

The mission of First Mennonite Church is to welcome all to know Christ's salvation through worship and works of love, peace and justice in service for God.

Growing loving communities

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ... And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Paul to the church at Corinth

These words from Paul are often read at weddings and anniversaries and thus we tend to associate them with the love between two married people. However these words were not written for the occasion of a marriage. They were written to a church at conflict. They were written to provide instruction and encouragement. They were written to paint a picture of what *agape*, God's unconditional love, looks like.

The picture of love is a beautiful one, however it can be hard to create. We like to be right. Being patient can try our patience. We like to insist on our own way and find it hard not to be envious. Loving is hard work, but it is not impossible work. Love described by Paul is a verb, it is an action and not a feeling. Actions we can practice even when we don't feel that way.

There are times when loving is hard because we are not sure what to do or say. A friend or a family member experiences a life changing event - an illness, the loss of a job, a death in the family, a miscarriage, an end to a relationship - and we are not sure how to respond. We want to show we care and at the same time we do not want to make things worse by saying the wrong thing. We are conflicted and so often times we end up doing nothing. Our fear of making the pain worse by doing the wrong thing, keeps us from reaching out.

Yet to love calls us into community and not out of it. How can we free ourselves to move from this place of paralysis into loving action? One way is to equip ourselves with a new vocabulary. We can learn from those who have experienced what types words and actions show the care and love we want to. Would you be interested in such a workshop? Learning "how to love when a friend is hurting"? Please let me know, if there is enough interest we will host a workshop in March.

Game Night

February 7, 6:30 pm

Valentine Breakfast

February 15, 9:00 am

Pancake Lunch MYF Fundraiser

February 22, 12:00 pm

Ash Wednesday Service

February 25, 7:00 pm

In this issue...

Growing loving communities	1
FMC & Community Announcements	2
Columbus 2009	2
Birthdays & Anniversaries.....	3
Worship @ FMC	3
On the horizon	3
MYF Corner	3
February calendar	4

FMC & Community Announcements

We are experimenting with **digital recording of our worship services**. That means we will also have a CD copy of the service in addition to a tape copy. The CDs will be in the library to be signed out. Also, if you would like a copy dropped off or mailed to you on a regular basis, along with a bulletin, please speak to Rachel.

In our busy world it is challenging to find the time to tend to our relationship with God. Sometimes we desire to know God better but find things get in the way. One way to tend to our relationship with God is through **spiritual direction**. Spiritual direction is not counseling, it is meeting regularly (monthly) with a person who is trained to listen for and to help us notice and discern God's movement in our lives. If this is something you have been pondering, please see Rachel. She is training to be a spiritual director and is offering spiritual direction as part of the practicum for the course.

New in the library: *Gathering at the Hearth: Stories Mennonites Tell*. Edited by John E. Sharp.

On **Sunday, February 22**, early-music ensemble **Musica Felice** (with guest violinist Amy Glick) will present an evening of music at **Bethel Mennonite Church at 7:00pm**. All are invited to enjoy some music, hymn-singing and refreshments. Offering proceeds will benefit local charity.

Oak Grove is hosting the **Winter Bible Institute on February 21-22**. This year's speaker is **John Roth**, professor of history at Goshen College and author of numerous books including, *Stories: How Mennonites Came to Be* and *Beliefs: Faith and Practice*.

You are cordially invited to **The Second Annual "Swing into Spring" Style Show and Silent Auction** hosted by the Wadsworth Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary at the Galaxy Restaurant on Saturday, March 7, 2009. Doors open at 9:30 a.m. for people to view the Silent Auction items. Luncheon is at 11 a.m., followed by a fashion show of clothes from Kohls. Cost is \$20 and it benefits the Salvation Army children's programs and services. Tickets are available from the Salvation Army office or Roberta Mohr.

The **deadline** for contributions to the **March newsletter** is **February 16**.

The Broader Church

At its fall meeting, the **CDC** leadership group (Board of Directors, Ministerial, Missional Church, and Stewardship Committees) decided to explore the use of the **regional meetings** as a venue for encouraging and facilitating networking among congregations. A pilot regional meeting has been scheduled for the Chicago area for Saturday, March 7. The event will be held at Asian Mennonite Community Church from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Asian Mennonite meets at Lombard Mennonite Church. The day will include time for worship, interaction with other congregations and each of the four leadership committees, lunch, a hymnsing, and interaction with Milwaukee Mennonite Church. Although this meeting is for the Chicago area congregations, all CDC congregations are invited to attend.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership announces the appointment of LaVern Yutzy of Lititz, Pa., as a consultant on churchwide operations and alignment. Yutzy began in the role Jan. 8.

Yutzy will be responsible to help the denomination to live within its means, eliminate duplication and achieve its goals. He will be called to identify ways of integrating churchwide priorities into the programs and practices of the entire churchwide system as well as propose ways for simplifying the system.

"We are hopeful that LaVern's work in this role will work to set the stage for further transformation of identity, purpose and organization for Mennonite Church USA," said executive director Jim Schrag.

The hiring is connected to a February 2008 Executive Board statement that declared "our vision and call to engage in God's purposes in the world is not adequately supported by our present relationships, behaviors and organization." Later in 2008, the Executive Board outlined several approaches it would take to strengthen the churchwide system. Some of those areas already have been implemented while a proposed plan for one board of directors for the entire denomination has been deferred.

Worship @ FMC

FEBRUARY:

Ushers: Jay Landis and Angie Newcomer

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Nursery</u>
1	Jenny & Rachel H	Emma N
8	Jay & Rhonda L	Evelyn B
15	Ken & Norma R	Nate H
22	Darren & Angie N	Sharon G

Greeters should be at the front and back door by 10:20 and ushers should be ready to hand out bulletins and seat people by 10:30.

Those in the nursery should introduce themselves to parents of young children and sit near the back to watch for children heading to the nursery.

Please remember to find someone to fill-in for you if you cannot make it.

February Birthdays & Anniversaries

4 - Jim Mohr
11 - Nick Saunders
14 - Joslyn Saunders
18 - Marian Mohr
20 - Dan Moss
22 - Shirley Rohrer
26 - Mark Haas
27 - Jerry Newcomer
28 - Paul Brenneman
29 - Bob Moss

On the horizon...

February 25	Ash Wednesday
April 5	Palm Sunday
April 9	Maundy Thursday
April 10	Good Friday
April 12	Easter Sunday
June 25 - 27, 2009	Central District Annual Meeting in Sugarcreek
June 30 - July 5, 2009	Columbus 2009
July 14-19, 2009	Paraguay 2009

MYF Corner

February Events:

February 8,
Sledding

February 22,
Pancake Lunch Fundraiser for Columbus

Watch the bulletin for more details.

Bible Quiz:

1. What was Bathsheba doing when David first saw her?
2. In the account of the creation of the world, on which day were Adam and Eve made?
3. Ruth and Boaz were the great grandparents of which Old Testament king?
4. In Judges, who fell in love with a woman from the Valley of Sorek?

Submit your answers, include the Bible verse where you found it, to Rachel. There may be a prize.