

# First Mennonite Church

February 28, 2010

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## Welcome!

The purpose of **F**irst **M**ennonite **C**hurch is to:

**F**OLLOW JESUS

**M**ATURE IN FAITH

**C**ARRY THE GOOD NEWS

Sunday School, Worship, and all our church activities equip  
and strengthen us to fulfill that purpose.

**We invite members, friends, and visitors to  
join us on the journey!**

**9:15-9:40** – Snacks & conversation in Fellowship Hall

**9:40-10:20** – *Sunday School*

PreK-5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Room 30

Youth

Youth Room

Adult Classes

**10:30** – *Worship*

*Retirement Celebration  
for Pastor Weldon Schloneger*

Prelude – Jan Reimer

Call to Worship

L: The Lord is in his holy temple;  
let all the earth be silent before him.

**P: God is here among us and within us.  
We await God's word.**

L: God's greatness fills us with wonder and with awe.

**P: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;  
the whole earth is full of his glory.**

**ALL: We worship a holy God, who inhabits the world  
and lives within us.**

[from Words for Worship – used by permission of Herald Press]

Prayer: “*Be thou my vision*” – Sunday Singers

\*Hymn #327 “Great is thy faithfulness”

### *Confession of Faith*

E: We believe in God the Creator of all, known to us through  
perfect love, who has called forth a people of faith.

**W: We believe in Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh,  
crucified and resurrected, our Savior from sin,  
our peace, and Lord of the church.**

E: We believe in the Holy Spirit, poured out on all believers,  
our source of inspiration and power.

**W: We respond to Christ in faith as the church, the  
community sustained by the Spirit, called to  
proclaim and witness to the kingdom of God.**

E: We continue the mission of Christ, making disciples,  
forgiving and restoring sinners, baptizing believers,  
sharing the Lord's supper, using our gifts in unity and love.

**W: We commit ourselves to follow Jesus Christ,  
growing by grace into the image of God.**

E: We accept God's call to live in the Spirit as faithful disciples,  
practicing purity, stewardship, justice and peace,  
and loving friend and enemy.

**W: We joyfully worship God, the three-in-one,  
giving allegiance to Christ as Lord.**

E: We believe in God's everlasting reign, in victory over evil,  
in the resurrection of the dead, in Christ's coming again  
in judgment and glory

**ALL: To God be praise forever and ever. Amen!**

[based on “Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective,” 1995]

Worship Music – words and music by Weldon Schloneger

“Heaven’s Gate” [the story of Jacob]

Refrain: Heaven’s gate is opened wide,  
we feel God’s touch of grace.  
Bethel is the house of God;  
the Lord is in this place.

1. Like Jacob we wander alone;  
we flee from brokenness past.  
Estranged from ourselves and those we love,  
we seek a home that will last. (R)
2. We slumber on pillows of stone  
surrounded by darkness of night..  
But God reaches down with arms of grace  
and turns us to the light. (R)
3. If heaven can reach to the earth,  
then tears can someday be dry.  
If angels of God can dwell with us  
then hope can never die. (R)

“Love story” [Romans 5, 6, 7, 8]

Refrain: If God is for us, what should we fear?  
Nothing can separate us from God’s love!  
We conquer all through Christ who is near.  
Nothing can separate us from God’s love.

1. When I was sinning God loved me completely;  
Grace was poured out to me when I was weak.  
Christ died for me while I lived as his enemy.  
Grace conquered sin and my life is at peace. (R)
2. Dying with Jesus, my old life is ended;  
Thanks to God, sin is no longer in charge.  
Raised to new life, I can live under grace.  
The free gift of God is eternal life. (R)
3. Human and weak, I still do what I hate.  
I fail to fulfill the desires of my heart.  
I look for rescue from battles within me;  
Jesus has saved me and I am set free! (R)
4. No more condemned, God declares me “Not guilty!”  
God has adopted me, now I belong!  
Called to God’s purpose, I pray with the Spirit,  
claiming a hope beyond what I can see! (R)

Scripture – Psalm 27

Sermon: Dorothy Nickel Friesen

--Conference Minister, Western District Conference

\*Hymn of Response – #418 “Move in our midst”

Offering: Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Offertory: “If with all your hearts” [from Elijah by Mendelssohn]  
-- Matt Schloneger

Sharing Joys & Concerns

Prayer

\*FMC Purpose Song [in the hymnal pocket]

### **Litany of Release and Blessing at Retirement**

**Conference Minister:** As brothers and sisters in a covenanted faith community we give thanks today for the ministry of Weldon and celebrate his new vocation in retirement.

**Congregation:** Praise be to God, who calls us to many forms of ministry within the body of Christ and equips the church with gifts through the work of the Holy Spirit.

**Conference Minister:** Weldon has used his gifts in leadership as pastor at First Mennonite Church for the past 12 years.

**Pastor:** We have shared worship and work, happy and sad occasions, committee meetings and mission projects. We met in hospitals, homes, and in the workplace. We ate together, worked together, played and prayed together, I retire as your pastor with cherished memories of our times together.

**Congregation:** God has blessed us richly through your ministry. We now bless you as you begin a new chapter in your life journey.

**Conference Minister:** As you, the people of First Mennonite Church, bless Weldon in his retirement, do you now release him from his pastoral responsibilities and relationships?

**Congregation:** With the help of God, we do. We give thanks for Weldon's faithfulness and acknowledge this transition in the life of our congregation. We will pray for God's continued guidance in Weldon's life.

**Conference Minister:** Weldon, do you release the congregation from its loyalty to you as a pastor? Do you release the members from turning to you and depending on you to provide the pastoral ministries they seek?

**Pastor:** With the help of God, I do. When we meet in the future, I will be your friend but not your pastor. I will no longer perform pastoral duties among you. I will continue to keep this congregation in my prayers.

**Conference Minister:** May God bless and guide you, Weldon, and this congregation, in the new relationship that you will now share.

\*Benediction song – "May the Lord go with you"  
-- Emm Hiebert and Barb Thimm (words & music by Emm Hiebert)

*\*(Please stand if comfortable.)*

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*First Mennonite Church*

*The retirement celebration of  
Pastor Weldon Schloneger*

*Sunday, February 28, 2010*