articles and plans and hopes for MCM. They are printed there so that I am reminded to pray for you without ceasing, to pray with a heart of joy for who you are and for all that you do for your church, and to remember that above all God is among us and God is at work. And with all of that, how can I not humbly proclaim, “what a time to be the Church!”

As I sit here at my desk on a surprisingly sunny and warm (for early February) day and reflect on my first year in the role of Moderator, I realize that I have done a lot of listening and lot of learning in the past twelve months. What luck, they are two of my favourite things!

Every time someone new introduces themselves to me, I am thankful. Thankful that they took the time, and thankful that I got to know someone new, even if just a little bit. Every time someone comes up to me and reminds me that we’ve met once or twice before, I am again thankful. Thankful for their grace, and thankful for a renewed connection. The same goes for those whom I have known a long time. It is good for my heart to see longtime and far flung friends, and to deepen and strengthen those relational bonds first knitted together so long ago. I am thankful for each story I hear, each email I read, each phone call I receive. I am grateful, because each of them, whether light hearted, warm hearted, heavy hearted, or deeply challenging, is a reminder of how deeply you, the people of MCM care for your church, the Church, and for MCM somewhere in the mix. And again, I say, “what a time to be the Church!”

Like the many years that have come before, 2023 has been a year of blessings and challenges. Life in the church is like that. It has been a gift and a blessing to sit around the metaphorical board table and hear each month just how busy our MCM staff are, how faithful they are in their work, and how many of you they are supporting and resourcing as you live out your calling to be the hands and feet of Christ. It is a gift and a blessing to see the love and the hope you have for the church in and through this work.

It has been a joy to get to know our new churches. And we have grieved as we have had to say goodbye to two congregations. There have been conversations with congregations invigorated with the opportunities they find

within MCM and with other congregations wondering if this is still a place they can call home. What a time we have chosen to try and be the Church together!

It has been a joy to see the ways in which our camping ministry is finding its way back to pre-pandemic enrollment and rentals, and vision new and bigger ways to do camping ministry in the future. And, as a board, we bless the capital campaign as it takes off in new ways in 2024. It has been a challenge around that same metaphorical board table to sit with a year end financial statement that shows a deficit for 2023 and wrestle with what that means for MCM programming and resourcing and the work of the church. And wrestle we did. As Moderator, I am deeply grateful for the work and wisdom of the staff and of my fellow board members which together have made it possible to address the significant financial challenges of 2023 and present a balanced budget for 2024. A budget prepared with hope and holding on to God’s promise to be faithful and provide us with what we need. What a time to try and be the Church!

I am still here, sitting at my desk. As I look out the window, I see that the sun is beginning its slow descent for the day, and I remain filled with hope and courage for what is to come. I am also, once again, reminded to pray. So, let us hold on to the hope we have in Christ, and let us fill our hearts and minds with courage for the road ahead. And as I embrace my commitment to prayer, these lyrics from the song “Build your kingdom here” by Rend Collective come to mind:

*“You made us for much more than this
Awake the kingdom seed in us
Fill us with the strength and love of Christ
We are Your Church
We are the hope on earth
...Build your kingdom here, we pray”*
May it be so.



Cheryl
Braun
Moderator

Executive Minister's Report

“After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb!’” (Revelation 7:9-10)

What a beautiful, powerful vision of God’s people in God’s presence! The suffering church, now gathered in glory before God’s throne, purified from all our sins of harm, a symbol of victory in our hands, calling out our Saviour’s praises.

It’s a vision of the church’s future which is intended to shape the church’s present. It’s a reminder that, through all our suffering, through all the trouble and turmoil this world experiences, the church continues its work of worshiping God, forming disciples of Jesus, and being formed by the Spirit into the image of Christ in his way of persevering faith, enduring hope, and justice-seeking love.

And so we have seen among us in 2023. Through this past year we as Mennonite Church Manitoba staff have heard countless stories of this work of the church being done in our congregations. We as staff have shared in this work with you all, supporting the ministries of our pastors and congregations and facilitating shared ministries together as a regional church. The reports that follow offer a summary of this supporting and facilitating work we have done on your behalf. If you haven’t already done so, I encourage you also to contact our office to sign up for our MCM Monthly newsletter, which shares stories of the good things going on among us as a regional church.

Out of all these reports, I’d like to highlight one item that illustrates the shared work we do. Our MCM Climate Action Working Group (CAWG) has worked diligently over the past two years to encourage us as congregations to engage the reality of climate change in a way that is faithful to the gospel and the way of Jesus. They have discerned together that it would be good for MCM to endorse the formulation of an international fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty. This discernment has resulted in a resolution which we will consider together as delegates at Gathering 2024. I encourage congregations and delegates to engage with this resolution before and during the Gathering.

As a regional church, we continue to experience the effects of the “unsettling and resettling” that is going on in the broader church and especially within the Mennonite world. Denominations, congregations, and pastors are responding

to societal changes by sharpening or shifting their focus on theological and social matters. We see this unsettling and resettling within MCM in ways that bring us both sadness and joy.

We lament the withdrawal of Springfield Heights Mennonite Church and Carman Mennonite Church in 2023. These congregations have both had a significant impact on our shared life as a community of congregations. We pray God’s blessing upon them as they discern their futures.

At the same time we rejoice that Saint Julian’s Table and Aberdeen Mennonite Church joined our community at our 2023 Gathering. In their first year among us they have enriched our community life immeasurably. This year we have before us an application from River East Church to join MCM as an affiliate member, providing a five-year window for discernment regarding their participation among us as full members.

2023 saw the continued effects of pandemic realities, along with other broader economic realities, on our finances as congregations and as a regional church. In early fall we were concerned we might have another unmanageable deficit on our hands at the regional church level. However, we give thanks to God—and to you, our congregations and people—that we saw a late surge both in congregational forwarding of funds and in individual donations to our MCM ministries, including Camps with Meaning. We do feel that 2023 has given us a more stable platform for being able to anticipate financial realities going forward.

Through all these things, the work of the church continues. Worship, discipleship, fellowship, spiritual formation, congregational care, community ministry, outward mission—all these things continue as God’s Spirit compels us to share the love of God with each other and with the world. May we continue to strive to live into the vision of Revelation 7 for the church: all the peoples of the world, all God’s people, rejoicing in the salvation of God in Christ Jesus.



Michael
Pahl
Executive Minister

Camps with Meaning

Looking back on the past year, it's clear that Camps with Meaning is a vibrant ministry with a bright future. God's presence among us is evident through those who support our ministry—our summer and year-round staff, volunteers, and supporters. Their dedication, whether through prayer, work, volunteering, or financial help, has been vital to our camp's success. We're excited about what lies ahead for Camps with Meaning, knowing full well that it takes God's blessing and a loving community to bring our vision to life!

Committees and Preparations

Among our volunteers, are those who serve on the Camps with Meaning Committee which gathers monthly to steer CwM programs and manage operations at Camp Assiniboia, and two additional committees that have been hard at work over the past year. These two committees are focused on the upcoming Light the Fire Capital Campaign and the 75th Anniversary weekend, scheduled for June 21–23, 2024.



Mennonite Church Manitoba
Camp Assiniboia Retreat centre study

Retreat Centre Exterior Back
Render

Light the Fire – Your Camps with Meaning Capital Campaign

The Light the Fire Campaign Team has been laying

the groundwork for our campaign's launch in 2024. Their efforts this past year include database preparation, research into grant opportunities, development of a communications and fundraising plan, and event planning. In the coming months, our team will transition from behind-the-scenes work to a public launch. This will be marked by a kick-off event on April 14, 2024. Stay tuned for more details and, if you wish to receive updates, please send your contact information (email address, mailing address, and phone number) to bwiebe@mennochurch.mb.ca.

Celebrating 75 Years of Camping Ministry

In 2024, Camps with Meaning will also mark 75 years of camping ministry. Plans for an epic celebration at Camp Assiniboia from June

21-23 include worship, food, activities, and a music festival.



To assist with planning, we strongly encourage you to pre-register for meals. Overnight bookings for this weekend can also be made through our website: www.campswithmeaning.org/news-events. All are welcome to join for part or all of the weekend festivities.

Staff Transitions

In recognition of departing staff, we express our gratitude and thanks to Janet Peters, now co-pastor of Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, and to Paul and Linda Dueck for their roles at Camp Assiniboia. A warm welcome is extended to Nadya Langelotz, the new

Associate Program Director for Camps with Meaning, Megan Klassen-Wiebe, Guest Service Coordinator at Camp Assiniboia, and Kerry Hyde, General Assistant at

Camp Assiniboia.

Facilities and Maintenance

We would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the Camp Assiniboia volunteers and staff who dedicated themselves to various building and maintenance projects throughout the year.

Among these projects is a new roof for the Wild Plum Conference Centre, a new meditation trail which is open to the public on Sunday afternoons, a large shelter in the garden for the summer camp program, and a lifeguard station at the beach. Many thanks to all of



our volunteers, we can't run camp without you!

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Thank You for your Financial Support!

A resounding THANK YOU to all who generously contributed in 2023, helping us surpass our goal with over \$93,000 in donations.

Running camp at full capacity for the first time since the pandemic disruptions, has provided clarity on the true cost of operations. Due to significant increases in food, utilities, and labour (to name a few) over the past few years, we find it necessary to adjust our rates, especially for our rental group program. We thank you for your understanding and continued support as we navigate these changes and we look forward to your presence at our Light the Fire launch and the 75th Anniversary celebration in 2024!



Dorothy Fontaine
*Director of Camps
with Meaning*

Greetings from Camp Koinonia Board and Staff

Coming into our first winter, post pandemic, guest groups were very slow for January. The groups that had previously booked those January dates have not returned post pandemic. That being said February was a busy month hosting guest groups, March through May guest groups were steady, but not overwhelming. June, July and August were busy with guest groups and the Camps with Meaning summer camping program. September through mid-November was very busy with guest groups and then the rest of the year was relatively slow.

Some of the highlights of the 2023 year were the replacement of 24 windows in the main lodge. All the windows in the dining area, pit and the swamp were replaced in May. This renovation has certainly brightened up the Lodge and has been noticed and appreciated by many. Another addition to the Main lodge was the installation of a Heat Pump, this heat pump now provides more efficient heating in the spring and fall. But it also provides air conditioning in the main area of the lodge and the kitchen, as you can imagine this is much appreciated by all who use our facility. Camp Koinonia received a 50/50 grant from Building Sustainable Communities, a provincial grant, to replace the windows and to have the heat pump installed. Camp Koinonia also received a Hometown Greenteam grant to hire summer help in June, July and August. We were thankful to have additional help on our maintenance team for the summer.

This year with the help of MCM, Camp Koinonia is now able to accept donations and provide a tax receipt to their donors. All donations are sent to MCM but need to be

designated to Camp Koinonia. We thank MCM for this opportunity and are appreciative of their efforts to the ministry of Camp Koinonia.

The primary reason that the Camp Koinonia Inc. board is in place is because they wanted to ensure that Camp Koinonia existed for children and adults with disabilities to have a place to attend summer camp. Camp Koinonia Inc. is grateful to Camps with Meaning for providing 7 weeks of camp at Camp Koinonia in 2023.

Thanks in huge part to our volunteers over the past year we were able to accomplish many things. Unfortunately, this year in October there was a huge dump of snow and we needed to cancel our woodcutter retreat. But with the nice start to winter we had 18 amazing volunteers come out in mid-December to haul wood out of the bush and split enough wood for next year.

Thank you also to Evan Laramee, our Onsite Manager, for all your hard work maintaining the camp and to Meara Harrison, our Guest group Coordinator, for staying on top of all our inquiries and bookings. Matthew Heide continues to be the Camp Manager, taking care of general oversight, personnel and finances.

For more Camp Koinonia information, please check out our website www.campkoino.ca

Camp Koinonia Inc. Board
Jan McIntyre, Ben Heide, Sheldon Dyck, Ron Toews

Summer Program Report

Bible Curriculum and Theme Song

Our Bible curriculum for this year was Jesus' Way of Peace, and was written by Gabrielle Bishop Wiebe, camp alumni and current teacher at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate. The theme was guided by a memory verse from John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." The new song for this year,



written by camp staff with the help of Darryl Neustaedter-Barg, followed this verse closely, as a song of hope and assurance. Listen to it at www.campswithmeaning.org/summer/music

Throughout each week, campers engaged with different aspects of peace: loving our neighbours and enemies, confession, reconciliation and forgiveness, standing up against injustice, taking up the cross and following Jesus, and doing all these things because we know Jesus sent his Spirit to be with us. A lot to talk about, and all good things!

2024's Bible theme is God's Community, and the curriculum will be written by Ellis Hamm.

Summer Program

This summer was a continued settling in to overnight camps, getting routines and rhythms back after the years of COVID. Staff were mostly all healthy and things ran smoothly. At both Assiniboia and Koinonia, we ran a total of three ADV weeks, and five kid's aged weeks. ADV weeks were great, as always, though one week at Koinonia was smaller than we would have liked. Last month however, we had record numbers at our winter ADV retreat since 2016, with a total of eight new campers! If that's any indication of summer, we will be full.

As always, our Junior-Intermediate week with day camp combination at Camp Assiniboia was a hit, with 85 campers one week and 63 the other. The same age group at Koinonia had 28 campers, the fullest week at Koinonia, and drew in mostly local kids, which was a great addition to the week. In general, our total camper numbers were up, and we had 540 campers throughout the entire summer.

Campers enjoyed the lake at Camp Assiniboia, with the kayaking activity as well. Koinonia activities ran as usual, with the out trip for junior high campers and a beautiful youth week to end the summer. This year, we hope to use the farm space more at Camp Assiniboia, as a new shelter for shade has been built. With the capital campaign launching this year as well, we anticipate some much-needed renovations/additions! Change is slow, but most certainly needed to keep our camps running!

Retreats

The Birding Retreat took place June 2-4 with around 45 people arriving for fellowship and bird watching, learning, and loving! Koinonia was unavailable so the group went to Camp Arnes instead, plans for this year are already underway and this group will be back at Koinonia in spring!

In November, almost 50 summer staff signed up for the Fall Retreat at Camp Assiniboia. We sang songs, talked about the nature of play and how we cultivate play in our lives, ran around during a night game in the snow, played board games, and laughed in the company of others.

The "This Ground" gathering, held at Camp Assiniboia, was on pause during the fall, while I began this role and reassessed whether this was something people were



participating in. We hope to meet monthly in spring and help get camp ready for summer while enjoying fellowship at camp and seeing whether this group will continue in the future!



As always, Both Koinonia and Assiniboia continue to be available for church and group retreats of all kinds – we would love to have you on site!

Staff and Volunteers

Our Leadership Team began with a week of training on May 8. This team of fourteen young adults gathered to remind themselves of all the things that camp

both requires of us, and gifts to us. We sat in sessions, participated in team building exercises, ate together, heard from guest speakers, and enjoyed the sites of both Assiniboia and Koinonia.

2023 gave us 82 staff total, including the 14 leadership, 19 young teens in our teen volunteer program and 10 in our servant leader in training program, and the remaining 49 staff working as junior and senior counsellors, as well as activity leaders.

We had a few more volunteers than in 2022; 60 folks signed up and dedicated their time and energy to the ministry of camp. This was essential for helping programming run smoothly, keeping our staff in good spirits, supporting leadership, and adding to the distinct community that is formed each week. These volunteers were health officers, kitchen help, maintenance workers, and camp pastors.



Nadya Langelotz
*Assoc. Summer Program
Director*

The following were the 2023 Leadership Staff:

Assiniboia

Summer Program Directors: Miriam Huebner and Grace Siemens
Bible Instructor: Jonah Huebner
Nature Instructor: Jamie Martin
Farm Coordinator: Caleb Samson

Koinonia

Summer Program Directors: Johanna Klassen and Lucas Salomons
Nature Instructor: Olivia Pries-Mallett
Bible Instructor: Alayna Smith

Inclusion Coordinators: Serena Athaide-Lepp and Scott Warkentin
SLT Directors: Nic Harder and Ava Campbell-Enns
TV Director: Carrie Schulz

Leadership Ministries

MCM's Leadership Ministries program and staff work with spiritual leaders and congregation across our regional body by providing care, resources, networking possibilities, and support. For pastors and spiritual leaders serving MCM congregations, we offer individual pastoral visits, opportunities for continued education, and monthly cluster meetings. We work with congregations in the calling and locating of pastors and other ministry leaders, tending to the pastor-congregation relationship, credentialing for ministry, and structuring healthy approaches to conflict mediation when needed. We also serve as a point of connection to Leadership Ministries staff in other regional churches across MC Canada and MC USA as well with staff in other Manitoba Mennonite denominations.

2023 was a year full of pastoral transitions. As you will see in the table below, there have been 15 pastors entering new contexts for ministry. These transitions have directly involved 12 of the 39 congregations that make up MCM. This has continued a trend we saw beginning when we started in this role in the summer of 2022. A shift is happening in the makeup of pastoral ministry in MCM that is touching a sizeable portion of our regional church.

