

**2024 Report Book  
Volume 67**

**MCM Gathering 2025**

# **Mennonite Church Manitoba**

**February 28 - March 1, 2025**

**Grace Mennonite Church, Steinbach, MB**

Edition date: February 12

# Grace Mennonite Church, Steinbach

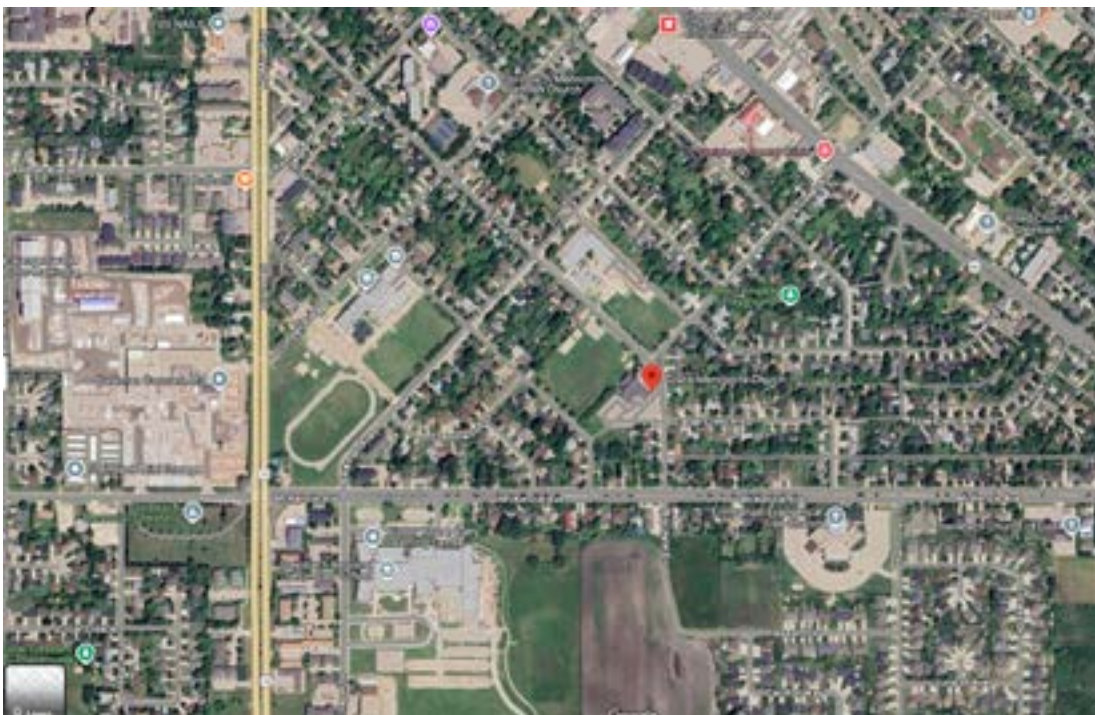
Our church was established in 1961 after a dozen or so families from a number of other denominations and congregations in Steinbach had met for over a year to discuss concerns regarding some of the theology and practices of their respective churches. There were a variety of issues including adapting to advances in technology, moving to the English language from German, concerns about church discipline practices, drifting away from fundamental Mennonite tenets of peace and justice in favour of more 'evangelical' practices, broader acceptance of post-secondary education and music considerations that all played a part in pursuing this option. Many saw this church start as a 'refuge' that brought them back into the church.

Reduced judgmentalism and discipling, increased emphasis on peace, love, forgiveness, social justice and inclusiveness, the most central of Christ's teachings was captured in the name, Grace Mennonite, chosen for this new congregation. Many today continue to be drawn by these faith tenets and express appreciation for the ability to express doubts or questions without feeling judged or excluded.

Starting with the original 35 charter members, Grace currently has over 250 members plus many others who consider us their home congregation. We have many children and young families as well as a significant senior population. We have recently completed a year-long discernment process after the retirement of our last long term pastor, Mel Letkeman. Kathy Koop has been our interim pastor and will continue in that position until this spring. Our search committee is beginning their work to find a new co-pastor to work alongside Kyle Penner who has been with us for the past fourteen years.

## Map

Grace Mennonite Church  
430 Third St. Steinbach, 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 those who are representing MCM during 2025: Danika Gingerich (Warkentin) as she represents MCM at the Mennonite World Conference Global Youth Summit in Schwabisch-Gmund, Germany, May 30-June 1; and our regional church delegates at our Mennonite Church Canada Gathering in Waterloo, Ontario, July 2-5. Please give generously!

## Gathering Video

Only the Friday evening worship from Gathering 2025 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](http://www.mennochurch.mb.ca/contact)

## Guiding Statement from the MCM Board

As we come together in this shared space for Gathering 2025, we seek to be guided by the following statement from the MCM Board (see [www.mennochurch.mb.ca/creatingspace](http://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."

# Table of Contents

- 77th Annual Gathering Program . . . . . 5
- Foreword . . . . . 6
- Vision and Mission Statement . . . . . 7
- From the Moderator . . . . . 8
- Executive Minister's Report . . . . . 10
  
- Camps with Meaning**
- Director of Camps with Meaning Report. . . . . 11
- Camp Koinonia . . . . . 13
- Summer Camping Ministry . . . . . 14
- Leadership Ministries**
- Co-Director of Leadership Ministries Report . . . . . 16
- Funds . . . . . 18
- Congregational Ministries**
- Congregational Ministries Report . . . . . 19
- Faith and Life Choirs . . . . . 20
- Circle of God's People . . . . . 21
- Mission Ministries** . . . . . 22
- Working Groups**
- Palestine-Israel Network . . . . . 24
- Manitoba Mennonite Coalition for Indigenous Solidarity . . . . . 26
- Climate Action Working Group . . . . . 27
  
- Minutes**
- MCM Annual Gathering, March 2023 . . . . . 28
  
- MCM Representatives to Related Organizations** . . . . . 32
- Committees** . . . . . 34
- Nominations Slate** . . . . . 35
  
- Our Nationwide Ministry** . . . . . 36
- Mennonite Church Canada . . . . . 37
- Mennonite Church British Columbia . . . . . 42
- Mennonite Church Alberta . . . . . 43
- Mennonite Church Saskatchewan . . . . . 44
- Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. . . . . 45
  
- Related Organization Reports**
- Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. . . . . 46
- Canadian Mennonite . . . . . 47
- Canadian Mennonite University . . . . . 48
- Eden Health Care Services . . . . . 49
- Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Assoc.. . . . . 51
- Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba . . . . . 52
- Mennonite Collegiate Institute. . . . . 54
- Mennonite Disaster Service . . . . . 56
- Manitoba Multifaith Council . . . . . 57
- Westgate Mennonite Collegiate . . . . . 58
  
- Listing of MCM Staff/Board of Directors** . . . . . 59
- MCM Staff Photo Directory.** . . . . . 60
- MCM Board Photo Directory** . . . . . 62
- The Clusters of MCM.** . . . . . 63

# 78th Annual Gathering Program

## **Friday, February 28**

9:30 am: Leadership Day with John D. Roth (at Steinbach Mennonite Church)

6:30 pm: Registration

7:00 pm: Worship Service: celebrating 500 years of Anabaptism

## **Saturday, March 1**

8:30 am: Registration

9:00 am: Plenary Session: opening worship, John D. Roth, table discussion

10:30 am: Break

11:00 am: Plenary Session: financial report, program reports

12:15 pm: Lunch

1:30 pm: Plenary Session: greetings, nominations, prayer

2:00 pm: Breakout Sessions

3:00 pm: Plenary Session: closing worship, commission for ministry

# Foreword

Welcome to the Mennonite Church Manitoba report book, looking back at 2024. 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 2025, 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 and 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 Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach for hosting Gathering 2025. It will be wonderful to worship together on the Friday evening (February 28) as a community of congregations, celebrating 500 years of Anabaptism together, and then to discern and be inspired together on the Saturday (March 1) as delegates and guests. We are looking forward to having John D. Roth join us as our guest speaker. John serves as the Anabaptism at 500 project director for MennoMedia. He brings years of experience as a scholar of historical and global Anabaptism to help us reflect together on what it means for us as an Anabaptist-Mennonite church to be centred on Jesus.

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 2025, as we explore what it means for us to be a Jesus-centred church, both as congregations and as a regional church. May we continue “looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith” (Hebrews 12:1-2)!



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 on the cover of my Moderator binder filled with lists and notes and minutes 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!”

In the past year I have often returned to our theme of last year’s Gathering, “The Intercultural Church”, revisited the message of our keynote speaker Fanoise Legesse, and sat with the challenge of reimagining a Mennonite church that looks very different than the one my grandparents worshipped in when they first came to Canada in the 1950s. It is a church that looks different because we have not only made space for the differences, we have also intentionally nurtured them. And so, it’s a church that looks and sounds and lives in new ways because we have intentionally nurtured relationships with folks who have grown up in different kinds of churches or no church at all. We have nurtured relationships with folks who learned to worship God in different ways than we did. And so now we have more beautiful and inspiring ways of worshipping God. We have nurtured relationships and made space next to us in the pew for folks who look different & dress differently than we do, who eat different kinds of foods than we do and call them comfort & cultural foods, who have completely unfamiliar last names that we have to practice to get right. And in nurturing these relationships we have discovered a shared love for God, a common desire to be Jesus followers, and we all want to embrace an Anabaptist theology. What a time to be the Mennonite Church!

For the past two years, we as an MCM Board have moved our meetings around the province a little in order to spend time listening to you share about your congregations, and all that you hope for and worry about, as you consider what it means to be a Mennonite Church in your community, and ponder the future of your congregation and the church in general. In 2024, we spent an evening in North Kildonan in the springtime and in Winkler in the fall. Both evenings were rich for the conversation and for their learning. Hopefully these also nurtured relationships. My deepest appreciation to all those who came out on those evenings and shared so vulnerably and candidly about life in their church, in the community, and the impact of MCM in those spaces.

This spring saw the launch of the camp “Light the Fire” fundraising campaign. A campaign filled with hope and aspirations for what the camp could become, and some hard truths about where the camp is and what it needs today. This fall, we as a board created a short term task force to look at opportunities for generating long term, sustainable revenue for the camp. We are hopeful that good options will emerge from this task force that work in harmony with the great work being done by the Light the Fire committee.

Late in the spring we also embarked on a two year visioning process, Hope & Courage. Folks have been, and continue to be, invited to participate in focus groups and complete one of two surveys (long form or short form). The survey results and the focus group discussions have in some ways confirmed what we think, know, hope, feel, and wonder about the church. They have also sparked incredible conversations of deep longing and rooted hope for the future of the church and MCM. Please consider completing a survey and/or participating in a focus group if you have not already done so. The surveys and focus groups will continue through the first half of 2025, and then the board will get to work distilling all that has been shared and learned. We look forward to sharing a “what’s next” report at our Gathering.



As always, as a board there are finances with which to contend. For much of the 2024 calendar, it looked like we were tracking close to what was anticipated and planned with regards to both revenue and expenses. Late in the year, it became clear that while expenses continued to track as anticipated, church donations were not. A couple of our churches experienced some real challenges this year, financial and otherwise, and were simply not able to contribute to MCM in ways that were historically normative for them. There was also the unexpectedly small government grant to camps this summer that had a significant impact on our overall financial picture. And in the end, thanks to individual donations and last minute church donations coming out of their own surplus' we are pleased to end up with a much smaller deficit than anticipated late in the fall. Again, my deep appreciation for all who were able to give and to give a little extra when the call came. As a board we are hopeful in our presentation of a balanced budget for 2025.

And, today, we are here. And we are called to be the church. 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 "Here in this place" come to mind:

*Gather us in, our spirits in-flame.*

*Call to us now, and we shall awaken*

*We shall arise at the sound of our name...*

*(AND) Give us the courage to enter the song. AMEN*

Cheryl  
Braun  
*Moderator*



# Executive Minister's Report

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-2)*

Typically expressed using 1 Corinthians 3:11—“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ”—this text from Hebrews 12 emphasizes the centrality of Jesus at the heart of Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and life. We are “looking to Jesus”—not to anything or anyone else—as “the pioneer and perfecter of faith.” While the great “cloud of witnesses” who have gone before us over the past 500 years of Anabaptism can inspire us with their faith, it is Jesus who is our ultimate exemplar.

We see this Jesus-centredness among us as congregations in many ways. Every week we as MCM staff hear stories of congregations and individuals “looking to Jesus” as they worship, learn, fellowship, and serve together. The reports that follow offer a summary of the work we have done on your behalf as staff, supporting your ministries and facilitating our shared ministries as a regional church.

I continue to enjoy the work among you to which God has called me. Visiting congregations is always a highlight for me, sharing what God is doing among us as a regional and nationwide church. I also appreciate opportunities to engage with congregational leadership behind the scenes, from helping out with constitutional reviews to improving congregational health. A significant part of my work this past fall has been focused on Hope and Courage, our two-year visioning process as a regional church. I have enjoyed meeting with focus groups of all kinds, reflecting on the good things happening among us, the challenges we face, and our imaginings for the future of the church.

As a regional church, we continue to experience the effects of the “unsettling and resettling” that is going on as conferences, congregations, and pastors shift affiliations in light of wider political, social, and theological realities. We rejoice that River East Church joined our community as an affiliate member at our 2024 Gathering. As they engage in the process of discernment regarding their participation among us as full members, we are grateful for the ways they have already enriched our community of congregations.

One congregation among us has experienced more than its share of challenges. We are grateful to God for the faithful perseverance of its remaining members and we anticipate a bright future for the congregation. However, these challenges have created difficulties beyond the congregation for us as a regional church, as this congregation has historically been one of our most generous churches in forwarding funds to MCM. Nevertheless, we give thanks to God that we saw a late surge both in congregational forwarding of funds and in individual donations to our MCM ministries, including Camps with Meaning. I am humbled by your generosity toward our shared ministries!

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 shapes us into the image of Jesus as we fix our gaze on him. May we continue to strive to live into the call of Hebrews 12, looking to Jesus as we persevere in faithfulness together, casting aside all else that might distract us from this Jesus-centred faithfulness.



Michael  
Pahl  
*Executive Minister*

# Camps with Meaning

## 2024: A Year of Celebration and Growth for Camps with Meaning

2024 was an exciting and vibrant year for Camps with Meaning, full of energy, milestones, gathering as a community, and, of course, plenty of summer fun! In total, 520 campers enjoyed all kinds of activities, from lake days at Camp Assiniboia to out-trips at Camp Koinonia.



Musical gifts being shared at the 75th Anniversary

Beyond summer, our camps welcomed over 180 groups and nearly 8,500 people for school trips, church retreats, family events, and celebrations.

Other unforgettable highlights of 2024 included the launch of the Light the Fire capital campaign in April, a special 75th-anniversary weekend in July, and the Celebration Banquets – 75 Years of Song in the fall. These events brought Mennonite Church Manitoba together to celebrate God’s faithfulness and dream boldly about the future. Special thanks go to the Light the Fire Capital Campaign Team, the 75th Anniversary Planning Committee and Camps with Meaning’s Camp Committee for making these events happen.

