

Christ's Hands

In World War II, bombs destroyed a church in Strasbourg, France. As parishioners cleared the rubble, they discovered a statue of Jesus that was now missing both hands.

A visiting sculptor later offered to make repairs, but church members declined, saying Christ “has no hands to minister to the needy or feed the hungry or enrich the poor — except our hands. He inspires. We perform.”

St. Teresa of Avila wrote:

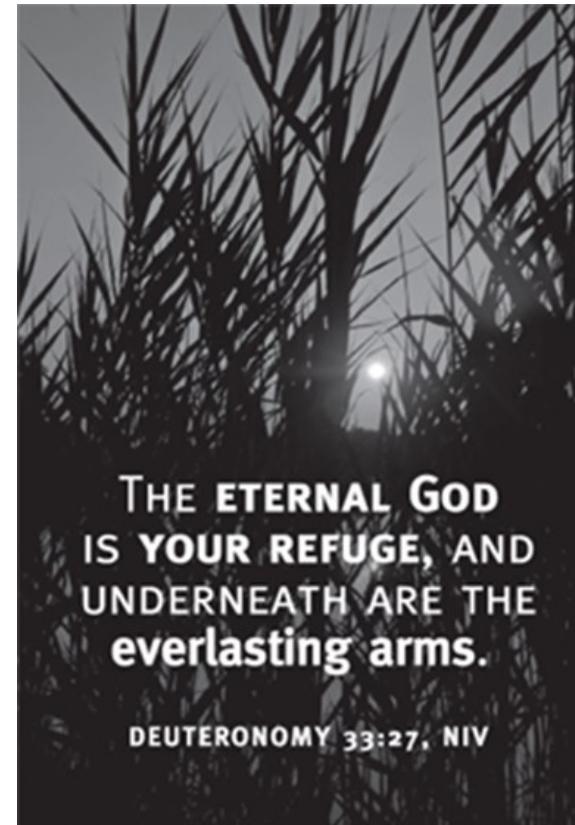
*Christ has no body but yours;
no hands, no feet on earth but yours.
Yours are the eyes
with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Yours are the feet
with which he walks to do good.
Yours are the hands
with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours.*



The Church Corner

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First Mennonite Church

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Sunday School—9:30 a.m.
Worship Service—10:45 a.m.

“We are a community of believers who follow Jesus Christ as we receive and share God's love.”

We, of First Mennonite Church,
Valuing the convictions
of our faith,
Endeavor to:
Engage our members in ministry,
Expand community outreach,
Embrace new people,
In the love of Christ.

Pastor's Note

Final thoughts on Leadership Development and the PCRC.

The Apostle Paul clearly gives the impression that the work of the church is not finished and won't be until Christ returns. As I exit the position of pastor here at FMC, Steve Wilcox will soon enter. The work and ministry of FMC will continue as you all learn to minister together. My hope is that the work here will be a joy for all of Steve's tenure with FMC. Hebrews 13:17a encourages the early church to "Be responsive to your pastoral leaders. Listen to their counsel. They are alert to the condition of your lives and work under the strict supervision of God. Contribute to the joy of their leadership..." (The Message).

So how can each of us help to make Pastor Steve's time at FMC a joy filled experience? What can we do to add to that joy? We can certainly begin by listening with discerning hearts and let Pastor Steve know when his sermon or teaching or counsel has helped you to heal or to grow. Affirm the gifts you see in Pastor Steve as he exercises them and encourage him to use gifts that you see but he may not be fully aware of yet. Offering encouragement or gratitude for what is going well is much easier than offering a critique or correction for what isn't going so well. How do we as a church work at those conversations? Isn't honest critique also necessary in developing pastors?

Hebrews 13 is not suggesting to follow a leader blindly, but rather with discerning hearts. It is encouraging us to grant trust and authority to the pastor as you experience the good gifts of a pastor's leadership. It is an example of how the level of trust in the pastor-congregation relationship is proportional to a pastor's ability to exercise influence in the congregation. If relation-

ships are strong and trusting, influence is also great. If relationships are weak and suspicious, a leader will not be able to lead the congregation because no one will be following.

Nurturing healthy leadership in the congregation is challenging but FMC has been able to do it well. I have not felt anything but empowered as your interim pastor. You have helped me to embrace my teaching/speaking style and tolerated my bringing examples into sermons that might not look too sermon worthy on the surface but you have allowed me to connect them to the message.