Many of these transitions involved people serving MCM as a pastor for the first time. This has meant that much of our work this year involved accompanying people through the process of discerning their sense of call, and then identifying which ministry context would be the best fit for them to explore. It has been encouraging for us to see people from a variety of different backgrounds recognizing how God's presence in their lives is potentially leading them to pastoral ministry. Our pool of pastoral candidates continues to be restocked with new people exploring pastoral ministry in MCM.

One area we have noticed a gap developing in our pool of pastoral candidates is with intentional interim ministry. Congregations who have a long-term pastor preparing to, or recently leaving their office will often benefit from having an intentional interim pastor serve them on a short-term basis. Over the past year it has been difficult to identify good candidates willing to serve our congregations in this way.

The Co-Directors of Leadership Ministries are also responsible for attending MCM's Ministerial Leadership Committee (MLC) and MC Canada's Church Leadership Ministry (CLM) meetings. The CLM meets monthly to discuss Nation-Wide Church matters related to the work of Leadership Ministries. This includes such things as maintaining pastoral records, supporting each other through difficult aspects of our jobs, and tending to the accountability structures in place for all credentialed ministers of MC Canada.

The MLC is our advisory group who we meet with to discuss the work of our office that is more focused on our regional church. A key piece of this to assist with the credentialing of pastors and spiritual leaders. We give thanks for the continued work of the members of the MLC, which includes Erin Morash (Prairie Mennonite Fellowship), Lee Hiebert (January-June, Steinbach), Laverne Siemens (Gretna Bergthaler), Harold Schlegel (January-March, Altona Bergthaler), Marla Langelotz (Sargent), Julia Thiessen (Charleswood) and Lynell Bergen (March-December, Hope).

We are grateful for the Leadership Bursaries we can distribute to support financially those pursuing training related to ministry: The A. G. Neufeld, Jake & Dorothy Pauls, and Johann Funk funds. In 2024 Kennedy Froese received funds for pastoral ministry training, and Korey Dyck for clinical pastoral education training.

Jeff Friesen
and Karen
Schellenberg,
Co-Directors
of Leadership
Ministries



MCM PASTORAL PLACEMENTS

(Congregation)	(Name)	(Position)	(Start Date)
Charleswood	Jonathan Neufeld	Co-Pastor	January 3, 2023
Douglas	Tobia Veith	Children's Ministry Leader	January 3, 2023
Altona Bergthaler	Terrell Wiebe	Associate Pastor: Youth Min	January 8, 2023
Pinawa	Liz Brasier	Pastor	January 30, 2023
Altona	Erika Enns-Rodine	Pastor	February 21, 2023
Douglas	Ben Pauls	Interim Pastor	May 1, 2023
Bethel	Kevin Derksen	Lead Pastor	August 1, 2023
Hope	Selenna Wolfe	Associate Pastor	August 1, 2023
First	Monica Bock	Associate Pastor: Music	August 1, 2023
First	Karis Wiebe	Associate Pastor: Music	August 1, 2023
First	Zach Dueck	Associate Pastor: Faith Formation	August 15, 2023
Emmanuel	Lois Bukar	Co-Pastor	September 1, 2023
Prairie Mennonite	John Klassen	Interim Pastor	September 1, 2023
Jubilee	Janessa Naylor-Giesbrecht	Pastor	September 10, 2023
Sargent	Janet Peters	Co-Pastor	October 8, 2023
Douglas	Kara Friesen	Interim Pastor	December 1, 2023

CONCLUDING ASSIGNMENTS

(Congregation)	(Name)	(Position)	(End Date)
Jubilee Mennonite	Ken Warkentin	Interim Pastor	January 29, 2023
First Mennonite	Erika Enns-Rodine	Associate Pastor	February 8, 2023
North Kildonan	Mackenzie Hildebrand	Interim Youth Pastor	March 26, 2023
Bethel	Laura Funk	Associate Pastor	April 30, 2023
Steinbach	Lee Hiebert	Lead Pastor	July 16, 2023
Bethel	Kathy Koop	Interim Pastor	July 31, 2023
Prairie Mennonite	Erin Morash	Pastor	July 31, 2023
Douglas	Don Rempel-Boschman	Lead Pastor	August 31, 2023
Prairie Mennonite	John Klassen	Interim Pastor	November 30, 2023
Grace Mennonite	Mel Letkemen	Pastor	December 31, 2023

CREDENTIALING ACTIVITY

(Congregation)	(Name)	(Credential)	(Service Date)
Altona Bergthaler	Terrell Wiebe	Licensing Toward Ordination	January 8, 2023
Glenlea	Cheryl Braun	Ordination	June 11, 2023
Aberdeen	Teresa Enns-Zehr	Licensing Toward Ordination	October 1, 2023
North Kildonan	Elizabeth Wipf	Ordination	December 10, 2023
Sargent	Janet Peters	Licensing Toward Ordination	November 5, 2023

Abram G. Neufeld Minister and Missionary Education Fund

The goal of the Abram G. Neufeld Minister and Missionary Education Fund is to provide financial support to pastors and missionaries who would like to further their training. Leadership Ministries administers the proceeds of this fund. We also attempt to invest in the fund as possible. We invite your donations.

If we can build the invested amount, it will be possible to help more pastors and missionaries. Your gifts are an investment in people preparing for Kingdom work. We'd love to hear from you.

Each year we are able to award bursaries based on the earnings of the fund. Since the monies have been invested in mutual funds (administered by Abundance Canada), the amount varies from year to year. The earnings are made available to us in mid-June.

Applications received by June, 1 2024, will be considered.

If you would like to apply for the **Abram G. Neufeld Bursary**, **Jake and Dorothy Pauls Pastoral Leadership Training Fund**, **Johann Funk Memorial Fund** in 2024, please contact MCM Leadership Ministries to receive guidelines and an application form.

Donations are welcome.

Jake and Dorothy Pauls Pastoral Leadership Training Fund

The idea for this fund grew out of a vision of Jake Pauls that the training of pastors should be given high priority in the Mennonite Church. The purpose of this fund, therefore, is to support leadership training for people who are called to pastoral ministry and who are in a program of studies with an Anabaptist/Mennonite focus.

Those who apply are eligible for up to \$2,500.00 per year dependent on the earnings of the fund. Monies are invested with Abundance Canada and are administered by Mennonite Church Manitoba.

Applications received by June 1, 2024 will be considered.

Johann Funk Memorial Fund

The Johann Funk Memorial fund provides interest free loans to students who desire theological training. An applicant may borrow up to a maximum of \$1,500.00 per year and make a maximum of two consecutive loans. (Since the fund is quite small, we cap the total loan for any one student at \$3,000.00).

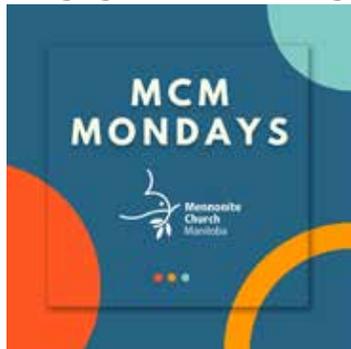
Applications received by June 1, 2024, will be considered.

Congregational Ministries

2023 Congregational Ministries- A Three E Year: Examination. Exploration. Experimentation.

For many MCM congregations and MCM ministries, 2023 was a year to take a good long look at where we were at, where we were hoping to go and taking some leaps of faith in that direction. One of the privileges of being an MCM staff, that I value most, is being welcomed into our congregation's: worship lives, leadership conversation circles and tables of visitation. It is in these holy spaces that I have witnessed, over and over again and in a multitude of ways, the persevering faithfulness of our community. We face challenging contexts and circumstances, ever changing realities, yet folks leaned hard into curious compassion and gave themselves to the way of Jesus and the voice of the Spirit among them.

Congregational Resourcing and Support Highlights:



1) In the beginning of the year MCM Mondays were launched. On-line sessions that each week, January to April, focused on congregational ministries and mission.

This was an experiment, designed to create an accessible and consistent space for congregation to

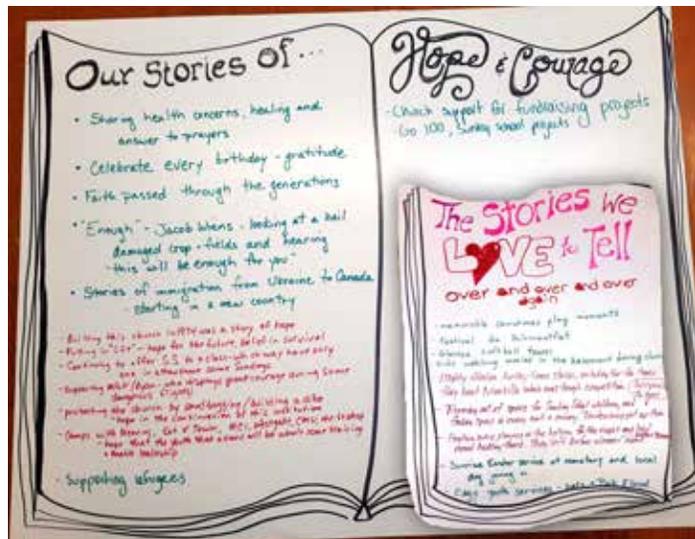
congregation conversation, learning from and with each other. Congregational committee chairs and members, pastors, interested congregants, guest presenters showed up, sometimes 1 or 2, sometimes 20. Stories of challenge and discovery were shared, resources recommended and people connected. We learnt from this experiment and will offer MCM Mondays again in 2024.

2) Providing increasingly integrated MCM staff responses to congregational requests, was a goal that emerged from examination of our work we did at a retreat in the summer. Since then, we have worked together more intentionally to create supportive and focused responses to the wide variety of congregational requests we receive. This has meant increased internal communication and collaboration, but already we have seen the positive impact of an integrated approach to congregational resourcing and support.

Congregational Health Initiatives Highlights:

1) In the summer of 2023 we created a Congregational Check-Up experience, in the Fall we tested it in two

congregations. Each of these testing experiences went well, learnings were gained from each of them as the experiences



unfolded and feedback was offered. It is our hope to continue to offer these Check-Up experiences as they requested and as staff is available

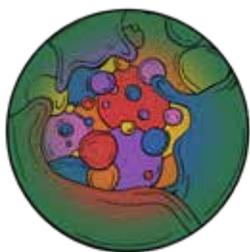
2) Offering a 3 session on-line series on Congregational Health, based on the work of the Flourishing Congregations Institute, in Fall of 2023 was a worthwhile experiment. It only drew small groups of participants, so the 'how/when/why' of this initiative will be re-visited.

Youth/Young Adult Initiatives Highlights:

1) Offering a Retreat with a new form and focus, Living Hope: centering connection, was an ambitious undertaking and experiment. I, personally was convinced that our children/youth/young adults needed to see their faith community pay attention to climate change/learning/action. What happened at Living Hope, was not what we initially imagined and planned for, but



what it turned out to be was so much more. Morphing into an intergenerational experience, where we hosted as many participants from outside of Manitoba as from MCM, transformed Living Hope into a Retreat that continues to create ripples within our MCM pond and beyond.



2) So grateful we are able to continue to provide pastoral care, resourcing and a mentorship program to pastors who hold responsibilities for children/youth/young adult/faith formation ministries. Our YMF Circle (Youth Ministers Fellowship) continues to meet on-line (primarily for conversation and prayer) and in person for resourcing, guided and unguided conversations and play. This year we welcomed four new members to our group of 20.

Gratitude.

It has been my absolute honor, joy and challenge to serve our MCM community of congregations this past year and over the years. Every congregational visit, has been gift. Every text/email/phone conversation/grocery store run-in with MCM folk, has been gift. Every friendship formed within our YMF Circle, has been gift. Every staff collaboration, conversation and coffee, has been gift. Every Board expression of care, affirmation, and support, has been gift. Every witnessing of the Spirit's voice and movement among us, has been gift. Every youth/young adult encounter, retreat and road trip has been gift. Every day, there has been gifts. Not a dull day has been had. With deepest gratitude for the grace and space given,
Rev. Kathy

Grateful to God for
our life together,
Kathy Giesbrecht
*Dir. of
Congregational Ministries*



Faith and Life Choirs



Faith and Life Male Choir - Spring 2023

Conductor: Ben Pauls Pianist: Loren Hiebert

Reflections on the Faith and Life Male Choir

Ben Pauls

In spite of a strong lament at the beginning of Psalm 22, David ends up saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you." (v.22)

As an intimate part of Mennonite Church Manitoba, I feel this is what propels and guides us. It has been said repeatedly that we feel most at home and do our best when we visit a congregation and lead in worship.

Presently, the Male Choir has 33 members, representing 22 churches, most of them from MCM - a wonderful representation of the larger body - from Boissevain to Steinbach, from Altona to Winnipeg, and places in between. It is both a privilege and a delight to be able to make music with these musicians, and to enjoy wonderful camaraderie in our times together. Working with Loren Hiebert is always a gift. Beyond his amazing gifts on the piano and encouraging spirit, he enhances our times of worship in wonderful ways. Thanks, Loren. Thanks also to the 5-member executive for your support.

Reflections on the Faith and Life Women's Chorus

Janet Brenneman

"We are people who must sing you,
for the sake of our very lives.
You are a God who must be sung by us,
for the sake of your majesty and honor."
(excerpt from *Voices Together* #882 – words by Walter Brueggemann, 2002)

These words frequently centre our time of devotion and sharing at our Saturday morning rehearsals. As we recite together the words of this prayer from *Voices Together*, we are drawn together in community, in a harmony of spirit and purpose, and in the company of our sisters in Christ. The poetry invites us to sing, to discern, to share, and to give thanks for the "good company of artists, poets, musicians, cantors, and instruments that sing for us and with us" toward our Creator God.

The FLWC comprises 50 singers representing numerous Mennonite Church Manitoba congregations and a few outside of the conference, including the Mennonite



Faith and Life Women's Chorus - Spring 2023

Conductor: Janet Brenneman Pianist: Anna Schwarz

Brethren conference, and non-denominational. We are a community in the best sense of that word as we care for one another and learn together in a supportive space. My gratitude to the committee for their ongoing work and leadership, and to Anna Schwartz, our pianist, and Assistant Conductor, who effortlessly and expertly moves between both roles regularly.

FLC Church services in 2023

(MC = Male Choir; WC = Women's Chorus)

The FLC appreciates the presence of the MCM staff members who have joined us in these church visits, and we are grateful to each of the congregations who have graciously hosted us.

- First Mennonite Church (Winnipeg) - March 2023 (WC)
- Jubilee Mennonite Church (Winnipeg) – April 2023 (MC)
- Prairie Mennonite Fellowship (Crysal City) - April 2023 (MC)
- Morden Mennonite Church – April 2023 (WC)
- Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church – November 2023 (MC)

- Pinawa Christian Fellowship – November 2023 (WC)
- McKenzie United Church (Portage La Prairie) - October 2023 (MC)

In addition to the church events, the choirs presented two Spring Concerts in May 2023 – at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, and at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Winkler. The Christmas “concert” in December 2023 was more reflective in nature again this year, including a lot of audience participation, singing the old and the new songs to celebrate and ponder the Incarnation. Thanks to Arlyn Friesen Epp for his dramatic monologues and to Sue Sorensen for the reading of her poetry. Lastly, thanks to Paul Dueck, who gave leadership to the choir in December while Ben was away.

A big thank-you to the churches in MCM for your support, and our deepest gratitude to Michael Pahl who guides us in our thinking and planning.

Circle of God's People Radio Program



Nadya Langelotz and Claudia Dueck

Circle of God's People is a monthly, 15 minute radio program highlighting Mennonite Church Manitoba ministry, community and music.

The program is hosted by Nadya Langelotz and Claudia Dueck.

Broadcasting Times

8:45am. Every second Sunday of the month in Manitoba. Both CFAM and CHSM can be heard in Winnipeg.

Station	Location
CFAM/950	Altona (accessible in Winnipeg)
CHSM/1250	Steinbach (accessible in Winnipeg)
CJRB/1229	Boissevain
Online	www.pembinavalleyonline.com/radio/cfam

Mission Ministries

Church Engagement

In 2023, I had 16 opportunities to speak in congregations. As part of the process of learning about congregations, at least 20 congregations have completed community surveys so far. Congregations define themselves in different ways as a questioning or authentic congregation with many skills for service including doing dishes together or supporting grieving families by hosting funerals. Survey responses were compiled for an article on volunteerism in the latest Leader periodical, where congregations notice how more volunteers are careful about how much time they give. Others have realized they don't want to be as busy as they were before Covid. Congregations are asking how do we inspire a sense of call and vocation with a renewed vision for volunteering? Sharing life-giving stories of involvement and experiencing the community building efforts of service might inspire this renewal at the same time as setting healthy boundaries on time commitments. We are grateful for all who respond to the call to support partners locally and internationally.

Many stories were shared during MCM Mondays where we noticed what congregations are doing related to homelessness, supporting newcomers, responding to hunger, and making efforts toward reconciliation with our Indigenous neighbours. Another common theme emerged in conversation with congregations who wondered about our aging church buildings. Together we considered: are there ways to innovate by noticing shared interests with the larger community? Are there partnerships, programs or ways of sharing space to increase the utilization of our buildings? Might we think about joining with other worshipping bodies? What are new ways of doing and being Christ's body?