With the launch of Light the Fire—which ensures the next 75 years of camping ministry—and the incredible support of our donors, volunteers, and all those who came to camp and participated in our programs, we look back on 2024 with gratitude while also looking to the future with excitement.

## Building Sustainability: Rising to the Challenge Together

We are profoundly grateful for the generosity of our donors in 2024. Thanks to your support, we received approximately \$106,000 in general donations—\$31,000 above our budget goal! These contributions made a significant impact, enabling us to stay on budget despite a \$22,000 reduction in funding from Manitoba’s Green Team Program compared to the previous year.

Your gifts also supported our programs, operations, summer staff, and campership fund, ensuring that Camps with Meaning can continue to offer meaningful experiences to all who come throughout the year.

The reduction in funding from Manitoba’s Green Team has highlighted the need for Camps with Meaning to secure additional revenue sources. This need stems not only from the uncertainty of grant funding in general, but from the ongoing challenges of maintaining aging facilities, and a significant rise in inflation over the last three years.

While our development plans focus on long-term solutions—such as upgrading our infrastructure and generating additional revenue through the new retreat centre—we must also address these immediate challenges. As such, in 2024, we increased our rental and food rates,



Light the Fire Launch hosts Kyle Penner and Kathy Giesbrecht

and we are working on additional measures to increase revenue in 2025.

**A Year of Excitement and Progress for the Light the Fire Capital Campaign** – Krista Neustaedter Barg (Campaign Chair), Dorothy Fontaine

What an exciting year it has been for Camps with Meaning and the Light the Fire Capital Campaign Team! The year began with a memorable launch celebration at Alloway Hall in the Manitoba Museum this past April. Over 400 people from Winnipeg to Altona, Boissevain to Beausejour gathered to connect, enjoy good music, and learn more about the future of camp. This event honored 75 years of camping ministry while casting a strong vision for its future.

Our campaign focuses on sustaining and expanding our ministry through key initiatives. These include enhancing



Light the Fire Launch Musical Finale

current programs, launching a young adult leadership program, creating retreat opportunities for MCM churches and other faith-based groups, providing spaces for special events such as weddings, supporting MMIWG2S families through dedicated spaces, and upgrading facilities at Camp Assiniboia and Camp Koinonia.

This year, the work of the Light the Fire committee has focused on spreading the vision through conversations, church visits, and initial meetings with donors. We have also been organizing records of past staff, volunteers, and supporters. With this updated information, we are eager to continue inviting individuals, congregations, families, and businesses to partner with us by pledging their support over the next few years. Our goal is to get 3,000 people on board. We're also excited to collaborate with



Light the Fire Launch Special Guest - Steve Bell

knowledgeable folks in the construction industry to help divide the big projects into phases, allowing us to better track and report our progress.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are happy to announce two upcoming events: a two-day gathering at Camp Koinonia from May 31 to June 1, and a full day event at Camp Assiniboia June 14th. We hope you will join us and bring friends along! Growing our circle of support and sharing our dreams are key to our success. Together, we can continue to offer radical hospitality and build a legacy of love in Manitoba.

Thanks to your incredible support, the Light the Fire Campaign has received over \$400,000 in donations and pledges so far. Your generosity is lighting the way for an exciting future for Camps with Meaning. Thank you for being part of this journey! We look forward to sharing more about our campaign phases and development plans in 2025.

Pledge now at [LighttheFire.ca](https://LighttheFire.ca)



Dorothy Fontaine  
*Director of Camps  
with Meaning*

# Camp Koinonia

---

Greetings from Camp Koinonia Board and Staff,

As we reflect on the past year and look towards a new year we are filled with gratitude. The 2024 year was filled with transition, which creates a natural time of reflection and dreaming.

There are some new faces in the Camp Koinonia world, as well as familiar faces wearing new hats. Our thanks go out to Evan Laramee, who for the past 4 years has been living on-site, hosting rental groups and maintaining the property, buildings, and equipment. Thank you to Meara Harrison who completed her role as Guest Group Coordinator. We are lucky to have Meara continue as the newest member of the CK Inc. Board. Finally, we have Matt Heide! Yes he gets an exclamation mark. Matt has held various roles, and been officially, intimately, and crucially involved over the last 21 years. While he willingly answers his phone to dole out asked for advice, in June he joined Evan and Meara in passing on the Camp Koinonia management. We extend our heartfelt thanks to him and much gratitude. Filling all these vacant shoes are Elisa and Paul Barkman, along with their 4 children (Caleb, Joanna, Abigail, and Dawn).

As a result of having new managers on site, Manitoba Camping Association (MCA) requires Camp Koinonia to go through an accreditation process. This involves representatives from MCA going over our policies, procedures, and camping facility with a fine tooth comb. Suggesting minor alterations to a few items, it is good to have their outside opinion and advice to keep us within best practices as a camping organization.

A large part of the mission of the Camp Koinonia board and staff is to ensure that Camp Koinonia exists 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 the faith, energy and love for 7 weeks of camp at Camp Koinonia in 2024.

Outside of summer camp, rental groups of many stripes appreciated all Camp Koinonia has to offer - whether that be basking outdoors in God's great creation or cozied up by the fire with friends and family. Rental income in 2024 increased markedly relative to our previous fiscal year.

Thank you to all the many people who have supported this camping ministry in so many ways. Whether that be with pocketbooks, hours spent in the kitchen, splitting firewood or prayer. This place is what it is as a result of the people that surround it.

For more Camp Koinonia information, please check out our website at [www.campkoino.ca](http://www.campkoino.ca), book a night in the mini lodge and come check it out for yourself, or bring the whole family or church community and fill the main lodge with laughter and good memories.

Prepared by Paul and Elisa Barkman on behalf of the board:

Jan McIntyre (Chair), Ben Heide (Treasurer), Sheldon Dyck, Meara Harrison, Ron Toews

# Summer Program Report

## Bible Curriculum and Theme Song

Our Bible curriculum for this year was God's Community and was written by Ellis Hamm – educator and outdoor lover, who currently works for A Rocha. Guided by Romans 12:4-5, the curriculum gave space for campers and staff to explore their God-given gifts and how they can



share these in community. The new camp song for this year, written by camp staff with the help of Darryl Neustaedter-Barg, followed the Romans scripture to flesh out the question: what does it mean to belong to each other?

Throughout each week, campers engaged with different gifts: creativity, bravery/courage, focus/attention, empathy and then digging into their own gifts. Alongside activities which explored these gifts in action, campers heard stories of Jesus displaying these gifts as well as modern day examples from Holy Troublemakers and Unconventional Saints. written by Daneen Akers.

2025's Bible theme is Knowing God and Growing in Faith. It will be written/revised by Marnie Klassen, with help from Kathy Giesbrecht, Jonathan Neufeld, Irma Fast-Dueck and Grace Siemens.

## Spring and Summer Programing

This summer felt almost "normal" again. With 82 summer staff and 67 volunteers, we were bustling! Our Adults with Disabilities Venture program was more popular than every, with completely full weeks at Assiniboia, including waitlists. This continues to be a strong and beautiful part of our ministry at Camps with Meaning.

In kids' camp, our Junior-Intermediate week with day camp combination at Camp Assiniboia was full of energy, with 84 campers one week and 69 the other. The same age group at Koinonia had 32 campers (up from last year), and our youth week at Koinonia was capped full at 37! Our junior high week saw the lowest numbers, though if current registration is any indication, that will be different for summer 2025. While our kids' camp registrations were slightly down, our ADV registrations were up.

Campers enjoyed the lake at Camp Assiniboia, as well as the new shelter in the garden to shade from days of extreme heat. Koinonia activities ran as usual, with the out trip for junior high campers and a beautiful youth week to end the summer – Kennedy Froese was out guest speaker for youth week. Elisa and Paul joined the summer fun as resident managers and added significant support to the program and staff.

## Retreats

Close to 40 birders braved a huge dump of snow and made it out to Koinonia for the CwM Birding Retreat. I gathered five friends, and we met them there to provide food for the weekend. While the snow was unfamiliar for May 23-26th, everyone was in great spirits and got some shoots photographs as well!

In November, around 40 summer staff signed up for the Fall Retreat at Camp Assiniboia. We worshipped, dreamed about summer together with new ideas and feedback from last year, and we explore what it means to be creative and for our innate creativity to come from God.



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 to share the beauty of each our camps – held by forest and water.



### Staff and Volunteers

Our Leadership Team began with a week of training on May 6. This team of fourteen young adults gathered for a week of sitting, learning, laughing, playing and reflecting. We sat in sessions, participated in team building exercises, ate together, heard from guest speakers, and enjoyed the

sites of both Assiniboia and Koinonia, ending our week with some camping in Spruce Woods Provincial Park. 2024 gave us 82 staff total, including the 14 leadership, 15 young teens in our teen volunteer program and 20 in our servant leader in training program, and the remaining 33 staff working as junior and senior counsellors, as well as activity leaders.

Our volunteers were up again, from 60 to 69. These lovely people 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. We are so grateful for their participation in our program – yay!



Nadya Langelotz  
*Assoc. Summer Program  
Director*

## The following were the 2024 Leadership Staff:

### Assiniboia

Summer Program Directors: Alayna Smith and Ava Campbell-Enns  
Bible Instructor: Lia Campbell-Enns  
Nature Instructor: Trinity Blair  
Farm Coordinator: Caleb Samson

### Koinonia

Summer Program Directors: Miriam Huebner and Kathryn Derksen  
Nature Instructor: Cheyenne Keeper  
Bible Instructor: Caleb Friesen-Epp

**Inclusion Coordinators:** Carlynn Davidson and Matthew Fullerton

**SLT Directors:** Aubrey Epp and Grace Siemens

**TV Director:** Olivia Pries-Mallett

# Leadership Ministries

MCM's Leadership Ministries program and staff work with spiritual leaders and congregations 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.

In 2024, the trend of significant transitions in the MCM pastoral offices continued. As you can see from the table below, there were 14 pastoral placements in the past year involving nine of our congregations. Unique among these is the arrival of the three pastors from River East Church. Following the congregation receiving affiliate-membership with MCM in March, Mary Anne Isaak, Aaron Thiessen, and Julie Doerksen regularly joined our cluster meetings, consultation groups, and other resourcing days. It has been a gift to have them as part of our group of ministers.

As we continue to see a significant turnover in the makeup of our pastors and spiritual leaders, it has been helpful to have a variety of programs and resources available at both the regional and nation-wide church level to use. Onboarding a new pastor involves such things as one-on-one interactions between pastors and us to familiarize ourselves with one another, assigning them a pastor mentor, credentialing, and participating in cluster groups.

This past year, two of our new pastors enrolled in MC Canada's Transition into Ministry (TiM) program. Emma Siemens (NKMC) and Selenna Wolfe (Hope) enrolled in the TiM program. This program seeks to lay the foundation for long, healthy, and thriving ministry by equipping and supporting pastors as they learn and grow as ministry persons. TiM is built around three elements: core training modules, coaching sessions, and mentoring by an experienced pastor. As a program of the nation-wide church, not only does this resource and equip our pastors as they minister to MCM congregations, it also builds relationships between pastors across Canada that will strengthen the connections between congregations throughout MC Canada.

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. Of significance in this work over the past year was the creation of the Guiding Ministerial Leadership in the Church policy. The GMLC is significant in that it establishes a new, and more robust, clergy code of conduct and ethical practice, and protocols in responding to complaints of clergy misconduct.

The MLC is our advisory group who we meet with to discuss the work of our office related to the 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 Laverne Siemens (January-March, Gretna Bergthaler), Marla Langelotz (Sargent), Julia Thiessen (Charleswood), Lynell Bergen (Hope), Liz Brasier (March-December, Pinawa), Virginia Gerbrandt-Richert (March-December, Altona Bergthaler), and Dan Epp-Tiessen (March-December, Home St.).

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 Marlene Krueger Wiebe, Kara Friesen, and Jonathan Muehling all received funds for pastoral ministry training.

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





**MCM PASTORAL PLACEMENTS**

<b>(Congregation)</b>	<b>(Name)</b>	<b>(Position)</b>	<b>(Start Date)</b>
Grace, Steinbach	Kathy Koop	Interim Pastor	January 2
Steinbach Mennonite	Paul Dueck	Associate Pastor, Worship	January 7
North Kildonan	Emma Siemens	Faith Development Pastor	January 14
River East Church	Mary Anne Isaak	Pastor	March 2
River East Church	Aaron Thiessen	Pastor for Youth and Young Adults	March 2
River East Church	Julie Doerksen	Worship and Children's Min.	March 2
Prairie	John Klassen	Interim Pastor	June 1
Douglas	Paul Walker	Intentional Interim Pastor	August 6
Bethel	Amelia Warkentin	Interim Associate Pastor	August 15
Steinbach Mennonite	Rick Neufeld	Intentional Interim Pastor	September 1
North Kildonan	Ken Warkentin	Lead Pastor	September 8
First Mennonite	Karissa Durant	Associate Minister	October 18
FGMF	Anne Whitford Fast	Lay Minister	October 6
FGMF	Dieter Schonwetter	Lay Minister	October 6

**CONCLUDING ASSIGNMENTS**

<b>(Congregation)</b>	<b>(Name)</b>	<b>(Position)</b>	<b>(End Date)</b>
North Kildonan	Marvin Thiessen	Lead Pastor	June 30
Steinbach Mennonite	Michelle Stoesz	Associate Pastor	June 30
Steinbach Mennonite	Paul Dueck	Associate Pastor, Worship	June 30
Prairie	John Klassen	Interim Pastor	October 31
Douglas	Kara Friesen	Interim Associate Pastor	November 5
Seeds	Theodore Enns-Dyck	Co-Pastor	December 31
Seeds	Darlene Enns-Dyck	Co-Pastor	December 31
North Kildonan	Elizabeth Wipf	Faith Development Pastor	December 31

**CREDENTIALING ACTIVITY**

<b>(Congregation)</b>	<b>(Name)</b>	<b>(Credential)</b>	<b>(Service Date)</b>
Aberdeen Mennonite	Teresa Enns-Zehr	Ordination	May 5
Jubilee Mennonite	Janessa Naylor-Giesbrecht	Licensing Towards Ordination	November 17

## 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 2025, 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 2025, 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, 2025 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, 2025, will be considered.

# Congregational Ministries

2024 saw some significant changes in our congregational ministries program area.

In 2021 the MCM Board approved a two-year special focus on congregational health for 2022-23. This was in part what led to Kathy Giesbrecht shifting her role from Associate Director of Leadership Ministries to Director of Congregational Ministries. Kathy poured herself into the role, drawing on her years of experience working across age groups in worship, faith formation, and congregational care. Out of this two-year focus, alongside the work of the newly formed Congregational Health Committee, the Congregational Check-ups program was initiated and the MCM Mondays, an annual series of resourcing events for congregations, was begun.

This two-year special focus on congregational health concluded at the end of 2023, and it was soon after, at the end of April 2024, that Kathy Giesbrecht retired. Nevertheless, the legacy of Kathy's work lives on. The Congregational Health Committee has been re-jigged to provide a more general advisory role regarding congregational health within MCM. The Congregational Check-ups program continues, and congregations are encouraged to check out the Congregational Ministries web page to see if that program is something they would like to participate in ([www.mennochurch.mb.ca/congregational](http://www.mennochurch.mb.ca/congregational)). The MCM Mondays program continues to provide resourcing in a series of online events between January and March each year. Responsibility for these Congregational Ministries efforts is overseen by me, but shared among staff.

