



Many thanks to Donna Stoltzfus who has kept the CMCL office in shape for 11 plus years, weathering every pastor since Vern Rempel! We wish you the best, Donna, in your new work at Ten Thousand Villages.



CMCL medical workers, physicians, nurses, social workers, nutritionists, administrators, mental health workers:

What has stirred in you during the Healthcare Access series these weeks?

- We invite you to gather for lunch next Sunday, February 18, immediately following second service in the Fellowship Room.
- Consider it a time to share with each other about your daily work and overall concerns.
- What are your dreams and hopes?
- It's a "Stone Soup" lunch: Carol Spicher will bring white chicken chili that will inspire you to bring something to round it out! RSVP to Carol Spicher.

Mark your calendar

May 12-13

CMCL Worship Committee has purchased *Sing the Journey*, a new songbook, for use in our worship services. Musicians and songwriters Jim and Angie Clemens will be at CMCL the weekend of May 12 and 13 to introduce the book to our congregation. Worship Committee is planning sessions for both days. Reserve the dates!

Finding our way ... as a congregation

"Today it is popular to think about systems and strategic planning...these techniques never seem as real or as meaningful as the simple action of sharing stories and shaping community." (from *Sharing Stories, Shaping Community*)

Our faith and our life together is shaped by stories. We link our story with the biblical story and we gain direction as stories teach us what we care about.

In 2001 the CMCL council led a congregation-wide process of listening to the core stories of people in the congregation. In recent re-covenanting worship services and small groups we again told the stories that have been shaping us.

Several groups reported that their own storytelling evening gave them another way of knowing each other.

Our next step is to uncover the core values and the guidance that these stories hold along with identifying the strengths and gifts already found in the congregation. We will continue to build on past work the congregation has done.

Council is forming a six-person group to work with this process. Pastors Chad Martin and Pam Dintaman are part of this group along with Janet Dick, representing CMCL's council. Leave your name with the church office if you have interest in this area. We're looking for people who can help distill information and hear underlying values in stories as well as identifying strengths within CMCL. We will work together March through May.

We will focus discussion within the congregation in April and May where underlying core values can shed light on congregational identity, vision and calling. More information will be coming. Our hope is that uncovering common language and values can bring us further into living out shared hopes and dreams.

—Pam Dintaman

Looking back, looking forward *Summer Ventures for CMCL Children, Youth*

Once upon a time, some wonderful CMCL parents developed a summer Peace School, sort of an alternative to summer Bible school with a different peace theme each year. As our number of children grew, so did the amount of planning and energy needed to carry on with this three evening program held each June. Busy schedules and the enormity of the task didn't bring forth

enough volunteers to make Peace School happen last summer. We saw too that peace teachings are being integrated into our children's classes more regularly on Sunday mornings.

Sometimes when programs are given time to rest, new ideas and energy can emerge. This is the summer for trying some new directions and I invite your participation as we try on some new ideas for size.

- **Venture Club** will continue the second Wednesday evening of each month with an emphasis on building strong relationships with each other and our local community.
- **Junior Youth** will also continue with monthly activities and **Senior Youth** will have planned events every two weeks throughout the summer. Since we don't have Christian Education during the summer months, this approach will give continuity to each of the age groups.
- **Age 2–grade 2** will play and learn about God with middle school and high school buddies the second Wednesday morning of each month from 9–11 a.m.. In addition to giving our older and younger children the opportunity to get to know each other better, this will leave an open window for our moms group to also try some different programs that they haven't had the opportunity to do.

It's exciting to think of what experiences we can provide for our children and youth to develop both as their own faith community and as a part of our larger faith community. We are fortunate to have so many wonderful kids here at CMCL.

—Emily Smucker Beidler



Gone to the desert to pray

Silence and solitude are long-standing faith practices in Christianity as well as other faith traditions. In the 1980's I experienced my first silent retreat and find myself coming back again and again to these times for listening and nourishment. This week I'm at a remote Sonoran desert hermitage east of Tucson, Arizona. The Cascabel Hermitage was founded by people wanting to preserve the desert land and provide a place for inter-faith desert retreat sojourners. (Goodbye to flush toilets, electricity and plumbing!)

Pastoral team members are available during this time as always. They are listed in each week's bulletin and can be reached through the directory or by calling the CMCL office. I return Sunday evening, February 18, and anticipate joining you in worship for Jazz Sunday, February 25, as we enter into a Lenten season together.



Cascabel's straw-bale hermitage

—Pam Dintaman

Dialogue at CMCL

by Katy Heinzel

Dialogue—a conversation with a center, not sides.

Dialogue—a conversation in which people think together in relationship. Thinking together implies that you no longer take your own position as final.

These quotes help define the art of talking, listening and learning together that we have been calling Dialogue and Deliberation (D+D) at CMCL. I joined 18 others in Atlanta in January for a three-day conference given by Susan Nienaber (Alban Institute) entitled "You Can Talk About the Tough Stuff". We worked on assessing levels of conflict, from minimal to highly conflicted, and exploring methods of talking with one another to allow everyone to have a voice in these different situations. Using Dialogue in a multitude of ways—from brainstorming to bringing together factions within a congregation—are all possible ways to use these methods of having conversation together.

Here at CMCL we have been working with the concepts of Dialogue since last summer, when we offered questions to work at getting to know one another better, again at retreat and most recently in our January 21 congregational meeting where we looked at increasing the associate pastor position to full time. We can and are learning to talk about difficult issues in a way that allows all of us to not only have a voice, but also to be transformed in our thinking as we listen to others.

We have been using a fairly controlled and systematic method of speaking with one another in our dialogues - a practice which can seem uncomfortable at times because it's so different from how we typically interact. This method is one that is typically used when there is tension to be explored by the group. We have worked with this model, moving around a circle, allowing silence and space for each person to speak to the question, regardless of our reason for using dialogue, whether we are working on getting to know each other or discussing potentially difficult topics. In using this more controlled method time and again, we are practicing how to speak and listen to each other and are able to have conversation on any topic, no matter how difficult the subject matter.

I see many ways in which to use the dialogue model at CMCL. In working with a single question and giving each person time to answer for themselves the dialogue process aims to evoke insight, which is a way of reordering our knowledge—particularly the taken-for-granted assumptions that we often bring to the table. We might use Dialogue when looking at our annual retreat, uses for the Grant Street property, how to parent our children—the list is endless. I hope to find ways to use it outside of our congregation as well—possibly getting together with other faith traditions to explore how God moves in our lives.

We will be having another facilitator training session soon. Stay tuned for details. I end with a quote from Margaret Wheatley's book *Turning to One Another*:

"Relationships are all there is. Everything in the universe only exists because it is in relationship to everything else. We have to stop pretending we are individuals who can go it alone."