Mission Stories

As I visit with members of MCM congregations and hear mission stories, I continue to ask the question – what is mission? Some folk have responded by saying their congregation has not talked about mission for a long time. Others have a clear sense of mission and provided a definition. Douglas members shared how mission is the movement toward shalom, where we are promoting God's activity in the world through our listening, contextualization, and walking alongside. "God's call is for all of us to be involved in doing God's work." They observe that there is more happening than we really know and it is important to notice together where we see God working in our lives. One summarized their definition by

saying mission is "anything that nurtures other people." Joanna Hiebert Bergen of MCC Manitoba responded initially with a dictionary definition where "mission is one's reason for existence; purpose or intention." From Joanna's experience, mission is building bridges across difference, across cultural understandings, religious experience and understanding of God. What are the ways we move into spaces as a learner, as a listener and how do we respond to what we hear and see? How do we carry this learning into international or local spaces where experiences are different than the majority population? How do we live into those stories and share them with permission if they are not our own and use those stories to expand the faith communities' understanding of God at work in the world and where we are called to work with God in bringing peace? Very helpful reflections that I hope inspire us!

I also brought this question of mission to Mennonite World Conference staff people Cesar Garci and Bruce Campbell-Janz who visited Manitoba last spring. They named Mennonite pastor and author Emily Ralph Servant and her book Experiments in Love as an important resource. She uses this definition: the purpose of mission is "to fulfill God's Dream on Earth, to restore the cosmos and draw all things into reunion with God and one another." I like the expansiveness of this definition. What do you think?

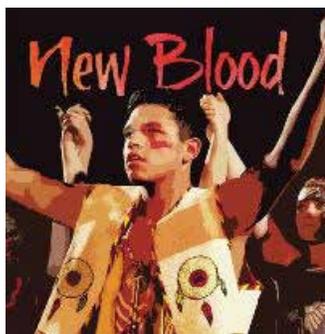
Local Mission

We received final reports from local mission grant awards that were sent out in mid-2022. The 7 reports told stories of what congregations are doing in their communities. MCM supported the community building efforts of Community Roots Resource Centre at Jubilee Mennonite which took on many forms including summer BBQs, a community garden, emergency pantry, coffee time, and community kitchen programs. Through their winter Toy Store they collected gifts for over 100 children. We welcomed Pam Jansen as the new Executive Director to the centre. The inner city initiatives and pastoral care of Little Flowers' ministry issued emergency funds to people needing support for rent and food while experiencing health crisis. Although North Kildonan saw volunteer enthusiasm and initial positive use of their parking lot's new basketball court, due to neighbourhood opposition the basketball hoops were moved to Camp Assinaboia. Prairie Fellowship continues to wait on progress for an individual waiting in Iraq and a family of four whom they have

sponsored to come to Canada with support from our grant. Seeds reported that all grant funds went towards creating a community office and computer station that increases opportunities for internet access for people in Altona who need it. Sterling was grateful for the additional funds this year and additional MCM involvement from Douglas, FGMF, and Whitewater to help with children's activities, leadership training and sports' camp which involved at least 159 kids in Pimichikimak (Cross Lake). Springstein's building functions as a community hub and was enabled to purchase new equipment as they promote children's activities of floor hockey, pickleball, Kids' Club and Youth Group. A highlight was the summer Fun Day which was attended by over 100 people. All grant recipients were grateful for the additional support from MCM that allowed them to expand their community building efforts.

Other local project updates: Springstein volunteers continue to support Ukraine newcomers with furniture by partnering with Charleswood Rotary's Bridge of Hope at a new location on Portage Avenue twice a month. We have also been witness to the shared efforts of Altona congregations (ABC, AMC and Seeds) working together to serve their community by sharing the hosting of a community meal once a month, as they partner to offer a kids' day-camp on Matheson Island in 2024, and are learning together by listening to Indigenous neighbour stories on the Orange Bench.

Indigenous Solidarity/MCIS (see additional details in MCIS report)



1. The Manitoba Coalition put effort into organizing and promoting a number of events in 2023 including New Blood where MCM congregations provided a potluck meal for the Albertan high school cast and crew and were witness to vivid story-telling of historic events impacting Indigenous people. The audience of

300+ was visibly moved in the talk-back time when folks from Roseau River First Nation spoke to their own understanding of church involvement with residential schools.

2. After last year's AGM, we offered a Manitoba premiere of the documentary "Custodians: A Story of Ancient Echoes" (filmed in Herschel SK) at CMU lead by CMU

students. Congregations of Prairie Fellowship and Nordheim after viewing Custodians pondered the question of preserving Indigenous sacred sites.

3. Knowledge Keeper David Scott of Swan Lake First Nation accompanied our communities in discovering how Ojibwe people would have navigated the West Reserve prior to their displacement. Thanks to the craft of Jonathan Dyck (2023 Manitoba Book Award), this Indigenous oral history will be produced in Canadian Mennonite in 2024.

4. Representatives from at least eight congregations reconnected with northern communities of Matheson, Pimichikimak, Pauingassey and Manigotogan over summer months either by attending family camps or organizing children's activities.

5. A week-long visit to Winnipegosis revealed the



informal ways Mennonites nurture relationships with their Indigenous neighbours.

6. Indigenous author, organizer, and Mennonite kin Sarah Augustine presented in November at the Returning Wealth event at FGFMF and encouraged us to work "together or not at all".

International Witness

After a covid hiatus, MCM received partner visits from MC Canada's International Witness program again! Many MCM members also participated in learning tours to Thailand.

Our South Korean partner Bo Ki Kim spoke at Morden

last June reflecting on the tremendous effort to respond to the enthusiasm for learning conflict resolution skills. John Fumana of African Inter-Mennonite Mission shared how Asset-based Community Development or ABCD practices are used to build ownership of projects in local communities. North Kildonan was able to hear firsthand the benefits of the Women's Literacy Program in the Congo.

Many of us were blessed by the Peacebuilders Community from the Philippines with Joji, Tala, and Boyet telling animated stories of how drinking coffee together is creating peace in their communities. Their effort to help Indigenous farmers produce high-value coffee high in the mountains and do leadership training has resulted in building a processing and training hub. They are 60% toward the goal of raising \$235,000 by March 2024.



All of our international partners were celebrated at our first annual International Witness food and fellowship event sponsored by Charleswood and the Vietnamese Mennonite Church with volunteers from Douglas and North Kildonan. Thanks for all our volunteers who hosted and took part in these great learning opportunities. Please be in touch if you are interested in learning more about our Witness Support partners!

Melanie Neufeld
*Dir. of
Mission Engagement*



Working Groups

Palestine-Israel Network

I write this on the 110th day of bombing of Gaza by the State of Israel. Gaza is a besieged piece of land smaller than the city of Winnipeg, holding approximately 2.3 million people, 80% of whom are refugees from 1948 and 1967. Of these 2.3 million Gazans, 50% are under the age of 18. 1.7 million Gazans are internally displaced. The statistics continue to horrify – 70% of those killed are women and children, only 14 out of 36 hospitals are functioning and barely so, 154 UN staff/152 UNRWA staff/337 healthcare workers and 119 journalists have been killed to date. As of today, the death toll stands at 26,083 with many others buried under rubble, and 64,487 people injured, many with life altering amputations and permanent physical limitations. Let us not begin to try to articulate the trauma inflicted on an entire population trapped by an Israel- imposed siege of 17 years, making the need to flee impossible.

This is the context of MCMPIN advocacy as of Oct. 7th when an estimated 1,139 Israelis were killed by Hamas fighters. This context extends beyond Oct. 7th to include pre-1948 ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from their homes and villages extending until today, by the State of Israel with undying support from Western powers, most clearly the United States of America, United Kingdom, Germany and Canada.

MCMPIN advocacy has been focused since Oct. 7th on the following demands:

- bring about an immediate ceasefire in Gaza;
- address the urgent humanitarian needs of the people of Gaza;
- stop increased settler violence toward Palestinians in the West Bank;
- secure the release of all hostages taken by Hamas;
- end the Israeli occupation and blockade of Palestinian territories in compliance with international law.

The urgent call for actions based on justice articulated in International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law have embraced the following actions:

- Meeting with Members of Parliament, both rural and urban.

- Encouraging Mennonite Church constituency to sign on to numerous petitions and arrange meetings/ write and/or call their MP.
- Creating statements in line with MCCPIN and MC Canada's positions in support of justice in Palestine and Israel.
- Speaking in churches to highlight new realities facing Palestinians in Gaza, West Bank, East Jerusalem and Israel.
- Ensure constituents have access to prayer services/ lament services, webinars and educational opportunities directly facilitated by Palestinians and Israeli Jews calling for an end to violence.
- Showing up at weekly rallies in support of a ceasefire organized by CPAM (Canadian Palestinian

Association of Manitoba) and other organizations including demanding humanitarian aid/long term just solutions to ending apartheid.

- Supporting Mennonite Action – a grassroots group of Mennonites from across the US and Canada supporting concrete actions, including public witness, to encourage the US and Canadian gov'ts to act justly.

- A Oct. 26th book launch – Nakba:

The Struggle to Decolonize Israel held at Augustine United Church with Israeli author Eitan Bronstein Aparicio, founder of Zochrot, an Israeli organization created to educate the Israeli public about the 1948 and 1967 dispossession of Palestinians from their lands.

- Dec. 19th Mennonite Action event was held in front of Liberal MP Dan Vandal's office in Wpg with music, stories of lament, calls for right action and faithful adherence to Jesus' teachings. Over 100 Mennonites from various denominations joined in.
- MCM_PIN Instagram was started to share initiatives including Christmas is Cancelled – a series of posts based on Palestinian Christian pleas from Bethlehem to remember them.

The MCMPIN group has grown from 13 members to 21 members on our monthly meeting list.



**Mennonite
Church Manitoba
Palestine-Israel
Network**

Since January 2023 two extended visits by PIN members to Palestine have allowed for renewed relationships, additional relationships and a growing understanding of the context and the asks of those who are weighed down by military might. Additional activities noted below;

- Byron and Melita Rempel-Burkholder spent three months (mid-January to April) in Palestine and Israel working for MCC as well as gathering stories and renewing relationships as MCMPIN/MC Canada PIN representatives.
- Joanna Hiebert Bergen and Chloe Bergen spent 5 weeks in the West Bank as Chloe embarked on a practicum at Caritas Baby Hospital for her physiotherapy degree.
- The monthly e-mailed UPDATES continued - Inspired and prepared by Byron, these updates go out to anyone who signs up and are also available on MC Canada's web page. In each update there are advocacy actions for constituency to embark on, as well as news from the region, focusing on the voices of Palestinians and Israeli Jews committed to working for peace. There are opportunities to sign up for webinars and notice of various events happening across the country by the various PIN groups.
- 15 Mennonite Church congregations invited MCMPIN members to speak in this past year. These invitations included Sunday service meditations and Adult Ministries presentations on Palestine and Israel – the realities and advocacy for justice and peace.
- Letter writing opportunities continued monthly with encouragement to write to those in political power to end the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the siege of Gaza and to abide by International Law.

- Ongoing connections to other advocacy groups including Independent Jewish Voices, UNJPPI (United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine – United Church) Canadian Palestinian Advocacy Network, Peace Alliance Wpg, Students for Justice and Peace in Palestine, and more continue.
- Meetings held with David da Silva – Canada's Representative to the Palestinian Authority – were held in July.
- MCMPIN was represented at meetings at Winnipeg's city hall to stop the adoption of the International Holocaust Definition of Antisemitism as this limits the ability to criticize Israel's lack of adherence to International Law.

It has been a busy year and will continue to be so as we answer the call to be disciples of peace, following in the footsteps of Jesus. I will end this report with a few verses from Habakkuk (3:17-19) which was part of a prayer of lament offered by Lamma Mansour a young Palestinian theologian during the Advent Season.

*Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
Though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
Though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls.
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God my Savior.*
Habakkuk

Respectfully submitted by Joanna Hiebert Bergen,
Chair of Mennonite Church Manitoba Palestine Israel
Network

Woven: Mennonite Women Together - Final Report

When a long treasured tradition dies, it is important to look back to its origins. So come, share in these memories with gratitude.

The Women's Missionary Association of the General Conference Mennonite Church, which was organized in 1917, became Women in Mission in 1974. Manitoba had an active chapter, with at least one women's group meeting and serving in each member congregation. Membership in these significant groups was maintained in the local, provincial, and at the binational/national (After 2002) level with dues, annual events and shared mission projects. Focusing on study and service, these groups were strong throughout North America as they gave significant support to the mission work of our denomination's local, regional, and international mission projects.

These organizations have been part of a powerful movement for the equipping of women for service and leadership. As the larger church body became more inclusive and welcoming women increasingly used those gifts and offered that service in the wider church and society. This left less energy and need for the organized women's group movement. The needs and social habits of Mennonite Women in Mennonite Church Manitoba have changed with the times. Women still meet in more informal ways in our congregations, for sisterhood remains a powerful dynamic, but the felt need to connect regionally as women has diminished in recent years".

In 2017, a full century after the birth of the Women's Missionary Organization, Mennonite Women Canada celebrated its past, disbanded and dispersed its remaining funds for mission equitably among the regional women's groups. Manitoba received \$24,000.

In Manitoba, Women in Mission had closed, but a regionally representative working group was being kept alive by the passion of Elsie Wiebe (Morden). We organized a Sister Care Event in 2016, A retreat on

Spiritual Practices with Laura Funk in 2017, and a day on The Road to Resilience, With Dr. Moira Somers in 2018. We maintained an occasional newsletter, tried out a lively online book study and Facebook group, and developed a creative new name and logo, "WOVEN." The group continued to support Anabaptist Women leaders as needs presented themselves.

In the fall of 2023 the time had come to disband the working group. The three remaining members, Kathy Giesbrecht, (MCM staff liaison), Heather Hildebrand, (Crystal City) and Elsie Rempel (Winnipeg) met to formalize this decision and to find a good new home for the remaining funds which they had received from Mennonite Women Canada to use for ministry with women.

In conversation with Jeanette Hanson of Mennonite Church Canada

Witness, we agreed to support an emerging joint project with the AMBS Journey program in Philippines, Thailand and Laos. So far 8 women are studying in this program. There are plans to meet next fall with leaders from this program and other interested Asian churches to assess this program and to make plans to strengthen Anabaptist Biblical/theological study in Asia. Our fund of \$19,000 will be set aside for use with women in Asia over the next 5 years, to be used as scholarships for programs of Anabaptist Biblical/theological study in Asia that are already and will be offered through this emerging partnership. Anyone wishing to top up this fund can do so with a donation to Witness with the tagline, Anabaptist Women's Leadership Training in Asia.

The funds we disperse as we formally close an organization that has empowered Mennonite women in Manitoba will now do the same for our Mennonite sisters in Asia. To God be the Glory.

Elsie Rempel, President of Woven, 2017-2023.



Manitoba Mennonite Coalition for Indigenous Solidarity

2023 was a year of exciting opportunities for the Mennonite Coalition for Indigenous Solidarity as well as a time of discernment and change.

On Feb 19, MCIS was the primary host and organizer for the theatre performance of *New Blood* in Winnipeg. The show was inspired by the life of Chief Vincent Yellow Old Woman, and the Alberta based troupe blended Blackfoot and contemporary music and dance in a visually stunning celebration of Blackfoot history and traditions. Attendance and feedback from the event were very encouraging. Three congregations along with MCC sponsored the event, including a meal for the cast held at Aberdeen MC.

MCIS also created a solidarity statement with the family members and Indigenous-led camps calling for a search of the Winnipeg landfills for the bodies of several missing Indigenous women. On September 5, representatives from at least 8 MC Manitoba congregations, including MC leaders, gathered with members of five other denominations at the Brady Road Landfill to stand together in a call to search the landfills. This immediate call reflects a deeper concern regarding ongoing violence against Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit people.

Early in the year, a group of Mennonite church leaders and MCIS traveled to Swan Lake First Nation reserve on the invitation of Elder David Scott who shared his oral history knowledge of Mennonite-Ojibwe interactions in the West Reserve area. Of particular significance was a story he'd researched on a secret handshake Treaty between the two peoples sometime in the late 1800's. This conversation led to a June 17 tour by Elder Scott of four significant Ojibwe sites in and around the West Reserve. A Plett foundation grant also created the opportunity for MCIS member Jonathan Dyck to collaborate with Elder Scott on an illustrated retelling of the Secret Treaty which will provide additional learning and engagement opportunities for a broader Mennonite audience this year.

Building on an initial roundtable in May 2022 on congregational reparations and land tax, MCIS organized

a conference on November 11 called "Returning Wealth - Land Reparations and the Church." The day's focus was on conversations around relationship healing, economic reparation, and land return. It included a keynote by Sarah Augustine, Executive Director of The Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery, local historical contributions by Adele Perry and Shelisa Klassen, and a biblical reflection by Gord Zerbe, as well as several breakout conversations. Over 130 attended in person or online from 19 congregations or other denominations, and MCIS plans to further engage these participants through potential sub-groups and initiatives.



