



First Mennonite Church

Midweek E-Newsletter

December 27, 2023

To All Brothers and Sisters In Christ:

Next Steps in our Journey - *Latest leadership plans and decisions*

Hello friends,

What a season! Moving from Blue Christmas to Christmas to New Year in short succession, closely followed by our annual congregational meeting, it's a momentous time in the life of our congregation.

I know not everyone reads these newsletters. Since you are one who does, I thank you. You get advance notice of events and a sense of the coming months' transition work.

What is church **transition**, anyway? **It's the in-between time!**

- Between one settled pastor and the next
- Between one set of policies & procedures and a major revision
- Between the way we were and the way God is calling us to be now (while God does not change, the problems and challenges in the world do, so God's guidance will direct us differently)

In-between time can be frustrating, and it can be tempting to hold back because "I'm waiting to see if I like the next pastor." Are you ready for some pushback to that sentiment? I assert that the congregation is the "long-run" community that holds this church together through time, across the tenures of multiple settled pastors. The **congregation's ability to work together** will influence an individual's likelihood to stay in the church. Someone's level of contentment with church is more often about interpersonal issues (and the pastor may even be a scapegoat). If you wait to get involved until the next settled pastor has arrived, you may have missed significant chances to influence the future!

So that's what we work on now: enhance our ability to work together. This year we'll have a **Peace Party** every so often, working at listening to each other, welcoming each other and being welcome-able, and so on. Read the announcement elsewhere for more on that.

Blessings~Pastor Kristine

- **Ministries Council:** January 14 we will celebrate together after worship with a carry-in meal and our Annual meeting to hear our accomplishments and plan our next steps. Don't miss this rich family time to participate with your FMC brothers and sisters! There will be a copy of the proposed budget information in you boxes by Sunday so you can prayerfully consider it in advance.
- **Worship/Nurture/Vision:**
 - **Dec. 31 –Worship** will be directed by our carol singing. Thanks to all who submitted your favorite songs! It looks to be a joyful time together.
 - **Epiphany Sunday – January 7.** Norma Duerksen will bring our message.
 - **The Gospel of Luke** will be used for our theme for the coming months during worship.

Verse for Pondering: James 4:10 (NIV)

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”

Among Our Friends and In Our Prayers

- Pray for one another through our directory!
- **WDC Request:** “We lift up our church mission before God, seeking His divine intervention and guidance. We pray for the success of our church planting efforts, that hearts may be touched, and lives transformed by God’s love. Bless our church planters, provide resources, and strengthen the commitment of all involved. May Your light shine through our mission, bringing hope and healing to those we serve. In Jesus’ name, we present these requests. Amen.” – WDC Church Planting Commission

Upcoming Events

- This Sunday – **Carol Sing at 10:30 worship.**
- January 7 – **Welcome new members!**
- January 14 – **Carry-In Lunch and Annual Meeting**
- January 28 – **Peace Party**

Other Announcements

- Last call for new members who would like to join FMC on January 7th. Please let Pastor Kristine know if you would like to join this group.
- Pastor Kristine will be gone on vacation January 18-24.
- **Peace Party:** A shorter-than-usual worship service on January 28th will be followed by a meal (provided) and a Peace Party atmosphere to kick off the transition work. We'll practice listening and exploring our similarities and differences, and what such things mean and don't mean. Learning these peaceful practices *together* is designed to strengthen our community and diminish some of the interpersonal hurdles that occur. So please plan to come! We'll be out by 1:00 p.m.