

OUR 2025 COUNCIL SLATE



Stephanie Thurston, Council Chair-Elect

I began attending FMC shortly after I moved to the area in 2021 to begin a job at the University of Illinois, where I teach in the Religion Department. I'm a social ethicist whose work broadly relates to religion and politics, but I am especially interested in moral and theological questions concerning schools, prisons, and families. My husband and I welcomed our daughter, Clover, in March 2022 and she loves coming to "iglesia con buddies." I look forward to the opportunity to serve on the council to support the deliberative work of the church.



Geoffrey Herman, Council Representative

My family and I started attending FMC in January 2024. I'm married to Christine and we have three kids: Timothy, Ariana, and Caleb. I'm a teaching professor at U of I where I focus on how to help faculty teach better and how to help students learn computer science and engineering. For fun I like playing cello, exercising, listening to theology podcasts, and playing board games.

Joyce Marie Hurd, Council Representative

I grew up in Chicago and attended a local Presbyterian church with my parents. My grandmother was a great influence on me and was a devoted non-violent Christian. I moved to CU and attended New Covenant Fellowship from 1997 until 2017. After searching for a new church home for a period of time, my daughter, Ahbleza Boltinghouse, suggested I visit FMC. I have felt AT HOME at FMC since my first visit. Some of the things that make me feel I belong at FMC: FMC's focus on taking care of the earth and on taking care of people; the congregation was both friendly and respectful when I visited. I look forward to learning from Pastor Michael's teachings and Pastor Deb's soft but firm manner and encouragement to explore what we feel is also a true blessing.



Kate Falk, Elder

I have actively attended FMC since 1998 and was raised in the Mennonite faith. Over the years, I've served on FMC's Hospitality & Fellowship, Service & Outreach, and Library Committees. I have also served on the FMC Council and was a FMC high school youth sponsor twice! Now that I am retired, I'm looking forward to supporting and faithfully serving as your elder these next few years!



WELCOME TO FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH
of Champaign-Urbana

Following Christ. Nurturing Community. Seeking Peace with Justice.

JOY

There is a joy in the journey,
there's a light we can love on the way,
there is a wildness and wonder to life,
and freedom for all who obey.

- from "Joy in the Journey", by Michael Card

Celebration of Worship

December 15, 2024



Advent 3: Journeying in Joy

Centering chimes

Prelude Joy to the World *arr. By Brent Olstad*

*Call to worship

Leader: The desert and the parched land will be glad;

People: the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.

Leader: Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom;

People: it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.

Leader: Then will the eyes of the blind be opened

People: and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

Leader: Then will the lame leap like a deer,

People: and the mute tongue shout for joy.

Leader: Merciful One, yours is the way of release and restoration.

You anoint us for justice, you call us to you.

People: Your Spirit is poured out upon us.

Leader: May your love flow through us to heal the broken hearted.

People: May we declare your good news to bring hope to the poor.

Leader: You anoint us; we are yours.

ALL: We delight and rejoice in you.

*Gathering Hymn #412 "My Soul Cries Out"

Welcome & prayer

Lighting Advent candles

Leader : Mary was told that she would be the mother to the promised Messiah.

People: And she responded, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you've said."

Leader: With the courage of Mary, we can accept the journey ahead of us.

People: But we do not need to walk it alone.

Leader: We need the support of others.

ALL: With Christ as our center, we join hands with others, walking together on the journey.

Candle lighting hymn #216 "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

Children's story and offering for SIM Bangladesh Arsenic Prevention Program

Congregation sings as children come forward (Voices Together #512)

Embodied scripture Luke 1:46-56

Sermon

*Response Hymn #222 "My Soul Proclaims with Wonder"

Offering prayer

Offertory (*offerings can be placed in the offering plates as the greeters come by*)

Congregational sharing and prayer (use a mic or *text/email prayers to Pastor Deb*)

Advent music The First Noel *by Richard Proulx*

Introduction of visitors

Work of the church

*Sending Hymn #240 "Joy to the World"

*Benediction

**Stand in body or in spirit. Children are invited to wave the worship ribbons during the hymns.*

We welcome, without exclusion, all who seek God's love and grace...

You are welcome here, inclusive of gender, race, country of origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, family status, past imprisonment, education, citizenship status and physical or mental abilities. We encourage you to share in the rituals, fellowship and ministry of this congregation.

Hearing devices (T-coil and over-ear) and large print hymnals are available from the greeters.

Childcare (birth – preschool) is provided in the nursery downstairs.