Co-chair Allegra Friesen Epp, who offered significant formational leadership to the group, moved on from the group mid-year and Melanie Neufeld stepped into the role of co-chair. Near the end of the year, three other members also decided to step down to pursue other interests, while three or four new potential

members are exploring their involvement. We continue to prioritize representation from a geographic spread around southern Manitoba, as well as from a variety of individual approaches, interests, and involvements.

We have had a number of conversations about how to structure and posture ourselves in relation to the churches around us and how best to support and engage congregations. As one small step, Jonathan Dyck designed a logo and bookmark to help facilitate outreach for the group. In addition to bulletin announcements, our primary means for posting resources and events continues to be our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/100084351986296/) and Instagram account (www.instagram.com/mennos4indigenoussolidarity). MCIS invites interested individuals to follow these pages for ongoing opportunities.

We look forward to more opportunities to connect in 2024 and welcome conversations about how we can support congregations wherever they are in their journey of learning and engagement.

Prepared by Kerry Saner-Harvey and Melanie Neufeld, Co-chairs

Climate Action Working Group

The past year has been one of new collaborations, ongoing formation, and deepening engagement with churches. We continue to orient ourselves with CAWG's mandate: To ignite the imagination of MCM congregations in generating personally and societally transformative actions in response to the climate crisis. The CAWG will serve as a network and resource for congregational engagement in public policy and capacity building work toward a Just Transition here in Manitoba.

Our pattern of monthly online meetings and quarterly in-person gatherings continued in 2023. We are grateful to be hosted in churches and homes across the province. Our meetings are often filled with deep conversation on topics ranging from a culture of consumerism; extractive industries; personal, household, and collective responses to climate change; and faith-filled climate action...

It was a joy to participate in the Living Hope retreat on climate for youth and young adults. We were inspired by the readiness of the participants to engage, and were convicted by their call that the responsibility for climate action within the church rests on all of us - regardless of age. In similar ways, it has been encouraging to the co-chairs to meet and converse with the leaders of the other regional climate working groups across Mennonite Church Canada. Called together by Sandy Plett, MC Canada Climate Action Coordinator, early in 2023, this group has met a number of times throughout the year. We look forward to leaning further into collaboration and mutual support across the country.

In September, CAWG sponsored three university students to attend the Rooted & Grounded Conference on the theme of Pathways Through Climate Doom: Resistance and Resilience. Along with the three students, the CAWG co-chairs and two other individuals carpooled down to the conference, held at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, IN. Highlights from the trip included meeting others from across Canada and the US interested in climate action; long and winding conversations throughout the 32 hours of driving; and living closely (most of us in tents!) together for the 5-day trip.

In November, CAWG hosted our second annual public event, Energizing Hope: Finding our Place in Climate

Action. Sixty people from across generations and across the MCM body gathered at CMU to share supper and to hear from the students who attended Rooted & Grounded. The intergenerational turnout fostered some lively and helpful dialogue surrounding the student reflections.

Much of our focus this year has been on the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty initiative. In conversations within CAWG and with the MCM Board, we were encouraged to submit a motion to the 2024 Delegate Assembly, asking MCM to sign the open letter of faith leaders calling on governments to develop and implement a binding Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. In an effort to start conversation on this call for a treaty in advance

of the delegate assembly, CAWG members have, and continue to, visit MCM churches across the province to speak in worship services and adult ed hours about the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. The motion can be found at mennochurch.mb.ca/cawg and in the delegate assembly packet.

As we enter another year we continue to invite you to connect with CAWG. In addition to our website, Aria Klassen curates a quarterly newsletter and a burgeoning instagram page.

CAWG members continue to welcome invites to speak in MCM churches.

Finally, we want to invite you to a nationwide book study hosted by Mennonite Church Canada. Together online, we will be reading and discussing Sarah Augustine and Sheri Hostetler's new book - So that We and Our Children May Live: Following Jesus in Confronting the Climate Crisis. For more details and to sign up visit <https://www.mennonitechurch.ca/article/31851-nationwide-book-study-so-we-and-our-children-may-live>.

Submitted on behalf of CAWG by Marta Bunnett Wiebe and Kenton Lobe (co-chairs)

CAWG Members:

Doug Dyck – Covenant
Sandy Plett – Pembina Fellowship
Marilyn Houser Hamm – Altona Mennonite
Matt Wiens – St Julian's Table
Josiah Neufeld – Hope
Nate DeAvila – Sargent
Marta Bunnett Wiebe – Home Street
Kenton Lobe – Charleswood
Aria Klassen – Grace (Steinbach)
Chris Regehr – Hope
Karla Bergen – Springstein



76th Annual Gathering | March 4, 2023

Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg

1. **Welcome:** Gerald Gerbrandt, Moderator, welcomed all, opened with a land acknowledgement, and called the meeting to order at 9:02am.
2. **Gathering music and prayer** led by members of Douglas Mennonite Church
3. **Keynote address**—Doug Klassen
 - Doug shared stories of the global Mennonite community to reflect on the theme of “Re-Imagining Church Together” and Ephesians 3:20-21
4. **Table Discussion around Vision/Mission/Values:**
 - Gerald gave an introduction on the consistency of change and pointed to the discussion prompts on page 2 of the Report Book Addendum before opening conversation time for delegates to talk among table groups.
 - **Reporting from discussion from reps of various tables:**
 - We are in stages of waiting
 - inspired by ‘not keeping our faith to ourselves’, to reach out at a personnel level
 - physicalities of buildings and locations define congregational identities (community centre, rhythms of farming year, knowing everyone in community, open up buildings while holding onto integrity of faith, buildings being both a burden and a gift)
 - Response to Doug’s call to prayer- if a healthy church is a praying church, we desperately need help
 - Not enough time for the discussion
 - From “should” to “could”
 - make more room for “gentiles”, those outside our communities
 - return to community (within congregation and local neighbourhood)
 - shift from thinking of people in the community as mission projects to people of the church
 - what it means to love each other well, the tension between change and relationships
 - working with other ecumenical communities and outside organizations
 - reclaim our heritage of hospitality in a wider, broader way and embracing the gifts of newcomers
 - small can be beautiful
 - Believing what we’re doing is making a difference and empowering people.
 - We continue to talk about re-imagining of the church, because change is happening and we need to participate in it
 - Inspired by the excitement of Christians in other parts of the world and the holy spirit talk
 - Focus on local communities and neighbourhoods has changed how we see the mission of our churches/how they might need to change

-----BREAK-----

5. **Introduction of Board**—Gerald Gerbrandt introduced the MCM Board members, noted that quorum was present with 34/39 congregations represented with 110 delegates. Erwin Warkentin will serve as Parliamentarian
6. **Review of Agenda** (Report Book, p. 5)—Gerald Gerbrandt noted that the schedule would be followed as printed.
7. **Acceptance of Minutes** (Report Book, pp. 30-34) —Gerald Gerbrandt reviewed the minutes from March 5, 2022 Gathering that was held via Zoom.
 - **Motion from the Board: That the Annual Gathering minutes of March 5, 2022, be accepted as presented. (Seconder: Andrew Wiens, Nordheim). Motion carried.**
 - Gerald noted the vacancies in the Nominations slate on pg. 38 and anyone wishing to nominate someone to see

Trevor Friesen-Stoesz during the lunch hour.

8. Affirming 2022 Board Actions (Report Book Addendum, pp. 8-9) —Gerald Gerbrandt highlighted some of the decisions made by the Board in 2022.
 - **Motion from the Board: That the 2021 MCM Board actions be affirmed as presented. (Seconder: Erika Enns-Rodine, Altona MC). *Motion carried.***
9. **2022 Financial Report** (Report Book Addendum pp. 10-17) and Introduction of 2023 Budget (Report Book Addendum pp. 18-23)—Michael Pahl (video report)
 - Michael shared the financial picture of 2022 by highlighting a few key numbers and explaining their significance.
 - after surpluses of 2020 and 2021, 2022 ended with a significant deficit (\$176, 828)
 - Factors that led to deficit: below budget for individual donations to MCM and individual donations to Camps with Meaning, above budget for casual summer camps staff because of lower numbers of volunteers
 - Is 2022 a trend or a glitch? Are we ready to commit to camping ministry?
 - MCM will be transitioning to new model for Canadian Mennonite subscriptions. Right now, MCM subsidizes all CM subscriptions. Come 2024, congregations will pay 50% of this amount (approx. \$10/subscription)
 - To reduce expenses, forwarding to MC Canada will be reduced to 27.5% from 30%. For the next year, MC Canada reserve fund could be accessed to make up the difference.
 - Reminder that God is at work within us and can do far more than anything we can ask or imagine.
 - We need each other, which is why we covenant together.
 - **Questions/Discussion:**
 - Peter Rempel (Charleswood): Received funds from federal and provincial governments in 2020 and 2021. Could this be a difference?
 - Response (Gerald): In budgeting for 2022, it was not expected to have this support.
 - **Motion from the Board: That the 2022 Financial Report be received as presented. (Seconder: Ed Neufeld, Grace, Steinbach). *Motion carried.***
10. **Program Reports** (video reports by MCM and MC Canada Staff)
 - **Executive Minister**—Michael Pahl
 - privilege to visit our congregations- to see the diversity and also what unites us; God is at work among us
 - Gave an introduction to the following reports
 - **Leadership Ministries**—Michael Pahl, Jeff Friesen, Karen Schellenberg
 - serve MCM community by supporting and equipping pastors and spiritual leaders
 - anticipate more collaborative forms of ministry and a move away from hierarchical structure of leadership to co-pastor models, pastors aren't working full time as much anymore
 - Just because churches become smaller, doesn't mean they aren't thriving
 - **Congregational Ministries**—Kathy Giesbrecht
 - good investments in youth and young adults in 2022 (as seen in report)
 - for 2023- image of a laboratory and experiments with the nudge of the spirit. MCM Monday as an example
 - seeing an openness to experimentation by congregations in the ways we do worship, congregational care, formation ministries. Listed examples from MCM churches
 - Spirit is alive and we are working together
 - Gathering for youth and young adults - Living Hope: Centering connection and conversations around climate change
 - This fall, resources and an Anabaptist model to assess congregational health will be coming to congregations
 - **Mission Ministries**—Melanie Neufeld
 - helping congregations connect to their local community.
 - local mission grant updates (Cal Funk- community exchange/seeds, Mackenzie Hildebrand-NKMC, Relationship with Cross Lake-Sterling- FGMF, Douglas)
 - Collecting mission stories.

- **Climate Action**—Sandy Plett shared her new role as Climate Action Coordinator of MC Canada, how people are acting in response to the Climate Crisis, and encouragement to connect with regional working group.
- **Indigenous Relations**—Jonathan Neufeld. Tasked with supporting indigenous relations regional working groups. Shared one initiative from each region in response to Call to Action 59.
- **International Witness**—Jeanette Hanson. Shared stories of what it means for people in Laos, Thailand, Philippines, and Myanmar to follow Jesus.
- **Camps with Meaning**—Dorothy Fontaine, Janet Peters, Paul and Linda Dueck, Elisabeth Franz-Warkentin, Lauren Gervais, Ed Doerksen, Darryl Neustaedter Barg
 - Where we see the spirit at work at Camp: staff applying for leadership roles, families making camp a priority for their kids, rental groups wanting to come to Camp Assiniboia, support of many volunteers
 - encouragement to book camp for church retreat, sign up for volunteer
 - in a regular year, 6000 guests and 600 campers come through the doors
 - Been reimagining camping ministry for many years (2015 and 2020 strategic plans). Need to move forward with Camps Capital campaign. Team has begun meeting to plan fall 2022.
 - 2022 Summer Camp video
- **CommonWord**—Arlyn Friesen Epp
 - synergy between retailing and resourcing
 - introduced CommonWord staff
 - many ways to access CommonWord resources and stay connected
 - thank you for support and engagement
- Michael Pahl shared that MC Canada reporting was integrated within the MCM reports because MC Canada is who we are as MCM. He also highlighted that a screening of Custodians documentary was taking place later in the day at CMU

11. **Staff Introductions**—Michael Pahl introduced MCM, Camp Assiniboia, Camp Koinonia and MC Canada staff.

-----LUNCH-----

12. Guests and Greetings

- Gerald Gerbrandt gave introduction that we are part of larger church body
- Greetings from MCBC- Gerry Grunau, Moderator of MCBC,
 - shared news of hiring new Executive Minister
 - gave insight into similarities between regions but also what will be taken back as inspiration.
- Gerald made note that the MBCM is meeting today in Winkler, debating heavy issues.
- Greetings from CMU—Sandy Koop Harder, Vice President, External, CMU
 - provided some snapshots on the makeup of the student body, benefits of CMU for students, and its mission statement.
 - Thank you for the ways you support CMU
- Welcome to guests and reps from partner organizations:
 - From MCC MB: Wesley Ncube
 - From Canadian Mennonite: Will Braun, Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
 - From AMBS: Doug Amstutz
 - From IMCA: Mark Von Kampen

13. New Church Applications (Report Book Addendum pp. 4-7)

- **Introduction video of Aberdeen Mennonite Church:** see themselves as a North End church and a welcome environment for single folks with strong lay ministry
 - **Motion from the Board: That Aberdeen Evangelical Mennonite Church be received as a member congregation of Mennonite Church Manitoba. (Seconder: Laura Funk, Hope). Motion carried.**
- **Introduction video of Saint Julian's Table:** ecumenical gathering that is a mission of St James Anglican in Beausejour. Began in 2020 just as the covid pandemic began on Zoom. See themselves as open and non-judgmental.

- **Motion from the Board: That Saint Julian’s Table be received as an affiliate member congregation of Mennonite Church Manitoba. (Seconder: Laverne Siemens, Gretna). *Motion carried.***
 - It was also shared that MCM has entered into an agreement of mutual support with Estuary Church in BC, and that a week ago Carman Mennonite Church made the decision to withdraw from MCM effective September 1.
 - Entered into a time of prayer among table groups.
14. **Appointments to MCM Positions** (Report Book p. 38)
- Trevor Friesen-Stoesz introduced the members of the Nominations Committee and made the following notes/updates:
 - p. 37: Lee Hiebert (Steinbach Mennonite) is on the Ministerial Leadership Committee.
 - Cheryl Braun’s term is longer because it includes the completion of Gerald’s term.
 - Brenda Suderman from Home Street has agreed to let her name stand as a rep to the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service.
 - **Motion: That the nominations to the Board be affirmed as presented.(Seconder: Moses Falco, Sterling). *Motion carried.***
 - **Motion from the Board: That the Board appointments to committees and partner organizations as recommended by the Nominating committee be affirmed as presented. (Seconder: Erwin Warkentin, Bethel). *Motion carried.***
15. **Focus on 2023 Budget**—Michael Pahl
- Change to comment #6 of the budget: “Camp Koinonia Inc., which manages Camp Koinonia, will become a related business of MCM in 2023. Camp Koinonia Inc. Is responsible for managing all of the expenses relating to Camp Koinonia not directly related to implementing Camps With Meaning programs. Mennonite Church Manitoba will receive donations directed to Camp Koinonia for this broader purpose and flow them through to Camp Koinonia Inc.”
 - **Motion from the Board: That the 2023 MCM and Camps budgets be approved as presented (Seconder: Lynell Bergen, Hope)**
 - **Discussion:**
 - Moses Falco (Sterling): question about clarification in the transition of the Canadian Mennonite subscription from MCM to churches.
 - ◁ Response -Michael: MC Canada and the Regions will be looking at this as they renew agreement with CMPS.
 - Dave Bergen (Bethel): affirmation that the grant to Camps stays in the budget line.
16. **Breakout Sessions around Working Groups and Program Areas**
- Considering our Buildings... (led by Melanie Neufeld and Kathy Giesbrecht): approx. 40 participants
 - Working Together! Camps and your Congregation (led by Dorothy Fontaine and Janet Peters): approx. 30 participants
 - Digging Deeper into MCM Finances (led by Michael Pahl): approx. 10 participants
 - Is Israel an Apartheid State? (led by MCM’s Palestine-Israel Network): approx. 35 participants
 - Climate, MCM, and Your Congregation (led by MCM’s Climate Action Working Group): approx. 30 participants
17. **Approval of 2023 Budget**
- Further discussion:
 - Moses Falco (Sterling): Don’t know how we’re supposed to answer the question on whether the lack of support for Camps it is a glitch or a trend. We trust in our leadership and want to hear from them what they think.
 - ◁ Response- Gerald: pointed to p. 2 of addendum – the overview of Budget
 - Ed Neufeld (Grace): what we see shows careful wisdom on the part of our Leadership. The biggest deficit items were camping, but from video reports it seems this year things are looking up. Lack of volunteers might be a general trend
 - Ray Hamm (Altona Mennonite): make sure the staff who are working part-time are actually working part-time.

