

Congregational Information Form

To be completed by congregations seeking new pastoral leadership.

There is an electronic version of this form on the Ministerial Leadership website, www.mennoniteusa.org.

Purpose of this form

This form is to assist a congregation to present information concerning itself to prospective candidates for a pastoral leadership position. Completing the form will also assist the pastoral search committee in self-understanding as they assess the strengths and weaknesses which may exist at the time of pastoral transition.

I. Part One - Information

A. BASIC INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

1. Name of congregation: First Mennonite Church of Denver

Address: 430 W. 9th Avenue, Denver, CO 80204

Church telephone: 303-892-1038

email: fmcdenver@aol.com

website: <http://www.fmcdenver.org>

2. Chairperson of search committee: Cindy Eby

Address: 3233 W. 31st Avenue, Denver, CO 80211

Telephone: 303-477-2452

Email: cindylulu2@earthlink.net

3. Area conference: Mountain States Mennonite Conference

Name of conference minister/overseer/bishop assisting your church's search committee:

Herm Weaver

Address: PO Box 1310, Nederland, CO 80466

Telephone: 303-258-7589

Email: herm@MountainStatesMC.org

4. Year in which the congregation first began meeting or was organized

1941

B. MEMBERSHIP

1. Average Sunday worship attendance during the last 12 months: 222

Highest attendance during that time: 409

Lowest attendance during that time: 110

2. Total current members Non-resident members

Resident members Children (not members)

We don't have formal membership lists. We have 494 individuals listed as current participants of First Mennonite Church.

Age 19+: 374

Age 0-18: 119

We have another 122 listed as "Other Friends of FMC" who want to be connected, but are not actively participating at this time. This listing includes people in Denver and people out of town.

3. Age of members and children. Give totals and percentage.

	Number	%
0-12	93	19%
13-18	26	5%
19-30	57	12%
31-45	94	19%
46-64	105	21%
65+	119	24%

4. Occupational profile: (ages 19 to 70). Give totals.

Business/manager/proprietor: 58

Homemaker: 7

Education/administration/teacher: 55

Clerical/sales: 11

Craftsman/laborer/operative: 11

Student/VS: 9

Medical: doctor/nurse/administration: 25

Farmer/rancher: 1

Other professional: 49

Other church institution/ administration/minister: 5

5. Educational level of adults:

Up to and including high school: 5%

Some college or college graduate: 72%

Graduate school: 23%

Describe the racial or ethnic composition of the congregation.

Predominantly Caucasian with a few other ethnicities represented.

C. COMMUNITY

1. Character of community your church serves or in which it is located:

Metropolitan area (over 1,000,000)

2. Which best describes this community?

Stable

3. Describe racial or ethnic composition of the community served by your church.

Neighborhood surrounding the church is primarily Hispanic with some gentrification.

4. List two or three primary business/industries in the community.

Mostly residential, close to downtown Denver. There is an Art District nearby and the church is located near a major medical center.

5. Identify other Mennonite/Anabaptist churches in the community, if any.

Arvada Mennonite Church, 14 miles away

Glennon Heights Mennonite, 9 miles away

Hmong Mennonite Church, 13 miles away

Peace Community Mennonite Church, 19 miles away

6. Name of nearest college or university

The Auraria Campus nearby includes University of Colorado Denver, Metropolitan State College and Community College of Denver. Denver University is about 5 miles away.

7. In what way does your church relate to these academic communities?

Iliff School of Theology is located on the campus of University of Denver. We have a close association with Iliff. A number of students have done their field experience here. Pastor Vern Rempel has taught there. He also participates in the DU Religious Advisory Council.

Pastor Annie Lengacher Browning teaches a class at Community College of Denver.

8. Identify significant issues confronting your community.

Low high school graduation rate

Gangs

Poverty

Homelessness

Gentrification

9. Describe what you believe to be distinctive assets of your community.

Location - proximity to downtown

Public transportation

Strong sense of community and heritage in the people living here

Attractive buildings and structures

Closeby eating and shopping establishments

10. How does your church participate in community affairs and interchurch programs?

We belong to Metropolitan Organizations for People and encourage our members to participate in activities of interest. We have members who serve on the Board of a nearby agency, Broadway Assistance Center. Pastor Vern Rempel belongs to the Interfaith Alliance. We have formerly participated in the Westside Ministry Alliance, but that program is not active currently.

