

Crestwood Mennonite  
Brethren Church



1966-2016

# Together in Christ

The story of the Crestwood Mennonite Brethren Church  
(CMBC)

Prepared By: Pastor Kevin Koop April, 2016

## *Introduction*

Paul the Apostle writes in Ephesians Chapter 4:15, “Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” This history is an endeavour to speak the truth in love to us, the Crestwood Mennonite Brethren Church. To answer some of the questions that have defined us over the first fifty years. How does one successfully plant a church in a city without any Anabaptist heritage? How do Christians from different denominations cooperate, survive, and even thrive under one church roof? What role does forgiveness play in bringing a church through its first fifty years?

This is our story. The story of a church that grew, and continues to grow in maturity by knowing Christ, and making Christ known. May it be an example to all those who journey down similar paths in their own communities, and may it serve as inspiration for us here, as we carry on in the work that was begun before us.

## *Beginnings*

The first organizational meeting of the “Mennonite Brethren Group of Medicine Hat for the purposes of organizing the Mennonite Brethren Mission” took place on November 10, 1965. Pastor Art Martens was appointed to the pulpit committee with his wife Leona, along with Mr. Rueben Engel and his wife Tina.

Pastor Martens was a beloved pastor. Charter member John Hubert says of Art, “I would cast Art in a Barnabas role. He was a good facilitator. He was an encourager.”

This fledgling church gathered first in the living room of Pastor Art and Leona Martens. As the group grew in number, the need arose for a unique place for the church to gather. A modest space was procured in part of a strip-mall development on Dunmore Road across the street from our current church building.

At the chartering service on March 13, 1966, the ten initial members were Art, Leona, and their son Ron Martens from Butler MB Church in

Fresno  
California,  
David and Elsie  
Wiens and  
John and Annie  
Hubert from  
Highland MB  
Church in  
Calgary, and  
John and  
Amalia  
Lautermilch  
and Sharon  
Biffart from the  
Woodrow MB  
Church in  
Saskatchewan.



These people represented at least two different groups of Mennonites: those with a background in the Alberta Mennonite Brethren conference who originated from South Russia, and those with a background in the Woodrow area who were converts from a different German ethnic group from the Swabian region in Germany. Ernie Nickel notes that “they spoke their own dialect. Just like we had our Low German.”



Hubert adds, “It was a mixture. It took us a while to get used to each other, to get to know each other. It was an interesting dynamic but also a good dynamic because everybody wanted to make

this work. It was something that we thought was worth pursuing. I always thought there was a spirit of cooperation.”

This varied group of cultural and adopted Mennonite Brethren met in the strip mall for the first few years. The space was quite limited. “It had a lot of challenges because we had to do everything in a small, confined space. We had Sunday school for kids, for adults, and we had to make do with whatever we had. If I remember correctly we had some moveable walls and partitions which were set up. That was your space for Sunday School, somebody else had space over there. We moved them and took them down when we had the worship service.”



Soon the church plant recognized the desire for a permanent home. On February 9, 1967, a building committee was established consisting of Medicine Hat residents: Rev. Art Martens, Ted Engel, Norman Penner, Dave Wiens, and John Hubert. The church moved quickly towards their goal of a building and in June of 1967 successfully petitioned the Medicine Hat City Council to re-plot the

land formerly occupied by Wittke Iron Works “to create four new residential lots and a church site for the Mennonite Church.” Within that same year, on November 20th, the church received a formal land offer from the City of Medicine Hat for Lot 6-7, Block 27, Plan 5198JK for the amount of \$9,988.00.

