

First Mennonite Church
Church Board Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2008

Church Board Chair John Penner called the meeting to order. Weldon then lit the lamp to signify the presence of God. John led the group in prayer.

Board members present: Weldon Schloneger, John Penner, Mike Goossen, Jane Esau, Jerry Reimer, Gail Cross, Lori Thimm.

Celebrating Mission

Minutes of the October board meeting were reviewed. Correction: the Worship Council was looking for two members to fill the vacancies on the Decorating Committee. Jane reported that both spots have been filled: Zella Penner will take Barb Esau's spot, Kathy Casey and Pat Penner will be the other two members (Pat will serve as Chair and will be a member of the Worship Council).

Missions, Peace and Service Council:

Gail Cross reported that the Council will meet six times per year. They met November 16, and will meet next on February 22, 2009. Several topics were discussed:

- Recommendations for improving the church building's heating and cooling efficiency have been forwarded to the Building Committee. John Penner will also contact Norman Reimer to help move the process along.
- Martha Goossen serves on the St John's Food Pantry Board and reported that supplies at the Pantry were low, with demand on the increase. After discussion, Jane offered to get more information about the status of hog donations to the Pantry (collection efforts from hog producers in the church have stalled over the past several years). Jane also offered to spearhead a food collection drive during the upcoming Advent season; she will contact Martha to coordinate the effort, and tie it into Sunday morning worship services.
- Gail is working on bringing a speaker to church for a Sunday evening program in February of next year. The speaker served in Colombia as a member of the Christian Peacemakers Team. Efforts will be made to invite the Beatrice Mennonite Church, Holmesville Church of the Brethren, and possibly other area churches.
- Support for Roger and Bev Claassen's work with Mennonite Disaster Service. The Council recommended that the Local Mission Fund be tapped to reimburse Roger for diesel fuel expenses of \$1,000. Vern Jantzen will work on that. The Council also felt it is important for the congregation to show ongoing support for Roger and Bev's efforts. That will include a commissioning service the next time Roger is back home. Weldon will organize that. Further action will be considered at the upcoming Council meeting.
- Gail presented information about 'Just Eating', a seven part study series developed to explore the faith issues of food. Gail and Merlin Friesen are planning to lead 6 Sunday evening meetings after an introductory session during the Cottage Prayer Group meetings (January 11, 2009). The theme of the study is 'to bring into dialogue: eating habits, faith and the needs of the world'. The goals are to: influence eating habits to be healthier and be more integrated with a person's Christian faith, and to support each other in taking group action. The concept of developing a 'localvore' eating regimen was also discussed. The Church Board concurred that this was a worthwhile plan. Gail and Weldon will work on developing material for the Cottage Prayer Meetings, and purchasing Leader and Discussion Guides.

- Agenda item for next Council meeting: Stewardship of Land and Life. Can something be done to facilitate generational transfer of farming opportunities/business ventures within the congregation and/or the community? How can we strengthen the communal aspect of our congregation?

Worship Council:

Jane reported that the Council met last week to continue planning worship services for Advent and through the first quarter of 2009. Weldon's focus for Advent will be on the 'Gifts of the Wise Men'. As mentioned earlier, the Decorating Committee is fully staffed, and Jane will work on the Food Drive effort. Discussion was held on the Praise Team leading congregational singing to start Sunday morning worship; the consensus was that the effort was very effective and well-received.

Education Council:

No report. Weldon reported that there may be a need for an adult Sunday School leader, but hopefully not if John Hiebert continues as leader.

Pastor's Report:

- Weldon reported that the speaker for the Annual Study Series will be Ruth Geuengrich from Indiana. She works with the Mennonite Mission Network in service placement, and has an extensive background in mental health issues. The date of the Study Series has not been finalized, but it will be held in February and have four sessions (Sunday morning, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday evenings).
- Pre-Easter speakers will be Bob and Enid Schloneger, a husband and wife pastor team from Ohio. The four sessions will follow the same format as the Study Series and begin on Palm Sunday, April 5.
- Weldon reported that he is organizing a brainstorming session at the Goossen building on West Court St. this Thursday, November 20. He expects representatives from several area churches, including St. John Lutheran and First Presbyterian. Discussion will be on developing an ecumenical youth ministry for the Beatrice area. Weldon will develop a handout sheet to distribute to participants to assist in taking information back to their respective church Boards. Weldon pointed out that he is facilitating the preliminary efforts, but will not be leading further developmental efforts; that needs to come from someone(s) else from our church or a different church.
 - Considerable discussion was held on the next step from our congregation. It was the consensus of the Board that the Round Table Discussion participants agreed that:
 - An ecumenical, cooperative effort was best (not trying to go solo on a program)
 - Accepting/buying the building was not a good idea at this time
 - Our congregation should be more 'intentional and missional' than simply using the building as it exists now. That would most likely require hiring a part-time director, possibly on our own until a governing board and the incorporation process is finalized (which could take 1-3 years).
 - That the building not be just a recreation center, but have a Christian mission focus.
 - That the west half of the building be developed to minimize liability issues from storage, etc. (and to improve the attractiveness of the facility).
 - That further action by the FMC Church Board should be delayed until a response from the Nov 20 meeting can be gauged.
- Mary Baumfalk is still in a lot of pain, and will find out this week if back surgery is required. Alternatives (such as hiring temporary help) may have to be considered for completing Mary's office duties if she is unable to work for an extended time.

