

Pastoral Report — July 8, 2004

Chuck Neufeld for CMC Pastoral Team

After 47 years CMC is still here! Still a beacon — still a community poised to make a difference!

What wondrous a call has come to us: to be God's people — filled with joy, hope and love. Joy, when we are overwhelmed with the gift of life abundant. Hope, when we yearn for wholeness and a fuller demonstration of all that God promises. Love, when nothing else matters and nothing else works. We have been given all of these. We are indeed God's people: alive to God's call, dedicated to God's service.

Sometimes, when I think of why we exist, I become overwhelmed. I think about what is, and wonder about what might yet be! I know I'm not alone in this. I suspect we all, in our own way, take turns doing the same: thinking about the present reality, while, at the same time, wondering about future possibilities. It's no easy task to maintain hope about the future while being aware — even burdened — by some of the realities of the here and now. But, it's precisely in that context that we proclaim our redemption, we herald our joy, we commit our lives. Because that's how the kingdom gets established; within us, and all around!

One only needs to take a quick glance to find many reasons for gratitude:

- The security we find in each other; a treasure we must care for most tenderly.
- The perspectives we have gained by training our focus on Christ's way in each other's presence.
- The empowerment we offer each other as we seek to tackle life's challenges.
- The encouragement we feel when others support and pray for us.
- The joy we feel when healings are experienced within our family of faith.
- The tender ache we suffer when we witness each other's pain.

God has given us each other! Christ has informed us of who we are. The Holy Spirit comforts and guides us as we seek to be faithful to our calling. May we as CMC commit ourselves yet again to listening carefully to God's voice — still & small, or loud & big — and then let us act

in love and unity as we seek to demonstrate our "life in Christ" to each other, but also to those all around.

Bonnie and I are in our third year of our third three-year term as Pastors at CMC. Eight amazingly full and vibrant years! How time flies. Horace is beginning his second three-year term as Associate Pastor. What privilege we all claim to serve you in this way. We seek your counsel and support as we devote ourselves to the many tasks that come our way. Don't hesitate sharing whatever concerns you may have about our work; but please don't hesitate encouraging us by sharing positive feedback as well. We long for your guidance as we continue our service as your pastoral team.

A totally incomplete look over the past six months:

- Pastor Horace's dad died, July 1.
- Pastor Horace's Evaluation — CMC is of one mind in wanting him to continue!
- Pastors Chuck & Bonnie attended Central District Conf., June 24-26.
- MCCA "Every Door" Evangelism Campaign, June 19 & 26.
- Men's Breakfast Fishing Trip, June 12.
- Pastor Horace started a Jr. High series on Christian "Teen Living."
- Pentecost, May 30 (Remember how well you all preached?!)
- CMC Retreat, May 14-16.
- CMC Discernment Process (Started in earnest at the annual retreat.)
- Raheen Johnson's Baptism, May 16.
- Kids' Club was again initiated by Pastor Bonnie.
- MCCA (Markham Community Church Alliance) Appreciation Dinner for community leaders and elected officers, April 24.
- Holy Week & Easter services, April 8-11. Gospel Choir sang!
- Palm Sunday, April 4.
- Eric & Karen Shirk joined CMC, March 28
- Served PADS meals on several occasions.

- Men's Breakfast continued to meet on a monthly basis.
- Several "Activity Nights" for Jr. Youth were hosted by Pastors Chuck & Bonnie and Eric & Karen Shirk.
- Our Loose Change & Sunday School offerings went for various MCC relief projects.
- Bob Bruno interviews regarding "Faith & Work." (Feb-March)
- Multi-Cultural Sunday, February 29. Gospel Choir sang!
- Pastors Chuck & Bonnie resourced the Central Plains Pastor-Spouse Retreat in Nebraska, Feb. 22-24.
- Pastor Bonnie resourced the Illinois Mennonite Conference Leadership Retreat at Camp Mennohaven, Feb.20-21.
- Pastor Chuck resourced the Cincinnati Mennonite Arts Festival, Feb. 6-8.
- Martin Luther King Sunday, January 18.

Many — countless! — other things happened. The above list gives you only a flavor of what goes on in our lives, but more importantly in the life of the congregation. Every member — every attender — young and old — seasoned or new — has an important role to play in our health as a gathered bunch of Jesus followers.

As we look to the future, we are aware of so many opportunities. Opportunities for ministry, for evangelism, for service, for prophetic witness, for worship, for fellowship, for just being. We are already benefiting from the discernment process Ken Hawkey is facilitating. Our hope and prayer is that this process will assist us as leaders and as a body of believers to discover how we can be even more effective and faithful in our living and our witness.

May God's Holy Spirit guide us as we continue our experiment known as Community Mennonite Church. It is quite the challenge — and how wonderful an opportunity!