

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 through Members Needs, and organize care around births (often setting up a meal rotation), deaths (often providing food for family during the visitation and a memorial donation of flowers or a plant), 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. You do not have to be in crisis to contact a pastor for a conversation! They are happy to meet with you and get to know you better.

Pastors also help to facilitate pastoral care groups. Currently the two ongoing groups are for parents of children with special needs, which meets every other month, and the Greencroft Gathering which meets the first Friday of every month. At various points pastors have also created support groups for individuals going through divorce, mental illness, addiction, or transition.

Our four 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.

Pastoral Care at AMC

Small Groups

Provide:

- Place for regular sharing
- Accountability & Discernment
- Request financial aid
- Help to mark transitions & provide care around:
birth, death, illness

- Support for elderly
- Care for those with significant mental/physical health & life stage challenges

Pastors

Provide:

- Short term counselling & referral
- Conversation about Faith & Life questions
- Care during crisis
- Help marking passage through life stages
- Organization of support groups
- Hospital visits
- Advanced planning
- Care of those not in small groups

Support Groups

Time limited, pastor initiated, confidential