Church Board:

Dates were set for the upcoming Church year calendar:

- Cottage Prayer Meeting- January 11
- Annual Business Meeting- January 14, Wednesday 7 pm
- Next Church Board Meeting- January 20, Tuesday for outgoing and incoming board members.

Offering Schedule for 2009 was finalized. As is current practice, the first, third and any fifth Sundays of the month will be reserved for Local Church Fund. Two Sundays (April 26, and August 9) will be left undesignated at this time. Other designated Sundays are as follows:

Jan 12	Western District Conference
Jan 26	Mennonite Mission Network
Feb 9	Mother to Mother Ministry
Feb 23	Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
March 8	Western District Conference
March 22	50% Mennonite Mission Network/50% Menn Publishing Network
April 12	Habitat for Humanity
April 26	TBA
May 10	Western District Conference
May 24	Communion Service-Mennonite Mission Network
June 7	Mennonite Central Committee
June 21	Western District Conference
July 26	Mother to Mother Ministry
August 9	TBA
August 23	Bethel College
Sept 13	Western District Conference
Sept 27	Mennonite Central Committee
October 4	Communion Service-Mennonite Mission Network
October 18	Beatrice Community Hospital Spiritual Ministry
Nov 8	Western District Conference
Nov 22	Mennonite Central Committee
Dec 13	Habitat for Humanity
Dec 24	Christmas Eve Service-Gift and Service Fund
Dec 27	Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
Dec 31	New Year's Eve-no offering

Wage and Benefit Discussion for Administrative Assistant. Current status of the position was reviewed; currently about 30 hours per week, the 2008 budget reflected 52 weeks of that level of work. Weldon reported that Mary is very capable, and is doing an excellent job; there was unanimous agreement with that assessment. After discussion, Mike Goossen moved and Gail Cross seconded a motion that: Wages for the Administrative Assistant position be set at \$11.50/hr (current is \$11.25/hr), and that a benefit of

vacation hours be added to the position. Total vacation hours will be 30 hours, paid at \$11.50/hr. The new pay package will be effective as of December 1, 2008. Motion passed. Lori will adjust the 2009 budget to reflect the new pay scale.

Wage and Benefit Discussion for Pastor. It was the consensus of the Board to again follow Conference guidelines for salary adjustment for the Pastor. This year's recommended increase was 3.2%. Lori will present the finalized pay package as part of the final draft of the 2009 budget at next month's meeting (after meeting with the Finance Committee).

Mennonite Mutual Aid-Advocate's Report

John Penner reported that some changes are being made to the Mennonite Mutual Aid Matching Grant Program. Each congregation is eligible for matching grants; the total amount available per year is based on the level of members' participation in MMA programs. Our church is eligible for approximately \$5,000 to \$6,000 in grants per year. John serves as our congregational advocate, and reported that we have not come close to 'maxing out', although several projects have been designated and awarded. The categories available for grant awards are:

<u>Individual Church Members</u>	<u>Congregational Grants</u>
Adoption of a child	Community Outreach (e.g. Mother to Mother)
Emergency Grant	Youth Group Service
Health Ins. Premium Assistance	Pastor's Continuing Education
Will Preparation	Good Samaritan Grant (for non-church members)
College Scholarship	

In the past, each grant category has been capped at \$250. That policy will be changed so that there is no 'cap' on any category. The congregation can apply for a matching grant in one or several of the categories, with the only limit being the overall congregational pre-determined annual maximum. Each grant application will still need to be approved by MMA.

Celebrating God's Provision-Central Treasurer's Report

Lori reported that approximately \$5,400 was raised at the MCC Mini-Auction, of which \$615 was used to buy an Amish quilt. The rest will be forwarded to MCC, and the quilt donated to the 2009 Nebraska MCC Auction.

Lori distributed the prior month financial statements and a rough draft of the 2009 Budget. Discussion and comments were made. The budget includes \$4,500 to facilitate bringing the Hayah family to Beatrice for the 2009 Daily Vacation Bible School. Lori will meet with the Finance Committee to finalize the budget, which will then be brought before the Church Board at the December meeting for approval or revision (and then submitted for consideration at the January 2009 annual business meeting).

Celebrating New Mission Possibilities

Nothing new at this time.

The meeting was adjourned with a prayer and a blessing.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Reimer