The spirit of our early church was one of camaraderie and cooperation. Hubert remembers, “Because we were such a small group, we were like it says of the early church in Acts: we had everything in common. If we were going to have a meal, it was potluck; everybody brought something that they liked, and we all had a meal together, and kibitzed a lot. There was a lot of back and forth. In late 1967 or early 1968, we lived in Crescents Heights. Our home, suddenly, for whatever reason became the stopping off point for the young people. There were three young ladies, Julia Penner, Agnes Janz (she was Julia’s cousin), and Winnie, I can’t remember her last name. Winnie and Julia were nursing students, and Agnes was a lab tech in the hospital. The four young men were Stan Wiens, Walt Loewen, Pete Giesbrecht, and another man whose name escapes me. These kids came and went out of our house like it was their second home, and they knew that door was always open any day of the week. Our oldest, Sandy would have been six years old, Judy was four, Michele was a year and half and Cathy was the baby. We managed because we were a big happy family. If we needed to go somewhere one of the girls would happily babysit. We said, ‘Sunday dinner is at our house. We’ll just water down the soup a little bit, or throw another hamburger on the BBQ.’ We made do with what we had and we had lots of fun.”

Church governance at the time, though formally documented, was quite informal in nature. “The board was the whole church because there were so few of us. We didn’t have formal board meetings like we do now. Everybody got together and if there was a problem, you discussed the problem, and you made a decision. And somebody was empowered to carry out the decision. You did what you had to do and carried on.”

For the purpose of constructing a church building, a more formal governance was required and on January 5, 1968 the “pulpit committee” was renamed the “church board”, consisting of Norman Penner, John Heidebrecht, Pastor Art Martens, and Deacon Ted Engel. John Hubert, Ted Engel and Andrew Lautermilch were appointed as church trustees.

While the first chapter of the story of this early mosaic of Mennonites in Medicine Hat was coming together, what felt like a final chapter was being written at the time for the General Conference Mennonites gathered in the nearby small town of Seven Persons. On September 16, 1968 the final business meeting of the Seven Persons Mennonite Church took place, and the church was officially closed. Most regular attenders “went to the newly established MB Mission in Medicine Hat,” adding a third unique group of Mennonites to the church. They were quickly put to work in helping realize the goal of a church building. On February 16, 1969 a church-building dedication service took place.





### ***Life in the New Building***

This assortment of Mennonites in Medicine Hat and the surrounding area now had a church building to call their home.

This new life in the new house however had some early hiccups. Against a backdrop of mutual cooperation, there was a general narrative of division amongst two of the denominations of Mennonites. “While it was never a formal written policy, it was a general practice in Canadian Mennonite Brethren churches to regard people belonging to the General Conference of Mennonites as non-Christians.” The Mennonites in Medicine Hat were gradually bridging denominational divides.

Ernie Nickel explains his early approach within this denominational conglomeration. “I was very cautious. My attitude was my life and my actions will speak for me. The first pastor was very hesitant. He had inherited the denominational baggage too. That all changed with time.”

Hubert adds, “It was different in the sense that there was still some of the bad feelings between the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonites. I think we had more a feeling of cooperation. We were worshipping together. The idea was to worship one Lord. The fact that we came from different

backgrounds is history. It's something that we can't do anything about, but the things we could do something about, figuring out how to worship together for example, we did."

At the time the church did not accept those with a General Conference background as full members yet all fully participated in church life. Nickel notes, "Most of the General Conference people that came were the Sunday school teachers because they had Bible school training. A lot of people from the Mennonite Brethren background said, 'This is strange you know, we're calling on them to be our Sunday school teachers'. Slowly we became friends and started to look each other in the eye and feel more comfortable about it."

By the mid 1970s, the church would make it official policy to include those from a General Conference background as full members of the church.

Formal financial support came from the Alberta MB Conference in the form of subsidies from the Alberta Home Missions board and a mortgage loan written up on December 1, 1969, for \$50,000.00 from the Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches of North America, Inc. to The Crestwood Mennonite Brethren Church. The initial monthly payment was \$580.00.

The church fellowship carried on. Things changed with the unexpected resignation of Pastor Art Martens on July 1, 1971. Ernie Nickel recalls "He resigned very suddenly for personal reasons. At the time, his closest friends didn't know about it. It was a great surprise to them."

