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## From Our Executive Conference Minister, *Eric Massanari*

### *Hitting the Ground Learning*

Greetings in the love and peace of Christ! I write these words on my very first day serving as the new conference minister of Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference. This day seemed far off when it was first set on the calendar a few months ago. However, as our family leaned into the many tasks of our move from Kansas to the PNW, the days and weeks passed quickly. I've felt warmly and enthusiastically welcomed by many of you already, and I'm excited to begin this work and get to know more of the wonderful people who are part of the PNMC community!

After 23 years of living in Kansas, coming to the PNW is something of a homecoming for us. My wife, Yolanda Kauffman, was born and raised in Portland, OR and Portland was our first home after we were married. That was followed by two years at Drift Creek Camp as caretakers and hosts (1994-1996). Yolanda's family members remain in the Portland area, and during our years away in Colorado and Kansas my own immediate family members relocated to this region, too. My sister's family lives in Bellingham, WA and my parents now reside in Lynden, WA.

My sister and brother-in-law have a wonderful little apartment on their property in Bellingham and this is where we are now living while we look for a house in the area. We are particularly exploring communities in Skagit County where Yolanda has started her job as a hospice social worker with Hospice of the Northwest.

There will be much more given and received in the months ahead, but for now I want to share with you my intention to begin this work by "hitting the ground learning" rather than "hitting the ground *running*." For me it is a difference between pace and focus. Though there will, of course, be many tasks to attend to, I want to be sure that my **primary focus** during the next 6-8 months rests squarely on **building healthy relationships and establishing good ground for what will hopefully be my long-term service and growth in this role.**

Between now and our annual meeting in Portland next June, I will prioritize learning about the formative stories and present-day life within the PNMC community. A concerted effort will be given during these months to meetings with pastors and congregations, leadership teams, constituency groups, denominational leaders and others who are integral to the life of PNMC. I want to listen with care to how you sense the Spirit of God is at work in your life, in your ministries and in our common life as the Body of Christ.

I will be carrying into this work a verse that has held particularly deep meaning for me in my various ministry experiences and in my own spiritual journey: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 12:24). These words remind me of the transforming, enlivening power of Christ's love, and the truth that **all transformation and growth inevitably bring endings as well as new beginnings.** I feel so grateful to be making this new beginning with all of you!

In gratitude and peace, *Eric*



## **PNMC CONGREGATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS & MINISTRIES**

### Portland Mennonite Church

Celebrate 100 years with PMC **November 12-13!** *The weekend schedule includes:*

#### **Saturday, November 12, 2022**

9:00 - 11:00 am - Service projects with SOLVE and Southeast Uplift.

10:00 - Noon - Meetinghouse open for tours including, Family Promise, Sunnyside Mennonite Montessori Preschool, Quilt and Comforter display, and a special presentation at 11:00 am by local stained glass expert David Schlicker.

2:00 - 4:00 pm - Meet and greet with former pastor Patty Friesen.

5:00 - 6:30 pm - A buffet-style fundraiser meal in support of PMC's reparation efforts with food provided by minority-owned local restaurants. The cost of the meal has been covered, but we invite generous donations.

7:00 pm - Hymn Sing & Video Slide show. A singing celebration using four of the Mennonite Hymnals used by the church and a showing of a video slide show capturing some of the people and activities over the last 100 years.

#### **Sunday, November 13, 2022**

9:30 am - Panel discussion and questions and answer time with former pastors Dave Stutzman and Patty Friesen.

10:45 am - Worship service focused on remembering the past /looking to the future with a renewed commitment to "Seeking the Peace of the City."

