

February 3, 2020

Dear Mennonite Church Saskatchewan,

In 2018, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan began a three-year journey called *Deepening Our Walk*. In year one, we opened ourselves to encounters with God's presence by *Deepening Our Walk With Christ*. This theme grew out of an awareness that if we desire to live well in this day of turmoil and uncertainty, we need to recentre ourselves on Jesus Christ, the one who invites us to the table and transforms us more fully into his image. In year two, we built upon this theme, recognizing we are not alone at the table. As tempting as it is to individualize our faith, *Deepening Our Walk With Christ* inevitably leads us to *Deepening Our Walk With Each Other*. It's at the Table of the Lord, in the presence of Christ and each other, that we are transformed from individuals into a community – a people no less – who seek together to pattern our lives after Jesus, learning to live and love the way he did.

In year three, we continue to build upon this theme. As important as it is to create this new and transformed community, this is not the “end result” of Christian spirituality. The goal is not to build or create perfect Christian communities for the sake of themselves. Instead, these communities are created for the sake of the world. *Deepening Our Walk With Our Neighbour* is a reminder that the church, be it a house church, a congregation, a regional church or a nationwide community of faith, was created for a purpose, a mission even, so that the world may encounter the transformative presence of Jesus Christ in their lives and communities.

A friend recently commented that as Mennonites, when faced with stress or uncertainty, our tendency is to go to structure. Let's call structure our “safe place”. If we could only create the perfect “container”, then we can keep on going. And so we pull out the outdated constitution, check when we last updated the bylaws (and yes MC Sask is in the process of much needed bylaw changes!) and scan over the job descriptions in the hope of making the right tweaks all the while forgetting what it is this container, or “structure”, was created and called to do in the first place.

*Deepening Our Walk With Our Neighbour* reminds us to turn our faces toward the world, working for wholeness (shalom), joy and reconciliation. To quote Palmer Becker in *Anabaptist Essentials*, “Reconciliation is the centre of our work”. Reconciliation in our relationship with God, with each other, and the world.

While we continue to live in times of significant change in society and the church, may we turn our faces toward our communities, neighbourhoods and world, so that God's reconciling love and grace may transform us all.

Yours in Christ,



Ryan Siemens  
Executive Minister  
Mennonite Church Saskatchewan