- **Motion that the 2023 MCM and Camps budgets be approved as presented was passed.**

18. **Closing Worship**

- Celebration of Church life slideshow
- Thanks to staff, board members, committee group members, working group members who contribute to MCM. Special thanks to Janet Peters who will be leaving her role as Associate Program Director at Camps with Meaning this year.
- Recognition of Gerald Gerbrandt, concluding 5 years in the role as MCM Moderator. Michael reflected on his impact on the regional and nationwide church.
- Michael Pahl led a commissioning for ministry
- Music led by members of Douglas Mennonite Church
- Gerald thanked Douglas Mennonite Church for hosting, members of the MCM working groups and committees, participants in Friday evening worship, presenters for Breakout sessions, MCM staff, and to delegates, partner reps, and guests for attending.
- Gerald presented Cheryl Braun, incoming moderator, a gift of Bible commentaries.
- Cheryl Braun closed in prayer.

19. **Adjournment** 3:38pm

MCM Representatives to Related Organization Boards

ORGANIZATIONS RELATED TO MCM

(and MCM Representatives in *italics*, if applicable)

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

David Boshart, President, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517

Phone: 574-395-3726

Rachel Siemens (First) 2024 (completing term)

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service

Will Braun, Tobi Thiessen, Publisher, 490 Dutton Dr. Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7

Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe, Provincial Reporter, mb@canadianmennonite.org

Brenda Suderman (Home) 2026

Canadian Mennonite University

Cheryl Pauls, President, 500 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg, MB R3P 2N2

Phone: 204-487-3300 ext. 667

Adelia Neufeld Wiens (Bethel) 2026

Graduate School of Theology and Ministry (CMU)

Karl Koop, Director 600 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg, MB R3P 2N2

Phone: 204-487-3300 ext. 630

Melanie Kampen (Into Account – non-MCM), 2027

Eden Health Care Services

204 Main St. Box 129, Winkler, MB R6W 4A4

Ingrid Peters Franssen (Home) 2026

Cheryl Braun (Glenlea) 2024

Emma Hamm (Hope) 2025

Wil Epp (Emmanuel) 2025

Lawrence Siemens (Morden) (Completing term)

Linda Nichols (Pembina) 2024

Ken Froese (Pembina Fellowship) 2025

Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Association

Mark von Kampen, Campus Chaplain

Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Assoc. University Centre

University of Manitoba, R3T 2N2

Phone: 204-474-9691 FAX 204 275-8098

Bernie Loepky (Pembina) 2025

Susan Reynar (Home Street) 2025

Allison Janzen (First) 2025

Manitoba Multifaith Council

Peter Rempel (Charleswood) 2025

Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba

Darryl Loewen, Executive Director, 124 Plaza Dr. Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9

Phone: 204-261-6381

Janet Plenert (Home) 2026

Yvonne Stoesz (Pembina) 2025

Ennet Bera (Charleswood) (Completing term)

Mennonite Collegiate Institute

Jennifer Klippenstein, Teaching Principal, Box 250, Gretna, MB R0G 0V0 Phone: 204-327-5891

Mennonite Disaster Service

Ross Penner, Regional Manager

200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd, Winnipeg, MB R3P 2J1 Phone: 204-261-1274

Westgate Mennonite Collegiate

James Friesen, Principal, 86 West Gate, Winnipeg, MB R3C 2E1

Phone: 204-775-7111

Committees

Board of Directors

- Cheryl Braun, Moderator (Glenlea) 2023
- Andrea Hildebrand, South (Altona Mennonite) (Completing term)
- Roy Lee, Winnipeg (Sterling) 2025
- Johanna Klassen, Young Adult (First) 2025
- Ed Neufeld, East (Grace Steinbach) 2026
- Don Rempel Boschman, Winnipeg (Douglas) (Completing term)
- Evelyn Rempel Petkau, South (Carman) 2023
- Karen Tiessen, West/North (Prairie) 2025

Ministerial Leadership Committee

- Erin Morash, Chair (Prairie) (Completing term)
- Lynell Bergen (Hope) 2026
- Lee Hiebert (Steinbach) (Completed term early)
- Marla Langelotz (Sargent) 2026
- Laverne Siemens (Gretna) 2024
- Julia Thiessen (Charleswood) 2025

Congregational Health Committee

- Don Rempel Boschman, Chair (Douglas) (Completing term)
- Lisa Enns (Charleswood) 2025
- Mark Tiessen Dyck (Altona Bergthaler) 2025
- Andrew Wiens (Nordheim) 2026
- Dori Zerbe Cornelson (Hope) 2025

Camp Committee

- Reynold Friesen, Chair (FaithWorks – non-MCM) (Completing term)
- Marie Loeppky (Bethel) 2026
- Krista Neustaedter Barg (Douglas) (Completed term early)
- Dave Wiebe (Springstein) (Completing term)

Finance Committee

- Roy Lee, Chair (Sterling) 2025
- Ruth Siemens (Gretna) 2026
- Doug Dyck (Covenant) 2027

Nominating Committee

- Harold Peters Franzen, Chair (Home Street) 2025
- Moses Falco (Sterling) 2027
- Mackenzie Nicolle (Home Street) 2025
- Henriette Schellenberg (Douglas) 2024

Nominations Slate

Name	Term	Term Expiry
MCM Board (Elected by Delegates; YA appointed by Board)		
Ed Neufeld, East (Grace Steinbach)	First	2026
VACANT, South	First	2027
VACANT, Winnipeg	First	2027
MCM Ministerial Leadership Committee (Appointed by Board)		
Virginia Gerbrandt Richert (Altona Bergthaler)	First	2027
Liz Brasier (Pinawa)	First	2027
Dan Epp-Tiessen (Home)	First	2027
MCM Congregational Health Committee (Appointed by Board)		
Lisa Enns (Charleswood)	Second	2027
MCM Camp Committee (Appointed by Board)		
Sol Schlegel (Morden)	First	2027
Erika Enns-Rodine (Altona Mennonite)	First	2027
VACANT	First	2027
MCM Finance Committee (Appointed by Board)		
Doug Dyck (Covenant)	Second	2027
MCM Nominating Committee (Appointed by Board)		
Moses Falco (Sterling)	Second	2027
Harold Penner (Arnaud)	First	2027
VACANT	First	2027

RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

Canadian Mennonite University Graduate School of Theology (Appointed by Board)		
Melanie Kampen (Into Account – non-MCM)	Second	2027
Eden Health Care Services (Appointed by Board)		
Cheryl Braun (Glenlea)	Third	2027
Linda Nichols (Pembina)	Second	2027
Randy Willoughby (Douglas)	First	2027
Mennonite Central Committee (Appointed by Board)		
Danika Warkentin (Home Street)	First	2027

OUR NATIONWIDE MINISTRY TOGETHER MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA

Joint Council
 Cheryl Braun, MCM Moderator (Glenlea) 2027
 David Wiens, Regional Representative (Elim) 2026

Nominating Committee
 Randy Hildebrand (Springstein) 2027

Our Nationwide Ministry Together

Our Covenant

Five Regional Churches—Mennonite Churches British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Eastern Canada—covenant together to create Mennonite Church Canada. Mennonite Church Canada carries our nationwide and international identity and ministry. Our shared programs as Mennonite Church Canada are funded by the Regional Churches each contributing a percentage of our congregational and individual giving. This covenant creates a close working relationship among the regions, and helps us to support our congregations more effectively, living into our conviction that the congregation is the primary locus of the church's life and ministry.

Joint Council

Mennonite Church Canada is governed by a Joint Council. Each region has two members on the Council: the regional moderator and one member-at-large. The Executive Minister of Mennonite Church Canada, the national moderator, the vice-moderator, and the secretary/treasurer make up the balance of the Council. The Executive Ministers Group advises Joint Council, which meets 3-4 times per year.

Executive Ministers Group (EMG)

The EMG is comprised of all the Executive Ministers: five regional and one national. This is a critical working group in our nationwide church which meets at least monthly for collaboration and to advise the Mennonite Church Canada Executive Minister.

Other nationwide groups meeting regularly:

- Finance, Policy, and Audit Committee: the secretary/treasurer and other appointees
- Sustainability Leadership Group: representatives from Joint Council and EMG plus regional reps, focused on environmental sustainability for Mennonite Church Canada
- Church Leadership Ministers: regional Leadership Ministers plus the Executive Minister
- Communicators: regional communicators plus the nationwide Communications Coordinator

Nationwide Gatherings

- Every Regional Church gathering includes nationwide agenda
- Mennonite Church Canada delegates meet annually for business agenda
- Mennonite Church Canada delegates meet biannually (see below) with interested leaders and representatives from all churches to learn, discuss, worship, and build community

Mennonite Church Canada

Doug Klassen, Executive Minister,
600 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg, MB
R3P 0M4 204-888-6781

National Moderator

Geraldine Balzer (Saskatchewan)

Joint Council Manitoba reps

Cheryl Braun (MCM Moderator) (Glenlea) 2027

David Wiens, Regional Representative (Elim) 2026

Nominating Committee

Randy Hildebrand (Springstein) 2027

Mennonite Church Canada Biannual Gathering delegates:

- six regional board members including the moderator
- five other delegates including the regional member-at-large on Joint Council
- plus one more delegate per 1000 church members, rounded up to the nearest thousand



2023 Year in Review (comprehensive)

It thrilled me to read the 2023 year-end reports from staff this year!

The reports thrilled me because of how closely they reflect the themes of MC Canada's refreshed priorities. Though still a work in progress, the priority statements are meant to help staff and the Joint Council define how we work toward our broad Vision: Healing and Hope statement.

The priorities read as follows:

To be a People of God who

- **Pursue God's CALLING** to join in the restoration of all creation.
- **Embrace our COMPANIONS** creating spaces where God's welcome, generosity, and forgiveness are known.
- **Cultivate a CULTURE** as multi-voiced, intercultural communities, empowering each other to live, grow, and share the peace of Jesus Christ with joy.

In each of the priorities, the words "join in," "creating spaces," and "empowering each other" bring focus and definition to how we work at the tasks of responding to "God's calling", to "embrace our companions," and to "cultivate a culture." These words remind me that God intends for us to work together. That we are not alone in our journey to be more Christ-like is happily evident from our work in 2023.

In 2023, the coordination of leadership development was moved to the national church office. Thank you to MCEC for assisting with this work in the past. Al Rempel has been appointed associate executive minister to work with pastoral and church leadership development programs and updating related policies.

In just over one year in the job of Indigenous Relations coordinator, Jonathan Neufeld has been growing our collective capacity to address reconciliation and move toward right relationships with Indigenous communities. Read more in this report about his work in connecting with

reconciliation work in MC SASK, MCBC, MCA, MCEC, Orange Shirt Day events, and an ecumenical initiative to help churches learn about Indigenous spirituality.

Sandy Plett, also just one year into her work, has made great strides in Climate Action. Nine congregations have made commitments to reduce their emissions with support from MC Canada's Emissions Reduction Grant. She also reports that many more congregations and networks are engaging in conversations to address the threats of climate change. Helping to kick-start these conversations are five regional church working groups and events like MCM's Living Hope Retreat.

Jeanette Hanson shares about her work in connecting North American resources and teachers with church leaders in China in a time of tightening restrictions on churches. Similar connections have and are being made with church leaders in numerous other countries to exchange gifts of learning with one another.



Doug Klassen engages with faculty and students of the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia.

It was exciting to hear from Arlyn Friesen Epp that CommonWord has fulfilled orders for approximately 750 copies of the new family storybook Bible, The Peace Table. It's exciting to see that this connection with MennoMedia will help shape the faith formation of households for future generations!

May you as congregations be blessed in your work together in 2024!

Doug Klassen
Executive Minister
dklassen@mennonitechurch.ca



Leadership Development

In the new role of associate executive minister, I've taken over responsibility for leadership development for MC Canada, which was previously shared among regional church leadership ministers. My responsibilities include the Company of 1000 pastoral development fund, which helps pastors finance continuing education. I also work with the TiM (Transitioning into Ministry) program, which helps new pastors adjust and integrate into the life and ministry of a congregation. In addition, I'm updating important policies that involve leadership calling and credentialing. I invite congregations, pastors, and others with questions about this work to contact me.

Al Rempel
Associate Executive Minister
arempel@mennonitechurch.ca



Indigenous Relations

When describing the pathway of Indigenous Relations, Repair, or (Re)Conciliation, my mentor and friend Sarah Augustine often says: 'we proceed together or not at all'.

Not meant to be dismissive, the statement recognizes that we have a larger call to build a collective movement toward right relationship with Indigenous communities.

It has been a privilege over the past year to witness and encourage varied expressions of peacemaking across Mennonite Church Canada. Together, we embody an alternative to colonial relationships.

I was blessed to join the Singing in the Arbor gathering on Muskeg Lake Cree Nation with Mennonite Church Saskatchewan's Walking the Path Initiative. I can't say enough about this intimate and tender time of sharing music, food, fellowship, and faith around the potluck table.

Mennonite Church Manitoba's Coalition for Indigenous Solidarity felt encouraged when all five regional churches joined a national ecumenical action group in support of searching a Winnipeg landfill for the remains of murdered Indigenous women.

Other ecumenical expressions of learning and remembrance: MCBC's annual participation in the 'Walk in the Spirit of Reconciliation'; MCEC congregations partnering with others in touring Ted and Co's play about the Doctrine of Discovery; MCA members' connection with Indigenous Neighbours through their Buffalo Shout group; regional participation in Orange Shirt Day; my

opportunity to join the Christian Interfaith Relations committee of the Canadian Council of Churches to resource churches' respect for Indigenous spirituality.

Building collective capacity is happening at many levels. Thanks be to God for what is and what is yet to be, as we follow the spirit of reconciliation.

Respectfully,
Jonathan Neufeld
Indigenous Relations Coordinator
jneufeld@mennonitechurch.ca



Climate Action

Healthy ecosystems are diverse and full of interdependent life: what a grand vision for the nationwide church!

In MC Canada, we've nurtured interdependence towards being a Creation Care church.

Leaders of the five regional church working groups on climate/creation care meet regularly to share ideas and encouragement. MCM's Living Hope Retreat gathered folks from across generations and four regions of MC Canada to help us move from grief and lament to action. We went home with new tools for leadership on climate issues. Folks who support youth and children studied In Deep Waters together, building capacity to provide spiritual care for younger generations in a time of climate crisis.

I'm deeply encouraged to see many congregations begin conversations about the changing climate and how the church can and must respond. The network of nurture and conversation is bearing fruit! A highlight of the year are the nine congregations that have taken steps to reduce emissions, supported by MC Canada's Emissions Reduction Grant.

In the year ahead, I am eager to hear how the body of Christ will shine as we find ways to build just practices and share Jesus's message of hope in our communities.

In the new year, watch for an invitation from Climate Action and Indigenous Relations to study So that we and our children may live. And please visit Together in Hope, a new collection at CommonWord specifically curated to support intergenerational action and dialogue around climate issues.

Submitted by
Sandy Plett
Climate Action Coordinator
splett@mennonitechurch.ca



International Witness

“While the last few decades have been a time where the church was able to spread widely in China, this is now the season to go deep.”

This is what a Chinese pastor (name withheld) said to me about the tightening restrictions on Chinese churches. He urged Mennonite Church Canada to share its “deep” resources in biblical and theological training in a gift exchange. “God has given you this gift to bless the wider church family. You will receive other gifts from us.”

We received similar encouragement from many parts of Asia and beyond.

Connecting and Sharing

Much of my work involves connecting people with one another’s gifts.

One gift MC Canada can offer is biblical, theological, and discipleship teaching through its ownership share in Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS).

Twenty-five students in the Philippines, Thailand and Laos are studying in the AMBS Journey program, some in their own languages of Hmong and Thai. Witness workers Tom and Christine Poovong help by translating material and mentoring students.

In South Korea, AMBS is offering a Master of Arts in Theology and Global Anabaptism together with the Nehemiah Institute. With help from the Korea Anabaptist Center and Mennonite Church South Korea, this initiative will have a long-term positive impact. Another hopeful sign in South Korea: Witness workers Bock Ki Kim and Sook Kyoung Park are increasingly being asked for training in restorative justice and peace theology.

Nhien Pham, MC Canada Witness liaison with the Evangelical Mennonite Church Vietnam, continues weekly Bible training online with leaders in Vietnam.



An outdoor Bible training class in Vietnam.

CMU professor Dan Epp-Tiessen taught a ground-breaking Old Testament and Peace course online for Mennonite pastors in Japan. Many said that it changed the way they read the Bible!

Witness workers Tom and Christine Poovong work with leaders in more than 100 worshipping groups in Thailand called the Friends of Grace network. They have hosted Old Testament training from professor Derek Suderman (Conrad Grebel), and Sister Care seminars featuring pastoral counselling for women provided by Mennonite Women USA.

Witness workers Werner and Joanne De Jong support biblical/theological education at many levels for students and faculty at the Meserte Kristos Seminary in Ethiopia

It is exciting to see Colombia’s Mennonite seminary (IMCOL) provide its unique perspective on peace theology in the Mennonite church there, and in partnership with others like SEMILLA, the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary in Guatemala. MC Canada continues to support this work financially.

