

# Welcome to Assembly Mennonite Church!

Assembly is a congregation of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christians who have covenanted together as a worshipping community. Begun in 1974 with the coming together of a number of small fellowship groups and house churches, Assembly currently has about 190 covenanted members. Attendance on Sunday mornings during the school year runs anywhere from 195-250, with over 100 children and youth. Small groups have always been an integral part of Assembly life; about 200 adults participate in 23 small groups.

Our meetinghouse, located at 1201 S. 11th St., is shared with Faith Mennonite Church, which meets for worship and a meal on Sunday evenings. We are members of Central District Conference, a regional conference of the Mennonite Church USA denomination.

We place a high value on shared leadership, participatory worship, inclusive language, and justice and peacemaking. We have ministry teams focusing on racial justice and creation care. We are an inclusive congregation that welcomes our sisters and brothers who are LGBTQ. We have a strong global awareness with many members having spent time abroad in study or service. Locally, members are involved with organizations such as La Casa, ADEC, the Window, and many of the Mennonite institutions.

Our pastoral team consists of Lora Nafziger (Faith Formation), Karl Shelly (Community Building and Mission), and Anna Yoder Schlabach (Pastoral Care and Worship). We have a handout available on the literature table that tells more about our pastors and their roles at Assembly. Our administrator is Naomi Roots.



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[www.assemblymennonite.org](http://www.assemblymennonite.org)

## ASSEMBLY COVENANT

*Members of Assembly make a covenant with God and each other to be church together. The words of the covenant are read aloud each time someone new becomes a covenanted member of the congregation and each year on Pentecost. A copy of this covenant can also be found on a blue sheet in the back pocket of the hymnal.*

As a community of God's people, we receive with joy  
God's gracious love.  
In response, we join in worship and praise  
and make this covenant with God and each other.

We affirm our faith in God, the source of life and love,  
and Sovereign of the world.  
We commit ourselves to follow Jesus Christ,  
who redeems, reconciles, and reveals God to us.  
We invite God's Spirit to transform, empower, and guide us,  
as together we discern and follow God's word.

We pledge to nurture and care for each other  
and call out the gifts of each person.  
We repent of sin, both private and social, and join God's plan  
for healing the earth and bringing peace and justice to its people.  
We accept God's call to share the good news of redeeming love,  
and invite others to faith in Christ and membership in his church.

We encourage and pray for each other as we live out this covenant  
in hope for the time when God brings all of creation  
to its fullness in Christ.

3/28/1993

# ASSEMBLY PRACTICES

**We believe our Covenant calls us to the following practices in this time and context:**

## **1. Active participation in congregational life**

- a. Worship – God calls us to be the church; not an audience. We encourage participants to nurture gifts for teaching, preaching, leading and otherwise contributing to our corporate worship.
- b. Discernment – members share responsibility for discerning the direction of the congregation in congregational meetings and in other discernment venues.
- c. Community building – small group participation is one important way we build community and invite others into the life of the congregation.

## **2. Ongoing spiritual formation**

- a. Spiritual practices – in addition to participation in Sunday worship, we engage other avenues of spiritual growth such as practicing spiritual disciplines; attending spiritual retreats; meeting with a spiritual director; and regularly reviewing our stewardship of time, money, gifts, and other facets of faithful living.
- b. Nurturing children – we seek to lead children to faith by the Christ-like love, care, and model we offer the young among us.
- c. Spiritual journey – we encourage each other to publicly claim and proclaim faith in God, and we also grant each other the freedom necessary for real searching and questioning.
- d. Giving and receiving counsel – we believe we are not an island unto ourselves but need the larger body of Christ for our mutual growth.

## **3. Acting on our commitment to biblical peace, nonviolence, and justice**

- a. Relationships – our commitment to peace begins with fostering healthy relationships. We commit to practicing Christian love and faithfulness in our primary relationships, supporting healthy marriages and families, and seeking reconciliation in situations of brokenness.
- b. Economics – we seek to follow God by growing in grace and generosity, releasing more of our financial resources, and contributing an extra 2 % of our income as partial restitution to the exploited people of the world.
- c. Creation care – we commit to better understanding our impact on God’s creation and acting to reduce the adverse effects of our actions.
- d. Justice for oppressed people – we advocate for concerns local and global, act on our biblical convictions against war/militarism, and are a congregation which seeks inclusion for our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters.

*The points listed under each practice are not meant to define the totality of how we engage a particular practice. They are meant to highlight key aspects of that practice to which members are committed.*

*Also, we intend for this list of practices to be periodically reviewed and for changes to be made as we discern new ways in which God is calling us to faithful discipleship.*

4/18/10

## MISSION STATEMENT

Assembly Mennonite Church seeks to be a dynamic Christian community by together meeting God who draws us beyond ourselves into nurturing, sharing, and living the good news of God's love as known in Jesus Christ.

