

Pastoral Report

Congregational Meeting • June 9, 2002
Community Mennonite Church, Markham, Illinois

Focus, Focus, Focus

Is there any more important a task for Christ's body than to focus — on the stuff that really matters? On the stuff that promises to bring life? That's the challenge for every person and every group of persons committed to following Jesus: The challenge of discerning and acting upon those things that bring life. That, in the end, was the purpose of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

To that end then, we, your pastors, have sought to facilitate time and space for this challenge. The question before us at all times is: "Are we focused on the things that reflect Christ's call in our lives, and are we allowing God's Holy Spirit to determine the specifics on which we are focusing?"

While there is always room for improvement, it is heartening to bear witness to this congregation's desire to act on the call of the Gospel — on Christ's call — in its life! Clearly this congregation has decided to follow Jesus — clearly it has concerned itself with the meaning of discipleship — clearly it has wondered what else the Spirit may be requiring of it! All in all, it has sought to be faithful to God's call and God's promises. May God continue to bless Community Mennonite Church in its life — both in its worship and in its service.

Stick to it!

When we commit ourselves to various ministries or emphases it's important that we honor the commitments made. We encourage the congregation to continue its support of the many different programs, ministries, and weekly events to which it has committed itself. These include things like: Sunday School, Thursday Bible Study, Sunday Worship, Computer Lab,

Choirs, Kids Clubs, Men's Breakfast, Retreats (*Church, Men's and Women's*), Vacation Bible School, Building Expansion, HOPE Community Services, CMELC, etc. Once decisions are made about certain programs or ministries, it's important that we stick to it — that we remember the decisions and commitments made. This congregation has shown an incredible ability to "stick to it!" For that it should be commended and encouraged: Keep it up!

Don't "Keep the Faith" — "Give it away!"

Evangelism continues to be one of the most natural and yet most difficult things to practice. If we are so convinced of the "life-changing" value of our relationship with Christ, and if we benefit from our association with the family of faith at CMC, doesn't it stand to reason that we should quite naturally and regularly invite others to join us? Pastors Chuck & Bonnie began challenging the congregation about this some years ago. More recently Pastor Horace shared this emphasis through various teachings. Don't keep this faith thing to yourself. Give it away! Invite your neighbors, your friends — even your enemies!

Pastoral Team doing just fine, thank you!

All three pastors continue to feel great about the opportunity to work together. What a joy it is to share in the vision of this congregation. And what an honor it is to have been entrusted with the responsibility of leading this church in the pursuit of that vision. The pastors continue to work on clarifying roles and, even though these roles are never "set in stone," we have come to a place that feels quite comfortable for each. Pastor Chuck is acting as lead pastor, taking primary responsibility for the coordination of the team, the congregation's worship life, and administrative functions. Pastor Bon-

nie's job description includes teaching and worship leading, but carries a heavier emphasis in visitation, children's ministry and counseling. Both Pastors Chuck and Bonnie are also giving leadership to the music ministry of CMC. Associate Pastor Horace McMillon's responsibilities include teaching and worship leading. He has taken primary responsibility for the Thursday evening Bible Studies. He also regularly facilitates worship on Sunday mornings. Other areas of responsibility include Youth Catechism courses, outreach to some of our marginalized members, and being available for any number of tasks or events that require or benefit from his involvement.

Talk to us!

Pastors Chuck, Bonnie and Horace desire to be responsive to your needs. Talk to us about areas of church life that you have concerns about. Affirm us when we're doing it right! Challenge us when we need a challenge! Correct us when correction is needed. We want to be true to our calling, and responsive to the vision of this church. The more open the feedback is, the more possible it is for us to adjust accordingly.

We thankfully long for more!

As we look at this congregation known as Community Mennonite Church,

We are grateful for:

- the spirit of fellowship
- the resolve to be a multi-cultural, inter-racial congregation
- the freedom to try things
- the readiness to forgive when things don't work out just as planned
- the easy-going nature

We long for:

- more persistent presence
- more vibrant, infectious worship
- more focused ministries
- more outreach
- more interaction between members
- more interaction with other churches

Major Highlight!

The annual Church Retreat was held at Camp Friedenswald May 17-19. What a joyous event for those that were able to attend. The most moving part of the whole weekend was the baptism of eleven individuals who gave public witness to their faith in Christ and their desire to follow him in life:

Byrone Hall,
Charles Rudolph,
Evie McDowell,
Floyd Brown,
Holly Clark,
Johnny Blackwell,
Lyn-Etta Hall,
Ricky Taylor,
Sean Thomas,
Tashina Brown,
Terry Rogers, Sr.

Praise God for these commitments. Continue to support them with your prayers and with your example.

Bottom Line:

Things are looking up.

- Way up!
- God is good.
- The Holy Spirit has been given.
- God's will has been revealed!
- Jesus is with us!

As we look to the future, let each of us do so with the knowledge of God's promise: That He will never leave us alone — that was the reason for Jesus' presence among us in the first place! And it continues to be the reason for the Holy Spirit's presence among us, even today as we bask in the knowledge of His love.

Rejoice, for you are a part of a wonderful demonstration of God's love. This demonstration is known as Community Mennonite Church of Markham, Illinois.

*Report prepared by Chuck Neufeld
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