So how can FMC continue to nurture and empower its leaders?

In the restructuring that was completed in 2012, the Vision Team became the body that the pastor was both accountable to and the pastor's support group. Support and accountability can be difficult to hold together because it is hard to be as honest as you would like to be if you know you are also accountable to the group that is hearing you.

I suggested that a Pastor Congregation Relations Committee (PCRC) be formed so that the pastor would have a support group for ministry that is separated from the group to which he or she is accountable. This not only gives freedom to the pastor to express how it is going and what the pastor's needs are but the PCRC can act as a sounding board to test the pastor's perceptions and to check assumptions that might not be accurate.

The PCRC can also help the pastor set goals for ministry in conjunction with the pastor's job description and can be an advocate on the pastor's behalf in shaping the job description, reviewing expectations of the church and the pastor, and be a voice for the pastor in developing the Covenant of Understanding (salary, benefits, and other contractual guidelines).

It is very difficult for a pastor to represent himself or herself in conversations about employment without someone he or she can be very honest

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Camp Mennoscah

- ⇒ Young Adult Weekend, August 4-6! Put it on your calendar, friends! We've a weekend of time for you to be unstructured and relaxed. There will be worship, swimming, time to play games or go for walks, be in solitude or with friends. It doesn't get much better than having a chance to do what you want (mostly)!
- ⇒ Mental Health Spiritual Retreat at Camp Mennoscah on Sept. 3-4--Join us, all people affected by mental issues, including friends and families! We will have sessions on the theme of Branching Out. Also part of our time together are crafts, a hayrack ride, worship, swimming, and time to visit with old and new friends! Register online. Scholarships are available.
- ⇒ The annual Womens/Girls Retreat at Camp Mennoscah will be held September 8-10. The theme this year is "Together: Rooted and Reaching" led by Barb Krehbiel Gehring. We will also be celebrating 100 years of Mennonite Women. Brochures are available on the literature table.
- ⇒ Camp Mennoscah Bridge Out--The Smoots Creek bridge to the south of Hwy 54 will be closed beginning July 17 for replacement. Alternate routes to Camp Mennoscah will be posted on the website and Facebook. The closure is expected to last until June 2018.

Contact camp at 620-297-3290 or
campmennoscah.org or
olivia.bartel@campmennoscah.org

Western District Notes

Registration is now open for the Womens/Girls Retreat (3rd grade and up) at Camp Mennoscah September 8-10. Our theme is "Together: Rooted and Reaching" with Barb Krehbiel Gehring as our featured speaker. Retreat schedules and registration forms are available on the literature table or available to print at: <http://mennowdc.org/calendar/>. We will celebrate 100 years of Mennonite Women organizations through stories and a hymn sing Friday evening. There will be no separate girls programming this year, so girls should register for Saturday morning and afternoon activities and seminars. Hope to see you all at Camp Mennoscah!

The WDC Annual Assembly is coming up soon on August 4-6 in Arlington, TX. Nearly 140 persons have registered to attend. Remember, anyone may attend the worship services (Friday evening and Sunday morning), as well as the Mini-Festival on Saturday evening at Luz del Evangelio (Dallas), without registration or payment.

The WDC Office and the Conference Resource Library will be closed on Friday through Monday, August 4-7, for Annual Assembly weekend in Arlington, TX.



Last Words

This represents my last opportunity to submit something for this newsletter. I can understand Paul's feelings as he penned his final letters to some of his beloved churches he helped to plant and shape. To the church at Philippi he writes in Phil.1:3-6, "Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns." I believe that for Pastor Steve, Raquel, and the FMC faith community. So, Keep Stepping Out! Keep Lighting Up!

-Pastor Robert

WITNESS TO OTHERS



Know Your Target

Businesses must know their target market. Writers must know their target audience. And we all make better decisions when we consider the target of our actions.

A college religion teacher set up a cardboard target in his classroom. "Draw someone who has upset you," he instructed. Students sketched ex-boyfriends or -girlfriends, coworkers who'd mistreated them, childhood bullies. Each, in turn, then placed their drawing over the bull's-eye and took aim with a bow and arrow. Afterward, the bull's-eye was riddled with holes. The students congratulated one another ... until the teacher pulled back the target, revealing Jesus' scarred, torn face.

Silence fell as he read: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these ... you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40, NRSV).

In choosing actions — no matter the human target — remember who else will be struck by your arrows. Let's take aim with love, not hurt.



**"If we have no peace,
it is because we have
forgotten that we
belong to each other."**

—Mother Teresa



Church Announcements



- The monthly collection for Neighbors is **August 20**. Neighbors needs are canned meat (like Spam), canned ravioli and spaghetti, egg noodles and tooth-paste.
- The deadline for the September newsletter will be **August 28**.
- Offering schedule for August:

August 6:	MC USA
August 13:	Church Budget
August 20:	Western District
August 27:	College Scholarship

Treasurer's Report

Budget balance @ 01/01/17	9,606.95
Jan-May receipts	42,539.88
Jan-May expenses	<u>(50,887.59)</u>
Budget balance @ 05/31/17	1,259.24
June receipts	10,590.97
June expenses	<u>(9,702.47)</u>
Budget balance @ 06/30/17	2,147.74

August Calendar

Aug. 2	6:30 pm	Prayer Meeting
Aug. 4-6		WDC Annual Mtg.
Aug. 7	12:30 pm	Blood Mobile
	7:00 pm	Nurture Meeting
Aug. 8	7:45 am	Early Birds Breakfast
Aug. 9	6:30 pm	Prayer Meeting
Aug. 11-12		Halstead Old Settlers
Aug. 13	10:45 am	Steve's First Sunday
	6:00 pm	Bunco Fellowship
Aug. 16	6:30 pm	Prayer Meeting
Aug. 22	7:45 am	Early Birds Breakfast
Aug. 23	6:30 pm	Prayer Meeting
Aug. 27	10:45 pm	Steve's Installation
	12:00 pm	Carry-in
Aug. 28	6:00 pm	Nurture & Mission
	7:00 pm	Church Council
Looking Ahead:		
Sept. 7	5:00 pm	Kids Club begins
Sept. 10	5:30pm	Visitation Night

Blood Mobile

The summer Blood Mobile will be hosted by our church at the Catholic Parish Center on Monday, August 7 from 12:30-6:30 pm. Sign-up sheets for volunteer help and donations of food are available on the bulletin board. Please take a moment to sign-up to help! Thanks!



Church Council Notes

Minutes from the July 24 meeting:

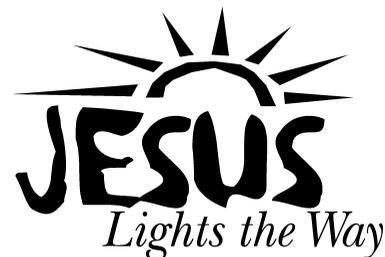
- The Discernment Team (Joyce Franz) shared that Ron Dick has agreed to join the Care Ministry.
- The Vision Team (Chuck Mueller) reported that they discussed the exit interview with Robert.
- The Care Ministry (Lois Loflin) shared that we celebrated child dedications, child blessing and a new member joined. Working on a schedule for visitation.
- The Mission Ministry (Dwight Mueller) reported that the service trip to Montana went well and they will report on it in worship on Aug. 6.
- The Nurture Ministry (Debbie Nightingale) has August planned for adult Sunday school. The fall quarter begins Aug. 27. Three people will be attending some child protection training workshops. Received quotes for some new furniture for the children's classrooms. Beginning to secure new teachers and discussed a theme for the new school year. Discussed Wednesday nights for adults as well as Kids club.
- The church treasurer (Larry Regier) reported that June was a good giving month with a balance of \$2,147.74.
- The Stewardship Ministry (Dwight Mueller) reported they have installed the AED in the hallway. Restroom signs have been ordered.

- Pastor Robert reported about his exit interview. The computer tablet is ready to be handed over to Pastor Steve. He will be meeting with Steve to discuss some transition issues. The PCRC is set-up and ready to go. Shared some signs he has seen of our church thriving.
- In new business Chuck asked about having an executive session implemented into the council meetings. Council agreed this was a good addition to each meeting. Arnita Haury shared some updates and organizing she has completed for the Policy and Procedures manual. Several things are missing and will need to be completed by various ministries. Leah Mueller will type and format the document so it is uniform.

*The next meeting will be held
Monday, August 28 at 7 pm.*

Website Update

Heads up! The website is receiving a makeover to make it both mobile and computer friendly. Bulletins, newsletters and sermon videos will continue to be available with the new look. Once the website is updated, fee free to contact Kaitlen with any questions.



voice a complaint, we each have a responsibility to offer a way forward. Each of us needs to be able to answer, "What is it that you need to make this work better for you?"

I list these three pitfalls as a way to illustrate how poorly a church can function with a PCRC but I believe the PCRC and FMC will think in terms of developing and growing pastors, not in managing fires.

Some Simple Guidelines

So, when there are concerns that need to be addressed, what would a healthy response look like? Some simple guidelines can make the difference between moving toward health or causing more harm to occur. Here is how you can help develop the pastors at FMC when you have a concern.

Go first to the pastor or PCRC

If you have a concern, first go and talk to the person who the concern is about or who can help. This movement alone can save the church much grief. It is more than tempting to talk about someone than to go to them directly but talking about others only causes bigger problems with more people and creates factions. Try to avoid the parking lot conversations about problems with the pastor and go directly to the pastor if you can.

If you don't feel comfortable or safe in going to the pastor directly, go to the PCRC and talk about this in confidence.

Speak for yourself.

Use "I" statements. This helps you to take responsibility for what you are saying. So rather than saying, "There is a group of people who don't like the music we are singing in worship" could be restated as "I find myself not able to relate to the music we are singing on Sunday."

Offer a way forward

Come to the conversation ready to offer a way something can be improved or changed. If you come to the PCRC only with a complaint or critique

but offer no way forward to fix what has happened, you and the PCRC will be caught in your own double bind where you all know the problem and now must hold it and yet there isn't anything discerned that can help heal the relationship with the pastor. It's helpful if you can articulate an answer to this question, "What would need to change or happen for you to be able to say, "I love our worship experience here at FMC?"

This question "What do you need?" shifts the focus off of the complaint and on to the hope of resolution for an improved relationship or experience in the future. And no one can be in judgment about what you need to be able to move forward in hope. It isn't a right or wrong; it is what you need.

Honor Others

Acknowledge that FMC is a gathering of individuals that have different perspectives and that what makes you feel better might make someone else feel worse. We might ask, "Since some people see things differently than I do, how can we change what we are doing now so that it works for both me and others?"

Come with this attitude: What can I do to help?

Come with an attitude of love and a willingness to help. Remember, it is far easier to be against something than it is to lead a church toward something. Be ready and willing to do your part.

Finally, embrace the risk and vulnerability of a conversation.

If the problem is not being able to have the conversation, the solution is to have the conversation. Once the harm or loss or discontent is named and a person voices what will help heal the situation, then the PCRC can put the necessary people together to have a conversation about how a person's need may be addressed. This creates an avenue for having honest conversation about what is not going well and can point out a way to make things better.

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gifting.

This need not be seen as highlighting a pastor's shortcomings, but rather a way to see how the Spirit of God is helping FMC to access all the gifts of ministry in the church. This is the rewarding work of gifts discernment and calling out gifts to help shape this body of Christ to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the Halstead community.

These are ways a PCRC can aid the pastor. How can the congregation aid the PCRC and the pastor in their work? Forming a PCRC is no guarantee that there won't be problems. A good organizational structure will not function well if the people in it don't function in a reasonably mature way, and even a poor structure can function well when the people relate to one another in healthy ways. I'd like to point out three behaviors or pitfalls that can make a PCRC function poorly.

Pitfall #1: The Confidential Ambush

This occurs when someone comes to the Pastor and rips the pastor apart through a barrage of insults and criticisms about all the pastor has done wrong or failed to do and then expect the pastor to keep it confidential. This behavior fails to honor the Scripture's teaching that we are a body and as a body, when one hurts we all hurt. We cannot take out our frustrations on one person and expect it not to hurt the whole. Hebrews 13:17 says, "to be responsive to your leaders so that...their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you."

It is unwise to allow this kind of abuse. Concerns brought to the PCRC or pastor are expected to be kept confidential, but this assumes some goodwill on the part of the person who is bringing the concern to work toward resolution. The confidential ambush usually occurs when a person isn't interested in working things out and only wants to see the pastor gone, and it often works. This behavior will likely lower the pastor's confidence, increase their anxiety, lower their performance, and

which all make the pastor appear more incompetent. This whole scenario then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy because the more the focus is put on one individual as "the problem" the more likely the individual will act in problematic ways. And it goes down and down and down until finally the "problem" person is gotten rid of even though that person may not really be the problem. That is not a healthy response.

