



# Director of Church Ministries Report

*"Don't be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. My Father's house has room to spare. If that weren't the case, would I have told you that I'm going to prepare a place for you? When I go to prepare a place for you, I will return and take you to be with me so that where I am you will be too. You know the way to the place I'm going."*

Jesus' words here in John's gospel vs 1-4 resonate with me. When Jesus thought of those who were his followers, of those who would become his followers, his love for them and for us is apparent. John communicates to us that this love that Jesus has for us will compel us to love others. This entire section of Scripture is framed by Jesus telling his disciples and subsequently every one of us to love one another. (13:34-35 & 15:12-13)

Love one another. I'm guessing you feel it too. This is the struggle of today. Sure it's easy to love those who align themselves most closely with our view of the world. It's pretty easy to talk to someone who shares your view on the freedom convoy, what it means to wear masks, getting vaccinated, responding to government restrictions and mandates. How are you doing with

people who don't share your view? If you're anything like me, you've become comfortable with some relational distance. As I type this, I am convicted! This is not the way of Jesus. Too often, I have failed. In spite of this, I am convinced that Jesus remains the same. That God is still love. And that you and I are recipients of this perfect love. And that it's still possible to obey the commandment of Jesus, that we love one another. Of course it is! God's grace is extravagant and his faithfulness is without measure. This is true for you and it's true for me. And it's definitely true for the Bride of Christ, His church.

## **The Life of MBCM Churches**

The life of the family of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Manitoba in 2021 could be told in a lot of ways. I'm going to tell you a few stories.

Starting in Flin Flon. Randall and Faith Krahn have been serving at our church in Flin Flon for many years. Perhaps you were unaware that they've also been serving as the pastor of the Evangelical Mennonite Church in Creighton, SK that whole time! We've been privileged to be a part of this partnership over the years. Due to various circumstances, the



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church in Creighton decided to close. As a part of that closing process, a significant portion of the church family has decided to join the MB church in Flin Flon. The EMC leadership has blessed their folks in this move. I want to thank everyone involved in this journey. Layton Friesen, Conference Pastor with EMC, and the leadership teams at both churches. May this expression of Christ's bride know, experience and live out the love of Christ.

Pastoral transitions are a regular part of the life of most churches. Sometimes we're comfortable with these changes, other times it feels like a struggle. In 2021, there were a number of pastoral transitions. All of them have a story to tell. Here's one. John Neufeld resigned from his ministry role at The Meeting Place and a few months later began at Eastview Community Church. I don't tell this story to talk about John really. John's a good pastor and I'm thankful that he has found a place to join in the ministry Jesus is doing at Eastview. I share this story to celebrate the manner in which this transition took place. I had the privilege of connecting with the leadership groups of both churches during this season. I am humbled by the humility and grace demonstrated by both. Thank you to TMP leadership for the blessing you extended to Eastview as they welcomed John into a leadership

role. Thank you to Eastview for the honouring and careful way that you related to TMP. You have been a faithful witness in loving one another.

The Christian Centre Fellowship in Thompson recently decided to close the church. CCF was founded in 1979 and joined the MB family in 1980. The reasons for closing are varied. I heard stories from people who have spent their whole lives in this church family. The thought of not having this community for their children is a painful concern. Others shared of the work the church has been up to for the past 40 years. There are decades of ministry and service that should be honoured. There's a struggle in letting go. God has been at work in Thompson, and that's not going to stop. There is also anticipation in the community that remains, a hope that something new will emerge. Please pray for our sisters and brothers in Thompson, as they navigate a new season.



**Lead Pastor Transitions in 2021**

Community Fellowship Church (Newton)

- Bob Enns retired
- Keith Hillier beginning as Lead Pastor (2022)

Friends Community Church (Carman)

- Terry Sawatsky retired
- Rick Hill began as Transitional Pastor

Lakeview Community Church (Killarney)

- David Gibson resigned
- Dave Heasler began as Transitional Pastor

Eastview Community Church (Winnipeg)

- Delbert Enns retired
- John Neufeld began as Lead Pastor

The Meeting Place (Winnipeg)

- John Neufeld resigned

Selkirk Community Church

- Ryan Galashan began as Lead Pastor

Manitou Christian Fellowship

- Andrew Krahn began as Transitional Pastor

Crossroads Mennonite Brethren Church (Winnipeg)

- Joe Welty began as Lead Pastor

Faithworks (Winnipeg)

- Roger Thiessen retiring (2022)
- Melanie Unger beginning as sole Lead Pastor (2022)

**Resourcing pastors and churches**

PostureShift happened! For those who don't remember, we had to postpone

PostureShift a couple times in the always changing landscape of the pandemic. Thankfully, we were able to gather a significant group in person, as well as a good contingent online to engage the content provided by Bill Henson and Josh Proctor. It was a privilege to engage this learning with our community. Every one of us has the capacity to grow, and I'm thankful for this opportunity to motivate and equip us to grow in our ongoing work to better love LGBTQ+ persons. There's a lot of hurt to heal and adjustment to make. Let's keep forging forward, that all people might have peace to know Jesus in our churches.

Our Nuts & Bolts series continued in 2021. A time for pastors and credentialed persons within the MBCM family to gather, learn, teach and grow together. In 2021, we've also included our family to the west. Saskatchewan Mennonite Brethren pastors have been joining us, starting in 2021. Thank you to Phil Gunther, SKMB Provincial Director, for inspiring this partnership.

It continues to be a privilege to come alongside churches as they navigate changing restrictions, pastoral searches, transition moments, vision discernment and much more. I'm grateful for the team that we have at MBCM. We very much work together to provide MBCM churches with the best support we can.



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Your emails or phone calls are always welcome. Please don't hesitate to reach out, we're here to support you in whatever way we can.

### **Looking forward**

Love one another. I'm not telling this to you, I'm really just echoing Jesus' words in my head. What will this mean in 2022? Here's what I know.

As I write this, we've just finished our most recent Nuts & Bolts. Where many of your pastors gathered to work together. What I saw brings joy and hope. I saw pastors and leaders who are working to continue to become what the church needs today. I saw pastors and leaders willing to learn from each other. I saw pastors and leaders that care about each other. I saw pastors and leaders who love you with a depth that's difficult to grasp. It can only be explained one way I think. The all encompassing love of Jesus! God's grace is extravagant and his faithfulness is without measure. No matter what 2022 brings, this is true.

*Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you have really known me, you will also know the Father. From now on you know him and have seen him." (John 14:6-7)*