

Pastoral Report

Annual Congregational Meeting
Community Mennonite Church
Markham, Illinois
June 29, 2008

Pastors: Cyneatha Millsaps, Bonnie Neufeld, Chuck Neufeld

Introduction

In many ways this year has been filled with emotions similar to what Mary, the mother of Jesus, must have felt. The visitation had happened, the announcement had been made, the vision was clearly received, and then — a time of waiting. We, as she, pondered all these things in our hearts. And now, on this day when we review the life of our congregation over the past year and envision what our calling and blessing might be for the year to come, we offer our praise and thanksgiving for God's mighty acts.

Calling Pastor Cyneatha Millsaps

It's no small thing to extend a "full-time" call to a new pastor, but that's exactly what we're considering doing today. We marvel at God's leading and rich blessing with regard to this matter. Who could ever have imagined anything as intricate as what's been presented to us in this blessed opportunity? We rejoice in God's tender care in response to CMC's yearning. We are poised to experience the next leg of the journey with our sister and brother Cyneatha and Steve Millsaps.

Pastors Chuck & Bonnie aren't going anywhere!

Over the years CMC has become more and more certain of its resolute desire for a multi-racial pastoral team. We've had them before, and are wonderfully blessed to have one again. The past 18 months, or so, have been rich indeed. How wonderful it is for a team to come together with eagerness and joy. Pastors Chuck & Bonnie are looking forward to being a part of this team in an ongoing way. With Cyneatha at the helm, Chuck & Bonnie will bring their gifts to the team in ways that capitalize on their skills and interests and that relate to the ongoing needs of the congregation.

Pastor Chuck is IMC Conference Minister

Unless there is an unanticipated and immediate shift in Chuck's sense of God's leading, he will be sending a letter tomorrow officially accepting the call to serve the Illinois Mennonite Conference as the next Conference Executive Minister. From Chuck: *"This will be a full-time assignment and will require significant travel, including being gone from Markham on many Sundays. Even so, I look forward to participating as a member of the pastoral team as discerned by Lead Pastor Cyneatha and Co-pastor Bonnie. The nature of my involvement will evolve as new arrangements are discerned."*

CMC's Future

God's call to us continues — powerfully and persistently. When we note the many needs within and beyond our congregation, we can only marvel at God's miraculous provision. We have indeed been given every spiritual gift, every material gift, every visionary gift needed to respond to the call of Christ's gospel. "How to respond to which needs" is a question that requires ongoing discernment. It's *always* something that is before us. We're never really "done" with such discernment. Some of the realities and needs that deserve our ongoing attention or development include:

- Christian "discipleship" training
- Anabaptist Biblical teaching.
- Membership/Baptism classes
- Marriage classes
- Christian Discipleship training
- Mentoring for kids and youth
- Youth programs. What kind of programs, services, or activities could more effectively respond to the needs of our youth; both in CMC and beyond?
- CMC's Sunday School and Christian Ed programs. How can these be adjusted or even reborn to be more relevant and effective?
- Outreach/church growth. How can we be more inviting and retaining?
- Education/school needs in our community. Are there ways in which we can be more involved?
- Violence – community and domestic. How can we as Jesus followers respond to this reality with creativity and defiant hope?
- Economic/wealth/poverty realities
- Small groups
- Promoting wellness
- Strengthening ties with community agencies and churches

Your pastors are a dedicated bunch!

Your pastors are poised, positioned and prepared to lead CMC into this next leg of our common journey. This is a great opportunity for us as a congregation. Let us be reminded yet again of two verses from the book of Isaiah:

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? — Isaiah 43:19

And when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left, your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." — Isaiah 30:21