Noon - Light reception in the fellowship hall. (*More information at [pmc@100](mailto:pmc@100) - PORTLAND MENNONITE CHURCH*)

## PNMC CONGREGATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS & MINISTRIES, cont.

### Evergreen Mennonite Church

Folks at Evergreen are taking action against hunger. They share these ideas for others in the conference to take local action:

- Send letters to your congressional representatives (Contact [evergreenmennonite@gmail.com](mailto:evergreenmennonite@gmail.com) for examples)
- Contribute food to local food pantry
- Give to food insecurity focused non-profit organizations
- Set aside an amount monthly/forego indulgences and re-allocate amount to fight hunger
- Carry a sack in your car for people on street corners with non-perishable food, gloves, water, hand warmers. Consider including an encouraging note and/or scripture.
- Volunteer at a meal site
- Give some of your food to the hungry and some of your clothing to the naked.
- PRAY re: food insecurity/inequality
- Voice food insecurity/inequality concerns on social media and urge friends to contact congressional representatives
- Organize an offering of letters to congress through [BREAD FOR THE WORLD](#)

#### **National Strategy on Hunger and Health:**

- Improve food access and affordability
- Integrate nutrition and preventive health
- Empower/educate all consumers to make and have access to healthy nutrition choices
- Enhance nutrition and Food Security research

### Mountain View Mennonite Church

Sunday, October 30 marked Jeryl Hollinger's final service as he moves into retirement. *He shared this reflection:*

"A little over 20 years ago our congregation decided to affiliate with PNMC when MC USA was formed and our conference affiliation was north of the US border. Little did I know at the time how valuable this new conference relationship would be for me personally. The relationships and resources of PNMC have been a source of joy and encouragement, a place of community as **we seek to find our way with Jesus**. We have shared with each other our challenges, questions and visions. In that sharing we have found a life together. As I retire from my ministerial role here at Mountain View I **give thanks** for all of you and trust that our conference community will continue to be a **source of guidance and hope for all of us**. I plan to keep seeing you since our family is remaining in Kalispell."

*Jeryl, we wish you well and are grateful for your years of service! Our prayers are with both Jeryl and MVMC during this time of transition.*

### Pacific Northwest Mennonite Historical Society

Mark your calendar for the PNMHS Annual Meeting, **Saturday, February 11, 2023** at 12pm.

## MENNONITE CHURCH USA & OTHER CHURCHWIDE AGENCIES

*listed alphabetically by organization*

### Mennonite Central Committee

Yearning for another MCC Bike Ride? **July 2023**, Columbus Ohio, welcoming riders and planners, contact [Ethan Horst](#).

### Mennonite Church USA

Are you interested in joining a 4-week series of Zoom discussions with Mennonites and Jews as we dialogue together about the Christmas story? The time and day of week is to be determined depending on group members' schedules. We will use [Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent](#) by **Amy-Jill Levine** as our guide, but reading the book is not required to participate. Watch the author's introduction to the book [here](#). **If you are interested please complete this form by Saturday, November 12!**

This book study is being hosted by the Mennonite Jewish Relations Working Group (MJRW), formed as an outgrowth of the 2017 resolution passed by delegates at the MCUSA conference in Orlando, FL entitled "[Seeking Peace in Israel and Palestine: A Resolution for Mennonite Church USA](#)." We are pastors, scholars, and laypeople, partnering with other justice organizations through Mennonite Church USA (MCUSA) to assist the denomination in fulfilling its commitments to opposing anti-Semitism and attending to right relationships between diverse Mennonite and Jewish communities. Questions? [Contact Erica Lea-Simka](#).

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### Upcoming e-Bulletins:

Nov 21 (submissions due by 9/14)  
Dec 5 (submissions due by 11/28)  
Dec 19 (submissions due by 12/12)  
Jan 2 (submissions due by 12/26)

If you would like to contribute, please send a **brief announcement** in Spanish & English with website links to [brenda@pnmc.org](mailto:brenda@pnmc.org). Our goal is to provide a valuable resource, not an In-Box jammer. If space is tight, we may omit announcements that are not as pertinent to PNMC. Announcements will run ONE time only, unless specified otherwise. *We welcome your feedback!*

For more PNMC updates: <http://pnmc.org> e-Bulletin Archives: <http://pnmc.org/Resources/eBulletin>