We are grateful to God for Kathy's investment in the life of the church in so many ways, but in particular in ways that have contributed to the greater health and vitality of our congregations. I am also grateful to the Congregational Health Committee for their work on behalf of our community of congregations: Lisa Enns (Charleswood), Dori Zerbe Cornelson (Hope), Mark Tiessen Dyck (Altona Bergthaler), and Andrew Wiens (Nordheim).

Our prayer for our congregations is that we will "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love" (Ephesians 4:15-16).



Michael  
Pahl  
*Executive Minister*

# Faith and Life Choirs

---



Faith and Life Male Choir - photo spring 2023

Conductor: Paul Dueck Pianist: Loren Hiebert



Faith and Life Women's Chorus - photo spring 2023

Conductor: Janet Brenneman Pianist: Anna Schwartz

The mission of the MCM Faith and Life Choirs is to participate in the mission of the wider Church, and specifically that of Mennonite Church Manitoba, by leading others into worship of God through music.

The Male Choir consist of 35 members from various MCM churches. In spring, Ben Pauls concluded his time conducting this choir and Paul Dueck took on this role beginning in fall. Thank you to Ben for his ministry in this way! The male choir continues to benefit from the gifts of Loren Hiebert as pianist.

The Women's Chorus consist of 45 members representing numerous MCM congregations and those outside MCM, led by the guidance of conductor Janet Brenneman and the talents of Anna Schwartz as pianist.

Thanks to generous donors, most of the Faith and Life Choir expenses were covered for 2024. These include honorariums for conductors and pianists, purchasing and printing music, and renting facilities for rehearsals and

concerts. Because of this, the concerts in 2024 were able to be used as fundraisers for Camps with Meaning.

The choirs carried out their mission through various concerts and church visits in 2024:

Elim Mennonite Church (Grunthal)—March 2024 (Women's Chorus)

Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship (Winnipeg)—March 2024 (Male Choir)

Charleswood Mennonite Church (Winnipeg)—April 2024 (Women's Chorus)

Grace Mennonite Church (Steinbach)—April 2024 (Male Choir)

Arnaud Mennonite Church (Arnaud)—November 2024 (Women's Chorus)

Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite Church (Lowe Farm)—November 2024 (Male Choir)

Spring Concerts—May 2024 in Winnipeg and Morden  
Singin in the Grain—October 2024 in Winnipeg and Winkler (Male Choir)

Christmas Carol Sing—December 2024 in Winnipeg

# Circle of God's People Radio Program

---



Isaac Kuhl-Schlegel and Mackenzie Nicolle

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 Isaac Kuhl-Schlegel and Mackenzie Nicolle.

### **Broadcasting Times**

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

<b>Station</b>	<b>Location</b>
CFAM/950	Altona (accessible in Winnipeg)
CHSM/1250	Steinbach (accessible in Winnipeg)
CJRB/1229	Boissevain
Online	<a href="http://www.pembinavalleyonline.com/radio/cfam">www.pembinavalleyonline.com/radio/cfam</a>

# Mission Ministries

## Church Engagement

In 2024, I was able to visit 16 congregations including Nordheim, Matheson Is, St. Julian's Table, Pinawa, Elim, Emmanuel, Whitewater and Prairie Mennonite. Some congregations have now been visited twice. In addition to visits to congregations, I also spoke with seniors at Bethel Place and facilitated a panel discussion for the ReNew conference with help from One88, Seeds, and Springstein. Congregations have frequently requested the topic of Truth and Reconciliation and I have notice an increased interest in considering reparations with our Indigenous relatives.

A highlight of 2024 was the combined outdoor worship service with the Vietnamese and Hope Mennonite Churches. During sharing time, stories emerged of the Vietnamese arrival in 1979 and their traumatic refugee experience. In the connections made throughout the year, I learned that Lowe Farm Bergthaler members first hosted Pastors Hoa and Lan Chau as a young couple expecting their first baby.

Another quiet story was revealed in conversation with a member from Morden Mennonite who hosts the Pembina Manitou Archives, preserving stories of intersection between settler and First Nations people.

Preparations for Activ8: young adult experience continue with Peace and Justice Initiatives c/o Kim and Jamie Arpin-Ricci hoping to host a young adult cohort for fall 2025. We pray this program will build connections for young adults living in remote parts of Manitoba. [Registration for Activ8 can be found here.](#)

Looking briefly at financial numbers for 2024, let us notice how MCM's mission is reflected in our financial giving. Through the Mennonite Coalition for Indigenous Solidarity (MCIS), we were able to raise \$5029 for the Secret Treaty Project with additional donations of \$3050. These funds allowed us to contribute to our partners at Search the Landfill, Indian Springs School in Swan Lake FN, Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery in the US, and to pay off publishing costs of The Secret Treaty comic. Sterling and Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship worked together to raise money for Cross Lake by hosting a silent art action and music evening. At least \$3000 were raised and went directly to the Cross Lake program. 5 MCM congregations contributed \$26,504 towards 3 International Witness Partners including Myanmar, Thailand, and South Korea. This amount is

down significantly from 2023 where 8 congregations gave \$57,985 to six IW partners.

## International Witness (IW)

IW Sunday was celebrated at the end of October with the publishing of a Giving Cookbook and an invitation to participate in the Banquet feast with tastes from all over the world including Fried Plantains from Burkina Faso & D.R. Congo, Ethiopian Stewed Chicken and Stir-fried Sweet Potato Noodles from South Korea. God invites us to a feast of rich food and well-matured wines. Death will be swallowed up for all people and tears will be wiped away. We rejoice together for the ways the Spirit of God continues to move through God's people in our global community. For congregations connected to International Support Networks, we are able to stay up to date on global activities through newsletters and zoom calls. We learned that the Filipino program completed the Malipayon Peace Hub building project in June! Bo Ki Kim and Sook Kyoung in S Korea are enjoying the new partnership with liaison workers Scott Kim and Cheryl Woelk. We are excited to anticipate a visit to Canada from the S Korea Mennonite Church in 2025.

Supporters of Hongtao in China and the Poovongs in Thailand were blessed with in-person visits in 2024. NK and Vietnamese churches took the lead in hosting a potluck for our Thailand guests. Elim and Sargent held potlucks and programs where we learned that Pastors Khamphen and Thippawan have been in ministry for 40 years. Their partnership with Tom and Christine Poovong over 10 years has established the Friends of Grace network with 56 small congregations. At least 20 volunteer alumni who taught English in China gathered with Hongtao to hear updates. Covenant Church hosted a breakfast for China guests and we learned Covenant has supported ministry in China for over 30 years. Many thanks for all the support received from MCM congregations.

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

In our MCIS report, we highlight The Secret Treaty project and formation of subgroups. Congregations Doing Repair is one of the subgroups that is meeting and involves at least 11 congregations in discussing how their congregations are working at reparations. At least 3 congregations are giving away 1% of their annual budget to Indigenous-

led organizations. As we learn together, folks are sharing resources on land acknowledgements and mission statements, film and book ideas. Manitoba congregations joined in the offerings organized by MC Canada's Climate Action and Indigenous Relations including a 5-week book study of *So we and our Children may live* with authors Sarah Augustine and Sheri Hostetler.

Additionally, our congregations have been active in building relationships. The Cross Lake team organized a fundraiser at FGMF with support from artist Eric Friesen and woodworker Henry Neufeld. Two Altona churches (AMC and ABC) joined forces to partner with the Matheson Is community to reconvene their summer church camp for kids. Grace Mennonite flew over 30 volunteers to Pauingassi for another week of engagement and activity. MC Canada held a joint conversation between Indigenous Relations and Climate Action regional leaders in Pinawa in October.

Here the group noticed the clear intersections of our work and imagined more ways to equip and support regional groups. Together with Jonathan Neufeld, we were invited to participate in mtgs with Native Mennonite Ministries, a remnant of our bi-national past. We traveled with Neill and Edith VonGunten, and Norman Mead to Billings Montana and met with the remaining 3 Cheyenne congregations still part of MC USA. Renewed connections were made however the future of these bi-national gatherings is unknown.



Dave Scott from Swan Lake FN shares oral history account under Cottonwood Tree at Dead Horse Creek (Sept '24)



Melanie Neufeld  
*Dir. of  
Mission Engagement*

# Working Groups

## Palestine-Israel Network

---

The Mennonite Church Manitoba Palestine-Israel Network (MCMPIN) remains a part of the larger Mennonite Church Canada Palestine-Israel Network (MC Canada PIN) which came together after the July 2016 MC Canada assembly passed its resolution on Palestine and Israel.

This report covers the 15 months of Israel's genocidal war bookended by the attacks of Oct. 7th 2023, and the shaky ceasefire ratified on Jan 19th of this year. The situation in the West Bank including East Jerusalem continues to deteriorate. The practice of ethnic cleansing, economic destabilization and shutdown, restricted movement and massive settlement and road construction throughout the precarious ecology of Palestinian farmland, olive groves and ancient villages continues unabated. Those of us from MCMPIN who traveled on a solidarity pilgrimage to Palestine in November witnessed clearly the groans and cries of a people living under siege and fear. Yet there remains the steadfast (samud) commitment to hope- As Samia Khoury, 91 year old hero of the faith and one of the founders of Sabeel told us, "We have to hope, it is all we have left."



Mennonite  
Church Manitoba  
Palestine-Israel  
Network

A report to you, the family of Christ, necessitates a quick overview of Gaza as deliberately crafted wasteland. In December, Amnesty International released a document stating, "sufficient basis to conclude that Israel has committed and is continuing to commit genocide against Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip." <https://amnesty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Amnesty-International-Gaza-Genocide-Report-December-4-2024.pdf>

Reports from the United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories, Francesca Albanese, confirm Amnesty's assertions. <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/279/68/pdf/n2427968.pdf>

The work of MCMPIN this past year has been multi-focal.

- A monthly Mennonite Church Canada PIN **Update Newsletter** <https://www.mennonitechurch.ca/>

[pin](#) sent to email subscribers offered key points in the unfolding war on Gaza as well as the impact on the West Bank and Palestinians and Israelis in Israel. Voices of Palestinian and Jewish Israeli peace advocates were highlighted. These updates included calls to action – letter writing, petitions and acts of solidarity, public events upcoming, guides for prayer and ways to contribute toward supporting relief in Gaza. Currently there are over 400 people on the contact list from across Canada

- **Mennonite Action** – a newly formed Mennonite group out of the USA with reach into Canada came alongside MCMPIN as we joined the global Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage action. 150 cities around the world embarked in prayer walks marking the length of the Gaza Strip, on a day in March. 130 people in Winnipeg participated in part, or all of the 42 km walk.  
The call was for:
  - an enduring and sustainable ceasefire
  - prompt delivery of aid into Gaza
  - release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas
  - an end to the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories by Israel
- **Advocacy letter writing** and bi-partisan visits with political leaders both provincial and federal;
  - Ongoing coalition work critiquing the development of a provincial curriculum for Holocaust education written by Kelly Hiebert. Concerns related to the curriculum being rooted in the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism which disallows/discourages criticism of the State of Israel.
  - Monitoring along with other justice organizations the use of the IHRA to silence Palestinian voices within the province.
- **Public Action and Protest**
  - Supporting numerous **public education** events (Canadian Palestinian Association of Manitoba (CPAM), Independent Jewish Voices (IJV), Peace Alliance, United Church, MCMPIN, and



- others...)
- **Church engagement** in 6+ churches covering topics on the current occupation and genocide of Palestine as well as the history of settler-colonialism within the region.
  - Comic Relief for Gaza (June) raised \$5000 for aid
  - **Weekly Saturday rally** attendance by at minimum 6 members of MCMPIN in solidarity with CPAM, IJV and other justice and anti-war groups calling for a ceasefire in Gaza;
  - **Vigils** were organized marking significant dates in the year,
    - ◁ May 15th Nakba Day – Prayer and Lament service at Home Street Mennonite.
    - ◁ Dec. 12th vigil and protest at Magellan Aerospace asking people to join in lament over violence and call for innovation that builds peace not war.
  - **Resources were created**,
    - ◁ To mark Oct. 7th If the War Goes On a lament resource, was made accessible on the MC Canada website.
    - ◁ An updated version of Bethlehem Then and Now was an offered option for Advent church reflections.
  - Support and promotion of two **CMU Explore Courses** offered by Dan Epp-Tiessen. How Did we Get from the Bible to the War in Gaza? (Feb – March 2024) and Coming to Terms with Christian Anti-Semitism (Oct – Nov)
  - MCMPIN is forging a relationship with a newly established Jewish led peace group in Manitoba – **Friends of Standing Together** (FoST). This group supports Israeli Jews and Palestinians living in Israel, working to free the hostages, call for a ceasefire in Gaza and end the occupation of Palestine. In Winnipeg, FoST is working to build bridges between Jews and Palestinians and allies to work toward a just and free Holy Land.
  - **Solidarity Pilgrimage to Palestine** by 4 MCMPIN members to stand with Palestinians, particularly Palestinian Christians in the face of horrific loss,

horror and fear. The tour organized by Sabeel Jerusalem included 40+ people active on justice for Palestine from Canada, the US and United Kingdom. It was a tour focused on our visible presence with those who are under siege, as well as an opportunity to hear and listen to Palestinians and Israelis as they live with hope and action into a just and equitable future. The prayer is to find opportunities to share what was heard and what was seen during this pilgrimage over this next year in churches and other spaces that provide this opportunity.

In conclusion, the challenge remains how we as the Mennonite Church in Manitoba respond to the call to seek justice and peace. Having witnessed this past year as those committed to Palestinian human rights, we pray for courage to live out the values of Jesus to free the captives, feed the hungry and clothe the naked, extend mercy to those most vulnerable, and speak the truth of God's love for all.

Amjad, a friend in Gaza who remains in contact with some of the MCMPIN members cries; *"I say it loudly and with all my strength. We in Gaza are a people who love life. Tell the world that there are a people who want to live and have the right to live in dignity. We have the right to play and see a future for our children, not to watch our children die. I hope the world sees what is happening in Gaza. We in Gaza want the war to end, for Israel to withdraw from Gaza and for all to live in peace."* Amjad Al -Mhalawi, Khan Younis, Gaza  
For more of Amjad's story - <https://paxchristi.net/amgads-journey-amidst-displacement-in-gaza/>

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

# Manitoba Mennonite Coalition for Indigenous Solidarity

MCIS members represent at least 9 MCM congregations. We are grateful for the founding members who traded places with new members in 2024. As a group, we want to honour the memory of two important Indigenous leaders who died in 2024: Grand Chief Cathy Merrick and Honorable Justice and Senator Murray Sinclair. Let us continue the collective work of Truth and Reconciliation as they worked so tirelessly to realize.

