

FMC Employment Proposal: Pastor of Child and Youth Faith Formation
March 8, 2009

Who We Are

The Staff Working Group for Child and Youth Faith Formation (SWG-CYFF), has been meeting together since June 2008 to determine how best to meet needs left by the resignation of Associate Pastor of Faith Formation, Rachel S. Gerber in March 2008.

Members of the SWG-CYFF group include:

Amy Conrad (Primary Education Committee)	Anita Miller (Leadership Council, Chair)
Cary Hansen (Congregation Member)	Linda Miller (Leadership Council, Nurture)
Glenda Kauffman (Congregation Member)	Heidi Swartzendruber (MYF Sponsor)
Lisa Longacher (Pastoral Partner representative)	Dawn Voth (Leadership Council, Education)

Our Discernment Process

The poet John O'Donohue said, "One of the key things in raising children in a very, very fast-moving culture is the difficulty of creating a space where children can actually unfold and where they can be truly accompanied in their journey."¹ We know that faith formation is a cherished part of our vision of ourselves at FMC and we want children and youth to find accompaniment here.

In the 2008 FMC Directory there are 115 children and youth between the ages of 0 and 18 from 60 different families, almost the size of a congregation in and of themselves. Many families have become interested in and joined FMC because there are so many children here. We currently have approximately 70 people supporting FMC's children and youth; Sunday School teachers, Opening Time leaders, sponsors, room grandparents, and other volunteers. We started our discernment process with the question, "How do we make ministry for children and youth an integral component of our congregational life?"

From the beginning we have read articles on child, youth and family ministry, processes and programs. We have interviewed Mennonite churches from other parts of the country and metro-Denver churches similar to FMC to find out how they do child and youth faith formation. We have also been in conversation with Vern Rempel, Annie Lengacher Browning and Barb Yoder Stutzman about needs they're aware of, what they'd like to see in a faith formation position, and how a new position would be integrated into the existing staff and organizational structure of FMC.

The core of our process was inviting the families of the children and youth to share their thoughts with us. During the months of November 2008 and January 2009, 33 families attended one of six focus groups. We asked participants to reflect on the following questions: 1) What are the most important qualities in a faith formation program?; 2) What should children and youth both learn and experience from a faith formation program?; 3) What do parents want in terms of help reinforcing faith formation outside of church?; 4) What values and gifts already exist at FMC that our faith formation program will build on?; and 5) What underlying anxieties or history might be barriers to our faith formation program? From there, we determined these overarching themes that were present in each of the conversations and on which we built our proposal:

- 1. For the Junior Youth and MYF especially, high quality programs of various styles will appeal to a diverse and busy group of youth and families. We have great volunteers available but have not had consistent, dedicated and knowledgeable pastoral leadership.**
- 2. Attention to individual needs and developmental issues is critical.**
- 3. Faith Formation is holistic, experiential and involves more than Sunday School.**

Our Vision

We believe the members of First Mennonite Church have the capacity and motivation to provide an environment that intentionally develops the faith of our children and youth. As Anabaptists, we want our young people to freely choose to become followers of Christ. We also realize that, as a church family, we all share the responsibility for nurturing their spirituality. **To that end, we propose convening a search committee to hire a full time Pastor of Child and Youth Faith Formation.**

Why a pastor - We envision a person who:

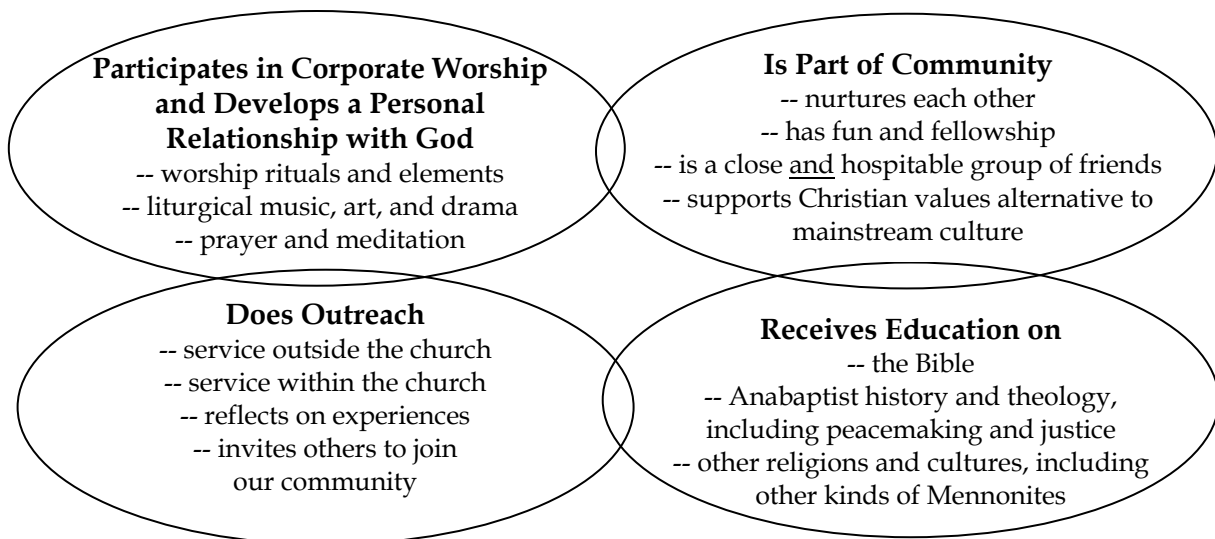
- Is knowledgeable about theology, spirituality and faith formation.
- Is called, commissioned and ordained by the congregation.
- Is held in a position of trust, accountability and respect by the congregation.
- Is comfortable asking and hearing difficult questions from children, youth and families and can help others with their faith journeys.

