

Mennonite Church Manitoba

November 2022



"What do you have in your hand?"

The question comes from Exodus 4:2, where God responds to Moses' hesitancy in taking up the call to lead God's people out of Egypt. God assures Moses that God can use what Moses has at hand—his own staff—to accomplish the mission God has called him to. Mennonite Peace House communities in Thailand use this question, "What is in your hand?" to inspire the identification of resources that can be used to build a holistic, transformative ministry in their community (www.mennonitechurch.ca/thailand).

Mennonite Church Manitoba congregations are also exploring what we have in our hands with the firm belief that we can do much more together than we can do apart. Together we rejoice for the ministry activities over recent months as a result of the gifts offered by our MCM community.

This year MCM established a one-time **Local Mission Grant** overseen by Melanie Neufeld, giving \$30,000 of our surplus from 2020-2021 to support eight congregations in sparking local ministry projects. These MCM congregations have a renewed vision for supporting refugees, starting a food pantry, opening a welcome centre, distributing emergency funds, opening up space for community activities,



or putting up a basketball court as a way to get to know their neighbours. Funds also supported Sterling and Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship members who returned to Pimicikamak First Nation in July where re-

lationships were rekindled with youth and adults, and children's programming and leadership development was offered in partnership with Living Word Church.

Camps with Meaning marked the exciting return of overnight camp this summer, including programs for Adults with Disabilities at Assiniboia and Koinonia for a mostly Covid-free experience. 523 campers explored what it meant to "let Jesus be captain" with the theme of "Get in the Boat" (Matt 28:23-27). Our Leadership team and staff led by Dorothy Fontaine, did an exceptional job of planning, implementing,



training, and supporting our new summer staff, many of whom had never worked an overnight camp. We are grateful for the 109 volunteers, leaders in training, and staff who made camp memorable through leading activities, cooking good food, and creating safety for everyone! Almost \$16,000 in Campership funds were used to support 79 campers. Recent banquets raised approximately \$13,000 to replenish this important fund. Thank you for your contributions!

MCM sent young people to Indonesia for the Mennonite World Conference **Global Youth Summit** where they gathered with others from 40 countries around the world. It was the "in-between spaces" of informal conversation that illuminated the global experience of being the church. Young leaders

came together in Edmonton as part of the MC Canada Gathering for the **Young Leaders Experience**. As a mentor to the group, Phil Campbell Enns noticed their giftedness, fun energy, and deep love for

the church. The **Amplify!** nationwide youth gathering at Camp Valaqua left a lasting impression on our



youth: seeing the breathtaking mountains, hearing voices singing all the time, enjoying campfires, and talking about hard things. We rejoice that our youth experienced a deep sense of community after a two-year isolation! Coming in 2023, MCM **Youth Winter Retreats** will be held in January and one February. We also look forward to hosting a **climate action retreat** for youth and young adults at Camp Assiniboia in April.

Kathy Giesbrecht is developing a **congregational care tool** to be offered through our website (Congregational Ministries page) in the very near future. She is available to visit with congregational folk working in the areas of worship, faith formation, congregational care, and community life. The **Faith and Life Choirs** are in the middle of a full season once again, with a Christmas carol sing coming up on December 18 and church visits through the year, culminating in Spring Concerts the first weekend of May.

Karen Schellenberg and Jeff Friesen led their first **Pastors' Retreat** in September and were commissioned



as co-directors of Leadership Ministries. Pastors reflected on their need for sharing in small groups as

a way to express their personal joys and challenges of this time. Other highlights included soul-moving music, warm cinnamon buns, celebrating at the Lord's Table, and exploring the beautiful little nooks at camp with a scavenger hunt.

MCM working groups have facilitated community building and resourcing among us. The **Woven** network of 85 MCM women is sponsoring a Ukrainian family related to Bethel Mennonite Church pastor Valerie Alipova. On October 29, our **Climate Action Working Group** explored the place where Hope and Courage emerge. Leader Sandy Plett shared, "Looking around the the 48 people in the room—each one there because Climate Action is very important to them. United in purpose and in hope, we sang, learned, and shared together." Participants explored advocacy for a Just Transition, learned about spiritual activism, considered the role of conversation



in climate action, and reconsidered the gift of More with Less. Our **Palestine-Israel Network** sponsored an event with Jack Sara and Yousef AlKhouri from Bethlehem Bible College which challenged MCM to understand what it means to be "Christ at the Checkpoint." Their minority experience as Christians in Palestine calls us to eliminate the walls of separation and move towards unity in Christ with other Christian groups.

Whether it be for Camps with Meaning, local mission, regional youth programs, MCM working groups, Faith and Life Choirs, support for healthy congregations, or leadership development—we are grateful for your support of our shared ministries through your prayer, volunteering, congregational giving, or individual donations. Thank you!