In the Philippines, Witness workers Dann and Joji Pantoja work with their team at Peacebuilders Community to prepare for the Pantoja’s retirement and a future of sustainable ministry. The team expects to complete the construction of a permanent facility for the school of peacebuilding in March 2024.

Some Asian Mennonite leaders are already planning to gather face-to-face with Witness workers and others for a time of gift-sharing. They will look at the resources available to learn more about how Anabaptism can inform faith in Asia, and what Asian churches can teach us.

I look forward to connecting and exchanging gifts of teaching and learning with more people in 2024. It feels like God is doing something new in the global church. I invite you to lean into these church-to-church relationships and share in this rich experience. Pray, give, and/or join a Witness Support Network. See www.mennonitechurch.ca/witness-support-networks for more information.

Thank you for your continuing support of Mennonite Church Canada International Witness!

Submitted by Jeanette Hanson
Director, International Witness
jhanson@mennonitechurch.ca



CommonWord

Bookstore and Resource Centre

In 2024 [CommonWord](#) will be entering its 10th year as a combined national bookstore and resource centre. We are in a strong position to move into our next decade.

Over 50 years of service

CommonWord owes its strength to a long history as a university bookstore and congregational resource centre that dates back to the 1940s and 50s. In 1974, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada hired its first Resource Centre staff person. Since then, our ministry has grown in its ability to foster faith development by serving you with Anabaptist and related resources to buy, borrow, and more recently, access online. Watch for further information about our 50th anniversary in 2024!

Our Pandemic story

Since the lifting of Covid restrictions, retail and loan activity has rebounded well. Up to December 19, 2023, we fulfilled over 700 online retail orders, transacted nearly 8,000 in-store purchases, delivered over 2,600 loans, and saw 17,000 items downloaded—all reflecting a year-over-year increase. Thank you for your engagement.

New for You

CommonWord partnered with MennoMedia this past year to distribute a new family storybook Bible, The Peace Table. As of this writing, buyers have ordered almost 750 copies. Thank you to Mennonite Church Canada for advancing funds to purchase inventory. Consider ordering yours—for your children, grandchildren, congregation, children ages 6-10.

Staying Current

We make a point of gathering and curating materials on important current topics. Several examples from this past year include:

- » The Palestine-Israel Network’s recommended resources on the current war (and long-standing conflict) in the Middle East <www.commonword.ca/go/3301>.
- » Regional Church climate working groups offer recommended resources under the banner “Together in Hope” <www.commonword.ca/go/3698>.
- » Indigenous Relations resources that reflect our calling as Mennonite Church Canada <www.commonword.ca/go/2098>.
- » Materials to inspire, inform and equip congregations

in mission and in partnership with the wider work of the church <www.commonword.ca/go/2283>.

» Formal regional church conversations on:

- Death and dying (including green burials, palliative care, Medical Assistance in Dying) <www.commonword.ca/go/3687>.
- The Character of Jesus <www.commonword.ca/go/1406>
- Church Identity/Vision <www.commonword.ca/go/2941>
- The Rural Church <www.commonword.ca/go/3299>
- Hope <www.commonword.ca/go/1725>
- Vocation/Calling <www.commonword.ca/go/2285>
- LGBTQ+ Inclusion <www.commonword.ca/go/3002>

Here for you

We are eager to amplify and support wider church conversations. Discover how to access CommonWord resources with the short video tutorial at <https://www.commonword.ca/go/tutorial>. Or contact us directly with any question by calling 1-877-846-1593 or e-mailing info@commonword.ca. Subscribe to the bi-weekly Curator email updates. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram. Embed our RSS feeds on your congregation’s website.

Thank you

We are grateful to Mennonite Church Canada and Canadian Mennonite University for an ongoing commitment to Christian faith formation. And we thank you for your support as well.

CommonWord is your bookstore and resource centre. We look forward to serving you in 2024!

Submitted by Arlyn Friesen Epp
 Director, CommonWord Bookstore and Resource Centre
afriesenepp@commonword.ca



Staff (L to R):

- Arlyn Friesen Epp
- Anita Neufeld
- Josh Paetkau
- AnaSara Rojas



Annual Report 2023

131 River Rock Place, SE, Calgary, T2C 4P5

www.mcab.ca

Executive Committee Brenda Tiessen-Wiens *Moderator* Linden Willms *Vice-Moderator* Doug Wiebe *Personnel* Elizabeth Wall *Secretary* Tim Wiebe-Neufeld *Executive Minister*

As each year draws to a close the celebration of Christmas reminds us of God's presence, entering the world in new ways in the form of a tiny baby. The birth of Jesus is known as the coming of "Emmanuel", a name which means "God with us".

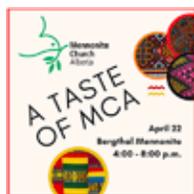
*As I reflect on all that has happened within our MCA faith family this past year, it is so appropriate to do so through the lens of the Christmas season and its affirmation of God's presence. Through the blessings and challenges of life, God has been present in so many ways as we **Reconnect, Reset, and Renew.***

Reconnect:

After 3 straight years of zoom meetings and limited gatherings, **Springridge Mennonite Church** reminded us of the joy of being together in their hosting of the **Annual Delegate Sessions (ADS)** March 17-18. Highlights included:



- 66 participants enjoying the warm hospitality of the Springridge congregation, who made everyone feel welcomed and cared for. They added personal touches to our meetings, as well as adding a Saturday games night and Sunday worship experience for those who were able to stay.
- Guest speaker Joe Heikman presented messages of **"Hope and Trust during a time of Transition"**, sharing stories and scriptures of how we can trust God to be present even during trying times.
- Delegates made important decisions including resolutions, spending decisions, and feedback on priority areas for MCA ministries



In April **A Taste of MCA** brought people together to **Bergthal** church for a spectacular time of food and music from a variety of cultures represented within our MCA faith community. There are plans to host this event again in 2024, this time early in the fall.

Throughout the summer months and through rentals year-round **Camp Valaqua** brought people together to experience God in creation. Highlights were the annual Hike-a-thon and Garden Party in June, and of course the summer program that touched the lives of campers, staff, and volunteers.



In November **Fun and Fundraising** events in **Edmonton** and **Calgary** brought people together where they enjoyed entertainment from a Cowboy Poet to Barbershop Quartet to Jazz Duo and a variety of other musical ensembles; stories of the impacts of MCA and our nationwide MC Canada community of faith; and fundraising through silent auction and generous giving. A **Coffee and Conversation** event in **Lethbridge** nurtured further relationships and connection to the ministries we share.

MCA is...

- **12** congregations worshipping in 5 languages
- **900** members and **1300** church participants
- **24** pastors, credentialed leaders, and year-round ministry staff
- **5** regions in covenant as MC Canada, our nationwide family of **202** congregations
- part of Mennonite World Conference, which includes **109** national churches from **86** countries

MCA's Vision is...

"...to be a community of Anabaptist-Mennonite congregations worshipping the one holy and loving God. Joined together in Jesus Christ, we are guided by the Holy Spirit and scripture as we seek to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace. Together we seek to embody Jesus Christ in the world."

MCA Constitution



Throughout the year **A Window Into** featured the 12 congregations of MCA in prayer notes, short videos, and stories, renewing our connection to each other.

Reset:

At the ADS in March MCA marked the conclusion of the **E3 Action Plan: Encountering, Embracing, Embodying Christ in life, in community, in the world**. While the theme may have concluded, E3 will remain as a milestone on the journey represented by these words as we continue to seek Christ together. Since E3's conclusion MCA leadership has been focusing on who we are as congregations, individuals, and broader church connections that form our MCA faith family. Priorities include centring our faith in Christ as we **support congregations, nurture connections, and celebrate faith in action**.

In July MCA bid farewell to **Steve Guigovaz**, thanking him for his 2 years of service as **Church Engagement Minister**. This role remains vacant as MCA Executive re-evaluates how to best meet the goals of connecting congregations, building relationships with our shared ministries, and generating financial support.

The diversity of cultures present within MCA and our society emphasize the calling to become ever more united in Christ.

- The **Bridge Building** ministry continues to recognize the desire to develop intercultural and interfaith relationships. A highlight included the annual Muslim-Christian dialogue in Edmonton, which featured Indigenous leadership. Other Indigenous connections within MCA included re-engagement of the Buffalo Shout group in Calgary, and the continued work of Indigenous Relations nationwide through MC Canada.
- At the **ADS sessions at Holyrood Church** in March, the speaker Joon Park will focus on themes related to becoming ever more an intercultural church.

Renew:

MCA walks with congregations through the challenges of being the church in today's world.

- Hope for the future has been building at **Holyrood Mennonite** through the stability and guidance provided by Joon Park and Suzanne Gross as interim pastors. MCA continues to walk with Holyrood as it discerns its leadership needs.
- Jerry Buhler has begun part-time interim work at **Trinity Mennonite**. We continue to seek additional pastoral support during this time of leadership transition.
- Pastoral vacancies at **Foothills** and **First Edmonton** were filled by **Aiden Scherzinger** and **Debbie Bledsoe** respectively.
- A small amount of financial support has been provided for **Pastor Mezgebu** to assist **Bethel International** during its post-pandemic recovery.
- Preparations are underway for walking with **Bergthal Mennonite** as its pastor **Anna-Lisa Salo** looks to take on a chaplaincy role in Ontario in the summer of 2024.



Other nationwide ministries include the **CommonWord Resource Centre**; **International Witness** relationships in 15 countries, a Climate Action coordinator working with **Creation Care** networks in most regions, and a **Palestine-Israel Network** seeking peace for all in the Middle East.

Pastoral leadership, credentialing, accountability, and support are key elements of our relationship as part of the nationwide church. An Associate Executive Minister has been hired by MC Canada to work in this area.

We live in a world in desperate need of peace, hope, and blessing. I pray that as 2024 unfolds we as the church may increasingly open ourselves to Christ, alive and at work in the world, and with it the promise of God's presence, where-ever God's spirit may lead!

Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, Executive Minister, MCA

For more information about these and other ministries we share as **MCA** and **MC Canada** check out mcab.ca and mennonitechurch.ca

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan 2023 Annual Report

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan (MC Sask) is a family of 21 congregations, covenanted together as Christ Centred & Sent. We prayerfully support one another, joining together in ministry alongside the other congregations of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite World Conference, trusting that as we do God's healing and hope flows through us to all the world.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. (John 15:12-14)

2023 again was a year of changes and adjustments for MC Sask. Gary Peters consented to serve as Interim Executive Minister. Kirsten Hamm-Epp resumed her role as Youth Minister. Josh Wallace continues as Congregational Engagement Minister and Marianne Siemens keeps everything organized as Office Administer



Our congregations, too, were in the midst of change. Many congregations are still adjusting ministries after the restriction and effects of COVID-19. Also, we have had numerous pastoral changes which are described below. As individual congregations and as a Regional Church we are attempting to understand what it means to be faithful and Christ-centred in today’s world of polarized thinking and the many and various priorities that demand our time and energy.

In March, we were hosted by Bethany Manor and online for our Annual Delegate Sessions. We gathered with the theme, “Rooted in Good Soil.” David Boshart, president of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary encouraged and challenged us to faithfulness.

MC Sask affirmed the calls of Rodney Hennessey (Grace MC) and Curtis Wiens (Aberdeen MC), joining with their congregations to ordain them to pastoral ministry. We rejoiced together with Mount Royal MC in the conclusion of the faithful service of Garth and Claire Ewert Fisher and in the appointment of Don Froese as interim Pastor. MRMC also called Evan Bueckert to serve as interim part-time associate pastor. Likewise, we gave thanks for the years of faithful ministry by Lois Bukar at Zion MC and for the installation of Zachary Stefaniuk as its pastor. Andrea Enns-Gooding concluded her time at Rosthern Mennonite Church.

We regret the withdrawal of Laird Mennonite Church from our fellowship. We wish them God’s blessings as they discern their faithful path of discipleship.

Throughout the past year we have planned and scheduled events to support the ministries of our congregations. In May, pastors were invited to participate in a daylong retreat during which Claire Ewert-Fisher led the sessions focusing on prayer for our congregations and our regional church. In October, Carol Penner, professor at Conrad Grebel College led us in a workshop for worship leaders.

The Youth Program under the recommended leadership of Kirsten Hamm-Epp continues to nurture the youth. Josh Wallace, Congregation Engagement Minister, is working on ways to energize our congregations through his involvement in the Ministries Commission and the new opportunities presented by the New Leaf Network and MC Canada’s Intercultural Church Steering Committee.

We continue to work on the Camping Ministry Study to review and strengthen our shared ministry through MC Sask’s three camps (Camp Elim, Youth Farm Bible Camp, and Shekinah Retreat Center).

Through transitions, expected and unexpected, joyful and sorrowful, the God of peace remains faithfully near to us, supporting each of our congregations in MC Sask and tenderly caring for all the world. Thank you for partnering with us in this work of peace.

With prayers for peace, healing, and joy,

Gary Peters, Kirsten Hamm-Epp, Josh Wallace, & Marianne Siemens (MC Sask Staff)



2023 IN REVIEW

Identity

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada is a diverse community

Transformed by the love of God

Inspired by the hope we find in Jesus

Called to action by the power of the Holy Spirit

Purpose

We come together as a regional church to:

Energize congregations

in worship, discipleship and mission

Encourage leaders

of hope, vision and transformation

Embody God's reconciling ministry for all creati

We celebrate congregations and pastors

105 congregations

- 2 congregations transitioned to full membership congregations: Hochma (Montreal) and Shalom Worship and Healing Centre (Kitchener)
- 2 congregations welcomed to provisional membership: Église Jésus-Christ Appelle Tous (Trois-Rivières) and Église Bethésda Mennonite de Saint-Hyacinthe (Saint Hyacinthe).
- 42 years of ministry celebrated with Mississauga Mennonite Fellowship who closed on August 31, 2023.

188 pastors serve as congregational pastors, chaplains and in other capacities

- 17 pastors installed in congregations
- 6 pastors licensed toward ordination
- 6 pastors ordained

We give gratitude for volunteers, donors and prayer

- Over 60 volunteers serve on councils, committees or as board representatives
- Volunteers assist in pastoral credentialing interviews and provide support for MCEC events.

We are excited by ministry throughout this past year

- Church planters met to talk about the joys and challenges of multi-vocational ministry
- Church leaders gathered for workshops focused on connecting to God's creation, intercultural church, medical assistance in dying, becoming a restorative church and more.
- Pastors learn together in Pastoral Circles and Transitioning into Ministry initiatives.
- Youth, and those who work with youth, gather at junior youth events and participate in conversations about youth engagement in the church.

Your support has brought inspiration and allows us to journey together in ministry as we become a transformed, inspired and called people of God. We are grateful.



Shalom Worship & Healing Centre led in worship at Annual Church Gathering.



Transformed by the love of God – 230 met in Kitchener at Annual Church Gathering.



Jr. youth from across MCEC came together for games, fun, worship (and cookies!)

Report to Mennonite Church Manitoba

AMBS serves the church as a learning community with an Anabaptist vision, educating followers of Jesus Christ to be leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world.

Our programs integrate academics, spiritual formation and practice. Join us — in person or at a distance, full time or part time — and deepen your understanding of Scripture, faith and Anabaptist theology!

Degrees and programs (* = distance-friendly program)

- Master of Divinity*
- Master of Arts in Christian Formation
- Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies
- Master of Arts: Theology and Global Anabaptism*
- Doctor of Ministry in Leadership*
- Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Direction*
- Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies* (fully customizable)
- Mennonite Education Agency Hispanic Ministries – AMBS Graduate Certificate in Theology* (in Spanish)
- Journey Missional Leadership Development Program* (undergraduate-level, nondegree)

amsb.ca/degrees-and-programs

We offer generous need-based financial aid, scholarships and matching grants for both full- and part-time graduate students. See also benefits for Canadian students!

amsb.ca/canadian-students

Leadership and enrichment

Grow your ministry skills and gain Anabaptist approaches to today's leadership challenges through our nondegree offerings. (* = distance-friendly program)

Short-term options

- Practical Leadership Training modules*
- Online Short Courses*: six weeks, discussion-based, noncredit (no grades, no papers!)
- Invite AMBS*: request a speaker (in person or online)
- Pastors & Leaders conference*: Feb. 17–20, 2025

Yearlong offerings

- Spiritual Direction Seminars*
- Transition to Leadership: program for new pastors
- Integrity Circles*: reflect theologically on leadership within a group

amsb.ca/leadership-and-enrichment



(Above) In April 2023, 12 men and eight women from five countries — Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, the U.S. and Zimbabwe — graduated from AMBS. Ten completed part or all of their studies at a distance.

Regional church connections

- **Board member:** position open, TBD

AMBS statistics

- In 2023–24, 149 graduate students are enrolled at AMBS: 65 from the U.S., 11 from Canada and 73 international students. The undergraduate-level Journey program has 40 participants in Canada, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, Uganda and the U.S.

Want to try out seminary?