D. CHURCH ADMINISTRATION AND PROGRAM

1. Identify the primary governing body (council, board, elders, deacons) which represents the congregation.

Name	Meets	# Members	Avg. Age	M-F
Leadership Council	monthly	15	43	W

2. Identify five other significant leadership/programming bodies: e.g. trustees, deacons, elders, commissions, councils, boards, committees.

Name	Meets	# Members	Avg. Age	M-F
Caregivers	monthly	15	65	M
Small Group Committee	as needed	5	40	W
Finance Committee	as needed	5	55	S
Primary Education Committee	monthly	5	46	S
Adult Education Committee	as needed	6	51	S
Human Resources Group (sub-group of Leadership Council)	monthly	4	49	S

3. Sunday School

Number of children's classes: 7

Number of youth classes: 2

Total Sunday school enrollment: 95

Average total attendance: 50

Number of adult classes: varies

What curriculum resources are used by these classes? Children use Gather 'Round from Mennonite Church USA. Adults most often have speakers who provide their own materials.

4. Describe your youth fellowship

Our MYF has been small the past few years. They provide the coffee and donuts every Sunday as a fundraiser. This is a major service to the congregation. It is difficult to get full participation in activities because of conflicts with high school activities and geographical distances. We have a very enthusiastic group of sponsors this year.

Does your congregation support and send young people to Mennonite camps, conferences and colleges?

We encourage youth to attend Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp in the summer. Our Jr. Youth and MYF attend Snow Camp each winter. We send youth to MCUSA biennial conventions and hope to add the Jr. Youth to that. Students attending a Mennonite college receive financial assistance from the church.

5. Does your congregation have an active small group organization? Describe.

We have 35-40 small groups. Each year we have a sign up period so newcomers can participate. We try to establish new groups that are a combination of newcomers and long-time attenders. Outside of the sign up period, we also accommodate individual requests to join a small group as these requests arise. Groups establish how often they meet.

6. What men's/women's organizations are active?

We have no active specific organizations for just men or just women.

Other special groups or programs: (Venture Clubs, young adults over 18, etc.)

We have solid groups of Venture Club and Jr. Youth with sponsors and activities. We have many young adults participating here in music and small groups.

7. What programs designed for evangelism/outreach to the community does your congregation support and participate in?

The main outreach to the community is our Assistance Program. Volunteers from the congregation staff the program where we assist with rent and utilities. This program has been going for many years.

8. In the next five years, do you anticipate a membership increase or stability?

We anticipate increases in membership as we have many young adults and families with children attending.

9. Music

Identify choirs

Adult Choir

Age range 25-75

Number of participants 15-40 depending on Sunday or season of the year.

Identify musical instruments

Sanctuary Instruments

Allen Organ

Installed 1991

Steinway Grand

Installed in the 1960s or 1970s

Community Center

Yamaha Upright Piano

Purchased in 1994

Basement

2 pianos

Donated

We have many talented musicians who bring their own instruments - strings, brass, drums.

10. Are there community programs or groups who also utilize your church facilities? Who are they and how often?

Group

Frequency

Use

VORP of Denver

Year round

Office space; meeting space

Head Start Preschool

During school year

Classroom, office, meeting space

Spirituals Project Choir

Year round

Fellowship area, Sanctuary

DOOR

Summer/Spring break

Entire building

Ten Thousand Villages

Monthly

Meeting space

MEDA

As needed

Fellowship hall, meeting space

E. CHURCH BUILDING AND PROPERTY

1. Seating capacity of sanctuary or worship area: 325

2. Date of construction of church building: Original building: 1948; newer part: 1991

3. Date of last renovation 1991

Describe what was done: New Sanctuary, new kitchen, converted old Sanctuary to Fellowship Hall; new foyer, new entrances, new classroom space in basement; new restrooms; new offices

What if any building/renovation program is needed or projected? We have a Facilities Working Group studying this issue now. We hope to hire an architect to conduct a Master Plan.