To fill the gap in leadership, the church hired Pastor Walter Epp who served the church from 1971 to 1973. During this time the church temporarily changed their name to Crestwood Gospel Chapel.

Agnes Regier recalls the rationale for the brief name change. "That seemed to be the way of the MB churches. They didn't seem to want to have 'Mennonite' in their name. It was in a lot of MB churches, take out the 'Mennonite' because it's just going to hinder our witness. They tried it, but it didn't last."

After Pastor Epp's departure, the church hired Pastor Walter Wiens, a recent graduate of the MB Seminary in Fresno. Walter and his wife Edith moved to Medicine Hat in August of 1973.

Pastor Wiens, while reflecting upon his time at Crestwood notes, "Looking back now in what was our first pastorate, we may have been perceived as a young Timothy who seemed intimidated... and yet my time at Crestwood MB Church was one in which I sensed a spirit of affirmation and encouragement to pursue the ministry of being a pastor even though there was much I needed to learn." He continues, "A common theme in our time at Crestwood MB Church was that we felt the church was a large, caring family. We were certainly blessed to be part of a wonderful expression of God's love."

In 1977, Pastor Wiens gave a final report to the Alberta MB Conference, thanking them for their support.

He said, "More than ten years ago you were obedient to God as He began a good work in our city. As a fellowship we are very thankful for the many hours you have spent in prayer and planning for our group. We also thank you for your generous financial support. We see ourselves with faults and recognize the need to confess and repent. Through God's love and grace we continue dedicating ourselves to be all that he has planned us to be." The church was no longer seen as a "Mission Church," and had stopped receiving financial support from the Alberta MB Conference. It was finding the support it needed from within.

After Pastor Wiens' tenure, the church was without a pastor for a number of months. During this time four lay ministers were organized and included C. L. (Lorne) Dick, Elmer Thiessen, David Rempel and Elmer Regier. David Rempel officially served as interim pastor during 1978.

These lay ministers "regularly shared in the pulpit ministry and helped in determining the spiritual direction of the church." When the church once again had a pastor, they served in an advisory role.



Elmer Regier reflects on the formation of this group by noting, “It was started because there was a vacuum in leadership when the pastor was leaving. In most cases, from a pastor leaving

to getting a replacement, you can have a fairly long time without a pastor so in that sense, we would give some continuity to leadership in the church.”

### ***Understanding our Beliefs***

A permanent pastor was found within the year. Jacob Penner began as the pastor in 1978. Ernie Nickel happily recalls the amount which he offered Penner for the position, on behalf of the church. “I was financial elder. There was a treasurer and all that. But I was responsible that the finances were done. I remember our offer was \$22,000.00 a year. He had no problem with that. He had been a school teacher and was a good speaker.”

Penner recalls with warmth the personal fellowship he and his wife Linda experienced in the church. “I enjoyed the fellowship with individuals. They didn’t hinder in the running of the church, except on specific issue”.



There were still some challenges in pastoring a church with people from various Mennonite backgrounds. “One of the members asked me specifically if I would attend a nearby meeting of the General Conference Mennonites. I said “if it isn’t too far away. So I drove there for about half a day and listened to it, and it didn’t connect with me at all. Not for any particular reason. It wasn’t bad. It was just that I didn’t think in the terms that they thought.”