- Sign up for an Online Short Course:
 - Exploring Peace and Justice in the Bible
 - Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology
 - Understanding Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture: What's Different and Why?
 - Transforming Congregational Conflict and Communication
 - Biblical Interpretation Across the Two Testaments
 - Resisting Christian Nationalism with the Gospel of Peace

amsb.ca/online-short-courses

- Take a graduate-level course — online or on campus. Nonadmitted students get 50% off tuition for their first three credit hours! amsb.ca/upcoming-courses
- Schedule a virtual or in-person visit and learn what AMBS has to offer! amsb.ca/visit
- Stay connected: facebook.com/followAMBS • instagram.com/amsb_seminary • youtube.com/amsbedu • amsb.ca/subscribe



THE BETHANIA GROUP

"Bethania, a Mennonite Organization, provides compassionate, outstanding long term care and affordable housing for seniors."

February 6, 2024

At the end of August 2022, Ferdinand Funk retired from his position as Bethania Spiritual Care Director. We are thankful for Ferd's many years of faithful service to this community. Kimberly Rempel Smith took over this position in September 2022, and in March 2023 began a Maternity leave. Marla Langelotz was hired as an Interim Chaplain until Kimberly Rempel Smith returns from her leave.

As Covid abated, regular Chapel (Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday) services at Bethania MPCH resumed in March 2023. We are grateful for the ongoing commitment of supporting churches in providing speakers for Thursday services and speakers and musicians for Sunday services. Many churches are finding it more difficult to fill these roles, which has meant drawing in more individual friends of Bethania to serve as speakers and musicians. Marla also speaks once a month on Sundays. *Volunteers play a crucial role in the delivery of spiritual care services. The need for volunteer pianists, individuals or group who would share their musical talents, individuals who would lead in worship, singing and assisting Residents to the services is always welcomed and needed. As a volunteer, you become an important part of our mission of providing compassionate care. Your skills and commitment can create lasting impacts in the lives of those we serve. Please contact Volunteers Services at Bethania/Pembina Place.*

In May 2023 Bethania MPCH resumed providing a monthly Catholic Mass for interested residents. Father Janesh from St. Gerards Catholic Church leads these services. It was wonderful to be able to gather again and celebrate Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving (with First Mennonite Church Choir), Christmas Candlelight (with Sargent Ave. Church Choir) and Christmas Day services. Communion services, led by Marla, were held quarterly.

Bethania residents further benefit from German Hymn Singing recreation programs twice a week. We are thankful for the volunteers who lead these programs. Marla Langelotz began a Dementia Support Group in May 2023. This group is open to all family members and friends of Bethania Residents who live with Dementia. Memorial Services were held quarterly, providing an opportunity to remember residents who passed away at Bethania and re-connect with their family members.

At Pembina Place, Vernelle Enns Penner retired in December 2023; Zachary Ward accepted the part time (2 ½ days per week) on Dec 11, 2023. Zachary's role includes spiritual care assessments and ensuring the spiritual needs of the residents are met. In addition to weekly Sunday livestream services, Zachary leads weekly worship services and individual visits. Pembina Place residents benefit from weekly hymn sings in partnership with the chaplain, Therapeutic Recreation staff and volunteers.

Alongside the weekly services and special programs at Bethania and Pembina Place, residents receive individual visits, words of encouragement, Scripture reading, prayers from the Bethania chaplains as needed and as much as time allows. The compassionate guidance and support offered by our chaplains have been invaluable in fostering a sense of peace and reflection. Their ability to address both emotional and spiritual needs plays a significant role in the well-being of our residents.

The Bethania Group Board said farewell to several long serving members- Brigitte Kutasiewich (outgoing Board Chair), Erna Braun (outgoing Fundraising Committee Chair), Erica Wideman- and welcomed two new members- Lillian Koley & Rob Winter. The Executive also saw changes with Martin Enns moving into the Chair position.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of The Bethania Group,
Martin Enns, Bethania Group Board Chair
Gary J. Ledoux, CEO
Marla Langelotz, Bethania Chaplain



CANADIAN MENNONITE

2023
Report to Mennonite Church Manitoba

Canadian Mennonite (CM) tells the story of the church, in partnership with the Churches of Mennonite Church Canada.

Online and in print, *CM* is a place for our faith community to gather. We share news about churches, pastoral transitions, milestones and passings. Readers write letters to the editor, opinion pieces, social media responses and website comments. Pastors and leaders contribute feature articles that foster dialogue. We seek to nurture a nationwide sense of belonging. We want people to feel connected to the broader faith community. And, we are interested in creative new ways to host conversations about what it means to be Mennonite today.

In 2023, approximately 9,000 households subscribed to the magazine. Online, 16,000 people per month read articles on our website. We hosted three *CM Events*, where *CM* moderates an online conversation between two or three panelists. The most popular event of 2023 was about medical assistance in dying. Videos of past events are available on the *CM* website.

At the end of 2023, Mennonite Church Canada and the regional churches signed a three-year covenant with *CM* to continue offering *Canadian Mennonite* magazine through the Every Home subscription plan. Anyone who attends a Mennonite Church Canada congregation can subscribe at a cost paid collectively through the church.

In 2024, *CM* will launch new initiatives to further engage Mennonites across Canada. We want to connect with, and give voice to, as broad a cross-section of the church as possible. Go to canadianmennonite.org to read more.

With your help, we are strengthening the faith community. We are making space for people with wide-ranging views to speak and to listen. Online, *CM* articles form a witness to the world about our faith. We do this in the spirit of Hebrews 10:24, spurring one another on to love and good deeds, to build up the Kingdom of God.

Thank you for partnering with us in this ministry to tell the church story.

✉ Have a story idea? Email Aaron Epp at ae@canadianmennonite.org.

1-800-378-2524 canadianmennonite.org [Canadian.Mennonite](https://www.facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite) [canadianmennonite](https://www.instagram.com/canadianmennonite) [CanMenno](https://www.x.com/CanMenno) [canadianmennonite](https://www.youtube.com/canadianmennonite)



Greetings to Mennonite Church Manitoba

CMU Mission

Canadian Mennonite University is an innovative Christian university, rooted in the Anabaptist faith tradition, moved, and transformed by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Through teaching, research, and service CMU inspires and equips for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation in church and society.

Denominational Enrolment Snapshot

- Mennonite Church Canada:** 35 congregations
- Mennonite Brethren:** 21 congregations
- Mennonite (Other):** 10 congregations
- Hutterite:** 7 colonies
- Other Denominations:** 118 congregations

Small university Big opportunities



Arts | Science | Business
Music | Social Work

For more information and connection to CMU view our **Report to the Community** at cmu.ca/communityreport.

Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter **Through this Place** for more stories and happenings at cmu.ca/newsletter.

cmu.ca



Here's a glimpse into CMU classrooms this year

The Art of Preaching | Dr. Andrew Dyck

Cultivates the skills needed to preach effectively by exploring topics like the nature and purpose of preaching, how to move from biblical text to sermon, creative sermon forms, and the power of stories.

Biochemistry I: Biomolecules and Metabolic Energy | Dr. Candice Viddal

Introduces the structure and function of biomolecules, including proteins, carbohydrates, nucleic acids, and lipids.

Adult Development: Aging and Society | Dr. Heather Campbell-Enns

A comprehensive study of aging in individual and societal contexts, including the psychological aspects of aging in society today.

Exploring Social Work Practice | Dr. Alex Sawatsky

Introduces the profession of social work, including the history and theoretical evolution of social work practice through a critical lens.

Ways of Knowing | Professors of various disciplines

This course introduces students to the university by getting them involved in asking a big question alongside other students and professors from many subject areas. Our big question this year is "what are people for?"

Resourcing the church

Xplore | A lifelong learning program investigating dimensions of Christian faith, our world, and life. Spring session begins February 20, 2024. Visit cmu.ca/xplore.

renew | Pastor and church leader conference, happens February 5-6, 2024. Visit cmu.ca/renew.

Graduate School of Theology and Ministry | Study part- or full-time, in person or online. Full scholarships for full-time students available. Visit cmu.ca/gstm.

CMU 2030: Four Strategic Directions

Visit cmu.ca/cmu-2030 to explore these strategic directions in more detail.



Relationships



Program Renewal



Lives



Reckoning... with life out of balance



2023 COMMUNITY REPORT

Greetings from Eden!

The mental health programs of Eden experienced another year of high demand with many of our community members reaching out to Eden for support. Outpatient psychiatric consultations and Recovery of Hope counselling sessions are operating at the highest levels in Eden’s history. Occupancy rates at the Inpatient Psychiatric Unit and with our supportive housing program continue to remain high. Our employment support program has a steady stream of participants looking for vocational assessments and work practicums. The programs offered in partnership with Southern Health-Sante Sud, like our Intensive Case Management program, are operating a full capacity. We are grateful for the privilege of supporting our community members with their mental health and mental illness and for the trust they place with the staff and practitioners at Eden.

While we are focused on providing the best possible care we can with the resources we have, we know there is more that needs to be done. The motivation to be the hands and feet of Christ in our communities is what birthed the work of Eden almost 60 years ago and it continues to drive our work as a Mennonite service organization to this day. Thank you for supporting Eden and investing in mental health and addiction care in southern Manitoba.

Brad Unger
CEO, Eden Health Care Services

The mental health and addictions programs of Eden:



Mental health hospital in Winkler and outpatient psychiatry consultation across Southern Health-Santé Sud.



Community mental health programming in partnership with Southern Health-Santé Sud.



Manages 145 housing units in Steinbach, Winnipeg, and Winkler. Housing options are on a continuum and include: group homes, integrative supportive housing, independent living with mental health support, and independent living.



Counselling therapy for individuals, couples and families in Winnipeg, Winkler and Steinbach and virtually across Manitoba.



Provides employment services for job seekers in and around the Winkler and Steinbach communities.

Eden programs are managed and supported by:



Provides management and shared services for the Eden programs.



Arms-length fundraising organization that raises funds to support Eden’s mental health work in Manitoba.

2023

EDEN HEALTH CARE SERVICES

YEAR IN REVIEW



Recovery of Hope had a total of 5,565 client sessions and 628 new clients.



Eden Housing and Supports had a vacancy rate of less than 2%.

Eden Mental Health Centre had an occupancy rate of **85%**

1,313

Eden Mental Health Centre's number of outpatient referrals.



33% increase in online applications for **Segue Career Options**.

Segue Career Options' Opportunities for Employment Skills Enhancement project met **60% of participant goals** in only **9 months**.



Eden Foundation granted **\$250,000** to Eden's programs and services.

All inpatient unit renovations from the flood of 2022 at the **Eden Mental Health Centre** were completed and units went back to full capacity.

The combined programs of **Eden Health Care Services** had an annual budget of **\$15.9 million** and employed **160 staff members**.



Eden Foundation's annual **Tractor Trek fundraiser** has now raised over **\$1 million** since it started 16 years ago.



Over 1,900 counselling sessions at **Recovery of Hope** qualified for our **Sliding Fee Scale** program.

7,600

Number of client contacts for **Pathways Community Mental Health's** Intensive Case Management program.

35%

of **Eden Housing and Supports** tenants received mental health support from an Eden Housing Support Worker.



Pathways Community Mental Health's Intensive Case Management program had over **200 participants** across the region.



1-866-895-2919
edenhealthcare.ca

hope • healing • community

Inter- Mennonite Chaplaincy Assoc.

Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Association (IMCA) is a campus ministry shared by three Mennonite conferences, MCM, EMMC, and EMC along with support from congregations and individual donors. Together this partnership offers an Anabaptist Christian presence and chaplain on the University of Manitoba's Fort Garry campus, serving students, faculty and staff. IMCA occupies a space in room 524 University Centre referred to by students as the "Menno Office". It is open 8:30 - 4:30 weekdays and is staffed on a half time basis Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

The office is situated on the University Centre's fifth floor as part of the Spiritual Care and Multi-faith Centre. Our bright and welcoming space serves as a gathering place for all. Alongside our multi-faith neighbours, the Menno Office provides a setting that invites curiosity, wonder and deeper engagement with the Good News of God's love and faithfulness revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Here students find a safe place to process their studies, their daily lives and the events of the world around us in a caring Christian context.

Students enjoy the Menno Office as a place to eat their lunch, study or connect with friends between classes, play on one of the many instruments, read articles or books available to students or chat with the chaplain. Though much of the time in the office is unstructured, students meet twice weekly for "Menno Talk," a more focused time for discussion, reflection and worship.

During the past term the Wednesday gatherings have focused on songs of faith to spark reflection, conversation and devotion. During the Thursday meetings, we have been using the articles of faith from the EMC, EMMC and MCM Confessions of Faith as a way of generating discussion about what we believe. The hope is that as we clarify our own beliefs and open ourselves to the moving of God's Spirit, we can learn to better articulate ourselves in love, humility, and unity with one another and also find the words and actions that can communicate the Good News in clear, relevant and engaging ways to a world that so desperately needs to hear and see it.

Though located in Winnipeg, the Menno Office reaches students from across the province, country and world. Here, students from far and near are able to make meaningful connections and experience peer support and pastoral care during their university years.

With many congregations seeing fewer students in their church buildings, IMCA offers a unique opportunity for churches and conferences to partner together to step into the everyday world of students at a critical stage of their development.

We are grateful and rejoice that, through referrals, church bulletin announcements, invitations, word of mouth and our online presence, new students continue to find the Menno Office and benefit from the ministry that IMCA provides. At the same time, we are saddened by the recent news that as of April 2024 the EMC will be stepping back from its long partnership with IMCA. In light of this development, we are asking all our supporters who are able, to consider increasing their financial contributions. Thank you for your ongoing support, financial gifts and prayers for this important campus ministry. Please continue to inform those you know who study or work at U of M of this opportunity for Christian fellowship, discipleship and support on campus. You can do this by directing them to mennooffice.ca

Rev. Mark von Kampen
Campus Chaplain
524 University Centre
204-474-9691
mvonkampen@gmail.com



Mark von Kampen
Campus Chaplain

MCC Manitoba 2023 | Report to Mennonite Church Manitoba

In the increasingly fast-paced world that we live in, MCC walks alongside Manitobans to build healthy communities, families and relationships — right here and around the world. We work to relieve injustice, develop people's inherent strengths and foster peace at the heart of communities. And while this work is never simple, we are so grateful for your partnership in this shared mission.

Over the past year, MCC Manitoba staff said goodbye to two longstanding office homes. We give thanks for many years and blessings on Plaza Drive and Henderson Highway. With our transition to one office, we prayerfully anticipate many new blessings, friendships and partnerships at our new home on Bannatyne Avenue.



The exterior of the building housing MCC Manitoba's new offices at 140 Bannatyne Avenue, Winnipeg. The café Sam's Place, where MCC Manitoba's youth program takes place, is located on the main floor. *MCC photo/Michael Veith*

Locally, we have continued efforts to foster healthy communities — by facilitating refugee sponsorships; partnerships with Indigenous neighbours; peacebuilding and climate advocacy work; abuse response and prevention in families and churches; and skills training with young people at Sam's Place.

Your support has made all of this possible, alongside thousands of thrift volunteer hours, material donations — like comforters, relief and hygiene kits — and more than 365 Grow Hope acres that will provide relief to vulnerable families around the world.

Internationally, MCC continued relief, development and peace work in 45 countries. We responded to high profile disasters and conflicts, among others that didn't make headlines. With your support, we provided emergency food and hygiene supplies to families affected by the Syria and Türkiye earthquake. In Ukraine, we continued to support people affected by conflict with emergency housing, trauma healing and practical supplies like blankets and food packages. And most recently, we began a response to the crisis in Gaza with emergency relief and a call to advocacy efforts in the U.S. and Canada.

Peacebuilding continues to be foundational to our mission. It is embedded in our response to the Gaza crisis and it's evident in other long-term relief responses like in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Six years after a devastating conflict in the Kasai region of DRC, MCC continues to walk alongside local partners to meet the needs of displaced families and their host communities. In the city of Kikwit, local tensions have been reduced with trauma training for nurses, school supplies for displaced children and wells to meet an increased demand for water. Our local partners see the transformative power of peacebuilding in this shared work.

We give thanks to our Creator and Sustainer for the many gifts we have been given this year and for our partners, both near and far. We give thanks for you, dear friends and churches. Thank you for partnering with MCC in our mission and thanks be to God, our source of perseverance, grace and love.