Necessary qualities - We envision a person who has the following necessary qualities:

- A background in child and youth development and passion for working with children, youth and their families.
- An understanding of theology, spirituality, and faith formation. We would prefer a candidate with previous pastoral work and/or seminary experience. If not experienced, we would expect the candidate to commit to study and supervision in these areas.
- Program management experience, interest and skills.
- The ability to work well in a team and whose personality and energy level provides a good complement to what Vern and Annie offer.
- The ability to build connections between people, delegate responsibility, and be a leader of leaders.

Faith Formation is much more than Sunday School

We envision a person who can 1) provide experiences for our children and youth in all these areas, creating new opportunities where necessary; 2) help draw deep connections between these experiences; and 3) identify, explore and support spiritual interests and gifts of individual children and youth in relation to these areas (e.g., teaching, peacemaking, music, leadership, etc.).



Pastor of Child and Youth Faith Formation (CYFF) Job Description

Works directly with children, youth and families: (approximately 16 hours/week)

- Is a loving presence for all children, youth and families.
- Gets to know children and youth personally; finds ways to identify, explore and support individual spiritual and leadership interests and gifts.
- Meets and works with children or youth individually on faith formation issues if requested.
- Meets with new families and orients them to CYFF activities.
- Organizes gathering times for children, youth and families to offer reflection, prayer, nurturing.
- Organizes gathering times for families to study, discuss and share ideas on parenting and finding faith at home topics.
- Is a resource for questions of theology as they relate to children developmentally.

Oversees the CYFF program: (approximately 8 hours/week)

- Researches, evaluates and helps implement Sunday School materials, including curriculum, and faith building resources that are theologically and developmentally appropriate.
- Creates curriculum calendar for Primary, Junior Youth and MYF classes.
- Guides youth group sponsors in implementing faith-building activities.
- Helps oversee and strengthen the Mentor/Mentee Program.
- Provides leadership for the Primary Education Committee including organizing the fall Teacher Training and Child Protection Program.
- Finds resources for questions of education and classroom management.
- Supports and provides spiritual encouragement to CYFF volunteers.

Integrates the CYFF program into FMC and the larger conference: (approximately 8 hours/week)

- Coordinates the CYFF program with worship, outreach, fellowship, and other activities of the congregation.
- Holds primary responsibility for FMC worship rituals having to do with children, youth and families.
- Oversees Children's Time during church.
- Ensures child care is provided so that families can attend special FMC events and activities (e.g., potlucks, congregational meetings, work days, etc).
- Works closely with Vern and Annie so that their skills and passions are available to the CYFF program and each pastor is known by and accessible to children, youth and families.
- Provides encouragement and tangible support to lay leaders in endeavors such as Vacation Bible School or youth mission and service activities or trips.
- Builds Mountain States Mennonite Conference connections by inviting youth from other metro-Denver and MSMC churches to join in special FMC activities and encouraging our youth to participate in MSMC activities like Annual Assembly.
- Builds Mennonite Church USA connections through participation in biannual youth convention.
- Possible counseling, preaching, music or other worship participation, depending on the skills of the particular candidate.

Participation in worship activities and staff / organization integration meetings: (approximately 8 hours/week)

- Sunday service, Sunday School hour, and Wednesday service
- Monday staff meeting
- Supervision with Vern Rempel
- Pastor collaboration meetings with Vern Rempel and Annie Lengacher Browning
- Pastoral Partners
- Leadership Council

Additional Questions and Answers

1. How will this pastor be incorporated into the existing staff and structure at FMC?

There have been several significant changes in FMC's staff team over the past years: Shawn Gerber and Rachel S. Gerber's resignations and Annie Lengacher Browning's hiring and move from half to full time employment. The staff team, with the input of the Congregational Chair, Anita Miller, and Vice Chair, Craig Sommers, have thoughtfully explored interaction and communication patterns. As well, Vern and Anita have had an exit interview with Rachel S. Gerber to gain her reflections on this position. Rachel provided helpful insight into how the staff can support this person emotionally and logistically, and provide them both freedom and accountability in the direction and content of their work. The staff is in a good place to integrate a new pastor into the system.

After consulting with Vern about these arrangements, we anticipate that this pastor will be supervised by Vern as part of his role as Senior Pastor, work collaboratively with Vern and Annie in providing a holistic worship experience for the entire congregation, and be provided administrative support from Karen Martin and Connie Rempel. After this person is hired, the Leadership Council will plan periods of reassessment so that as needs and expectations are identified over time there will be opportunity for realignment of resources.

