

Baptismal Sharing

Colin Mathias Ens Funk

June 11, 2017

Good Morning. As most of you know, I grew up in this church attending here since I was born. I'd like to speak about why I am choosing to be baptised as a Mennonite into this congregation. I have asked to be baptized into this community because I believe in God and value the Christian stories, I choose the Mennonite way of interpreting these stories and wish to continue to find my way with this community of thinkers.

I believe in God and the stories of God's people. I believe in God the Creator of all things. This means I believe we have the responsibility to care for the natural world and do not have the right to do with it as we please. I believe in God the Teacher in the stories of Jesus and know I have much to learn from studying them so I can learn how and who I want to be in the world. One example of a story showing how to live that I find meaningful is the story of the prodigal son, and in particular the generosity and joy with which the father treats the son when he returns. I am drawn to this moral code found in the stories of the Bible.

I believe in fostering relationships with people with whom you disagree. This is exemplified by Jesus eating with tax collectors and outcasts for meals. Doing the right thing even when it is difficult is a message which resonates with me.

I want to publically profess to be a Mennonite.

I am a Mennonite because it's how I grew up; it's a comfortable place to be for me. I like the stories we tell and I identify with them. One story I appreciate is the story of Dirk Willems, one of the early Anabaptists. He was the man who, as he was being chased by a bounty hunter to be burnt at the stake for his beliefs, ran over a lake of thin ice. When his pursuer fell in, Willems turned back, helped him out and dried him off. He acted compassionately even though it was a risk to his own life. Willems is a powerful example from history of living faithfully the teachings of Jesus. Loving your neighbour and loving your enemy enough to save the life of someone who hates you is something to aspire to. I want to live my faith practically and with integrity, even if it has a cost.

I love the community of this church and all the discussion, music, and food it brings.

NPMC is a welcoming environment. I used to be afraid to say what I thought but I have come to realize that, though I may be 16 and others may be 60 years older than me, we are all on this same messy journey together so my thinking and participation is welcomed.

I am comfortable and at home here. This church is full of people I enjoy spending time with. You are people I have seen almost every week for all of my life and I want to continue in these relationships. I like making music here - jam night, Musika Tribus, choir. I like Youth and having time with six or so other young people. I like our faith discussions, church round tables, and talk over the potluck table. NPMC is home to me, and I am excited to officially enter into this community.

Growing up I believed that baptism was a given for all adults in the church. I understood that in the Mennonite tradition, we want baptism to be a considered choice, and that infants could not make that considered choice. That much was clear to me, however I still thought that baptism was just something everyone did. When I started to work with the pastoral search committee for Susanne though, I was surprised to find that many members of the committee were active participants in the church but not baptised members. I started to wonder about the meaning of baptism and why a person would choose to be baptised or not. This made me consider the question of whether I **would** be baptised as opposed to just **when** I would be baptised. I had assumed it was something I just needed to wait to do until I was a magic number, such as 18.

I took my wondering and asked Anita and Patrick if we could talk about baptism and the issues of importance to church members. We then got together and discussed things like the rituals of the church, practices around holidays and the meaning of the bible and other religious texts. Through these discussions, first with other youth and then with other young adults, I realized although the church is a church of believers it is also a church of thinkers and a place where discussion happens, even over the things I have always seen as a given or permanent, such as the way we celebrate Lent or Advent. I have realized that just as our traditions are evolving and changing through our work together, I will also evolve and change and want to do it with this thinking believing community.

Thank you for being with me in my faith journey up until this point and for baptising me into this community to continue it.