June 1997

## WELCOME STATEMENT

As a reconciling faith community, Assembly Mennonite Church seeks to follow Jesus' example by welcoming all who come our way, regardless of age, economic or social circumstances, ethnic background, gender, marital status, physical ability, race, or sexual orientation.

December 1999

## THE PRIVILEGES OF THE CHILD IN ASSEMBLY

1. To be in the midst of the congregation, not on the sidelines.
2. To wander among us during worship, being the responsibility of each of us.
3. To give answers during children's time without being laughed at.
4. To be called by name by each adult.
5. To be a valued person in the congregation.
6. To be led to faith by the Christlike love, care, and model of each adult.
7. To be an active participant in worship.

Updated Feb 1992

Given the preciousness of our children and youth and their potential vulnerability to abuse, we covenant for their safety and full participation in our community. Out of our commitment to love and care for all of God's creation we make a covenant to our children, youth, adults, families and community. This Covenant, along with Assembly's "Digital Communications Policy" and "How to Report Suspect Abuse" [can be found on our website here.](#)

## SMALL GROUPS AT ASSEMBLY

Small groups play a key and multi-faceted role at Assembly (we are, after all, the "Assembly of small groups"). Assembly small groups are a place to share about your life, build community, provide and receive support, grow spiritually, participate in congregational discernment, and have a good time. Over 90% of members and many participants are a part of a small group.

No one will assign you to a group, but Karl Shelly ([karlss@assemblymennonite.org](mailto:karlss@assemblymennonite.org)) can help you find your way by providing information about existing groups and connecting you with people forming a new group. September is the easiest time to do this, but it can be done throughout the year.

Every September there is opportunity for individuals to "shuffle" (change small groups). Entire groups also periodically shuffle at this time, especially those that have been largely intact for three or more years.

# A guide to Assembly

## **2% offering**

On the first Sunday of the month we have two baskets for offerings --one for our regular tithes and offerings; and the other for our 2 % offering --2 % of our income which is disbursed to impoverished people locally and in the 2/3rds world. We do this as an act of restitution for injustices in economic distribution. The 2% committee determines how to distribute the funds.

## **Announcements**

An opportunity for anyone to make oral announcements at the end of worship. Brevity is valued. We also have a weekly newsletter, called the Assemblyline where announcements are shared. Assemblyline announcements should be emailed to [assemblyline@assemblymennonite.org](mailto:assemblyline@assemblymennonite.org) by 8am on Fridays.

## **AssemblyLine**

Weekly announcements; available online, on paper, or by email. You can also find paper copies of the Assemblyline on the literature table. You can subscribe to receive the Assemblyline via email, visit <https://www.assemblymennonite.org/assembly-101/assemblyline/>.

## **Birthday candle and Ice cream visit**

Assembly children up through middle school are celebrated with a birthday candle during first hour on a Sunday close to the child's birthday, along with a few sentences about the child in that week's Assemblyline. Children ages three through grade 8 get taken out for ice cream by a member of the pastoral team each year for the child's birthday. To ensure your children can participate in this tradition, give your children's names and birthdates to Naomi Roots: [office@assemblymennonite.org](mailto:office@assemblymennonite.org).

## **CDC or Central District Conference**

Assembly is a member of Central District Conference, also known as "CDC."

## **Congregational meeting**

Assembly does not have a traditional church council or church board. Instead, there are monthly gatherings of all interested adults to discuss congregational business and make decisions.

## **Faith**

When used with a capital F, "Faith" refers to Faith Mennonite Church, our sister congregation that meets in the same building on Sunday evenings.

## **Fellowship break**

Time for coffee, tea and conversation between first and second hours during the school year, and following worship during the summer. Help yourself to any mug.

## **First hour**

Not really an hour in length. The first portion of the morning worship service, from 9:30-10:45 or 11am.

## **Gathering space**

The area just outside the worship space with the mailboxes. Also called the lobby or the narthex.

## **Junior youth**

Grades 6-8

**Leadership group**

The closest Assembly equivalent to a church council or church board. Six elders, 1-2 apprentice elders, and the pastoral team, who meet at least once a month to provide support for the pastoral team and do initial processing of church business to prepare for congregational meetings.

**LGBT or LGBTQ or GLBT**

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer/Questioning. Assembly is a “welcoming” congregation, meaning that all people who are LGBTQ are welcome to worship with us and be fully part of the congregation.

**List Serve**

We maintain a local email list serve for time-sensitive announcements. We also have a list serve for parents, with information related to children’s activities at Assembly. To sign up for these email lists, fill out the form at the end of this packet.

**MCC**

Mennonite Central Committee

**Ministry Team (as compared to *committee* and *task force*)**

A group of people who wish to give focused attention to a specific faith-related issue. Two current examples are the Racial Justice Ministry Team and Creation Care Ministry Team. Ministry teams vary from Assembly committees and task forces by having voluntary membership and a life span determined by the members. Committees and task forces are appointed by leadership group and/or congregational discernment. Committees renew annually through the leader selection process. Task forces end when their task is completed.