The Facility Working Group is currently thinking about where this pastor's office will be located and plan to have it constructed by late summer. They understand the importance of locating this pastor near other staff for both physical and symbolic integration.

2. By making this investment in our children, youth and families, what benefits will we see as a congregation?

While we anticipate many benefits to our entire congregation, we are particularly excited about these three:

First, we will experience broadened pastoral capacity in our growing and multi-celled congregation. There will be openness and breathing space for Vern and Annie to devote to their areas of expertise; preaching, teaching and counseling. We know that there are many people interested in FMC who are still looking for a connection point, many wondering whether there is a place for them here. We want to expand our range.

“As a rule of thumb, if you desire to staff for growth, you need one full-time program person on your staff for every one hundred active members. (This does not include support staff such as janitors or secretaries.) You are staffing for maintenance if you are just slightly under that figure. You are staffing for decline if you are seriously under that figure.”² From the classic Alban organization article on staffing patterns.

Second, the ideas and energy from the children and youth will flow to the rest of congregation. What can we learn from these young people? What opportunities exist for intergenerational experiences and relationships?

“The church is still one of the few places in American culture where generations have an opportunity to interact, where values can be taught and modeled, and where an individual is valued as a gift to the community. It is not random or accidental that this should be so; community and relationship is the very heart of our values. Rather than shuffling a specific age group off to an isolated “youth room,” these realities of community and relationship need to be at the core of the congregation's ministry as it relates with youth and families.”³

Third, we are developing the people who will be the leaders, visionaries, and architects of the future; not only of the Mennonite church, but of education, healthcare, business, politics, economics, and all other fields. How heartening that the values of relationship, community, service, multi-cultural appreciation, conflict resolution, and justice will be at the center of the inspiration that will drive their work and witness in the world!

3. What are the budget implications of hiring a full time pastor?

In the Administrative category of the 2009 Budget there is \$36,000 for the “Faith Formation Position.” The Interim Coordinator for Child and Youth Faith Formation is being paid from these funds. These funds are also expected to cover the hiring of a full-time pastor in the last third of 2009 if the process indicates that we move in that direction and a candidate is called in that time frame.

To calculate the approximate cost of a new pastor, we used the 2008-2009 Guidelines for Pastors’ Salaries and Benefits, the most current version of a worksheet available on the Mennonite Church USA website. At the low end, the compensation package for a candidate 24-34 years old with one year previous related experience, a Bachelor’s degree, and receiving health insurance benefits for herself or himself only would cost approximately \$49,400. At the high end, the compensation package for a candidate 45-55 years old with ten years previous related experience, a Master’s of Divinity degree, and receiving health insurance benefits for herself or himself only would cost approximately \$62,200.

We estimate that our candidate will be in the middle of this range and, in 2010, cost approximately \$56,000, an increase of \$20,000 to the \$36,000 that is budgeted in 2009 for the position. This alone represents a 3.9% increase from our 2009 budget to our 2010 budget.

These figures and our estimation processes were shared with the Finance Committee, Myrna Schmidt, Finance Commissioner, Craig Sommers Vice Chair and Karen Martin, Congregational Administrator. They are familiar with the Guidelines for Pastors’ Salaries and Benefits and they accepted our methods of calculating a compensation range and expected amount.

Next Steps

March into April	Small Groups are encouraged to discuss the need for and benefit of this position. Representatives from the Staff Working Group for Child and Youth Faith Formation (SWG-CYFF) will be available to meet with small groups if requested.
Sundays March 15 & 29	Q&A sessions during the Sunday School hour. The Q&A sessions are designed to let the congregation talk with the SWG-CYFF about the proposal or process.
Sunday March 22	Congregational Discussion , Round Table Format - The SWG-CYFF, Leadership Council and Pastoral Partners will meet immediately following to summarize the feedback and prepare a statement to the congregation. There will be no Sunday School so that all Junior Youth, MYF youth, teachers, and parents can participate in the discussion. Child care will be provided for children birth to fifth grade.
Sunday March 29	The Leadership Council will convene to vote on whether or not to approve the creation of a search committee for the position and job description agreed upon by the congregation, including accepting budget implications.
Sunday April 19	Congregational Vote on whether or not to approve the creation of a search committee for the position and job description agreed upon by the congregation, including accepting budget implications.

References and recommended reading

¹ Krista Tippett interviewing John O’Donohue on “The Inner Landscape of Beauty” on American Public Media’s Speaking of Faith, www.speakingoffaith.publicradio.org
² <u>How to Minister Effectively in Family, Pastoral, Program, and Corporate Sized Churches</u> , by Roy M. Oswald, 1991, www.alban.org
³ <u>How does youth ministry fit into the ministry of the whole congregation?</u> , by Rev. Janice E. Nesse <u>Calling and providing for youth ministry staff</u> , by Todd Buegler <u>Foundations for youth and family ministry</u> , by Rev. Nathan Frambach, Ph.D. <u>A Guide for Assessing and Strengthening your Sunday School Ministry</u> , by Diane Monroe Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Help Sheets, www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Ministry/Youth-Ministry