4. Describe the educational facilities.

Children's classroom space is fully utilized and we could use more rooms. It is a challenge to find sufficient space for adult education.

5. Describe the fellowship and/or recreational facilities.

We have a large fellowship hall (called the Community Center) on the main floor of the church for social events, meetings, meals. We have no recreational facilities on our property but a public park is located across the street.

6. Describe the church office location and equipment: printing/copy machine, typewriters, computers, dictation equipment.

The church office is located on the main floor of the church to the right of the main door as you enter the building. We have a reception area and three private offices; a separate work station and a conference table in the middle. We have a copy room with a copy machine, counter work space and storage cupboards. Each employee has a computer. We actually still have a typewriter for the rare form that needs to be typed. We do not use or have dictation equipment.

7. Are building and equipment adequate for an effective program?

We do not have particularly good handicap access between floors of our building. Accessibility is achieved by going around the outside of the building which is a deterrent distance-wise and weather-wise. We think our building allows for an effective program, but could use additional classroom space for both children and adults. Parking can also be an issue.

Describe any special assets or liabilities of the building.

The building is centrally located, near downtown, and has a beautiful view across a park of the downtown buildings.

Our kitchen needs to be upgraded to commercial, rather than warming, and we need an elevator.

8. Name the insurance company and describe the coverage for church liability, property, pastor's liability, etc., for the church.

Our insurance is through Brotherhood Mutual.

Liability Declarations:

General Occurrence: 1,000,000/3,000,000

Principal coverages: bodily injury/property damage liability, medical payments, products/completed work, fire legal liability

Additional Coverages:

Counseling Acts (\$1,000,000/\$3,000,000), Directors & Officers, Nonowned property damage, sexual acts (with screening); Religious Athletic Medical, Nonowned/Rented Vehicle, Nonowned Vehicle Medical, Computer Related Liability, Religious Communication, Discriminatory Acts Liability, Terrorism, Benefits Administration, Employment Pract, Defense Reimbursement, Wage Reimbursement.

F. CHURCH FINANCES

1. Based upon your last report, identify the previous year's giving of your congregation. In 2008, total income was \$473,466; total expenses \$471,563

Local Church

Expenses \$471,563

Local relief and mission: \$25,165

Buildings and facilities: \$110,450

TOTAL LOCAL CHURCH CONTRIBUTIONS: \$366,524

Non Local Contributions

Area conference: \$25,490

Denominational total: \$47,275

Mennonite institutions and agencies: \$11,410

Mennonite Central Committee: \$6.125

Other Mennonite causes: \$440

Non-Mennonite causes: \$0

TOTAL NON LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS \$72,765

2. Church budget

Who makes recommendation regarding pastoral and staff salaries?

Human Resources (HR) sub-group of the Leadership Council and the Finance Committee make recommendations to the Leadership Council.

Who determines church budget or makes recommendation to congregation?

The Finance Committee, with input from the HR group, the Leadership Council Commission Coordinators and the congregation, puts together a proposed budget. This budget is then recommended to the congregation by the Leadership Council.

What plan is used to challenge the congregation to Christian stewardship and to raise the budget: We emphasize stewardship throughout the year in preaching, teaching, articles. We also have a "First Fruits" ritual in the fall to symbolize God's abundance to us. We involve the congregation in the decision-making process and invite their discussion and feedback on the proposed budget. The congregation votes to accept the budget and then we raise funds through pledging. If we don't reach a certain level of pledging, we revise the budget accordingly.

Current total budget: 2009 Budget is \$488,655

3. Is there church indebtedness? Not at the present. We paid off our mortgage in October 2008.

G. STAFF

1. Identify the present staff position for which you are seeking a candidate.
Pastor for Child and Youth Faith Formation

2. Two previous persons in the above position:
This position is changing from part time to full time. We have had two others serve in a similar position, part time.

Name: Barb Yoder Stutzman, serving as Interim Coordinator for Child and Youth Faith Formation

Dates of service: October 2008 to the present

Name: Rachel S. Gerber, Part time Associate Pastor for Faith Formation

Dates of service: October 2005 through March 2008

Comment on the transitions experienced by the above staff persons. What were the reasons for termination?

Rachel left to move when her husband accepted a position in another state.

By whom and how were decisions made? She resigned and the Leadership Council accepted her resignation.

3. Financial support of previous person in the above position:

Barb Yoder Stutzman: Confidential

Rachel S. Gerber - 2008

Cash salary: \$20,178

Housing allowance and utilities or parsonage: \$16,350

Social security cash assistance: \$1544

Family medical health plan (deduct amount): Church paid full premium of family in amount of \$6753

Retirement/pension plan: \$1614 put in account at Mennonite Retirement Trust

Continuing education: \$500

Expense account: \$500 including mileage reimbursement and all other expenses

Projected changes for new pastor: New position will include more for expense account and continuing education because it is full time. The church now only pays the employee portion of health insurance.

4. Identify other staff: (assistant/associate minister, lay ministers, office secretary, custodian, musicians, other)

Title	% of full time	Specific responsibilities	Years served
Administrative Assistant	63%	Facilities readiness, hospitality, general office work, other as needed	9
Cong. Administrator	100%	Facilities oversight, finance, Leadership Council support, communication, other tasks	13

Pastor (Executive)	100%	Leadership and program development, pastoral care, worship planning, outreach, preaching/teaching, Conference activities	2
Pastor (Senior)	100%	Preaching/teaching, pastoral care, worship planning, outreach, adult education, Conference/MCUSA activities	13

5. Describe housing options for the above position: Is there a parsonage or a housing allowance?

No parsonage. Housing allowance is offered and negotiated.

Is the person free to choose between these options? No.

II. Part Two - Interpretation

The answers to the questions in this section are more difficult but probably more important in determining the qualifications needed by pastoral leadership. Use a small group to test for consensus on the answers given in this section.

A. Describe the commitment of your congregation to Anabaptist/Mennonite faith. What issues in the faith heritage are important to you? Does your congregation cooperate with and participate in: MCUSA and/or area conference?

First Mennonite Church of Denver is committed to Anabaptist and Mennonite faith traditions and membership continues to be voluntary with baptism by choice as a declaration of faith. The church believes that the Bible and the example of Jesus Christ should be central in our lives and worship. Our worship services incorporate sharing of stories, music, and sermons by many church members and non-members alike in an inclusive and participatory manner in order to challenge us all in our walks of faith and the ways of Jesus.

Peace, service, simplicity and community are central issues in the wider Mennonite church and can be witnessed in our church in the form of outreach to and support of our own church, local, conference and world communities.

FMC of Denver is an affiliate of Mennonite Church USA and an active participant in the Mountain States Mennonite Conference. First Mennonite Church of Denver is committed to Anabaptist and Mennonite faith traditions and membership continues to be voluntary with baptism by choice as a declaration of faith. The church believes that the Bible and the example of Jesus Christ should be central in our lives and worship. Our worship services incorporate sharing of stories, music, and sermons by many church members and non-members alike in an inclusive and participatory manner in order to challenge us all in our walks of faith and the ways of Jesus.

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FMC of Denver is an affiliate of Mennonite Church USA and an active participant in the Mountain States Mennonite Conference. Several congregation members have served as leaders in conference roles. Our pastors are actively involved in conference and denominational processes, including the conference Ministerial Commission and the denomination's Constituency Leadership Council. Congregation members regularly attend various conference

functions. As a member of Mennonite Urban Ministries and participant in other metro-area inter-Mennonite activities, First Mennonite has committed itself to becoming a greater presence in the Denver community.

B. What is the mission of your congregation? Describe any particular focus or special emphasis which characterizes the church's ministry such as overseas missions, evangelism, peace and justice issues, special ministry to aging, students, families, etc. Has the congregation worked recently on goal setting, and with what results? (Not sure if this is the mission, or just themes. Would the results of the Round Table discussion we talked about be additive here?)

The mission of the church is to provide a community of faith and connection for members within the larger urban context. Because of this strong core, a number of individuals and families have joined the congregation in recent years, including many families with young children and many new to the congregation and the Mennonite faith.