Pitfall #2: The Double Bind

A double bind happens to a pastor when someone or a group of people are unhappy with the pastor or something the pastor has done or is doing but no one will tell the pastor what the problem is. It might emerge in this kind of statement when someone comes to the pastor and says, "How are you doing with all this talk about you in the community?" The pastor immediately has two dilemmas. The pastor knows people are unhappy about something and will want to resolve it, however, the problem can't be addressed or resolved because the pastor has no idea who the unhappy people are. We might as well lock the pastor in the stocks in the public square where the pastor is chained up by ridicule for all to see but has no way to correct the harm because the pastor doesn't even understand it, not for lack of trying, but because no one will go and talk to the pastor.

Pitfall #3: The Trash Dumpster

Just as people who don't know how to get rid of their garbage and then take it to the dumpsters in the city park, it can be tempting to dump our concerns on the PCRC and just expect them to figure how to get rid of it or resolve it while we drive back home and enjoy not having that trash in our house anymore.

The PCRC is not to be dumped on. Their purpose is not to give people the satisfaction of "getting something off their chest" and expect the PCRC to take care of it. If we want the freedom to

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What's up at Church!

Kids Club

Kids Club is just around the corner and we are looking for additional helpers to help for the fall! Kids Club will run Wednesday's, Sept. 6 to Nov. 8, from 5-6 pm. If you are interested in helping some or all of the time, or helping prepare meals for the families following at 6 pm, please talk with Kaitlen or Melanie.

Fellowship Night

Join us for Bunco Night on August 13 at 6pm. This is a great way to socialize with a lot of people in a short amount of time. Bring snacks to share and your friends!

Pastor Installation

Mark your calendars for August 27. Pastor Steve will be officially installed during worship with conference pastor, Heidi Regier Kreider, participating. We will celebrate following worship with a carry-in meal. Please bring a dish or two to share.



The Log in your Eye

A young man from Scotland went to study at an English university. A month into the school year, his mother visited and asked how he liked living in the dorm. "It's awful!" he exclaimed. "The fellow in the room next door bangs his head on the wall constantly, and the one on the other side screams all day." "How do you stand it?" his mother asked in amazement.

"Oh, I ignore them," her son replied. "I just sit here quietly, playing my bagpipes." (see Matthew 7:3-5)

Summer Sunday School

Adult summer Sunday school during August will be a variety of things. On Aug. 6 we will have a fellowship morning with games and refreshments. Classes are encouraged to use Aug. 13 as a planning session for the fall where you can discuss curriculum, room improvements, social gatherings, etc. On Aug. 20 Mitch Stutzman from Everence will share about how hospitality is a part of stewardship. The fall quarter will begin one week early on Aug. 27.

Children's classes meet as usual in their own classrooms and will finish the summer quarter on Aug. 20. New class assignments, along with the fall curriculum, for the children will happen on Aug. 27. The summer mission offering is for Food 4 Kids.

Please talk with a member of the Nurture Ministry if you have questions or suggestions. Members are Melanie Haspels, Marilyn Mueller, Debbie Nightingale and Kaitlen Ortman.

August Celebrations



- 1 Jerry Keller
- 1 (A) John & Pamela Keller
- 2 (A) David & Brocia Mueller
- 2 Randi Schaff
- 2 Rheannah Unruh
- 4 Derek Keller
- 5 Virginia Berger
- 6 Jessica Harmon
- 6 Roberta Warren
- 6 Crescent Haury
- 6 (A) David & Monica Flask
- 8 (A) Michael & Roberta Warren
- 9 Doug Auernheimer
- 9 Taylor Nemeth
- 10 (A) Harley & Elaine Mohler
- 11 Joe Penner
- 11 (A) Jim & Lois Loflin
- 12 (A) Arnold & Velma Klassen
- 13 Jennifer Penner
- 13 (A) Larry & Sharon Finley
- 15 (A) Rick & Sandy Allen
- 15 Rachel Klassen
- 16 (A) Larry & Virginia Berger
- 18 Ruby Buller
- 19 Korbin Black
- 19 Tim Lewis
- 21 Larry Berger
- 21 (A) John & Debra Vogt
- 21 Abram Rodenberg
- 24 Betty Schowalter
- 25 Lillian Vigneron
- 26 Marj VanWye
- 26 Monica Flask
- 27 Lloyd Voth
- 28 Allison Smoker
- 28 Jaren Smoker
- 28 Richard Schmidling
- 29 Marisa Schaff
- 29 Haylee Ewert
- 30 (A) Kenneth & Dee Ann Lintz
- 31 Ashlee Stucky

