



## 2023 in Review (Summary)

It thrilled me to read the 2023 year-end reports from staff this year!

But before I tell you why, an important note: This one-page summary cannot do justice to the work that's been done. Please see (and share!) a more comprehensive four-page edition at [www.commonword.ca/go/3761](http://www.commonword.ca/go/3761).

These reports thrilled me because of how closely they reflect the themes of MC Canada's refreshed priorities. Meant to help staff and the Joint Council focus on how we work toward our broad Vision: Healing and Hope statement, our desire is to: 1) join in restoring all of creation; 2) be companions who make known God's welcome, generosity, and forgiveness; 3) joyfully cultivate intercultural communities.

Each of these priorities reminds me that God intends for us to work together. That we are not alone in our journey to be more Christ-like is happily evident from our work in 2023...

**Leadership Development:** In 2023, the coordination of leadership development was moved to the national church office, and Al Rempel was appointed to take over this work as associate executive minister. Al works with the Company of 1000 leadership development and the TiM (Transitioning into Ministry) programs, and updating leadership and pastoral development policies.

**Indigenous Relations:** After just over a year in the position of Indigenous Relations Coordinator, Jonathan Neufeld celebrates a growing network of reconciliation groups, events, and actions across all five regional churches of MC Canada. Jonathan has responded to invitations to resource a national ecumenical group on Indigenous spirituality, and to support the Winnipeg landfill search for



missing and murdered Indigenous women (pictured with Doug Klassen representing MC Canada). A highlight was the Singing in the Arbor gathering on Muskeg Lake Cree Nation with Mennonite Church Saskatchewan's Walking the Path Initiative.

**Climate Action:** Also with just a year on the job, Sandy Plett reports that nine congregations have taken steps to reduce carbon emissions, supported by MC Canada's Emissions Reduction Grant. MCM's Living Hope Retreat gathered folks from across generations and four regional churches to help us move from grief and lament to action. Those who support youth and children studied In Deep Waters to provide spiritual care for younger generations in a time of climate crisis. Leaders of the five regional working groups on climate/creation care meet regularly to share ideas and encouragement.

**International Witness:** Jeanette Hanson connected Anabaptist church leaders in South Korea, Thailand, Philippines, Colombia, China, Vietnam, and Ethiopia with North American resource people to study the Bible, theology, and discipleship in an Anabaptist context. She notes that while church leaders in China are feeling increased pressures from the state to restrict faith-based activities, they remain eager to know more about Anabaptism. One Chinese church leader told her that, "God has given you this gift to bless the wider church family. You will receive other gifts from us."

**CommonWord:** Arlyn Friesen Epp reports that retail and loan activity recovered well after Covid restrictions were lifted. Approximately 750 copies of the new family storybook Bible, *The Peace Table*, were bought in 2023. And new resource collections have been created on topical themes such as climate change, right relations with Indigenous communities, medical assistance in dying, and the longstanding Palestine-Israel conflict.

Blessings to you in your work together as congregations in 2024!



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A handwritten signature of Doug Klassen.