Additionally, there is an active peace and justice and service orientation within the congregation. A number of congregation members have worked overseas either with MCC or through other organizations, and church members are involved with such organizations as Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP), MEDA, and inter-faith and inter-religious organizations. The church manages an outreach office that provides rental and utility assistance to those in need within the neighborhood – funded through the annual church budget. The church also regularly supports community organizations such as Broadway Assistance Center and Denver Inner City Parish. In the past the church has supported a part time outreach position and/or this has been part of the role of the pastoral team. Currently there is also an active Outreach Committee made up of congregation members focused on providing service and outreach opportunities for congregational members and strengthening this focus. There is also a component of health oriented ministry addressing healthcare access, advocacy and end of life issues with a number of congregation members working within the health profession.

C. Our view of the pastor's role in our congregation is to be a multi-dimensional leader who can facilitate, mentor, direct, and coordinate processes and structures within the congregation. In this particular role, we are looking for a pastor who is relational and has strong skills in expanding the structure and continuity of children and youth faith formation programming. This pastor would also be a natural initiator with an inherent attention to detail and the ability to inspire and encourage volunteers in their gifts and their sense of leadership. The pastor would function as part of a pastoral team, and, while this person would focus most directly on the faith formation of children and youth, the intent would be that they would be integrated into the ongoing work of the pastoral team. The pastor would co-represent the congregation in regional and national church related events as well, like MCUSA or the Mountain States Mennonite Conference.

D. First Mennonite identifies very explicitly as Mennonite. We value the history and denominational associations of that name. In particular we value that idea that God calls us to follow Christ in life, in ways that are suggested in the Sermon on the Mount and similar Biblical passages. We seek to "love our enemies" and be "light and salt." So, for example, while the congregation is predominantly anglo urban professionals, there is always strong response to calls for assistance locally and globally around poverty. There is strong support for what might broadly be called "the common good" whether in national and global food, housing, or health care policy. The congregation is also committed to finding alternatives to war and other lethal strategies, in cases of global conflict, crime, and conflict. We support conflict transformation in

the Spirit of Christ. The congregation is inclusive. We value God's love for all people, knowing that we all need mercy and compassion and that we all need transformation. The congregation values creation and nurture of genuine community of mutual care and solidarity among ourselves and with our neighbors. We care for the earth, our human home.

E. Overall, morale is high. As the church is growing, relationships within the congregation appear to be dynamic. While there are 35 ongoing established small groups ranging in size from six to 15-20 members, there was a great response recently from congregational members to branch out and participate in short term small groups to promote new relationships. As well, there continues to be the formation of new (longer term) small groups to welcome new attendees; in several cases, more rooted members leave their groups to support the formation of these new groups. There is a strong sense of mutual care in the congregation. When needs or concerns arise, the community quickly responds to one another with support and resources.

The health of our congregation from a spiritual perspective can be viewed through open sharing that appears to be on the rise during the worship service. This sharing time demonstrates a level of trust within our congregation and a desire to have a faith community be supportive in prayer as well as a belief in the power of prayer in one's life.

In terms of the acceptance of new ideas, there is not always unanimity – however, one would not expect this. The congregational members participate in discussions and appear to feel free to express their opinions. With several recent issues, it has been observed that in spite of differing opinions, generally, the congregation eventually is able to come to a consensus and agree with the common goal being the good of the church and its members.

F. We are currently in the middle of what is called in the literature a transition from being a "program" church to being a "corporate" church. Most basically, this means moving from being more or less one group (albeit a large group) to understanding ourselves as a "group of groups", all working together but with more complex and multiple processes alive and working in the congregation. We expect to have more than one significant weekly worship event in the future. We expect a scale shift in our outreach program, both in care for community and global connections. We plan to provide a much broader range of "life-needs" kinds of resources in the congregation, from marriage and divorce counseling to substance abuse support groups, to a whole range of life-transition rituals and support. Our education program is expanding in many ways, including the creation of this pastoral position for Children and Youth Faith Formation.

In addition, we think that in the next generation, there will be greater collaboration among Mennonites in the entire metro area, as Mennonites finally begin to "move into their own" in this growing and cutting-edge urban environment.

Name of group or persons responsible for completion of this form:
Annie Lengacher Browning, Amy Conrad, Cindy Eby, Dave Harguth, Karen Martin,
Stephanie Miller, Vern Rempel

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