Despite the differences, an unmasking of denominational assumptions was taking place. That attitude shifted during Jake Penner’s time as pastor. Nickel notes, “I remember our daughter Trudy being baptized. Some wanted pouring, some wanted immersion. Elmer Regier was from the General Conference tradition. He said to me, “Don’t you think Trudy would want to be baptized by pouring rather than immersion?” I said, ‘Elmer, I told them always that the form did not matter. I will not approach her about that. If she wants to be baptized by immersion, that’s her choice. That is the practice here.’ Trudy remembers that. She said, ‘Why should I be baptized like that if they baptize this way here?’ I’ve always said the form does not matter, it’s the heart. Anita Thiessen was baptized by pouring. So they had both. They were kind of putting Jake Penner on the spot. That’s where the faith family of our denomination came into play. They wanted him to do the pouring too. He felt very uncomfortable about that because all his relatives in Ontario were Mennonite Brethren. They were leaders and they would wonder what he was about. I spoke up and said to the rest of them, ‘This is not fair at all if we have other lay ministers here who have been baptized with pouring, like Lorne Dick had been. We should not ask Jake to do it.’ They accepted that explanation.”

Penner echoes Nickel’s sentiment and provides further clarification for some miscommunication during this period of growing understanding. There was an incident regarding a specific baptismal candidate who wanted to be baptized by pouring. “I said, ‘Well, I don’t do sprinkling, but we have members here who would do it.’ So I arranged with someone from a General Conference background to do the baptism. They said yes.

Come the day the baptism was supposed to take place I was in my office at the church just before the service and the baptismal candidate came in and said 'I've decided not to be baptized'. All the arrangements had been made. So how do you clear that? I didn't have a chance to talk to the individuals that were going to do it so I made the announcement. Of course I became the culprit. I told them that I had not stopped it. The candidate came and told me clearly that they didn't want to be baptized that day."

Nickel notes that despite any misunderstanding, the decision to cooperate and to accommodate Pastor Penner's denominational background was the right one. "Why should we force him to step out of that boundary all of sudden when there were others that could have done it? That's where I differentiated with the faith family. It kept him in good standing."

After Jake Penner's departure in 1982 to accept the position as principal of a private school in Winnipeg, the lay ministers once again filled the gap in leadership left by a departing pastor. From 1982-1984 they served in pastoral functions, meeting monthly to plan out and apportion the pastoral responsibilities.

One of the lay ministers Elmer Thiessen notes, "I very much cherish a plaque that was given to each of us in June 1984. The text reads thus:

"The mantle of leadership seems to fall so naturally onto the shoulders of those men most able to bear it. We have been blessed with four such men who have, for the past years, worn this mantle most dutifully and admirably.

Alas, when affairs are run so smoothly, we the led, too often forget that this mantle of leadership sometimes wears heavily, no matter how willing and able the bearer. We, the worshippers of the Crestwood M.B. Church, wish hereby to express our gratitude,

For your dedication to keeping the fire of our fellowship,  
For your inspiration and words of experience and learning,  
For your guidance, advice and teaching,  
For the unnumbered, unnoticed hours given selflessly to planning, praying, meeting, writing, worrying. May God occasionally make us mindful of each other's burdens."

It was during this period of shared lay pastoral leadership that Dave Funk served as the church's first intern in the summer of 1983. Dave, along with his wife Shirley returned after another year of study to assume full-time pastoral duties.

"David Funk was a good friend of mine," notes Nickel, "He was willing to come back. I got along with Dave and Shirley. He was a good speaker and well organized."

During his time as pastor, Funk designed the church's current logo. Its meaning is explained this way: "The Circle represents the all encompassing love and presence of our eternal God. It also represents the world in which we live. The empty cross, representing the receptive death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, separates the kingdom of death and darkness from which we have come and the kingdom of life and light into which we have been called. The wheat, symbol of the prairie, locates us in the midst of Alberta's grain growing country. Wheat also represents our life of discipleship. The message our logo communicates may be summarized in the phrase 'To Know Christ and to Make Him Known.'"



The Funk's concluded their ministry in 1989.

"When Dave left, that was one of my low times in church," recalls Nickel. "Yet the Lord says 'I will build my church and the gates of hell will not stand up against it.'"

While having a church retreat in Elkwater Mark and Sylvia Jantzen stopped in to visit. They saw this group and wanted to come here. I saw the hand of the Lord stepping in and giving us another pastor just like that. Mark was good too. He was here nine years."

## ***Expanding Ministry***

On August 15, 1989, Mark Janzen was officially hired as pastor. Two years later, on July 14, 1991 the church celebrated its 25th Anniversary. At the time of the anniversary, membership in the church was up to 89 people, with an average Sunday morning attendance of 125.

The church reached a place of stability and with some money left in the bank from the two-year absence of a formal paid pastor in the early 1980s a building expansion project was undertaken. On February 7, 1993, approval was given in principle to proceed with the building expansion with Kim Holmlund as chairman of the building committee. Those members included Kim Holmlund, Vic Janz, Ernie Nickel, and Elmer Thiessen.

The spirit in the church surrounding this ambitious building project was a very positive one. There was a clear need Ernie notes, “we had known for a long time that we had to do something.” There was also a willingness to work together. “I am always amazed that we went through nine years of planning a church building and about two years in building it without having a severe clash. I expected it could very easily happen. People were kind of committed: If it is to be, it’s up to me.’ Until we had it all in place there was a pretty good atmosphere. Mark Jantzen was very capable too in helping in that regard.”



The sod turning ceremony took place on August 14, 1994. The first service in the new sanctuary was held five months later on January 1, 1995 with an official celebration and dedication service taking place on September 10 later that same year.

“Well one fond memory of course, was when we finished the addition,” Nickel recalls. “and it was finally all incorporated. We could not envision a building where you couldn't see the old church. I was amazed at our architect. Unless you were looking for it, you would not notice that it was an addition. There was a whole church there. The old church building had little room for visiting, but with the expansion we were able to fellowship freely after the service.”



In a symbolic way, what was a multiplicity of people from different denominations and many different backgrounds had come together. We had our debates over theological issues, particularly baptism, but we also enjoyed good times of personal fellowship. This group came together under a new roof with the old divisions having been addressed over time. There may have been times in our past where the barriers between these groups would have been unmistakable yet in Christ our church was made whole.

Good fellowship continued on in the new building, yet another pastoral transition was under way. On June 30, 1998, Mark Janzen concluded his time as pastor of the Crestwood MB Church. His tenure stands to this day as that of the longest serving pastor of our church.

That same summer, on August 1, 1998 Murray Schmidt was hired to his first pastorate; a calling he embarked upon along with his wife Diana and their family.

In June of 2001, shortly into Pastor Schmidt's tenure, the church adopted its current constitution.

Murray recalls his ministry at Crestwood with great warmth. "My time at Crestwood was filled with interactions with 'salt of the earth' people who knew what it meant to serve." Schmidt reflects, "During our time at Crestwood we banded together and saw the basement developed into a very functional kitchen and large meeting room; much of the labour donated by the craftsmen of the church. Younger members were the first to volunteer to help in practical ways like when someone was moving from one house to another. Our annual yard sales to raise funds for MCC and missions activities were a highlight every year but involved a huge amount of work – from those who collected items that had been abandoned in storage units to others who sorted and priced items to others who baked pie or set up tables. Relationships, especially among the core who had been in the church for many years, were highly valued and strong."

The church also hired a part-time youth director with Pastor Murray's help. Janet Heller served for five years starting on January 1st, 2001, and recalls with fondness her time with the youth: "Every summer we used to take the youth out camping at Elkwater. One time I drove my car and I had four youth with me. We had gotten out of the car to do something, and when we got back in I forgot that there was a parking block in front of me. I just put the car in gear and drove ahead right over the block. The four youth in the car said, 'That was so fun! Do it again!' and of never let me forget about that. The story came out at our wedding."

## ***A Journey of Forgiveness***

Many good things happened during this time in the church's history, yet the circumstances leading up to the conclusion of Pastor Schmidt's tenure stand out to many as a difficult time in the church's history. Forgiveness was a necessary reality for our church, and it was given and received in many different ways during and after the Schmidts' departure.

Nickel describes his own forgiving actions. "I sat by a lake one day fishing. I didn't care if I caught any fish. I was working through something in my mind. I went to Murray and Diana that next day and said, 'Murray, you're leaving to do mission work'. He had gotten the call already before it happened. 'Don't leave in muddy water'. I had a very serious talk with him before they left and we left as friends."

As part of accepting this call to serve with Africa Inland Mission they sought ordination from the Crestwood Church. At a congregational meeting held on March 13, 2005, the possibility of the Schmidt's ordination was discussed. Former lay minister Dave Rempel's comments in the minutes read as follows, "In the process of seeking God's will, Dave came to a decision. Dave will vote in favour of the ordination. Peace has been made. What we perceive as errors in others, others may not even consider a problem. If we join Murray in this, by affirming Murray to lifelong ministry, we will have done much in healing hurts that have occurred. Psalm 133 says 'How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity ... for there the Lord bestows his blessing.' Dave recommends that we ordain Murray and Diana Schmidt."

As an act seeking forgiveness, an official letter of apology was later sent to the Schmidt's. It was warmly received, and forgiveness was returned to the church in kind.

Sarah Regier, eight years old at the time of the transition says, "I remember when Pastor Murray left because they went to Kenya in Africa. That was where God was calling him. I don't know that I grasped that at the time. In the moment I was like, 'They're moving?' He was the only pastor that I could ever remember

having. ‘What? He’s going somewhere else?’ I didn’t grasp that at all. I remember that being difficult for me for a couple of weeks, but then I came to terms with it. They were going on a missions trip. Awesome!”

Janet Heller’s notes the hurt she experienced at the Schmidt’s departure, stating “It was definitely a challenging time for me. It was really painful for me because I respected him as a pastor.” Yet she continued to attend the church and serve the church in a variety of leadership roles. She explains, “I was known here. If you go somewhere else you have to go through all of that again. I knew that there was going to be challenges and conflict wherever I went. There is never going to be a church that is exactly what I want. Churches are always going to go through rough times. These people are my friends. I stayed because of a bit of stubbornness. The positive light of that word could be determination to see it through. I guess I knew that it was a journey that you have to stick out.”

Recognizing that the hurts accumulated during this time would take time to heal, the church leadership sought an interim pastor. Jim Miller along with his wife Pauline, served in this role from October 1, 2004 to June 30, 2007.

Jake Penner recalls, “Jim Miller came in. He was a quiet and reserved person. Very calm, which calmed the church down as well.” Nickel adds, “Here’s another thing that I’m just amazed at. Jim Miller came in here. Very humble. Talking very slowly, meticulously. Very accurate. Very prepared. A lot of them said at first he needs more caffeine in his coffee. When he left there wasn’t a person that didn’t love him. But he would not get involved in the business of the church. He said ‘You hired me for the pulpit.’ That’s what he did. He was a wise person that way.”

Eventually the church was ready for a permanent pastor who would be willing to engage with them fully in the business of the church and continue their journey of healing, forgiveness and worship. John Willems began as pastor of the church in November 2007, moving to the city to serve along with his wife Blenda.



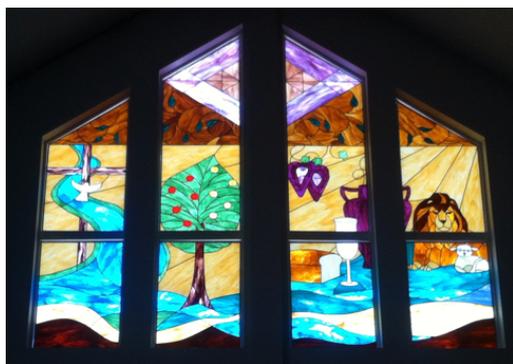
The church finally paid off the mortgage for the building expansion on December 17, 2012. The principal amount was \$450,000.00. The initial loan interest was 7.5%. A mortgage burning service was held on March 3, 2013 celebrating the event.

