



Mennonite Church San Jose Assembly *How shall we speak?*

Ruth Hartzler Martin and Prem Dick will represent our congregation at the summer meeting of Mennonite Church USA in San Jose, CA. A discussion will be on the agenda for that meeting concerning the disciplining of congregations. Ruth and Prem will want to know how the congregation wants to be represented.

Originally brought to the denomination as a proposed resolution, the Executive Board of MCUSA approved it for discussion, but not for a vote, wanting to encourage "respectful sharing, listening and learning." The original resolution asks that member conferences of Mennonite Church USA end the practice of disciplining or expelling congregations based on differing interpretations of the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. While the resolution is general in nature, it is acknowledged that this practice has been applied to congregations based on their openness to accept persons of different sexual orientations.

We invite you as individuals and small groups to read through the resolution and discuss it together at any time during April. The resolution is available in the CMCL office. Council will be bringing the following action for discussion and voting on April 29.

Action: We encourage our delegates to MC USA to speak on behalf of CMCL in support of a resolution for member conferences to end, and the leaders of MC USA to discourage, the practice of disciplining or expelling congregations based on differing interpretations of the Confession of Faith in Mennonite Perspective.

Grant Street property

A group is meeting regularly on behalf of Church Council and the congregation to consider the future of the Grant Street property. Cindy Hinkle is chairing the group and Donna Walton Gibbs is the council liaison. Members of the group are dividing up various tasks for further research and conversation.

- Checking viability and financing of suggested uses (potential resources)
- Dialoging with neighbors
- Code, uses and legal issues
- Existing conditions
- Costs for renovations
- Congregation discussion and visioning
- Deciding on balance between church-supported and self-sustaining

Moving further into vision and values

As we've shared stories, scriptures and songs that shape us, we look for the core values that underlie those stories. What light do our core stories offer us as a faith community? It is out of our underlying (and often unspoken) values that we find direction for releasing the gifts and energy among us.

Chad Martin, Louise Ranck, Janet Dick and Pam Dintaman are meeting to gather the responses that various groups have given.

What might underlying, unspoken values look like? Here's a preview:

- Turning towards God at the center is more important for us than defining the outer edges.
- Jesus is the central reference for our faith and lives—yet we carry a deep respect and readiness to learn from people of other faith traditions.
- Many voices and styles are part of Sunday morning. We don't want to leave our intellect behind when we come to worship and look for ways to speak to the mind and heart. We expect our preachers to bring their wrestlings and unfinished processes as well as what has been clarified for them. We want our life experiences and our questions to be taken seriously.

Sing the Journey May 12-13

Someone said once that Mennonites pray through their singing. For CMCL, singing is prayer, joy, lament and an expression of our life together. We are blessed with good music. While we were in the middle of finishing the *Community Songbook*, we learned that a new songbook was being created called *Sing the Journey*. We were so far into the project that we made the decision to keep going and printed ours in 2003. Through it we've been able to enjoy: *Rain down, He came down, Don't be afraid, If you believe and I believe, The Lord lift you up, and My soul is filled with joy.*

The Mennonite press released *Sing the Journey* last year. We've been watching its use increase in surrounding Mennonite churches and in shaping some of the newer common hymns, including some that we included in our *Community Songbook*. Worship Committee recently agreed to purchase *Sing the Journey* for CMCL. It gives us access to songs now being enjoyed by the larger Mennonite community and we would not need to put

additional time into getting further licenses and permissions for our own book.

We have invited Jim and Angie Clemens to come May 12-13 to introduce us to some of the songs. They have been actively involved in the Laurelville worship event as well as Jim composing music included in *Sing the Journey*. Mark May 12-13 on your calendar.

"Where can you shine?"

A lot of times church work is, well, work.

But on occasion the things we do for CMCL transcend work. We aren't conscious of effort, but get lost in the joy of contributing.

We may come away thinking, "I was meant to do that."

Ron Umble experiences fulfillment leading singing. As the congregation rises and everyone lends his or her voice in a celebration of song, Ron can feel he's at the center of the universe.

It's behind-the-scenes work where **Julie Kauffman-Jantzi** finds satisfaction. She particularly enjoys planning Women's Retreat, where her role is to set a theme, extend hospitality and encourage others to share from the heart. The fellowship that unfolds is, for Julie, one of the best reasons to belong to CMCL.

Darrell Yoder feels engaged when he's sitting on a Sunday morning before young faces and telling a story from the Bible. One Sunday he illustrated the story of the Prodigal Son by ripping a sheet of paper—a metaphor for the torn relationship between father and son. The children watched transfixed as the paper tore. "You could have heard a pin drop," Darrell recalls.

While committee work can be drudgery, **Marlene Reiff** knows it doesn't have to be. She recalls a brainstorming session with committee members that created

excitement for the tasks ahead. She came away energized and feeling "like something important had happened."

Linda High remembers similar feelings of good things happening at Peace School. In helping children think about peacemaking and in working with like-minded adults, Linda got a sense that this is where she needs to be.

Michael Eby-Good said times he has helped prepare meals while funeral services we're going on have felt like a powerful way to minister to those who are hurting. The kitchen work "can be as worshipful as anything that happens upstairs," he said.

Faith Cowell remembers delight and satisfaction in pulling together a Sunday School teacher-

appreciation breakfast, while **Ken Kulp** has found his niche planning wine-tasting socials for the men of CMCL.

Scott Weaver said working with other guys over several Saturdays to

create the courtyard behind the church annex was time well spent.

Kelvin Mack found serving on pastoral team a "good stretch" that took him out of his comfort zone as he interacted with people he otherwise wouldn't have gotten to know.

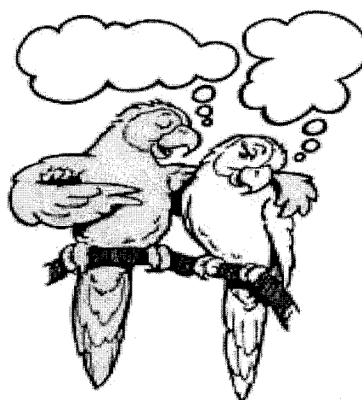
Daryl Snider said he and wife, **Jean Sensenig**, were apprehensive when they began terms as senior youth advisers, but the concerns melted as he was pulled into the energy of the group. "It surprised me how fun and rewarding it was," he said.

Louise Ranck, who considers congregational singing a "deep ritual," remembers leading the singing after the death of Mark Siemens and feeling privileged to hold in her hands that holy moment.

How do the rest of us approach the work of the church?

We may offer our time and talents to the life of our faith community out of obligation, of course.

But it's the hope of the Leadership Selection committee, as we begin the work of recruiting people for positions, that our gifts mesh with church work that is most meaningful to us. Is there a greater gift to others and ourselves when we bring the best of who we are to our work?



To Do List for April

- Reflect on your own gifts.
- Ask others where they have served at CMCL. What was it like?
- Tell someone why you do what you do at CMCL.
- Affirm gifts you see in others.
- Encourage someone to fill out their response form.