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Called to Ministry

*"We believe that **ministry** is a continuation of the work of Christ, who gives gifts through the Holy Spirit to all believers and empowers them for service in the church and in the world. We also believe that God calls particular persons in the church to specific leadership ministries and offices. All who minister are accountable to God and to the community of faith."* (Article 15 from the summary statement of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, 1995)

For many alumni, hearing God's call or feeling the nudge toward ministry became part of their lives. Some found that direction while students at IMS. For others, the planted seeds of their high school years brought the fruition of ministry later. No matter the timing, there are faithful alumni serving God through their gifts of ministry to the church and to the world. Read on to follow the paths of several such alumni.

Marvin Yoder, '50, remembers feeling "spiritually challenged, sometimes spiritually convicted" during spiritual emphasis weeks in chapel. He looked up to principal and teacher Paul T. Guengerich, English



Marvin Yoder, '50

teacher Esther Detweiler, "who taught what it means to be truly educated," and Samuel Nafziger, the Industrial Arts teacher. As a freshman at Hesston College, Marvin realized his "first really satisfying spiritual commitment." Goshen College, Goshen College Biblical Seminary, and then Clinical Pastoral Education training at SUI followed, although Marvin never really felt called to pastoral ministry. Upon returning to Iowa in 1956, Principal Guengerich contacted Marvin about teaching two Bible courses at IMS. "I accepted this call, and during that year discovered what I knew to be my 'calling,' teaching the Bible and its message of salvation, and God's calling to all of us to become disciples of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ."

A call to mission ministry followed, finding Marvin and Neta Faye appointed by Mennonite Board of Missions to work in Japan. As career long-term missionaries (35

years), the Yoders "focused on planting and nurturing new churches through pastoral ministry and leadership development, teaching, counseling, writing and doing whatever

had to be done. We helped give our Mennonite church access to an understanding of God's mission for our church consistent with our Anabaptist faith heritage."

Since retirement, Marvin stays quite active in both the

church and community. He's worked and served at West Union Mennonite Church, IMS, given five years as chairperson of the Outreach and Service Committee of Central Plains Conference; worked as heavy equipment operator for D. K. Yoder Construction Co.; has attended Mennonite World Conference sessions since 1984; and volunteers weekly at Crowded Closet. Marvin and Neta Faye's family include IMS graduates Becky, '77, (who died in August, 1978) and Jay, '80, and Debbie and Steve.

**"We helped give our Mennonite church access to an understanding of God's mission for our church consistent with our Anabaptist faith heritage."
—Marvin Yoder**

Mission Statement of Iowa Mennonite School

Iowa Mennonite School, in partnership with the family and the church, offers high school students an academically excellent, Christ-centered education rooted in an Anabaptist perspective. Within a caring community, IMS prepares students for lives of Christian discipleship, peacemaking and service.

Called to Ministry continued

Marcia Yoder-Schrock, '66, left IMS for Hesston then Goshen colleges; taught elementary school in Indiana, Brazil, and Iowa; studied at AMBS, and has done pastoral ministry in Ontario, Indiana, Nebraska, and Kansas. However, Marcia's journey began with her renewed commitment to Christ during Spiritual Emphasis Week her junior year while listening to guest speaker, David Augsburg. She goes on to mention, "Certainly it was the whole experience at IMS which helped lay the groundwork" for her call to pastoral ministry. Marcia fondly remembers 11th and 12th grade "big brothers/sisters" to 9th graders; competent teachers who "encouraged us as individuals"; exposure to the wider Mennonite Church through home stays and mass choir concerts on choir tours; class fundraisers like chili supper; and intramural sports.

Along with the experiences, Marcia points to "teachers who lived what they taught and were transparent and genuine in their faith commitment; who anchored us in order to deal with current political events such as the assassination of President Kennedy, racism and



Marcia Yoder-Schrock, '66

"Certainly it was the whole experience at IMS which helped lay the groundwork."

—Marcia Yoder Schrock

the war in Viet Nam; teachers who understood [our] emotional and spiritual development and responded to or guided us appropriately."

As a pastor, Marcia has guided four congregations. She enjoys, "living and working in community even though it's sometimes messy, calling people to worship together in the presence of the living Christ, inviting people to take hold of the Scripture for what it is really saying to us today, equipping members to release their spiritual gifts for the good of the community, and . . . no two days being exactly alike." Several highlights of her ministry tenure include the congregation sharing in the joy and celebration of their son's birth; the scary delight of doing a river baptism (she doesn't swim); preaching at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church (her home congregation); and many more. Currently Marcia and her family are in a transition time, "a time for active listening and discerning God's leading in the next phase of life and ministry." Marcia is married to John L. Schrock, and they are parents of son, Isaac.

Firman Gingerich, '68, experienced a "very personal sense of call while at IMS," and believed he would end up in church leadership in some way. He kept this call private for many years, and struggled with wondering if he "could be human and be a pastor." The modeling of a believable faith to Firman by all his IMS teachers, particularly

Merle Brenneman, Gareth Swartzendruber, Marvin Yoder, Merlin Grieser, and Evie Miller provided a sense of faith in action. "I came out of IMS with a broad based view of Christian discipleship and a sense that whatever I would do in life would be about helping God's Kingdom be present around me. My world view was very deeply connected to my faith."

After teaching elementary school for eight years, Firman and Susan (Yoder), '68, moved to Elkhart to attend AMBS. Since earning his degree, Firman has pastored for 27 years in Indiana, Iowa, and Pennsylvania. Highlights of his



Firman Gingerich, '68

ministry include being part of a baptism service for an 84-year-old woman; watching a sense of call to ministry grow in others; seeing people reconcile long standing differences; watching a community of faith reach out with compassion and care to persons in need; and watching people reach out to God and to others in hope."

In his spare time, Firman enjoys reading, exercising, woodworking, particularly turning wood on a lathe, and spending time with his family and friends. He and Susan are parents of two IMS graduates, Amy Gingerich Claassen, '95, and Fred, '97.