Prayer & Praises

Prayer needs during July:

- Give thanks for Pastor Robert’s work among us this past year and pray for Robert and Luann as they determine where they will serve next.
- Pray for Pastor Steve, Raquel, Ethan and Eli Wilcox as they prepare to begin their ministry with us in August and as they settle into their new home.
- Pray for the family of Denice Klassen whose step-brother, Jack Barth, was killed last month.
- Pray for continued healing for Peggy Koehn, John Pjesky and Lillian Vigneron.
- Pray for healing for Michele, Leila Dalke’s daughter, who had surgery for a blood clot in her leg in July.
- Continue to pray for John Will and family as they adjust to life without Marge.
- Pray for healing for Laurie Boelk, daughter of Larry and Carol Flickinger, as she begins treatment for breast cancer.



SING PRAISES TO HIM;
TELL OF ALL HIS WONDERFUL WORKS.

PSALM 105:2

with. The decisions on the COU and job descriptions still rest with the Stewardship Team and the Church Council, but having the PCRC in the conversation assures that the pastors concerns are discussed prior to final decisions being made.

Those are some of the basic benefits of having a PCRC but the real power of a PCRC is to be a pastor development team to help the pastor grow in confidence and skill.

PCRC = Pastor Development Team

Many times, people think the PCRC exists to handle tough disagreements or when a third party is needed to act as an unbiased mediator. That is part of what a PCRC does; it is tasked with tending to the relationships between the pastor and the congregants. The problem with that being the PCRC’s primary task is that it puts everyone in a defensive posture of trying not to get hurt rather than being proactive in building healthy, rewarding relationships.

Prioritizing pastor development creates a pro-active focus with which to view the PCRC conversations rather than thinking of the PCRC as meeting only when a problem emerges. I once heard an interview with someone who was known to be one of the world’s best ship handlers. The question was asked, “What makes a good ship-handler?” The man replied, “To not ever get the ship in a place where it requires a good ship-handler.” The same can be said for good leadership, and the PCRC can be the GPS that helps pastors navigate the pastor’s journey through uncharted waters.

So, what is needed from the PCRC to lead in a pro-active way to build trusting and growing relationships?

Meet regularly

That might sound like a no-brainer but if meetings don’t get scheduled and adhered to, the PCRC can fall into the trap of thinking, “Oh, things are going fine, we really don’t need to meet right now.” And since regular meetings are held once a

quarter, one missed meeting creates a gap of 6 months in the PCRC’s work of hearing the pastor’s experience and giving voice to anything new that has come up in the congregation. That’s a little like losing your GPS signal and having to go without the benefit of seeing what lies ahead.

Set goals

Set goals to realize the hopes for the future, both for the pastor and congregation. There is a saying that good judgment comes from experience and a lot of that from bad judgment. While we all have experienced the truth of that statement, there is no need to expect a pastor to learn the way of a congregation through trial and error. Much can be known. The PCRC can actively and regularly review the pastor job description and the focus of the congregation to make sure the description is aligned with the mission and vision of FMC. Then specific goals can be set for the pastor that align with the pastor’s passion, areas of desired growth, and that will accomplish the mission of the church.

Listen for the joy

The PCRC can listen to where the pastor is experiencing the most life-giving moments in his or her work and where there are things that drain the life from the pastor. These conversations can provide the PCRC and the pastor the basis to assess ministry load, priorities, and boundaries so as to encourage the growth and long tenure of the pastor’s leadership.

Reflect and make adjustments

Having set goals and setting appropriate boundaries, the PCRC can reflect back on the past months of ministry with the pastor and celebrate the best of what has been done and to see what adjustments can be made to increase the pastor’s gifts/strengths. This conversation also considers areas of least strength or gifting to identify resources for addressing them or to see if those responsibilities can be shifted to others in the congregation who do have that

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