The church was now about to encounter

another transition as on June 30, 2015 Pastor John became the first pastor to retire from ministry while working at Crestwood MB Church.

In his final pastoral report at the congregational meeting on June 14, 2015, John noted, "It has been my joy to be your pastor. You have been a faithful congregation. Together we have grown in our relationship and in our

relationships to Christ. It has been a joy to preach, teach Sunday School, administer the ordinances of the church, leading people to faith in Christ, encouraging, listening and praying. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your lives. Thank you for the many cards of encouragement. Thank



you for welcoming us in to your homes and lives. We love you and appreciate each one of you, and one last thing: I'm going to try my best to be a good former pastor." Hearty applause followed his address to the congregation.

## ***Love and Life in Christ at Crestwood***

Past and present members of the church share their experiences of how they found love and life in Christ at Crestwood.

John Hubert notes, “It was a growing experience because we started small and we ended up with something considerably bigger, first starting in a storefront setting and ending up with our own building. You worked at it. You made it work.”

Jake Penner adds, “Well it’s home. Yes, there have been ups and downs, but we’ve stuck with our faith in the Lord. It’s home.”

Janet Heller says, “It’s like being in a family. So there’s things that drive you crazy whenever you get together with your family. There’s always frustrations. There’s always challenges. There’s changes. There’s growing. But yet, there’s that feeling of belonging. This is where I belong. What I feel about our church is when we gather together or even when we’re not together we have the most important thing in common; loving and serving God.”

Elmer Regier says, “They were good years. We never entertained the possibility that we don’t want to be a part of this church, or that we’ll go elsewhere.” His wife Agnes adds, “I would probably say the same. I don’t have any regrets.” Their granddaughter Sarah Regier observes, “I would say that it’s been the centerpiece of my life. We’ve moved a couple times within town and changed schools. I’ve gone away and I’ve come back, but I’ve always been at the same church and there has always been the same people. It’s formed my faith and it’s formed my relationship with God. That’s how I would summarize it. It’s been that centerpiece of my life.”

Ernie Nickel concludes “We’ve experienced a lot of down times. We’ve experienced a lot of very good times. Our biggest concern even before we came here was that our children would have a Christian education. That we ourselves would be kept in our faith, and that we would grow.”

So it is that speaking the truth in love, seeking to know Christ and make Him known, the church at Crestwood grew in maturity.

We began as a fledging church plant in a city not known for any Mennonite immigrants. We grew through personal relationships. At our dinner tables and in our potluck lines we bridged the barriers raised by others outside our church, we set aside old assumptions, and found healing for the hurts within our hearts. We learned personally both the cost and reward of forgiveness. With determination and cooperation we worked out our life of faith together under one church roof. We came together as one in Christ.

There is much that lies ahead for our church. The need for the community of Medicine Hat and the surrounding area to know Christ is great. But we know that together in Christ we can offer truth, love, and life. We face the future equipped with what we have learned from the past. As our first pastor, Art Martens, remarked in 1966 to a convention of Mennonites offering their financial support to our church: “For this work to continue, much determination is needed. Rumours continue that we are just experimenting and that before long we may close shop. But, wherever we can, we confirm strongly that we as a church are needed here and we are here to stay.”

*For academic details of this written account, including full copies of the interview transcripts, and a complete works cited please contact the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1310 Taylor Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3M 3Z6, (888) 669-6575.*

*Ephesians 4:16 says "From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work"*

They say 'a picture is worth a thousand words'. These are some photos of our congregation. We have worked, played, taught, learned, sang, worshipped and rejoiced together over the years. Building each other up in love; each doing our part. Young and old alike. Here is another part of our story.

Cheryl (Penner) Durksen

*Working...*



*Playing...*



*Teaching...*



*Worshipping...*



*Learning & Growing...*





*To know Christ  
and to make Him known*



Cover created by Tyler Durksen