The Returning Wealth event with Sarah Augustine in 2023 gave MCIS momentum for 2024 as numerous sub-groups formed around particular interests. 2 events in Feb 2024 generated larger engagement of MCM/MCC constituents including a subgroup kick-off and the publishing of the Secret Treaty story in Canadian Mennonite. The formation of various **Subgroups** allowed various projects and campaigns to move us to action. Support for **Search the Landfill** helped deepen relationships with local Indigenous people as many gatherings were held by the sacred fire at Camp Morgan. Members kept the fire going while family members witnessed the trial of Jeremy Skibicki. The work of this group shifted with the announcement of the closing of sacred fire at Camp Morgan and the search of the Prairie Green Landfill began. We hope for resolution and closure for the grieving families and grateful for the courage of Morgan's Warriors who offer support and security on the streets of Winnipeg. Other subgroups include **Energy and Resource Extraction, Decolonizing our Institutions**, and understanding the **Global Impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery**.

Thanks to the efforts of member Jonathan Dyck who accompanied our friend David Scott of Swan Lake First Nation, we collaborated with Canadian Mennonite to publish his story. **The Secret Treaty** working group partnered with 3 southern Manitoba regional groups

including Truth and Action Working Group (TAWG), Steps Toward Reconciliation and Mennonite Heritage Village. These groups planned and hosted tours and book launches for their areas. A fourth book launch was hosted by Common Word at CMU. More than 300 people were engaged by these events and over 1000 books have been sold. Additionally individual congregations and local schools requested speakers and purchased the graphic comic book in bulk. MCIS hopes Mennonites view the work of reconciliation in a new way and are prompted to get involved in their local communities to continue to learn better ways to share the land.



The primary goal of MCIS is to resource and equip congregations to learn and act collectively. Our subgroup **Congregations Doing Repair** meets about 3x a year where representatives can hear what other congregations are doing. Charleswood Mennonite's Indigenous working group hosted the film **Singing Back the Buffalo** and invited other groups. Together we are learning what it means to pay reparations and repair the broken relationship with Indigenous neighbours.

We invite you to continue to explore how your congregation might get involved. Invite us to facilitate the Kairos Blanket Exercise, consider participating in activities for Orange Shirt Day, or march in May with others in support of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit people. Consider a book study or film night that might contribute to our ongoing learning together. Please be in touch if your congregation would like to explore ways to work towards reconciliation.

Like us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#)

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

# Climate Action Working Group

For CAWG, 2024 began with a continued focus on the movement calling national governments to collectively develop and implement a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (FFNPT). Leading up to the 2024 MCM Gathering, CAWG members visited seven churches to introduce and answer questions on this call for a FFNPT. We also facilitated a “MCM Mondays” session and led a workshop at the MCM Gathering about the FFNPT initiative. The resolution CAWG submitted to the MCM delegate body asking MCM to sign on to a letter from faith leaders calling for a FFNPT was passed. We are grateful for this support.

We also heard questions and concerns about the FFNPT and the related MCM resolution, both before and after the Gathering: Does this resolution distract us from more meaningful action? Does it make us feel like we did something, when possibly we have used it to avoid difficult changes to our consumptive lifestyles? How would a phase-out of fossil fuels work? How would we farm? How would we heat our homes? These are vital questions that CAWG is wrestling with, and we are grateful to have the MCM community alongside us.

The conversations about the FFNPT led us to consider the question “how then shall we live?” and helped us focus on two intertwined themes: more-with-less, and degrowth. *Living More-With-Less* by Doris Janzen Longacre, and *Less Is More* by Jason Hickel are books that have helped CAWG imagine a response to the environmental and social crises we are collectively inflicting on the Earth.

We carried these questions and themes into five other church visits across the province this year. They also became the focus of our third annual public event, “The Upside-Down Economics of Jesus: Household Action and Global Change.” Approximately 65 people braved the wintery November evening to join us in Altona for supper and an evening program with guest speakers, music, reflections, and Q&A. Speakers Karla Braun and Zach Rempel challenged us to reflect on Doris Janzen Longacre’s five life standards: 1) Do Justice; 2) Learn from the World Community; 3) Nurture People; 4) Cherish the Natural Order; and 5) Nonconform Freely.

Following the November public event, CAWG heard from many a desire for more conversation and learning on degrowth. We are currently working on a follow-up event focused on degrowth, to happen sometime before spring. Stay tuned for more details.

In September, Matthew represented CAWG at Waabanang: Navigating our Way to Free, Prior and Informed Consent, hosted by Camp Morningstar. These leaders from Hollow Water First Nation have led prayerful resistance to the extraction of silica sand from their community. Despite their efforts to alert people and governments of the destructive impacts of a silica sand mine in their community, in February the provincial government granted an environmental licence to Canadian Premium Sand to extract and process the sand. Camp Morningstar hosted the conference to share their experiences with other First Nations and supporters in hopes to prepare communities on how to respond when mining companies show up with proposals for “green” extraction projects.



In October, CAWG co-chairs Matthew and Marta participated in a retreat for leaders of Mennonite Church Canada regional working groups on climate and Indigenous-Settler relations. It was a gift to gather and worship together, share food, learn from and be encouraged by one another, and consider how we might deepen our participation in the life and work of the church.

Perhaps above all, the highlight of the year for CAWG has been getting to know many of you through church visits and further leaning into relationship and trust as a working group. Consistently, we name church visits as the most rewarding part of our work! As a working group, we are grateful to find encouragement and even joy in being together as we continue to work to ignite the imagination of MCM congregations in generating personally and societally transformative actions in response to the climate crisis.

Submitted on behalf of CAWG by Marta Bunnett Wiebe and Matthew Wiens (co-chairs)

#### CAWG Members:

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

# 77th Annual Gathering | March 2, 2024

## Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Winkler

1. **Welcome:** Cheryl Braun, Moderator, welcomed all, called the meeting to order at 9:07am, and opened with a land acknowledgement.
2. **Gathering music and prayer:** Corey Hildebrand gave a welcome on behalf of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, sharing about the history of the congregation and concluded in prayer. Music led by Darryl Neustaedter Barg.
3. **Keynote address:** Cheryl introduced Fanosie Legesse, Intercultural Minister for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Fanosie empowered those present to shift their mindset of what it means to be the 'church of all nations' by using the blueprint of scripture and paying attention to what God is doing among us.
4. **Table Discussion:** Cheryl thanked Fanosie and introduced a time of table discussion on what intercultural realities are present in our MCM congregations and how to form meaningful relationships with those in our communities.  
Comments from discussions:
  - Many gifts in congregations
  - Take on roles of Facilitator relationships when newcomers need support
  - Churches can provide grounding for newcomers
  - English clubs for newcomers
  - Acknowledgement of subcultures within smaller towns
  - Shared community spaces
  - It is worth it to have significant relationship with those from other cultures, but it is also a lot of work
  - Culture beyond race (ex. Political/theological diversity). How do we hold diversity of opinions?
  - There are things from different cultures to both hold onto and let go
  - Recognizing power dynamics among different cultures. Learn to find a path through it/ do it anyway

-----BREAK-----

5. **Introduction of Board:** Cheryl introduced the MCM Board members: Cheryl Braun, Moderator, Andrea Hildebrand (Altona Mennonite, South), Don Rempel Boschman (Douglas, Winnipeg), Ed Neufeld (Grace Steinbach, East), Evelyn Rempel Petkau (Carman, South), Johanna Klassen (First Mennonite, Young Adult), Karen Tiessen (Prairie Mennonite, West/North), Roy Lee (Sterling, Winnipeg)
6. **Quorum:** Cheryl reported that quorum was present with 31/39 congregations represented with a total of 104 delegates. Harold Peters-Fransen will serve as Parliamentarian, Naomi Ewert as minute-taker.
7. **Review of Agenda** (Report Book, p. 5): Cheryl Braun noted that the schedule in Report Book will serve as agenda for the day.
8. **Acceptance of Minutes** (Report Book, pp. 31-35): Cheryl Braun reviewed the minutes from the 76th Annual Gathering held March 4, 2023 at Douglas Mennonite, highlighting key motions.
  - Correction for point 8 (p.32)- Motion should read the 2022 MCM Board actions be affirmed
  - *Motion from the Board: That the Annual Gathering minutes of March 4, 2023, be accepted as presented. (Seconder: Lynell Bergen, Hope Mennonite). Motion carried.*
  - Cheryl noted the vacancies in the Nominations slate on pg. 39 and anyone wishing to nominate someone to see Harold Peters-Fransen during the lunch hour.
9. **Affirming 2023 Board Actions** (Report Book Addendum, pp. 3-4): Cheryl Braun highlighted some of the decisions made by the Board in 2023.
  - *Motion from the Board: That the 2023 MCM Board actions be affirmed as presented. (Seconder: Dori Zerbe-Cornelsen,*

*Hope Mennonite). Motion carried.*

- Clarification that the “Camp” referred to from October 24 Board Meeting is Camp Assiniboia (Tobia Veith, Douglas).

10. **Introduction of CAWG Resolution** (Report Book Addendum pp. 7-10): Cheryl Braun noted background and rationale is found in the addendum. The Climate Action Working Group (CAWG) bringing this resolution forward has representatives from 10 MCM congregations representing 3 of our 4 regions.

- Video played made by CAWG members on why the resolution is important.
- Cheryl reported that CAWG members have been engaging with MCM congregations on this topic over the past few months and hosted a Zoom session for those interested on February 19. There is also a breakout session planned for the afternoon providing another opportunity to engage with the CAWG.

11. **Staff and Program Reports:** Michael Pahl noted that the Staff reports in Report Book (beginning p. 9) look back on 2023 and the video reports being shown will be looking at where we are at and what is ahead.

**VIDEO REPORTS:**

- **Executive Minister:** Michael Pahl reflected on the reality of wider change and change within MCM with a reminder that Jesus and God are consistent and always with us.
- **Leadership Ministries:** Jeff Friesen and Karen Schellenberg shared their three priorities for the year: partners as primary support for pastors, talking to congregations about power and authority of clergy, transitions in pastoral leadership.
- **Congregational Ministries:** Kathy Giesbrecht reflected on the bright future with folks continuing to experiment and explore what ministry looks like. MCM will continue to support congregations with MCM Mondays, congregational checkups, and accompaniment. Introduced new young adult faith formation program, Activ8, beginning in Fall with director Kim Arpin-Ricci.
- **Mission Ministries:** Melanie Neufeld shared how MCM congregations are using their gifts to respond in their communities (Ex. Jubilee/Community Roots, Little Flowers), and new story of Secret Treaties in Southern Manitoba in upcoming Canadian Mennonite. She also highlighted upcoming opportunities: event with Poovong family and Vietnamese MC, collecting red dresses for Camp Morgan, NKMC collecting glasses to support literacy project in the Congo.
  - Jonathan Neufeld highlighted the work of the National Residential School Museum in Portage, MB, and shared stories on how the Church across Canada is walking the path of reconciliation (ex. IR Task Force in MCBC establishing reconciliation fund, MCIS lifting up the call to search the landfill, Jubilee Fund of MCC and MC Canada offering grants to Indigenous efforts in MCEC, all nations grand river water walk, Singing in the Arbour in MC Sask).
  - Jeanette Hanson and International Witness workers shared how they are sharing their gifts globally.
- **Climate Action Coordinator-** Sandy Plett reported on events from 2023 including Living Hope, Rooted and Grounded, and teaching an Explore course. The work of responding to the climate crisis needs to be done in community. All five regions of MC Canada now have Climate working groups and a new curated collection of Climate stories/resources, Living Hope, is available at CommonWord. MC Canada’s emissions reduction grant is accepting applications again this year.
- **Camps with Meaning:** Dorothy Fontaine and Krista Neustaedter Barg introduced Camps with Meaning’s Light the Fire Capital Campaign with a Launch Party scheduled April 14. The expanded vision of camp is to provide year-round programming focusing on stewardship. In 2024, Camp is celebrating 75 years of its ministry. Nadya Langelotz shared that registration has opened for summer camp 2024 and volunteers are needed. The 2023 Camp video was played.
- **CommonWord:** Arlyn Friesen Epp reported that 2024 marks 50 years since MC Canada invested in the resource centre. Commonword is now the home of Anabaptist and Mennonite Resources, including the new Peace Bible.

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

-----LUNCH-----

13. **Greetings:** Cheryl Braun acknowledged that as MCM, we are a part of a wider church body and these reports are in the Report Book starting on p. 40.
- Greetings from Mennonite Church Canada: Doug Klassen (Executive Minister) shared the mission statement of MC Canada and their priorities: pursue God's calling, embracing companions, and cultivating a diverse culture
    - Ray Hamm (Altona Mennonite): There have been critical gaps since the restructuring- how is this being addressed?
      - ◁ Response (Doug Klassen): Some of the hopes of the new structure have not come to fruition and Joint Council is currently exploring ways to respond better operationally, especially when it comes to collective statements.
  - Greetings from Mennonite Church Alberta: Linden Willms (Springridge Mennonite Church) shared the makeup of MCA and their camping ministry of Camp Valaqua. He also shared that his home congregation uses sermons and music from different MC Canada churches.
  - Cheryl welcomed guests and reps present from partner organizations (Report Book pp. 49-62):
    - From MCC MB: Darryl Loewen
    - From Canadian Mennonite: Will Braun, Aaron Epp
    - From CMU: Karl Koop
    - From AMBS: Doug Amstutz
14. **New Church Application** (Report Book Addendum pp. 5-6): Cheryl Braun noted that the application from River East Church is for affiliate membership which allows for a period of testing of up to five years whether full membership is mutually agreeable. This time of testing can also be extended past the initial five years. Other distinctions of affiliate member status are that delegates cannot vote at Gatherings and members of an affiliate congregation cannot serve on the MCM Board. They are otherwise full participants of MCM and receiving of support and resources.
- Introduction video of River East Church: pastors of REC shared the gifts of their congregation and their call to be a Jesus community for the world with core values of wisdom, prophecy, and compassion.
  - ***Motion from the Board: That River East Church be received as an affiliate member congregation of Mennonite Church Manitoba. (Seconder: Randy Hildebrand, Springstein Mennonite).***
  - Comments:
    - Randy Hildebrand (Springstein): expressed welcome to River East Church and looking forward to being partners together.
  - ***Motion Carried, with 3 opposed***
15. **Prayer for the Church:** time spent praying in twos and threes.
16. **Nominations** (Report Book p. 38-39)
- Harold Peters-Fransen reported that on pages 36-37 are listed reps to other organizations, appointed by Board. Also listed are those that have accepted another term. The two biggest holes on the nominations slate are Board positions. Once people have been found, the Board will ratify during their meetings and the names will come to delegate body next Gathering.
  - ***Motion from the Board: That the Board appointments to committees and partner organizations be affirmed as presented. (Seconder: Janet Peters, Sargent). Motion carried.***
  - ***Motion: That the nominations to the Board (Ed Neufeld, Steinbach) be affirmed as presented (Seconder: Earl Reimer, Emmanuel Mennonite). Motion carried.***
17. **2023 Financial Report and Introduction to the Budget** (Report Book Addendum pp. 11-18):
- Video report wherein Michael Pahl shared that 2023 has been the first 'normal' year after two years of surplus (2020 and 2021) and a large deficit in 2022. Camps was ahead of budget with registrations, rentals and donations, but higher than expected expenses left a deficit. MCM saw below budget donations and church forwarding but this was offset by reduced expenses. The final deficit of \$36,000 will be covered by reserve funds.
  - For 2024 Budgets, all camp expenses will be carried on the Camps budget and summer camp fees, rental rates and food rates have all been increased for inflation. MCM budgeted revenue for 2024 is more realistic and Canadian

Mennonite costs will be recouped by invoicing congregations \$10/subscription. Forwarding to MC Canada will be back up to the full amount of the Shared Revenue Agreement. Michael shared reduction of staffing costs include concluding the Congregational Ministries position after Kathy Giesbrecht retires and Melanie Neufeld going down to 0.75 FTE. In the end, budget was unable to be balanced and projecting a deficit just over \$16,000.

