



Director of Church Ministries Report

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The Life of MBCM Churches

Sure, pastors are great, but have you met the rest of the people in your church? One of my favorite things is spending time with people and some of my favorite people are a part of MBCM churches. There's the farmer who won't stop spending time on her church. The professor who wants to build things with his hands. The business person who keeps the team together and on task. The teenager whose response to the Sunday sermon is to apply what she learned to her relationships with her friends. The nurse whose tears demonstrate the care she has for her church family. The retiree who invests even more of their time into the life of the congregation. The piano teacher who invests her talent in worship. The professional violinist sharing her world class ability with her church community. The teacher navigating single life with two teenagers at home. The administrator battling cancer in front of and with her church family. The student who is hurt by their church and dares to stay. And so many more!

I know that I've just identified a whole bunch of people by their vocation. These precious followers of Jesus are so much more! More than I can describe here. And they are the church. In every way, the people who call your church home are the fabric of your church. It

continues to be my privilege to get to know some of you. From Assembly 2022 to now, I've had the joy to join one of our MBCM churches 24 times for a Sunday service (one on Saturday). I'm happy to preach a message, but I love spending time with God's people. Thank you, MBCM churches, for being communities that continue to produce Jesus followers. Keep doing your good work!

Back to those pastors. Pastors are people of course, experiencing the sidwinding realities of life like everyone does. I am grateful for their diligence in ministry. I'm encouraged by their posture when things get tough. I'm uplifted by their determination to engage the mission God has given to the churches that they serve and lead. Pastor transitions are a part of the life of the church. This past year was no exception. At one point in 2022, MBCM was experiencing a 25% vacancy in lead pastor roles across Manitoba. As I type this today, that number is less than 10%. There are four churches who currently have a lead pastor vacancy. I invite you to pray for Lakeview Community Church(Killarney), Justice MB Church, Friends' Community Fellowship(Carman) and Cornerstone Community Church(Flin Flon) as they continue to



search for a pastor as they continue to live out their calling as people of Jesus.

The work of our pastors, leads and associates, didn't get any easier in the past year. I've seen many pastors struggle to identify which way to go in this sort-of-post-pandemic church. I've seen numerous pastors grapple with their own health and calling. I've seen pastors time at their church come to an undesirable end. Through it all, God is faithful. For me, the window through which I observe God's faithfulness is often in the life of one of our MBCM pastors. I won't be specific, but allow me to generalize a few observations. In the face of sharp adversity, I've seen pastors hold their integrity. In the slog of declining volunteer engagement, I've seen pastors dare to move boldly forward. In the risk of polarized disagreement, I've seen pastors dare to teach the message of Christ. In the darkest of moments, I've seen pastors pour out compassion into the life of a friend. MBCM pastor, thank you for your faithfulness to our Lord.

Resourcing MBCM Pastors & Churches

Nuts & Bolts events continued this past year. Every time our pastors gather to resource each other, it's a worthwhile time. Thank you pastors, for your engagement in this important ministry.

It continues to be a privilege to come alongside churches as they navigate changing ministry needs, pastoral searches, transition moments, vision discernment and much more. I'm grateful to Cam and Amanda, thank you to each of you for your faithfulness in

ASSEMBLY 2023

this work. We very much work together to provide MBCM churches with the

best support we can. 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.

Due to the pandemic, pastors newer to MBCM haven't had as much opportunity to engage with the Pastors Credentialing and Orientation(PCO) event. For the uninitiated, PCO is an equipping and orientation event for all pastors in an MB church in Canada. PCO is a National Faith and Life Team event, supported by MB Seminary faculty and Canadian Conference staff. It is for those who are new to ministry within the Mennonite Brethren conference and for others who are seeking a refresher on Mennonite Brethren history, theology and resources. Attendance and completion of Pastors Credentialing Orientation is a requirement for pastoral credentialing through the pastor's respective provincial conference. PCO is happening in Winnipeg this spring and there are more than 20 pastors eligible to attend! This does not include any pastor who might wish to engage with PCO as a refresher. I'm looking forward to participating with our pastors in this building experience. For anyone who is looking, further information, including registration, can be found [here](#).

As a member of the National Faith and Life Team(NFLT), I continue to participate with the NFLT and our National Faith and Life Director, Ken Esau, as we work to develop resources for our churches. In recent days, this work has produced an MBCM credentialing policy, a new introduction



to the CCMBC Confession of Faith and a revised Code of Personal and Ministry

ASSEMBLY 2023

and neighbour by telling the good news and by doing acts of love and

Ethics for MBCM pastors. There continues to be much work ahead of us to integrate these resources into the lives of our churches, pastors and leaders. The MBCM Provincial Faith and Life Team and MBCM Board continue to be instrumental in integrating resources produced by NFLT into our MBCM context.

compassion. May the Holy Spirit empower each of us be a witness to God's salvation. May we be witnesses to God's reign in the world. And by our life as a redeemed and separated community, may we reveal God's saving purposes to the world.

Looking Forward

Assembly 2023 is notable for a particular point of decision. What does it mean for MBCM Churches to be in relationship with one another? A tall task that I've observed is the distinction between institutional relationships, that of every MBCM church with every other MBCM church, and the ministry needs that each church faces. What easily happens is that institutional conversations are interpreted and understood as the context of ministry. In my view, we do need clarity around our relationships as churches to churches. And at the same time, it is a different work for our churches to minister in each of our contexts.

If you would dare to hear it, let's devote ourselves to the ministry of Christ. While we resolve to hold our institutional relationships as important and clear, let's devote our energies to the good news of God's salvation in Jesus Christ for all people. May we respond to Christ's command to make disciples of all nations by calling people to repent, and by baptizing and teaching them to obey Jesus. May we live out the teaching of Jesus that disciples are to love God