**Multipurpose space**

Overflow space added at the north end of the worship space through the use of divider curtains. It is also used for fellowship break, fellowship meals, elective classrooms, and during the week, a preschool classroom. We are in the midst of working on a plan to address our space needs for Sunday morning worship and Sunday school.

**MYF**

Mennonite Youth Fellowship, grades 9-12

**Pastoral team**

Assembly’s team of three co-pastors which functions as a support/guide for the congregation, with an intentionally non-hierarchical structure. The pastors do not set the agenda or “lead” the congregation in a traditional sense. You may not even see any of the pastors up front on a Sunday morning. Assembly thinks of leadership a bit differently than many churches, so you don’t have to be officially welcomed by the pastor to become a part of the congregation. Still, they’d very much like to meet you, so don’t hesitate to ask around if they don’t happen to be up front on the mornings you’ve attended so far. Email is a great way to contact the pastors: Lora Nafziger, [loracn@assemblymennonite.org](mailto:loracn@assemblymennonite.org), Karl Shelly, [karlss@assemblymennonite.org](mailto:karlss@assemblymennonite.org), and Anna Yoder Schlabach, [annays@assemblymennonite.org](mailto:annays@assemblymennonite.org). To contact the church office, email [office@assemblymennonite.org](mailto:office@assemblymennonite.org).

**Phone list**

The Assembly phone list is updated several times a year and is therefore the most up-to-date version of an Assembly directory at any given time. Check the rack to the right of the literature table (on the side of the mailboxes) for copies, or find it online on our website.

### **Privileges of the child**

A long-cherished document for Assembly; it is included in this packet. Children's time is an important part of our worship together; ages three through grade school children are welcome to come up front. Little children's time for children under three takes place across the hall from the worship space in the first classroom. Child care for pre-school children is available in this classroom after children's time. Some parents with young children like to use the rocking chairs in the back of the worship space. We have a total of 10 Sunday school classes, based on age/grade. Ask any friendly-looking adult to help you find the right room and teacher. Given the preciousness of our children and youth and their potential vulnerability to abuse, we covenant for their safety and full participation in our community. Out of our commitment to love and care for all of God's creation we make a covenant to our children, youth, adults, families and community. This Covenant, along with Assembly's "Digital Communications Policy" and "How to Report Suspect Abuse" [can be found on our website here](#).

### **Reps**

Short for "Small group representatives." Small groups are the building block of Assembly life, pastoral care and general functioning. Each small group has a rep, and reps meet monthly during the school year to share and process congregational needs. Small group reps also select congregational elders on behalf of their groups. Small groups take turns with tasks such as Sunday morning clean-up and hosting K-5 activity nights. Small groups also do some processing of congregational business.

### **Second hour and electives**

Assembly does not have adult Sunday school classes. Instead, adults not involved in teaching Sunday school re-gather as one group in the worship space for "second hour," which includes a variety of activities.

### **Set up**

Because we share our space, we have volunteer set-up and clean-up tasks to do each Sunday morning. "Set up" typically refers to setting up chairs, song books and other items in the worship space.

### **Small group shuffle**

An annual opportunity for people to join or change small groups. Shuffling is not mandated, but most groups shift in some way about every three years, with the goal of several new groups forming each fall. Small groups are an important part of the life of Assembly. Contact Karl Shelly ([karlss@assemblymennonite.org](mailto:karlss@assemblymennonite.org)) to learn more about joining a small group.

### **Supportive Communities Network or SCN**

A network of churches and other groups who support and welcome Christians who are LGBTQ (see above). Assembly is a member of SCN, which is associated with BMC, the Brethren-Mennonite Council for Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Interests.

### **Website**

Assembly's website is [www.assemblymennonite.org](http://www.assemblymennonite.org). Lots of information is posted in the password-protected "Members" section of our website. You can request the username and password on the form at the end of this packet.

### **Worship space**

Often called a "sanctuary" in other church buildings.

# Assembly Survival Kit response sheet

If you would like to deepen your connection to Assembly, or have more questions, please return this sheet to Naomi Roots in the church office: [office@assemblymennonite.org](mailto:office@assemblymennonite.org).

Name(s)

Email and/or phone number:

Ages of children, if applicable:

Two sentences about you/your household (*Ex/ I just moved to Goshen from Chicago because I accepted a job at Goshen Hospital. My children will be attending Waterford Elementary*):

Please check any that apply:

- I would like a copy of the phone list.
- I would like a copy of the email list.
- I would like a username and password for the website.
- Add me/us to the next phone list update. Address and phone number(s):
- Add me/us to the next email list update. Email address(es):
- Add me to the local list serve
- Add my children to the Sunday school list. Birthdays:
- Set up a mailbox for me
- Contact me to talk about small group visiting or participation
- I would like to fill in a worship gifts form
- I would like to fill in a Hospitality and Childcare tasks form
- I'd like my photo taken for the next directory update.
- I'd like to receive a Sunday lunch invitation from a household in the congregation.
- I'd like to ask someone about \_\_\_\_\_ at Assembly.
- Other: