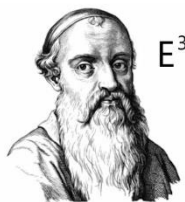


Our church in renewal together: 2020



Encountering, Embracing, Embodying Christ
In life, in community, in the world

$$E^3 = MC^A$$

How do we encounter Christ? How do we embrace the message of Christ? How do we, the church, embody Christ? These questions speak to the desire of Mennonite Church Alberta congregations to draw closer to God in daily life, in congregational gatherings, in our interactions with the world. We want to become the church God is calling us to be.

We've asked ourselves what it means to be the church in today's world. What are the deep longings of our time? What do we need to release? And what do we need to embrace?

Over the past two years the 12 churches of Mennonite Church Alberta have gathered to discern where God is calling us to go and how we are going to get there. With help from Betty Pries, from Credence & Co., MCA (that's us!) has heard God's voice calling us to deeper spirituality.

What has emerged is a 3-year plan. This first year we will focus on Encountering, Embracing, Embodying Christ...in Life. We will ask:

- How do we nurture our relationship with God?
- How do we reclaim prayer & spiritual disciplines?
- How do we remember that we are deeply beloved?
- How are we formed so we are able to give ourselves in the world?

It is our relationship with God that brings us together to create the church, and so renewal must start within each one of us. *Each of us needs to know, deep down to our bones, that we are beloved of Christ.* We can only know this if Christ is real to us, if we truly encounter Christ in our lives. This can happen in many ways:

scripture reading; prayer; worship; music; nature; relationships. God is waiting for us, calling us. Let us open ourselves to hearing God's voice, experiencing God's love, being in God's presence.

What amazing thing is God going to do when we promise to seek Him?

"Each of us needs to know, deep down to our bones, that we are beloved of Christ."

Encounter

meet, see, hear, experience

Embrace

accept, adopt, incorporate, allow-in

Embody

personify, incarnate, become



The first step to a deeper relationship with God is an encounter. To encourage that, we are asking each other to try something new, take a step in God's direction and see what happens. Will God answer with something new awakening within us? Will God disrupt our usual ways of doing things? Let us open ourselves to the possibilities of wonder and awe.

The following is a partial list of potential ideas. **Pick one** as a way to encounter God.

Commit to daily prayer

(5-20 minutes of spoken, walking, or contemplative prayer)

Begin a gratitude journal

(Can you find things to be thankful for each day?)

Take up fasting

(Once day a week?)

Lectio divino

(Reading scripture prayerfully)

Select a spiritual friend

(Someone to ask you about/encourage you in your spiritual journey)

Develop a statement of faith

(Why are you a person of faith and why do you go to church?)

Listen to a faith-based podcast

Read a book on faith or prayer

Try new kinds of prayers

(Acceptance Prayer, Centering prayer, Beads, Candles, Music)

Take on an intentional practice

(See God in everyday life, in music, in people you meet, in nature)

Join a class or club

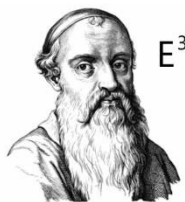
Sunday School, Bible Study or Book Club

Pray through the day

(Short prayers at regular intervals)

More ideas can or will be found on the Mennonite Church Alberta website. If you are interested in knowing more about the process, visit mcab.ca/e3-mca and listen to the sessions, read the slides, or talk to someone who was at the sessions.

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