- Michael also highlighted that over the last 4 years, congregational forwarding has dropped \$100,000.
- ***Motion from the Board: That the 2023 Financial Report be received as presented (Seconder: Erika Enns Rodine, Altona Mennonite). Motion carried.***

#### 18. Breakout Sessions (Report Book Addendum p. 2)

- Connecting with Our Newcomer Neighbours (led by Fanosie Legesse): approx. 20 participants
- The Story of the Vietnamese Mennonite Church (led by Ha Nguyen): approx. 40 participants
- Gaza: What's Going On, and How Can We Respond? (led by Joanna Hiebert Bergen and Byron Rempel Burkholder): approx. 30 participants
- A Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty: What Is It, and Why Should We Endorse It? (led by Marta Bunnett Wiebe, Kenton Lobe, and other members of CAWG): approx. 30 participants
- Talking about Clergy Misconduct (led by Jeff Friesen): approx. 20 participants

#### 19. Approval of 2024 Budget (Report Book Addendum, p.11, pp. 19-24):

- ***Motion from the Board: That the 2024 MCM and Camps budgets be approved as presented (Seconder: Jonathan Muebling, Sargent). Motion carried.***

#### 20. Vote on CAWG Resolution

- ***Motion: Be it resolved: With prayer and conviction, we (Mennonite Church Manitoba) join other faith bodies around the world in signing the open letter of faith leaders calling on governments to develop and implement a binding Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. (Moved: Marlene Plett (Altona Mennonite), Seconded: Marilyn Houser Hamm, Altona Mennonite).***
- ***Motion carried, two opposed.***
- Thank you expressed to the CAWG for all the work they have done.

#### 21. Closing Worship

- Music led by Darryl Neustaedter Barg
- Cheryl thanked all those on the Board, members of committees, and reps to other organizations for their time. Thank you to those serving and those completing terms (listed in pp. 36-38 of Report Book).
- Cheryl highlighted the work of Woven (formerly Mennonite Women Manitoba) for their work over many years in supporting, encouraging, and resourcing women across our regional church. One of their last actions was transferring last of their funds to start a bursary fund for Anabaptist Leadership training for women in Asia. In-person acknowledgement to Elsie Rempel, Kathy Giesbrecht, and Elsie Wiebe for their service leading this group.
- Special recognition of Kathy Giesbrecht and her decades of service to the church, including the past 15 years serving as Associate Director of Leadership Ministries and then Director of Congregational Ministries. Both Cheryl and Michael expressed personal appreciation. Video wishes from members of the Youth Ministers Fellowship with whom Kathy has worked closely.
- Michael Pahl led a Commissioning for Ministry for those involved as MCM Staff, Board members, members of MCM committees and working groups, pastors and lay ministers, church council and church committee members, delegates, and guests.
- Cheryl Braun thanked Fanosie Legesse, Emmanuel Mennonite for hosting, caterers, participants in Friday's evening worship service, breakout session presenters, MCM Staff, and delegates and other for participation in Mennonite Church Manitoba.
- Cheryl led a closing prayer
- Darryl Neustaedter Bard led closing song

#### 22. Adjournment 3:35 pm

Minutes recorded by Naomi Ewert

# 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) 2025 (completing term)*

### **Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service**

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

*Brenda Suderman (Home St) 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

*Emma Hamm (Hope) 2028*

*Wil Epp (Emmanuel) 2025 (completed term early)*

*Cheryl Braun (Glenlea) 2027*

*Randy Willoughby (Douglas) 2027*

*Ken Froese (Pembina) 2025 (completing term)*

*Ingrid Peters Fransen (Home Street) 2026*

*Linda Nichols (Pembina) 2027*

### **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

*Allison Janzen (First) 2025 (completing term)*

*Susan Reynar (Home Street) 2028*

*Bernie Loepky (Pembina) 2028*



## **Manitoba Multifaith Council**

*Peter Rempel (Charleswood) 2028*

## **Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba**

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

Phone: 204-261-6381

*Janet Plenert (Home Street) 2026*

*Danika Gingerich (Sterling) 2027*

*Yvonne Stoesz (Pembina) 2028*

## **Mennonite Collegiate Institute**

Londa Backlund, 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) 2027
- Johanna Klassen, Young Adult (First) 2025 (completing term)
- Roy Lee, Winnipeg (Sterling) 2025 (completing term)
- Ed Neufeld, East (Grace Steinbach) 2026
- Evelyn Rempel Petkau, South (Carman) 2026
- Brian Dyck, Winnipeg (Hope) 2027
- Marvin Dyck, South (Emmanuel) 2027
- Karen Tiessen, West/North (Prairie) 2028

## Ministerial Leadership Committee

- Julia Thiessen (Charleswood) 2025 (completing term)
- Lynell Bergen (Hope) 2026
- Marla Langelotz (Sargent) 2026
- Dan Epp-Tiessen (Home Street) 2027
- Liz Brasier (Pinawa) 2027
- Virginia Gerbrandt Richert (Altona Bergthaler) 2027

## Congregational Health Committee

- Andrew Wiens (Nordheim) 2026
- Lisa Enns (Charleswood) 2027
- Dori Zerbe Cornelson (Hope) 2028
- Mark Tiessen Dyck (Altona Bergthaler) 2028

## Camp Committee

- Sol Schlegel, Chair (Morden) 2027
- Marie Loeppky (Bethel) 2026
- Erika Enns-Rodine (Altona Mennonite) 2027
- Bruce Pauls (Bethel) 2028
- Vacant

## Finance Committee

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

## Nominating Committee

- Harold Peters Fransen, Chair (Home Street) 2028
- Mackenzie Nicolle (Home Street) 2025 (completing term)
- Harold Penner (Arnaud) 2027
- Laverne Siemens (Gretna) 2027
- Moses Falco (Sterling) 2027

# Nominations Slate

Name	Term	Term Expiry
<b>MCM Board</b> (Elected by Delegates; YA appointed by Board)		
Marvin Dyck, South (Emmanuel)	First	2027
Brian Dyck, Winnipeg (Hope)	First	2027
Karen Tiessen, West/North (Prairie)	Second	2028
Chris Friesen, Winnipeg (Jubilee)	First	2028
<b>MCM Ministerial Leadership Committee</b> (Appointed by Board)		
Glen Fehrmoore (Morden)	First	2028
<b>MCM Congregational Health Committee</b> (Appointed by Board)		
Dori Zerbe Cornelson (Hope)	Second	2028
Mark Tiessen Dyck (Altona Bergthaler)	Second	2028
<b>MCM Camp Committee</b> (Appointed by Board)		
Bruce Pauls (Bethel)	First	2028
VACANT	First	2028
<b>MCM Nominating Committee</b> (Appointed by Board)		
Harold Penner (Arnaud)	First	2027
Laverne Siemens (Gretna)	First	2027
VACANT	First	2028

## RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

<b>Eden Health Care Services</b> (Appointed by Board)		
Emma Hamm (Hope)	Third	2028
VACANT	First	2028
VACANT	First	2028
<b>Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Association</b> (Appointed by Board)		
Susan Reynar (Home Street)	Third	2028
Bernie Loeppky (Pembina)	Second	2028
Tobian Penner (Sterling)	First	2028
<b>Mennonite Central Committee</b> (Appointed by Board)		
Yvonne Stoesz (Pembina)	Third	2028

## 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
- Beginning at Gathering 2025, congregations are invited to send congregational representatives to MC Canada's Gathering. See <https://www.mennonitechurch.ca/nationwide-events/Gathering2025> for details.

# 2024

The Year in Review



Every day, some aspect of Mennonite Church Canada inspires me!

One day it might be an email that I receive from one of our International Witness workers. Another day it is a discussion that we have in a staff meeting, or connecting with the Regional Church executive ministers.

An inspirational highlight I can count on is when I join one of our 203 congregations for worship. Whether I am in a congregation of 13 or 300, God is present and the Holy Spirit moves among us.

Annual visits to a dozen or so congregations and meeting Regional Church colleagues remind me of who MC Canada aims to serve. In the 2017 restructuring process, congregations were the centre of our attention, and leaders re-shaped our governance structures at the national and regional levels to support these local communities.

Since 2017, it has become clear that some early communal expectations of looking to congregations and regional churches for select expertise created unprecedented challenges. For example, it has been a struggle for congregations and regional churches to effectively speak into matters of nationwide programming and binational and global partnerships.

This past year the “Group of 5” – an ad hoc committee of the Joint Council – made recommendations to address our challenges. Here are a few of them:

- The Joint Council gave MC Canada staff more freedom to navigate national, binational, and global partnerships.
- Additionally, the Joint Council decided to reintroduce congregational representation at nationwide Gatherings (formerly Assemblies). This will take effect at Gathering 2025 in Kitchener (July 2-5).
- MC Canada will coordinate and lead revenue generation efforts to provide congregations, Regional Churches, and Nationwide Church with coordinated approaches to raising needed funds for ministry.

In making the above adjustments to our governance, we strive to strengthen the ministries we do together:

**CommonWord:** Your centre for congregational resources is celebrating 10 years of serving churches as your national bookstore and resource centre! Arlyn Friesen Epp also reports on special activities as Mennonites prepare to celebrate 500 years of Anabaptism in 2025.

**International Witness:** Whether at home or abroad, we strive to cultivate the gifts an intercultural church offers. Learn more about how that’s happening in Jeanette Hanson’s report.

**Indigenous Relations:** Reconciliation is a long word that describes a long journey. Jonathan Neufeld’s report brings us healing initiatives with intriguing names like the Secret Treaty, the Strawberry Communion, and more in his report.

**Climate Action:** Sandy Plett shares survey results that show congregations are deeply and biblically rooted in the ethics of social justice and stewarding our resources. However, we need to better understand how social justice and creation care connect with how we care for our neighbours.

**Leadership Ministries:** Top of mind for Al Rempel is his work with Regional Churches to equip and grow those who are called to congregational ministry. In his report, learn about financial assistance to pastors and congregational leaders wishing to grow their skill set and a policy update that will interest all church leaders.

Please read the ministry report summaries that follow, and engage MC Canada staff with any questions you have.

Thank you for your companionship as together we seek to be People of God!

Doug Klassen  
Executive Minister  
dklassen@mennonitechurch.ca



## LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES

My ministry provides oversight to regional churches as they credential leaders, equip leaders with tools and resources for the congregation-pastor relationship, and develop leaders for the church.

It has been a year of significant steps:

- This year we launched a reformatted program called Transition into Ministry (TiM). All five regional churches have joined together with our primary partner, AMBS, to deliver formation experiences alongside ongoing coaching and mentoring. Thanks to the Company of 1000 leadership development fund, each participant is entitled to \$500 for an additional elective of their choice provided by one of our other Mennonite education partners across Canada to pursue excellence in one of the six core competencies of pastoral ministry. Your gift to the Company of 1000 <mennonitechurch.ca/company-of-1000> helps build strong new leaders for our church.

- Thank you to the many individuals and particularly credentialed leaders who have helped shape new policy for Mennonite Church Canada. Joint Council formally adopted the Guiding Ministerial Leadership in Mennonite Church Canada (GMLC) in October of 2024. This strengthened policy reflects our best intentions to deal with conflict and create safe spaces for all. Regional church leaders will be introducing the new policy with congregations and their credentialed leaders in the coming months.

Looking ahead: Church leaders, pastors, and other interested individuals are invited to attend Leadership Day on July 2, 2025, as part of Gathering 2025. Plan to attend this day of worship, enrichment, and blessing for church leaders.

I'm grateful to my colleagues from the Regional Churches for the many ways they encourage leaders in our church!

Al Rempel  
Associate Executive Minister  
arempel@mennonitechurch.ca



## CLIMATE ACTION

When I joined the MC Canada team just over two years ago, the big question for Climate Action was: How does the church 'respond faithfully to the climate crisis'?

Two years later there still are many unanswered questions, but the questions reveal a church that is engaged, wrestling, thinking, and moving toward action.

The MC Canada Environmental Sustainability Survey shows that a stewardship ethic built on biblical creation narratives is firmly established in our church family alongside a strong justice ethic.

The survey also showed that we need a stronger understanding of how environmental sustainability/creation care connects to social justice and care for our neighbours. And we discovered that the link between peacemaking and creation care are not yet fully formed in our thinking as a faith family.

While there's loads to do, congregations are meaningfully engaged:

- Six congregations greened their buildings with help from the Emissions Reduction Grants totalling \$18,000.
- Congregations looking to weave climate justice themes and learning into the life of the church now

have even more help from new resources created by collaborators in MC Canada and MC USA:

- Journeying with Creation: Advent Prayers in a Time of Climate Change.
- Worship series – To Hope and Act with Creation: A Season of Creation Worship Guide.
- Several events this past year gathered young adults, Anabaptist organizations, Indigenous relations, and regional climate working group leaders to nurture the health of the nationwide church, invite the Spirit, and spark energy for the work of climate justice.
- Organized online meet-ups helped equip participants to green our buildings, green our burials, and preach about hope in a time of crisis.

Up next? From February to July of 2025, pastors and church leaders will gather for "Faithful Leadership in the Climate Crisis: Responding in Hope" to strengthen their skills and understanding of how to weave creation care into the life of the church.

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



## INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

I believe this to be true: that being in relationship with Indigenous neighbours is not an opt-in/opt-out concern.

From coast to coast to coast, we are neighbours—touching the earth, living on the same lands, walking the same streets, breathing the same air, sustained by the same earth, and loved by the one Creator. It is never a question of our being in relationship but rather what sort of relationship we seek to nourish and incarnate.

- Through the Secret Treaty project <[commonword.ca/go/3972](https://commonword.ca/go/3972)>, Mennonite Church Manitoba congregations and schools are learning how treaty was the starting place for a relationship of reciprocity and mutuality. We are invited to reclaim our treaty commitment to one another as neighbours on these lands.
- Similarly, congregations of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada showed up with reparative gifts to the Strawberry Communion <[canadianmennonite.org/strawberry-communion-at-six-nations](https://canadianmennonite.org/strawberry-communion-at-six-nations)>, a spiritual covenant between churches and Six Nations.
- Congregations of Mennonite Church Alberta oriented themselves to the history, protocol, and role of powwow in Indigenous communities. They ventured together to bear witness to the sounds, sights, and movements of powwow.

- In Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, the ongoing work of sacred site protection was cinematically shared through the film *Custodians* <[commonword.ca/go/3338](https://commonword.ca/go/3338)>
- In Mennonite Church British Columbia, congregations have been encouraged to support Indigenous Theological Education through the Elijah Harper Fund.

Choices to embrace and incarnate relationship is being discerned and pursued on many levels across MC Canada. To encourage regional church collaboration, the MC Canada Climate Action and the Indigenous Relations working group leaders met for a weekend in October (see below). This in-person gathering was important to building relationships across the regional churches of MC Canada to reinforce that none of us are alone, that we have ideas and passion to share, that we are co-conspirators in Climate Action and Indigenous Relations, and that we share many overlapping concerns and hopes.

In 2025, we anticipate building on these more recent nationwide connections to make further strides in our shared ministries of healing and restoration.

Respectfully,

Jonathan Neufeld  
Indigenous Relations Coordinator  
[jneufeld@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:jneufeld@mennonitechurch.ca)



Leaders of Indigenous Relations and Climate Action/Creation Care working groups from all five regions of our nationwide family of faith gathered in picturesque Pinawa, MB on October 4-6.

The weekend served to deepen connections across the regions and discuss collaborative possibilities. They hope this initial gathering will inspire and ultimately lead to broader awareness and hyper-local uptake of earth-care and Indigenous reconciliation among congregations.

*Photo by Ruth Bergen Braun*

## INTERNATIONAL WITNESS

The theme for the MC Canada’s Gathering 2025 is “Each has a gift” (based on 1 Peter 4:10). It emphasizes the diversity of gifts that everyone brings to enrich the ministry of an intercultural church. In the International Witness program, we have talked about this as bringing dishes to a global potluck where God is the host, and we share with each other the gifts that God has given us. Welcome to God’s Global Potluck!



The table in Asia is being set by small conferences of Mennonites coming together to share what they are doing and what they dream to do in Anabaptist training in Asia. Mennonite Church

Canada, in partnership with Mennonite Mission Network, and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, is invited to the table to share what we have as these Asian churches build pathways to lay leadership training, pastor in-service training, and theological education. Ten church leaders from different parts of Asia met together in September 2024, and formed working groups to move forward with this dream, developing curriculum, and forming a platform where resources can be accessible.

A study guide for Anabaptist Essentials piloted with the Evangelical Vietnamese Mennonite Church by Nhien Pham and Garry Janzen (MC Canada liaison workers for Vietnam), is being shared with congregations in China. Youth Peace Conferences set up in Myanmar are brought to the table by the Bible Missionary Church Mennonite. Anabaptist centres in Northeast Asia are connecting to share ideas. Witness workers, Bock Ki Kim and Sook Kyoung Park, are active in connecting congregations and church leaders in China, South Korea, and Japan with opportunities to share experiences in restorative justice and peace education.

The Malipayon Peace Hub, a coffee production and peace training facility, was opened in November 2024. PeaceBuilders Community (PBCI) and local Indigenous communities celebrated this space for training and economic development. It continues to be a work in progress as Coffee for Peace expands its collaborative work in the area.

In 2024, MC Canada congregations had the opportunity to learn from and develop relationships with global

companions from Thailand and China with visits across the country. This is an important part of the mutual learning that is a basis of working together.

Witness workers Werner and Joanne De Jong completed three years of teaching at the Meserete Kristos Seminary in Ethiopia. Their contributions to the development of theological education at MKS are deeply appreciated by church leaders there.



Palestine Israel Network volunteers worked tirelessly at advocacy and education in the ongoing crises in Palestine. Several members participated in a solidarity visit to the area in November, bringing stories from Palestinian Christians living with war.

Sharing also happened globally through a three-part online conversation on “Land, Identity, and Faith” – a conversation about decolonization from South Africa, Palestine, Philippines, and North America – building solidarity, relationships, and learning from each other.

These and many other gifts are being brought to God’s banquet table. Thank you for participation in this potluck through your prayers, relationships, and financial gifts.

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



(l to r) Tom Poovong, Khamphan Sudcha, Doug Klassen, Jeanette Hanson, and Thipawan Sucha on a visit to our MC Canada offices. Talked about the growth of *Friends of Grace* church network in Thailand and the need for leadership development training.



# CommonWord

Bookstore and Resource Centre

In 2024, CommonWord recognized several significant milestones. We completed our tenth year as a combined national bookstore and resource centre. Over that time, we have served about 93,000 retail customers and have circulated over 29,000 loan items across Canada. This past year we also celebrated 50+ years of Christian formation efforts nurtured through a resource centre and bookstore. We compiled a brief history of CommonWord and its predecessor organizations <[commonword.ca/go/3828](http://commonword.ca/go/3828)>.

A highlight this past year has been our partnership with MennoMedia in the Canadian distribution of the Anabaptist Community Bible. Your response has been overwhelming! We pre-sold almost 1,400 copies. This significant publication – with marginal notes from 600 small study groups around the world – helps mark the 500th anniversary of Anabaptist beginnings in Europe in 1525. Please consider ordering yours, if you have not already done so, and watch for other anniversary publications in the next months. See full collection <[commonword.ca/go/500](http://commonword.ca/go/500)>.

CommonWord served as a public venue for various resourcing events. We hosted ten book launches, a climate action conversation, and a Christian formation seminar. Each of these events were livestreamed and attended by a total of 540 people. One highlight was a touching personal conversation between literary icons Rudy Wiebe and Margaret Atwood during the launch of *Rudy Wiebe: Essays on His Works*. This and all past discussions are available to view at <[commonword.ca/go/4173](http://commonword.ca/go/4173)>.

CommonWord's partnership with Together in Worship <[commonword.ca/go/tiw](http://commonword.ca/go/tiw)> remains strong. We have seen the addition of many digital Anabaptist worship resources to our website again this year, including original music, video, visual art, and words for worship. These resources are free to use in your congregational settings. And we welcome your own submissions <[togetherinworship.net/Content/tiw-submissions](http://togetherinworship.net/Content/tiw-submissions)>.

We continued to shoulder our three main daily responsibilities: curation, accessibility, and communication. We carefully select materials through an Anabaptist lens for the purpose of Christian formation in the home and congregation. We make

these materials accessible in-store and through our website (to buy, borrow or access online). We also ship loan items across Canada for free. These materials and services are profiled through your regional church newsletter, social media, and our Curator newsletter.

Thank you for your engagement this past year. In eleven months (as of November 30), we have fulfilled over 850 online retail orders, completed nearly 8,500 in-store purchases, delivered over 2,300 loans, and had 16,300 items downloaded.

We want to hear from you. Are there titles you would recommend? Are there original resources you would like to share? Are there displays of loan materials you would wish to host? Are there ways we can serve you better? Are you unfamiliar with us? Please be in touch (1-877-846-1593 or [info@commonword.ca](mailto:info@commonword.ca)).

We are grateful for the church and university's ongoing commitment to Christian formation. On behalf of the rest of our staff - Anita Neufeld, AnaSara Rojas, Josh Paetkau, and our student employees and volunteers - we look forward to serving you in 2025.

Submitted by Arlyn Friesen Epp  
Director, CommonWord Bookstore  
and Resource Centre  
[afriesenepp@commonword.ca](mailto:afriesenepp@commonword.ca)



Staff (L to R): Arlyn Friesen Epp, Anita Neufeld, Josh Paetkau, AnaSara Rojas



## MCBC 2024 IN REVIEW

#305-32025 George Ferguson Way  
Abbotsford, BC, V2T 2K7  
T: 778.751.3313  
E: [shelboese@mcbc.ca](mailto:shelboese@mcbc.ca)



### GREETINGS TO OUR FAMILY ACROSS CANADA!

#### MCBC in 2024:

- Started a new congregation in Kelowna, Valley Road Church
- 23 Churches plus 1 developing congregation
- Celebrated many baptisms in our churches in 2024
- Our average weekly main worship attendance: 61 in 2023 - 67 in 2024
- Kids, youth, and young adults are around 14% of our total engaged constituents
- The average total of people engaged is roughly 131 if spread evenly between churches
- Average membership 90

#### Other items of note:

- We have partnered with a parachurch ministry for health assessments and revitalization work.
- Our forward-leaning simplification and prioritization of building a people continues.
- Our Executive Minister's primary areas of focusing more energy around are:
  - **New Congregations and Revitalization**
  - **Pastoral and Church Leadership Support, Training, Development**
  - **Funding Long-term Vision (get out of structural deficit mode)**
  - **Centre-Set Approach to Unity: Jesus.**
- The proposed New Congregational Categories bylaw will be before our Regional Church delegates at our AGM. We are wrestling with creating more of a network orientation and less denominational, given the post-denominational realities of thriving churches across North America. Currently, we have one category called "recognized congregation" and given our unique tensions and history, this has not served us well when engaging in church planting or established churches looking for a network home. So the proposal includes creating two categories of non-member congregations:
  - **Developing congregation.** Which would be for churches being "birthed" and in their initial years of life. And,
  - **Exploring congregation.** Which is for those established churches looking for a Jesus-centred Anabaptistish network. This would require assent to the Mennonite World Conference Shared Convictions and then a mutually established process for discernment between that congregation and existing MCBC congregations over a period of up to 5 years.

#### Our hope is that these open us more to the wider work of the Holy Spirit in new and other areas of the church.

- We continue to explore ways to encourage the calling and growth of pastors with our Columbia Bible College and other partnerships.
- Finally, our task groups around pressing local church social and spiritual issues are doing good work. Sign up for our regional newsletter at [mcbc.ca](http://mcbc.ca) for more details.

*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus the Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith.- Hebrews 12:2*  
We respectfully and gratefully acknowledge that we gather on the unceded, traditional, and ancestral lands of Indigenous First Nations



**MCA ministries focus on:**

*Supporting Congregations*

**A community of 1300 participants in 11 congregations, worshipping in 4 languages**

- Financial aid helped provide rental space for **Edmonton South Sudanese Mennonite**, assisted **Bethel** in supporting their bi-vocational pastor, and helped **Holyrood** hire their interim pastors.
- MCA walked with the **Edmonton Christian Life Community Church**, which closed in April after several decades of Chinese-language ministry; with **Holyrood** in its process discernment; and with **Trinity and Bergthal** in their pastoral searches.
- **19 credentialed leaders**, as Pastors Council, serve as congregational pastors, chaplains and in other ministry capacities
- **Terry Fach** was installed as interim pastor at **Trinity**, while at **Foothills**, **Bill Christieson’s** Ordination was officially recognized, and **Aiden Scherzinger** was Licensed Toward Ordination.
- At **Camp Valaqua** 32 young people served as staff, growing in faith and developing leadership skills to serve the church.

*Nurturing Connections*

**Part of MC Canada, including over 200 congregations in its 5 regions.**

- **Annual Delegate Sessions** at **Holyrood** saw 100 participants from across MCA come about MCA ministries. Speaker Joon Park outlined Christ’s calling to reach across cultural boundaries and join together in faith. The Saturday evening cross-cultural worship featuring music from Edmonton congregations was a highlight.
- **Pastors Council** met 5 times for relationship building, prayer, and peer support. A **Faith Studies** event in May focused on Creation Care, a **fall retreat** included personal sharing and discussions about anger, and pastors joined an **online Boundary Training**, hosted by MC Sask.
- **“Come Together”** events in Edmonton and Calgary brought together people to hear stories of transformation through MCA’s ministries, raise funds, and have a good time!

*Celebrating Faith in Action*

**Serving in ministries across the street and around the world.**

- At **Camp Valaqua** 365 campers experienced God in creation, supported by 60 volunteers and staff.
- In Ethiopia, **Werner and Joanne De Jong** concluded 3 years of teaching and support for students at the Meserete Kristos Seminary (MKS), while **Tom and Christine** Poovong continued their ministry in Thailand. Through **MC Canada Witness** MCA helped build the church in 16 countries around the world.
- MCA continued to facilitate the training of two **South Sudanese** pastors at MKS.
- **Bridge Building** organized the annual dialogue with Christians and Muslims in Edmonton, which featured the study of the prophet Jonah. Bridge Building increased its focus on **Indigenous Relations** and offered **“Powwow Prep”** encouraging people to attend these open events.
- In August **Bethel, Holyrood**, and a few from **First Mennonite Edmonton** gathered to witness the baptism of 5 young people from Bethel in the river at a nearby park.

*We are grateful for the ongoing commitment we share as congregations, pastors and leaders walking with each other in our service to Jesus Christ!*





## Mennonite Church Saskatchewan 2024 Annual Report

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan (MC Sask) is a family of 21 congregations, united in our commitment to being Christ-centered and sent into the world. Together, we prayerfully support one another, collaborating in ministry with Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite World Conference, trusting that God's healing and hope flow through us to all the world.

***“For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.”***  
**Romans 12:4-5**

These words from Romans guided us as we gathered for the Annual Delegate Session in Drake, hosted by North Star Mennonite with help from Pleasant Point and Grace Mennonite Churches. Under the theme **“Rekindling Relationships,”** and led by Doug Klassen, Executive Minister of Mennonite Church Canada, we experienced this spirit of renewal through worship, storytelling, discussion, and fellowship.

Looking back at 2024, we reflect on a busy and transitional year, shaped by challenges and opportunities. Leadership changes continued to define this season, and we thank God for all who serve in so many ways with MC Sask, using their various gifts. In May, **Gary Peters** concluded his role as Interim Executive Minister, with **Len Rempel** stepping into the position in June. In August, **Kirsten Hamm-Epp** concluded her time as Youth Minister, with **Evan Bueckert** beginning as Interim Youth Minister in October. **Josh Wallace** completed his work as Congregational Engagement Minister on December 31, 2024. **Marianne Siemens** kept everything running smoothly as Office Administrator.

Transitions within our congregations also reflected God's ongoing work. We celebrated the licensing toward ordination with one pastor and welcomed a pastor who was new to MC Sask. There were pastors who moved from one congregation to another, some pastors who ended their time with congregations, and pastors who retired. While all these transitions represent challenges, we thank God for raising up leaders from within our midst and elsewhere, and for the continued perseverance and faithfulness of our congregations.

Throughout the fall, the MC Sask Council led **Town Hall meetings** across the province to engage congregations in discussions on youth ministry, finances, volunteering, and connectedness. It was a great opportunity to hear from the 'folks in the pews' and better understand who we are as Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.

In November we partnered with Canadian Mennonite University to host the **Healing Haunted Histories** course with Elaine Enns and Ched Myers, fostering deep reflection on the ways our histories intersect with Indigenous stories and what this means for the future.

The MC Sask youth events, Mega Menno, have continued to engage youth with opportunities to learn, have fun, and explore their own relationship with God.

The end of another year gives us the opportunity to look back on how God has led us as a church, through challenges and transitions. We are also invited to look forward, to be participants in this movement of God's spirit as we seek to live out our mission, so that God's healing and hope may flow through us to the world.



## 2024 IN REVIEW

We come together as MCEC to  
Energize Congregations | Encourage Leaders |  
Embody God's Reconciling Ministry



**Left:** Marilyn Rudy Froese, MCEC Church Leadership Minister, anoints Chinda Kommala during his ordination ceremony.

**Middle:** A shocking experience at a junior youth event in Leamington.

**Top:** Anthony Siegrist hired as Executive Minister.

### We celebrate congregations and pastors.

#### 108 congregations

- Welcomed 5 congregations to provisional membership: FreeChurch Toronto; Mennonite Disciples Swahili Church (Ottawa-Gatineau); Rehoboth Inner Healing Church; Shalom Worship and Healing Centre, Guelph; Shalom Worship and Healing Centre, Windsor.
- Congregations Closed - Hawkesville Mennonite Church (June 2024); Agape Fellowship (July 2024). We appreciate the generosity of these congregations and their support of MCEC through their legacy gifts.

#### 196 pastors serve as congregational pastors, chaplains and in other capacities

- 14 pastors installed in congregations
- 6 pastors licensed toward ordination
- 3 pastors ordained

### We are inspired by ministry throughout MCEC.

- At the Annual Church Gathering in Leamington, 236 delegates and congregational leaders were inspired by the hope we find in Jesus as we came together to worship and collaborate in community. We grow, learn and serve best in relationship with others, listening for God together.
- In the area of youth engagement, 150 voices contributed to a research project focused on ways to better engage youth in the church. Alongside our partners, junior youth gatherings in Kitchener and Leamington brought together 144 junior youth and their sponsors for meaningful connection and growth. This effort reflects our commitment to leadership development, intergenerational discipleship, collaborating with our partners to nurture both the current and future generations of the church.
- To encourage leaders of hope, vision and transformation, 39 pastors attended renewing retreats, focused on the seasons of Lent and Advent. Additionally, 50 pastors participated in Healthy Boundary Workshops online, equipping them to maintain healthy boundaries while leading with integrity and care.
- The INNOVATE Ministry concluded after a decade of impactful service. Over the past 10 years, 48 MCEC congregations have participated in discipleship events and workshops, fostering growth and renewal. Additionally, the Transitioning in Ministry (TIM) Program saw the graduation of 5 pastors this year.
- We are privileged to journey alongside congregations during transformative moments, whether it's through pastoral searches, discernment processes, revitalizing mission, or reimagining facilities. A wonderful example of this is the shared co-ownership journey of Shalom Worship & Healing Centre and First Mennonite Church.
- We celebrate the hiring of Anthony Siegrist as Executive Minister, effective February 1, 2025.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of congregations, pastors and leaders through prayer, time and finances. We continue to grow into the future as a transformed, inspired and called people of God.



## 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 Global Anabaptism\*
- Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies
- 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 certificate)

[ambs.ca/degrees-and-programs](https://ambs.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!

[ambs.ca/canadian-students](https://ambs.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. 23–26, 2026

#### Offerings of one to two years

- Transition to Leadership\*: program for new pastors
- Ministry Reflection Circles\*: reflect on current ministry challenges with the support of a group
- Spiritual Direction Seminars\*

[ambs.ca/leadership-and-enrichment](https://ambs.ca/leadership-and-enrichment)



### AMBS statistics

- In April 2024, 13 women and nine men from four countries — Ethiopia, South Africa, Tanzania and the United States — graduated from AMBS (*see above*). Sixteen of the graduates completed part or all of their seminary studies at a distance.
- In 2024–25, 149 graduate students are enrolled at AMBS: 82 from the U.S., four from Canada and 63 international students. The graduate student body represents 18 countries. Ten students are pursuing the Spanish-language Graduate Certificate in Theology.
- The Journey program has 41 participants in Canada, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, Tanzania, Uganda and the U.S.
- In 2023–24, 553 people participated in lifelong learning offerings of the Church Leadership Center.

### 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
  - Transforming Congregational Conflict and Communication
  - Challenging Christian Nationalism
  - Biblical Interpretation Across the Two Testaments

[ambs.ca/online-short-courses](https://ambs.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! [ambs.ca/upcoming-courses](https://ambs.ca/upcoming-courses)
- Schedule a virtual or in-person visit and learn about what AMBS has to offer! [ambs.ca/visit](https://ambs.ca/visit)
- Stay connected: [facebook.com/followAMBS](https://facebook.com/followAMBS) • [instagram.com/ambs\\_seminary](https://instagram.com/ambs_seminary) • [youtube.com/ambsedu](https://youtube.com/ambsedu) • [ambs.ca/subscribe](https://ambs.ca/subscribe)



# CANADIAN MENNONITE

# 2024

The look and feel of *Canadian Mennonite* changed in 2024. Now monthly with longer feature sections, we offer **in-depth reporting on complex issues**. We continue to carry news from across the church, with regular articles from correspondents in B.C., the prairies and eastern Canada.

*The Secret Treaty*, our February feature, gave a unique new view on early Mennonite-Indigenous encounters. It has since been published as a book, with more than 1,000 copies sold, and was the basis for several events in Manitoba.

We launched several **new columns** in 2024, giving voice to a broad cross-section of the church. *Deeper Communion* is an ongoing conversation between four younger leaders in the church. *Life in the 80s* features some of our older members reflecting on lives of discipleship. *Faith Story* brings inspiration from one person's spiritual life.

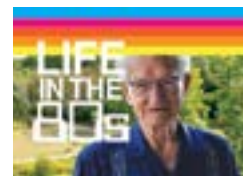
We also launched **MennoCreative**, a residency program for creative communicators to tell the church story through new media and different channels. Three resi-

dents were hired. Watch for their work to appear in 2025 in a podcast, on our website and in the magazine.

Through all these voices, *Canadian Mennonite* seeks to strengthen the faith community. We want to represent the diverse church and encourage people to listen to one another, even on topics that could divide us. We do so in the spirit of Hebrews 10:24, spurring one another on to love and good deeds, to build up the Kingdom of God.

Through the Every Home Plan, people who attend a Mennonite Church Canada congregation subscribe at half the cost of a regular subscription. Fees are paid collectively. Talk to your church administrator for details.

Whether you read the magazine on paper or a mobile device; whether you visit our website or follow us on social media; whether you write letters, post comments, or discuss the articles at church; *Canadian Mennonite* is grateful that you connect with our national church family through the magazine.



Have a story idea? Email Katie Doke Sawatzky at [prairies@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:prairies@canadianmennonite.org).

1-800-378-2524 [canadianmennonite.org](https://canadianmennonite.org) [canadian.mennonite](https://canadian.mennonite) [canadianmennonite](https://canadianmennonite) [CanMenno](https://canmengo)

# 2024/25 CMU Report to the Church

## Greetings to Mennonite Church Manitoba

**Thank you** to our church community for your steadfast support of CMU and the ways you partner with us in nurturing lives of faith, learning, and service. Your commitment to Christian education helps inspire and equip students to make a meaningful difference in the world.



### Undergraduate Degrees

- » Bachelor of Arts
- » Bachelor of Business Administration
- » Bachelor of Music
- » Bachelor of Music Therapy
- » Bachelor of Science
- » **NEW!** Bachelor of Social Work

### Graduate Degrees

- » Master of Divinity
- » Master of Arts in Christian Ministry
- » **NEW!** Master of Arts in Spiritual Care
- » Master of Arts in Theological Studies
- » Master of Business Administration



### Geographical Representation

- » 75% from Manitoba (13% First Nations, Inuit, or Métis)
- » 25% from other provinces and international (30 countries)

### Faith Representation

- » 70% from Christian traditions, including 30% from Mennonite/Anabaptist traditions
- » 27 MC Canada congregations
- » 15 MB congregations
- » 15 other Mennonite congregations and Hutterite communities



### 2024/25 Enrolment

- » 10% overall increase in students on main campus (40% increase in incoming students)
- » 694 students on main campus (630 full-time equivalent)
- » 125 full-time equivalent students at Menno Simons College (CMU courses in UW degree programs)

### Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

- » 100% of graduating students complete an experiential learning opportunity
- » 84 students completed their WIL placements in 2023/2024
- » Placements include: Assiniboine Park Zoo, Children's Hospital Research Institute, Legal Aid Manitoba, Sport Manitoba, Turning Leaf



# 25

### 25 Years of CMU

Join us in celebrating 25 years of CMU at Fall at CMU, September 19 and 20, 2025. Events include special celebratory program, Song Feast, alumni reunions, Farmers' and Makers' market and more. Learn more at [cmu.ca/fall](https://cmu.ca/fall).

### 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.



[cmu.ca](https://cmu.ca)





At Eden, we feel a great privilege and calling to be the hands and feet of Christ as we provide mental health care in southern Manitoba. Eden exists as a response to a calling that came from the Mennonite churches in the 1960s to do more

for those living with mental health concerns and mental illness.

While we know the needs today are great, our strategic plan is challenging us to enhance what we do well and scale our programs for greater impact. Eden continues to trend towards higher numbers of psychiatry consultations, counselling

sessions and vocational assessments each year. Occupancy rates at the inpatient and clinically supported housing units remain at high levels and wait lists for supportive housing are long.

We need support to accelerate growth in mental health services. Eden is actively working to expand our partnerships with the community, donors, businesses, non-profits, health regions, government, and others to strengthen and develop a fully integrated system of mental health and addiction services. Together we can take the next steps in providing hope, healing, and community!

Brad Unger  
Chief Executive Officer  
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.

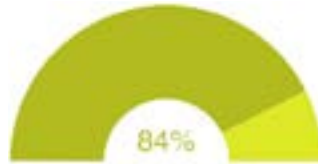


Arms-length fundraising organization that raises funds to support Eden's mental health work in Manitoba.



# EDEN HEALTH CARE SERVICES

## YEAR IN REVIEW



From April 1, 2023 to February 29, 2024, there were 211 admissions to **Eden Mental Health Centre** with an occupancy rate of 84.45%.



**Eden Foundation's** annual Head for the Hills fundraiser surpassed \$2 million in total funds raised.



**7 years**

The average length of stay for **Eden Housing and Supports' CV4** tenants has reached 7 years.

**49**

Tractor drivers in **Eden Foundation's** annual Tractor Trek fundraiser.



**464** NEW CLIENTS



**Recovery of Hope** welcomed 464 new clients and have conducted just over 4,900 sessions.

**Eden Mental Health Centre** completed 1,027 outpatient assessments and 3,111 follow-up and on call/professional consults.



Average length of a client's stay at **Eden Mental Health Centre** was 27.7 days.



**Eden Housing and Supports** residences have an occupancy of over 95% in Winnipeg, Steinbach, and Winkler.

**\$180,000**

A total of \$180,000 in funding for **Recovery of Hope** came through Winnipeg Foundation, Eden Foundation, Access Credit Union, and Grant Advance.



**Eden Housing and Supports' Community Wellness Initiative** provided housing support services to 68 clients.

**Eden Foundation's** annual Tractor Trek has raised \$1 million since it started 17 years ago.

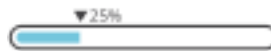


**60%**

**Segue Career Options** had a 60% increase in online application form submissions from November to March.

**210** Participants

**Eden Housing and Supports' Community Choices** provided programming to 210 participants.



**Segue Career Options** assisted 114 participants and helped to find employment for 28 clients.



**Recovery of Hope** raised \$12,000 for their Sliding Fee Scale program at the Music for Mental Health fundraiser concerts.



1-866-895-2919  
edenhealthcare.ca

hope • healing • community

# Inter- Mennonite Chaplaincy Assoc.

Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Association (IMCA) is a ministry at the University of Manitoba Fort Garry campus shared by two Mennonite conferences (MCM and EMMC). This ministry also receives support from congregations and individuals who value the nurture of Christian faith and community among students at this critical stage of their development. IMCA serves students, faculty and staff by providing an Anabaptist presence and half time Chaplain in a space known as the “Menno Office”. It is open 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. weekdays and is staffed on a half time basis Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

We are located in room 524 University Centre within the U of M’s Spiritual Care and Multi-faith Centre. There, alongside our 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. IMCA offers students a safe place to process their studies, their daily lives and the events of the world around us in a caring Christian context.

The Menno Office serves as a regular gathering place for students. While many of them have connections with Mennonite congregations, our ministry also attracts students with other denominational ties as well as those with no church affiliations who are drawn by the inviting atmosphere, the music, food and conversation. The ministry serves local students, as well as those from rural Manitoba, other provinces and around the world. Some students visit almost daily, others spend time there weekly, still others come only occasionally, but still value the office as a touchstone where they find support and connection when needed.

Students enjoy the Menno Office as a place to eat their lunch, study or connect with friends between classes, play musical 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. Last term the Wednesday gatherings have been focusing on the “I am” statements of Jesus in John’s Gospel. Through this Bible study, participants have been finding opportunities to know each other and themselves better even as we have been gathering to get to know Jesus on a deeper level. The Thursday Menno Talks, used podcasts, videos, articles and excerpts from books to spark faith-based discussions addressing everyday topics of interest and concern to the students.

Through the activities and atmosphere in the Menno Office, IMCA continues to provide a welcoming setting for students to foster meaningful relationships with one another and with the Chaplain. As such, the students experience peer support as well as pastoral care, which is also available to faculty and staff.

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](http://mennooffice.ca)

Rev. Mark von Kampen  
Campus Chaplain  
524 University Centre  
204-474-9691  
[mvonkampen@gmail.com](mailto:mvonkampen@gmail.com)



Mark von Kampen  
*Campus Chaplain*



# 2024 Report to Churches

Proverbs' Lady Wisdom teaches us the value of wise planning and hard work. This wisdom is especially meaningful as I reflect on MCC Manitoba's first year at 140 Bannatyne Ave.

Our building provides a beautiful and unique venue for our offices, a material resources working space and youth engagement program at Sam's Place Coffee. Thanks to God and careful planning, we have built a strong foundation in the Exchange District.

One year in, the coffee shop is busy and youth employment training has been elevated. MCC Manitoba offices and staff coexist in one location. And most happily, volunteers, supporters, churches, schools and guests visit us often.

MCC's international work continues, with the same values of wise planning and unceasing effort. Relief and disaster responses support displaced families in 20 countries, and our local partners are essential in making sure that the most vulnerable are being supported.

Our commitment to development is teaching Cambodian farmers the techniques they need

for sustainable food, equipping girls in South Sudan to succeed in school, and supporting new mothers and babies in Ethiopia to thrive in their first years.

Peacebuilding is the work of generations. In Rwanda, we're working with the next students to foster a love of reading and commitment to peace through Peace Libraries. Students learn peer mediation, how to engage in healthy debates, and are using these skills to grow in the classroom and at home.

Dear friends, we continue to pray for wisdom as we learn and grow, giving thanks to Christ who strengthens us in all things. Thank you for being a part of MCC's support and mission.

**DARRYL LOEWEN**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
MCC MANITOBA



## Program Highlights

*from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024*

**\$ 4.27 million**

forwardings from MCC Thrift shops in Manitoba to MCC - a record high

**4,317**

individuals, businesses and churches made a donation



**19**

youth and young adults gained employable skills



**7,622**

comforters shipped from Manitoba



**10**

local partners supported by the Indigenous Neighbours program



**185**

participants in climate and creation care events and activities



**108**

refugees welcomed to Manitoba



MCC Photo/Michael Veith

## MCC in Manitoba

Sam's Place Coffee is thriving in the Exchange District, in a space that creates connection between MCC's local and global work. The youth engagement training program gives opportunities for young adults (pictured left) to learn valuable skills, as customers sip specialty drinks while seeing Material Resources activities like kit packing through glass barn doors. With ongoing success stories for the program, including their new barista training, Sam's Place has more applications than available spots. "My email is full," says Youth Program Coordinator Rebecca Engel. "The response has been amazing... it's very evident that Winnipeg needs more spaces like this because there's just not enough."

