

Pastoral Care at Assembly Mennonite Church

Small Groups. At Assembly, we say that small groups are the front-line of pastoral care. This vision for small groups is rooted in the New Testament vision of the church: *“See how they love one another;”* *“Let each of you look not to our own interests but to the interests of others.”* This kind of caring can’t happen nearly so well in the large group.

Small groups as the front-line of pastoral care means that small groups are where we listen to one another; it is where we share the highs and lows of our lives; it is where we are known, heard, supported, and prayed for. Small groups mark transitions, offer accountability, help with discernment, request financial aid for individuals and families when needed, and organize care around births, deaths, and illnesses.

This aspect of group life can be strengthened by group members discussing how and who will make pastoral care best happen as a part of group life. Most well-functioning groups have some person(s) who by natural giftedness or training know how to listen deeply. Also, groups that care well check-in about concerns that have been raised in earlier meetings.

However, small groups should be quick to inform the pastoral team when someone in the group has a significant need or is going through an important transition. Also, a pastor should be notified when the help or resources needed are beyond what’s available in the small group.

Pastors. Pastors at Assembly provide a variety of kinds of pastoral care. They offer conversation about faith and life questions, counseling and support during transitions or hard times, spiritual care in times of crisis, and help marking and navigating various life stages. Our three pastors bring different skills and are designated to work with different kinds of care. However you may contact any of the pastors for pastoral care needs and be confident they will see that you get the care you seek.

Care Team. A more recent addition to pastoral care at Assembly is the Care Team. This is a group of individuals (currently Randy Roth, Brooke Rothshank, Joyce Hostetler) that primarily give attention to older people in our congregation. They check in regularly, have friendly visits and connect with them when they have health concerns or are in the hospital. With direction from the pastoral team, the Care Team also provides support to some people who are not in small groups and are experiencing life transitions (e.g. with meals etc.). *If you would like to have a regular visitor, please talk with one of the pastors.*

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