

## World Communion Sunday – October 1<sup>st</sup>

### A Special Afternoon Guest at Christ Church, Annville – Matthew Bucher

Christ Church joins with Christians around the world to celebrate World Communion Sunday on October 1<sup>st</sup>. In the afternoon beginning at 3 p.m. Annville native Rev. Matthew Bucher will be at Christ Church, 200 S. White Oak St., Annville, PA 17003 to talk about the sign (see below) that has become a movement of welcoming the neighbor. Matthew will tell the **Story of the Sign and Neighboring Stories.**

Matthew Bucher was watching a presidential primary debate and lamenting the language candidates were using to refer to recent immigrants to the United States. Bucher is pastor at Immanuel Mennonite Fellowship in Harrisonburg, Virginia. The church is located in northeast Harrisonburg, in a neighborhood that is rapidly diversifying and includes people who speak many languages, most prominent among them English, Spanish and Arabic.

As he thought about ways his congregation could counter anti-immigrant rhetoric, Bucher came up with the phrase, **“No matter where you’re from, we’re glad you’re our neighbor.”** He shared the statement with his church, and a member of the congregation, Melissa Howard, painted the slogan, in all three languages, on a large yard sign that the congregation displayed in its front yard.

“I’m a relatively new pastor, and I’ve tried to encourage the congregation to make the walls of the church pretty permeable for people coming in and for us to go out and be part of the community. The sign is a reminder to us that this is part of our commitment as real people following Jesus’ radical call to love and service and a strong statement to folks in our community that we are glad they are here, whether they’ve lived here for a 100 years or a couple weeks,” said Bucher in a Dec. 5 interview.



Matthew Bucher’s signs are now everywhere it seems. Christ Church is blessed that Rev. Bucher is willing to stop by and take time out from a family visit to be with us. We will be opening the afternoon session up to the community as well as members of the Lebanon Association of the UCC and the Penn Central Conference UCC. We hope to offer some refreshments following the afternoon gathering. *There will be a free-will offering.*