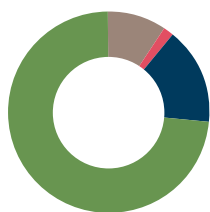


Al-Najd Developmental Forum photo/Basbar Al Arja

## MCC Around the World

The war in Gaza is one of the direst humanitarian crises of the last year. Because of your support, MCC partners were able to deliver emergency food and bedding for hundreds of displaced and terrified families. "It's really only possible to respond in situations like this with trusted, existing partners," says Sarah Funkhouser, MCC representative for Jordan. MCC staff and partners describe the level of destruction in Gaza as unfathomable. Support has since taken the form of cash transfers and cross-border food shipments when humanitarian aid is permitted to flow.

## Financial Highlights



**TOTAL EXPENSES:**  
**\$13,853,495**

- International program  
**\$10,176,771 (73%)**
- Manitoba program  
**\$2,174,991 (16%)**
- Administration  
**\$1,296,347 (9%)**
- Fundraising  
**\$205,386 (1%)**

**TOTAL REVENUE:**  
**\$15,599,992**

### Funding Sources

- Donations  **\$7,492,294 (48%)**
- Thrift  **\$4,273,132 (27%)**
- Other sources  **\$2,590,290 (17%)**
- Material resources (in-kind)  **\$727,445 (5%)**
- Property transactions  **\$313,053 (2%)**
- Grants  **\$203,778 (1%)**

Read more stories online at [mcc.org/MBreport2024](https://mcc.org/MBreport2024)



# MENNONITE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

EST. 1889



## Annual Report 2024

This past year has highlighted the resilience, dedication, and faith of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute (MCI) community. While we have faced challenges, particularly in financial sustainability and enrollment, we also celebrate significant progress in our mission, community engagement, and donor support.

### Highlights of the Year

This year, MCI hosted events like Youth Orbit (gr. 8-12 youth conference), *The Pirates of Penzance* musical and a coffee house fundraiser, which brought alumni, donors, and prospective families together to celebrate community, arts, and faith.



Varsity Boys Volleyball Makes Provincials



The Pirates of Penzance Musical



Youth Orbit & Outreach

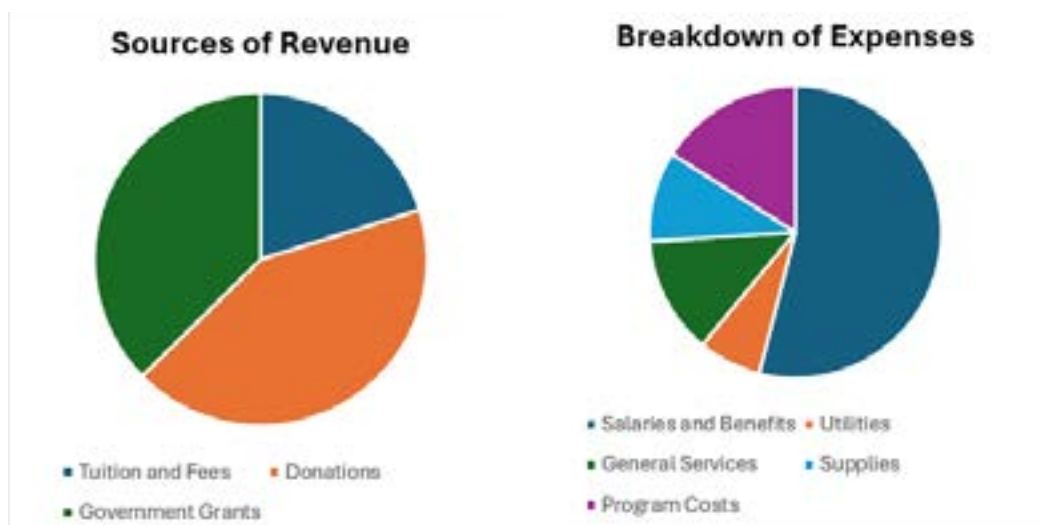


Spring Fundraiser Coffeehouse

## Financial Overview

### Revenue and Expenses

- **Total Revenue:** \$1,923,015
- **Total Expenses:** \$1,943,639
- **2024 Deficit:** \$20,624 (an improvement from 2023's \$96,000 deficit)



### Key Financial Goals for 2024/25

As we continue to focus on building a sustainable future for MCI, our financial goals for the coming year include:

- **Increase Enrollment:** A full reset of recruitment and admissions processes.
- **Engage Donors and Community:** Strengthen relationships with current donors and reach new audiences.
- **Maintain Cost Control:** Focus on operational efficiency and reducing unnecessary expenses.

### Student Enrollment

Student enrollment has declined from 54 in 2023-2024 to 47 in 2024-2025, highlighting the need for thoughtful action. As we move forward, our priority is to grow MCI's student community in a way that reflects our mission and values. Rather than focusing solely on immediate solutions, we are committed to creating a strong foundation for sustainable growth through meaningful program enhancements and deeper community connections.

We are deeply grateful to the alumni, parents, churches, and community members who support MCI through prayer, volunteer efforts, and donations. Your unwavering faith in our mission sustains us and propels us forward.

## Mennonite Disaster Service Canada

# REPORT

### MDS Canada 2024: Restoring hope

“It is a tremendous thing to have this happen. To have a house built for you, it’s beyond words,” said Jade Shamen, one recipient of a volunteer-built home in North Shuswap, British Columbia.

Jade, his wife Isabelle and their four-year-old son Able were among hundreds of North Shuswap area residents affected by the Bush Creek East Wildfire in August 2023. The family was one of four households in the North Shuswap area to benefit from an MDS volunteer-built home this summer, while four more were helped with home repairs and renovations. Over a five-month period, 227 volunteers served in the North Shuswap.

Around the same time, a smaller national crew rebuilt a house in Lytton, British Columbia. Patsy Gessey and Owen Collings survived a wildfire in 2021. Due to several complicating factors — including toxic ash removal, loss of town records, archeological surveying requirements and updates to the local building code — rebuilding began more than two years after the fire flattened their village.

“I’m so grateful and thankful that I’m working with [MDS] because your organization shows hope... Some people have given up... but you’ve stuck with us,” shared Owen.

Units were also active across the country with house builds taking place in Carstairs, Alberta, and Truro, Nova Scotia. Home repair projects were undertaken in Manitoba.



Isabelle Labelle and Jade Shamen in Celista, B.C.

In Carstairs, more than 130 people volunteered to rebuild a house for Elisa Humphreys after she lost her home to a tornado last year. The house was built almost entirely by daily volunteers, 95 serving with MDS for the first time.

“God [directed] but people had to say yes. So, my heart was really warmed by how giving people were and what a great community we live in,” said Jessica Lawrence, volunteer coordinator for the response.

In July, the Ontario Unit hosted the MDS Canada Family Project at Fraser Lake Camp near Bancroft, Ontario. Over four weeks, 48 people built three cabins and put the finishing touches on two more — to house camp volunteers and facilitate their program activities.

As I reflect on our work and relationships with disaster survivors and their communities in 2024, I am so grateful for the collective efforts of response coordinators, units, staff and the hundreds of daily, weekly and long-term volunteers who helped us achieve our mission to restore hope and homes. Thank you for your partnership in this work! I invite your continued prayers as we explore how to best serve our neighbours, across the country, in 2025.

—Ross Penner, Executive Director

#### 2024 STATS

2 national responses	8 service scholarships awarded
263 national response volunteers	21 Spirit of MDS Fund grants totalling
4 unit responses	\$102,000 issued to churches and community orgs.
1 summer youth project	
1 family project	



# Manitoba Multifaith Council

The year 2024 witnessed a number of activities helping to realize MMC's vision of "People of diverse faiths working together to help build a just and caring society."

Early in the year the Province's Lieutenant Governor, Anita Neville, presented the Award for the Advancement of Interreligious Understanding to Rev. Dr. Loraine Mackenzie Shepherd. Having served rural and urban United Churches for thirty years, Loraine developed a deep passion for interfaith work. It is her conviction that building relationships with people of other faith traditions holds a greater possibility of effecting change in our world. This conviction found expression in her teaching and writing.

At MMC's Multifaith Leadership Breakfast in February, Premier Wab Kinew was the guest speaker. During his comments, Premier Kinew drew attention to the opening ceremony of the legislature meetings. Presently a distinctive Christian prayer is used. In light of the plurality of faiths in the Legislature the Premier expressed his conviction that the time had come to re-visit this opening. Later in the year the Premier invited various faith and community leaders to the Lt Governor's residence for a Prayer Summit. As of this moment we are still waiting to see what decision the Premier's office might make.

At MMC's AGM in September MMC welcomed Free Press writer, John Longhurst. He took this occasion to give those present an idea of what it has been like for him to write close to 1,000 Faith Page articles for the Free Press over the past five years. John acknowledged the different reactions he receives from the reading public as he attempts to create healing conversations in a world of mistrust. But instead of contributing to a world often divided between "Us" vs "Them" he seeks to reduce suspicions in "such a time as this." Those present



expressed deep appreciation to John for his comments and contribution to the city.

**Corrections and Justice:** This Committee continues its work of supporting chaplains in the provincial and federal penal institutions. It also continues to represent faith communities especially with the province's justice system. This past year the Art Contest for Inmates was sponsored by the Mennonite Faith Community, based on the theme: "Seeking the Light Inside." And during Restorative Justice Week, a workshop based on this theme was held, with the Honourable Matt Wiebe, Minister of Justice, presenting.

**Education:** This Committee has begun to explore ways of inviting people to the various locations of faith communities in the city. A first expression of this was the invitation for people to visit the Manitoba Buddhist Temple. The Chair looks forward to creating more such events in the future.

**Community Relations:** This Committee was instrumental in mounting several important public events, such as the Award for the Advancement of Interreligious Understanding. It also hosted the Annual Multifaith Leadership Breakfast, with guest speaker Premier Wab Kinew. Close to 170 people attended, and heard the Premier invite MMC to participate in a re-thinking of the prayer which opens legislative sessions.

**Spiritual Health:** In October this Committee mounted on workshop based on the theme: "Spirituality and Social Connections: Enriching the Aging Experience." This Committee is also seeking ways to advocate for the place of spiritual care within the Province's Health System.

With thanks - Ray Harris, Secretary

## WESTGATE MENNONITE COLLEGIATE

**January 8, 2025**  
**Annual Report**

The mission of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate is to provide a well-rounded education that will inspire and empower students to live as people of God. Our 2024-25 school year is going well with 348 students and full classes in all of our grades.



### Nurturing Faith

Our chapel theme this year connects to the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism. We will be looking at the call to reform and renewal, to renew our commitment to follow in the way of Jesus, and to reform our practices in order to live out Jesus’ gospel of peace. Through our chapels, we will explore a variety of Anabaptist practices, encouraging Westgate students and staff to participate in these practices

This year in our Spiritual Emphasis Week, we heard from Julia Klassen, Steve Bell, and Simon Hildebrandt, who each spoke about their faith at work. Julia shared her experiences as a counsellor, helping people overcome shame in a broken system and serving others with vulnerability. Steve shared songs of faith but insisted that it’s not the lyrics that make him a public Christian; rather, it’s his choices and how he relates to others. He closed by asking our students the following questions: “Do you want to be humble? Be kind?” His answer was: “Don’t try. Train.” Simon Hildebrandt, a 21-year-old Division One basketball player in North Carolina, compared his faith journey to a basketball game. The supportive people in his life, the opportunity to invest in his church community, and the practice of prayer and Bible study are tools that carry him through hard times.

### Who We Are

We have been in our newly renovated space for seven years now. I suppose one could say it is hardly new anymore. When it was completed, there was a plan to put up a donor wall to acknowledge the amazing generosity of the Westgate community. Well, that donor wall is finally in the atrium but it has become more than simply a donor wall. In the end, we created something much more meaningful and true to who we are. It displays the following panels:

1. A Mennonite School
2. Mission and Vision
3. A School with a Rich History
4. A Generous Community
5. A Faithful School



Respectfully Submitted,

James Friesen  
 Principal

# Listing of MCM Staff and Board of Directors

## Office:

600 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4  
Phone: 204-896-1616, fax: 832-7804  
Website: [www.mennochurch.mb.ca](http://www.mennochurch.mb.ca)

- [office@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:office@mennochurch.mb.ca)

Michael Pahl – *Executive Minister*

- [mpahl@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:mpahl@mennochurch.mb.ca)

Darryl Neustaedter Barg – *Associate Director of Communications*

- [dnbarg@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:dnbarg@mennochurch.mb.ca)

Zachary Entz – *General Accountant*

- [finance@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:finance@mennonitechurch.ca)

Steffi Friesen – *Accounts Payable/Finance Assistant*

- [finance@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:finance@mennochurch.mb.ca)

Naomi Ewert – *Administrative Assistant*

- [office@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:office@mennochurch.mb.ca)

## Leadership Ministries:

Jeff Friesen – *Co-Director of Leadership Ministries*

- [jfriesen@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:jfriesen@mennochurch.mb.ca)

## Mission Ministries

Melanie Neufeld – *Director of Mission Engagement*

- [mneufeld@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:mneufeld@mennochurch.mb.ca)

## Camps with Meaning

Dorothy Fontaine – *Director of Camps with Meaning*

- [dfontaine@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:dfontaine@mennochurch.mb.ca)

Nadya Langelotz – *Associate Program Director for Camps*

- [nlangelotz@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:nlangelotz@mennochurch.mb.ca)

Elisabeth Franz-Warkentin – *Administrative Assistant*

- [camps@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:camps@mennochurch.mb.ca)

## Camp Assiniboia

2220 Lido Plage Rd., Cartier MB, R4K 1A3; 864-2159

Ed Doerksen, *Facilities Manager*

- [assiniboia@campswithmeaning.org](mailto:assiniboia@campswithmeaning.org)

Megan Klassen-Wiebe, *Guest Group Coordinator*

- [carentals@campswithmeaning.org](mailto:carentals@campswithmeaning.org)

Kerry Hyde, *General Assistant*

- [caga@campswithmeaning.org](mailto:caga@campswithmeaning.org)

Lauren Gervais, *Food Services Coordinator*

- [cakitchen@campswithmeaning.org](mailto:cakitchen@campswithmeaning.org)

## Camp Koinonia

Box 312, Boissevain, MB, R0K 0E0 ; 534-2504

- [campkoinoniainfo@gmail.com](mailto:campkoinoniainfo@gmail.com)

## Board of Directors

Cheryl Braun, *Moderator*

- [moderator@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:moderator@mennochurch.mb.ca)

Johanna Klassen, *Young Adult*

Brian Dyck, *Winnipeg*

Roy Lee, *Winnipeg*

Ed Neufeld, *East*

Marvin Dyck, *South*

Evelyn Rempel Petkau, *South*

Karen Tiessen, *West*

# MCM Staff Photo Directory



Zachary Entz  
*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 (Completed in April  
2024)*



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 (Completed in Jan  
2025)*

# 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*



Brian Dyck



Johanna Klassen



Roy Lee



Ed Neufeld



Karen Tiessen



Marvin Dyck



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. River East Church\*
21. Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church
22. Sterling Mennonite Fellowship
23. Vietnamese Mennonite Church

## Eastern Cluster

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

## Southern Cluster

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

\* denotes affiliate member