

## **The MENNONITE CHURCH BRITISH COLUMBIA (MCBC) Story to the Nationwide Regional Churches for 2021, Submitted by Garry Janzen, Executive Minister**

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13*

As we reflect on this past year, it has brought many more challenges. We spoke of 2020 being a year like none other with all the uncertainties brought to us by COVID-19. With many of the ravages of climate change landing in BC, including a heat dome, atmospheric rivers, and the destructive effects of fire and flooding, we are moved to look for what might give us hope. Romans 15 reminds us of where our hope comes from, ending with the benediction in verse 13 above. May this hope that we find in Jesus sustain us and carry us as our theme in 2022.

In 2021 we affirmed a new structure for MCBC. Task Groups have grown, and others have been formed. There is much that our people have said they care about and want to act on, and the work of our task groups reflect these interests. Our task groups are too numerous to name them all here. We give thanks to our Ministry Leaders: Andrew Haak (Cultivating Anabaptist Vision), Henry Krause (Engaging God's World) and Bob Boehr (Growing Community). They do quarterly reports on the work in their ministry area. As Leadership Board members they also help with giving overall direction to MCBC.

We have said that the local congregation is the foundational unit of the church. It has been brought to our attention that we still need to figure out how our MCBC task groups connect with this commitment. It might be good for those who are in task groups to let their congregations know what they are doing, and for congregational leadership to become familiar with the task groups that their people have joined and learn about their work.

MCBC has developed an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement statement. Here it is, "We respectfully and gratefully acknowledge that we gather on the unceded, traditional, and ancestral lands of Indigenous First Nations." It is designed to be general for use anywhere in the province, brief, and adaptable to the specific Indigenous lands on which any MCBC event may be taking place.

In September I announced my plans to retire mid-2022. The exact time will be dependant on when a new Executive Minister is found. There is hope that I might have overlap with the new person for some orientation. I am in my 15<sup>th</sup> year, and I am so thankful for this rich experience.

The 2022 MCBC Annual Gathering on February 26<sup>th</sup> will be on Zoom. Video reports will be posted in advance.

This fall it became possible to meet in person again for worship services. This gave opportunity to catch up with baptisms, pastoral installations, licensing, and ordination. It was a great pleasure to be able to do these celebrations, but with the continuing uncertainties regarding COVID, preparation was challenging. We learned to do a no-touch laying on of hands.

Appreciation needs to be given to the Calling & Credentialling Task Group for the many Zoom interviews they did and other hard work they were called to do virtually this year. Also, the Intercultural Church Task Group has been meeting with our non-English pastors and others interested in MCBC congregations becoming intercultural, thanks to the work of Joon Park. This is a very positive and hopeful initiative.

As 2022 unfolds, hopefully this will be the year to move beyond COVID-19 as a pandemic. Our Nationwide work together as the Mennonite Church gives me hope. May we be filled with hope in whatever circumstances we find ourselves, and may we find our way to amazing new beginnings as we serve together in God's work.