 WESLEY NCUBE
 CONSTITUENCY RELATIONS COORDINATOR



2022-2023 Local Program highlights:

300+

people participated in ARP program offerings

959

resource downloads from AbuseResponse andPrevention.ca

52

youth and young adults gained employable skills at Sam's Place

106

refugees sponsored with support from 33 community and church sponsor groups

16

sermons, presentations and events facilitated by the Indigenous Neighbours program

11

local partners received support from the Indigenous Neighbours program

110

people attended Germinating Conversations events, engaging in dialogue on food and faith

118

people participated in conversations on creation care and how we can respond to climate change

2022-2023 Manitoba Thrift highlights:

16

MCC Thrift shops served their communities and supported the work of MCC

1,600+

volunteers donated their time and talents in MCC Thrift shops

283,800

volunteer hours donated in MCC Thrift shops throughout the province

\$3.3 M

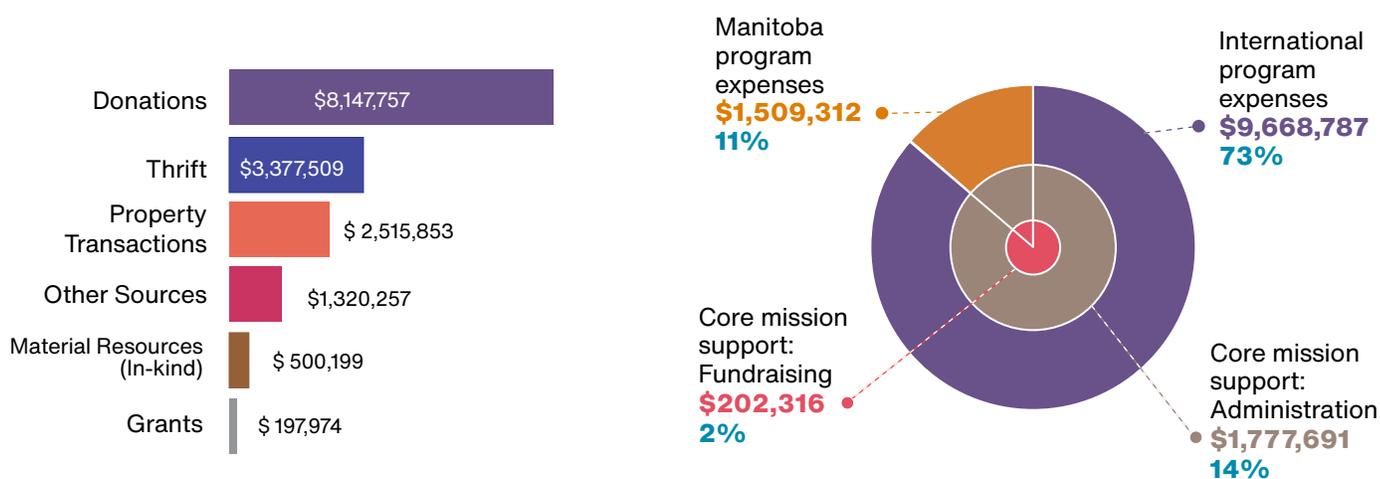
contributed to MCC's local and global relief, development and peace work

TOTAL REVENUE:

\$16,059,549

TOTAL EXPENSES:

\$13,158,106



*All activity in this report, including finances, reflects MCC's fiscal year from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023

For the full report, visit mcc.org/our-stories/20222023-annual-impact-report-manitoba



MENNONITE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

EST. 1889



Mennonite Collegiate Institute Annual Report to Congregations – 2023

“The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does.” Psalm 145:13

Praise the Lord for his everlasting faithfulness towards MCI and thank you to our generous supporters.

In 2023, we saw many examples of God’s faithfulness to MCI and its community. After several years of low enrollment, questions arose about MCI’s future. Would 2023 be MCI’s last? Or would we look back on 2023 as the beginning of a turn-around for the school?

To help navigate the way forward, the MCI Board of Directors, its Leadership Team, and a committee of MCI supporters developed the Strategic Plan, which was presented at a community meeting on April 25, 2023. This plan can be found on our website at: <https://mciblues.net/about-us/board-of-directors/>. Inspired by the words of Scripture (Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 12:2, Isaiah 40:31), the plan establishes five strategic pillars as the focus for the next three years:

1. Financial stability
2. Recruitment and retention of students
3. Educational and program excellence
4. Clarification of MCI’s identity
5. Stakeholder engagement

At that meeting, the Board also shared the school’s need for \$500,000 of financial contributions to make it through to the end of the 2022-2023 school year and remain open for 2023-2024. During April and May, many teaching staff made the difficult decision to find employment elsewhere due to the uncertainty at MCI. The MCI Board met in late June to discuss and put forward a motion regarding the future of the school; by the faithfulness of God and dedication of our donors the decision was made to be open for the 2023-2024 school year and beyond.

MCI’s Leadership Team spent the end of June and the summer filling vacant positions. By the grace of God and the willingness of many individuals, all but one of the vacant teaching positions were filled by the beginning of September. Students enrolled in Grade 11 Chemistry, Grade 12 Biology, Grade 10 Geography, and Grade 9 Social Studies for first semester have been completing coursework using an online platform called Informnet. With a new hire starting in the second semester, we plan to move away from this course delivery method.

The current school year has been full in the best of ways. We are pleased to continue to offer students opportunities for growth in faith and community through daily chapels, our annual Christian Life Retreat at Red Rock Bible Camp, and the upcoming youth conference, Youth Orbit, in January. We have cherished time spent connecting with the wider MCI community of parents, alumni, and supporters at events like our Soup and Pie and Fall Concert, Christmas Concert, and PAC-coordinated movie nights and family

carnivals. This fall we offered students an opportunity for hands-on learning during a six-week block of ‘Workshop Wednesdays’, where staff, alumni, and parents led specialized subjects such as agriculture, photography, set building and design, outdoor education, and bouldering. Another six-week block of different workshops will take place in the second semester.

Significant progress has been made toward the goals expressed in the Strategic Plan. Details were shared with the MCI community at the Annual General Meeting in November. Here are a few highlights:

- With the help of a newly formed Donor Development Committee, MCI successfully raised more than \$600,000 in donations and pledges by the end of August.
- The Leadership Team and Board worked hard to establish a realistic and manageable budget for the 2023-2024 school year.
- Student enrollment came in at 55 students to start September, including 3 international students. We anticipate a slight increase in enrollment for the second semester with 3 new students joining us.
- We revived Youth Orbit in March 2023, attracting over 100 students, and look forward to another successful Youth Orbit in January 2024.
- We convened a new Educational Advancement Committee to examine and enhance MCI’s educational program.
- We have heard calls to find new ways to engage with our stakeholders. This includes our supporting churches, other local churches, our surrounding community, and our alumni.

As we work, we remain focused on MCI’s mission:

Our purpose is to educate young people in an Anabaptist Christian context, seeking to develop their God-given potential...

Our goal is to raise up a generation who express Christian hope by serving others, promoting peace, and providing Christ-like leadership within the church community and secular world.

-from the MCI Mission Statement

Since 1889, young people have had life-changing experiences at MCI. In this Christ-centered environment, students have received a high quality, well-rounded education, formed life-long friendships, and grown in faith and faithfulness. Our alumni have gone on to significant roles of service and leadership in the church, local community, and wider world. We call on our churches and constituents to come together in trust and unity to support MCI with their talents, gifts, and prayers. Please continue to pray that God’s wisdom will guide us as we continue to discern the way forward.

Submitted on behalf of the MCI Board of Directors and Leadership Team

by Jennifer Klippenstein, B. Ed., Interim Principal

Mennonite Disaster Service Canada

REPORT

MDS Canada 2023: **“You brought hope and love to the community”**

“You brought hope and love to the community.” That’s what Amanda McDougall-Merrill, mayor of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, said about volunteers from Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) who came to Cape Breton to repair homes damaged by Hurricane Fiona in Cape Breton.

After the storm, which struck on September 24, 2022, people “felt alone and hopeless,” she said. “You did more than build walls and fix houses. You brought love here,” she said. “There are no words that have the capacity to show how grateful we are.”

Altogether, 458 volunteers from across Canada provided over 32,000 hours of service for 272 families and community organizations in Cape Breton. This included repairs to 44 houses, 28 new roofs or roof repairs and 179 tree-cutting and cleanup jobs.

Caroline Purnell’s daughter, Rosalyn, had her house repaired by MDS volunteers. When it hit, the hurricane damaged the roof of Rosalyn’s house, causing rain to leak in every time a new storm came along. Unable to afford repairs, and with a deadline from her insurance company to fix the roof or lose her house insurance,

the situation seemed hopeless for the single mother of three boys.

When MDS offered to fix the roof, everything changed, Purnell said. “When you said you would do the repairs, not only were you helping someone with a leaking roof, you were changing the outcome of an entire family’s life. I have seen my daughter go from hopelessness and despair to gratitude and hopefulness for her future,” she added. What MDS did “was a miraculous answer to prayer and a

source of encouragement to everyone who hears how you answered God’s call,” she went on to say.

Along with service in Cape Breton, MDS Canada responded to a tornado in Alberta and did other repairs in other provinces. We also offered the Spirit of MDS Fund once again, providing 26 grants worth just over \$137,000 given to churches and organizations across Canada.

The goal of MDS Canada is to restore homes and hope for survivors of natural disasters in Canada and the U.S.



Caroline and Rosalyn Purnell and family

Hearing about the impact of our service in Cape Breton, I am happy to hear both of those things happened. We thank God for the mission God has called us to: To be the hands and feet of Jesus for those affected by natural disasters. We invite you to pray for us as we explore where in Canada we can be of best service in 2024.

— Ross Penner, Executive Director



Mennonite Disaster Service
Canada

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 Winnipeg, MB Canada R3P 2J1
 204-261-1274 / toll-free 866-261-1274
 mdscanada@mds.org | mds.org

Manitoba Multifaith Council

Mission: MMC exists to promote multifaith dialogue and understanding, while collaborating to serve the community as a whole.

Vision: People of diverse faiths working together to build a just and caring society.

On behalf of the Manitoba Multifaith Council, the following is offered as a brief report of its work in the year 2023:

The year began with its annual Award for the Advancement of Interreligious Understanding. This Award was given by Her Honour, Anita Neville, who had recently begun to serve as Manitoba's Lieutenant Governor. The Award Ceremony was held at Government House, and given to Bill Weismann. Over the years Bill has played an important role in welcoming visitors to the synagogue, and visiting schools to help students understand more fully the Jewish faith. His hospitable spirit has helped to build many bridges within the faith communities of the city of Winnipeg.

A few weeks later, on Feb 28, the annual Multifaith Leadership Breakfast was held at the RBC Convention Centre. This year's guest was the new mayor Scott Gillingham. This event invites the guest speaker to reflect on the theme, "For the Sake of the City." Mayor Gillingham engaged his audience with personal reflections, and also held out his hope of establishing an advisory group composed of people from different faith traditions and cultures. His remarks were met with a warm response from those gathered.

Through the year MMC has found ways to engage with the Justice system in the Province. One such venture is with an Art Contest for inmates in prisons. Inmates are invited to create works of art around particular themes, and this year introduced an award for young inmates as well. The Award was sponsored by Lutheran Urban Ministries and Inner City Youth Alive. The Council's Justice Committee also arranged meetings with the new Bruce Oake Recovery Centre in order to help prison chaplains understand the role of this Centre to help inmates reintegrate back into the city.

In the fall, the Council's Spiritual Health Committee mounted a workshop on the "Positive Effects of Spirituality and Religion on Mental Health." Held at Sara Riel Place, speakers from different faith traditions confronted the tendency in our health system to ignore or dismiss the dimension of spirituality in responding to issues of mental health. Close to 40 people who gathered had opportunity to engage with both the presenters and each other as this important topic was explored.

Through the fall our world was impacted by the crisis in Israel and Palestine. And the Manitoba Multifaith Council became aware that international conflicts like this also impact life in this city, and within MMC. We acknowledge the need to more fully understand and learn how we best respond to each other and to the world in which we live out our respective faith traditions.

Most sincerely,

Ray Harris, Secretary



Greetings from Westgate Mennonite Collegiate

We began September with a healthy number of 335 students. Put simply, our school is full. We have even had to turn part of our cafeteria into a makeshift classroom. Our student body is about 35% Mennonite. We also welcome many students of other Christian denominations, students from other religious traditions, and students with no faith connections at all. Our student body has been made rich by the diversity of students we have in our community. In this diversity, we continue to work on our mission to provide a well-rounded education that will inspire students to live as people of God.

Nurturing Faith

This year in chapel we are exploring how we are united with the worldwide Church as members of one body, and how we can apply this Biblical wisdom to our lives in a variety of communities. We are using the Lectionary Bible texts used by churches around the world, and we are trying to tell stories of people and churches around the world, making use of some of the resources available from Mennonite World Conference. Our hope is to help our students become aware that we each work in a different way, for we are individuals with our own gifts and vocations. Yet our differences cannot divide us; we are radically interdependent as a species and as a community of Christ followers. We are one body with many members.

In mid-October, Westgate's Special Emphasis Week, elegantly known as SPEW, featured Dr. Carol Penner, a professor of Theological Studies at Conrad Grebel College. She focused on the topic of building healthy relationships in community involving careful choices about how we express our sexuality and spirituality. She encouraged us to pay close attention to our bodies and to our own power. At three all-school chapels with students, faculty and staff, Dr. Carol Penner explored intimacy and abuse as we looked at stories from our lives and our culture. We talked about learning to make choices about sex and how those choices impact our lives, and how our core spiritual values can help us survive and thrive.

Church Connection

Westgate is sponsored by thirteen MCM congregations. Our students have been connecting with these churches, leading worship services throughout the year. As we bring our gifts of music to these churches, we think of our chapel theme and how our connection with our supporting congregations helps us to understand who we are and fulfill our mission statement. In this current climate in which we try to understand the violence in our world, we are given hope by being in a community which tries to speak differently about violence and walk humbly on the path of Jesus.

CAMS Music Festival

Westgate will be part of a Canadian Mennonite Association of Schools music festival in April. The festival will take place at MBCI and will bring together Mennonite schools from across the country. We are excited to widening our circle in this way and making music together.



Listing of MCM Staff and Board of Directors

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Karen Schellenberg – *Co-Director of Leadership Ministries*

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Congregational Ministries

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Mission Ministries

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Nadya Langelotz – *Associate Program Director for Camps*

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Camp Assiniboia

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Megan Klassen-Wiebe, *Guest Group Coordinator*

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Camp Koinonia

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Board of Directors

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Ed Neufeld, *East*

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Karen Tiessen, *West*

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MCM Staff Photo Directory



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General Accountant



Naomi Ewert
Administrative Assistant



Dorothy Fontaine
*Director of Camps with
Meaning*



Elisabeth Franz-Warkentin
CwM Admin Assistant



Jeff Friesen
*Co-Director of Leadership
Ministries*



Steffi Friesen
*Accounts Payable/Finance
Assistant*



Kathy Giesbrecht
*Dir. of Congregational
Ministries*



Melanie Neufeld
Dir. of Mission Engagement



Darryl Neustaedter Barg
Assoc. Dir. of Communications



Michael Pahl
Executive Minister



Nadya Langelotz
CwM Assoc. Program Director



Karen Schellenberg
*Co-Director Leadership
Ministries*

MCM Staff Photo Directory cont.

Camp Assiniboia



Ed Doerksen
Facilities Manager



Lauren Gervais
Food Service Coordinator



Megan Klassen-Wiebe
Guest Group Coordinator



Kerry Hyde
General Assistant

MCM Board Photo Directory



Cheryl Braun
Moderator



Andrea Hildebrand



Johanna Klassen



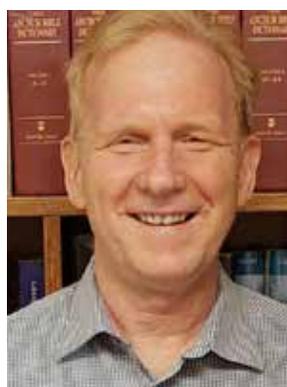
Roy Lee



Ed Neufeld



Karen Tiessen



Don Rempel Boschman



Evelyn Rempel Petkau

Clusters of MCM

Western/Northern Cluster

1. Prairie Mennonite Fellowship (Crystal City)
2. Grace Mennonite Church (Brandon)
3. Living Word Church (Cross Lake)
4. Matheson Island Community*
5. Nordheim Mennonite Church (Winnipegosis)
6. Oak Lake Mennonite Church
7. Whitewater Mennonite Church (Boissevain)

Winnipeg Cluster

8. Aberdeen Mennonite Church
9. Bethel Mennonite Church
10. Charleswood Mennonite Church
11. Douglas Mennonite Church
12. First Mennonite Church
13. Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship
14. Home Street Mennonite Church
15. Hope Mennonite Church
16. Jubilee Mennonite Church
17. Lao Mennonite Church
18. Little Flowers Community*
19. North Kildonan Mennonite Church
20. Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church
21. Sterling Mennonite Fellowship
22. Vietnamese Mennonite Church

Eastern Cluster

23. Arnaud Mennonite Church
24. Elim Mennonite Church (Grunthal)
25. Glenlea Mennonite Church
26. Grace Mennonite Church (Steinbach)
27. Pinawa Christian Fellowship
28. Saint Julian's Table (Beausejour)*
29. Steinbach Mennonite Church

Southern Cluster

30. Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church
31. Altona Mennonite Church
32. Covenant Mennonite Church (Winkler)
33. Emmanuel Mennonite Church (Winkler)
34. Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite Church
35. Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite Church
36. Morden Mennonite Church
37. Pembina Mennonite Fellowship (Morden-Winkler)
38. Seeds Church (Altona)
39. Springstein Mennonite Church

* denotes affiliate member