

BETHEL COLLEGE MENNONITE CHURCH
Congregational Meeting
Sunday, January 31, 2021, 1 pm – Via Zoom, hosted by Pastor Renee Reimer

At least 70 persons were visible on the screens at the beginning of the meeting. A quorum was present. Voting on practice questions using a Zoom poll feature was conducted by Pastor Renee, practiced twice and successfully reported.

- 1) Call to order and Centering Prayer — Elizabeth Schmidt, moderator, led the group in an opening prayer.
Ancient of Days, we gather with gratitude for the blessings that have sustained us through a disruptive and challenging year. Our cup runneth over. May the reports we hear today, and the budget we approve today, express our faith in Your love — a love that leads us, by the power of the Spirit, to follow Jesus in doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with all Your creation. Amen.
- 2) October 11, 2020 congregational meeting minutes
No corrections had been received before this meeting. No corrections were voiced. The minutes were accepted as distributed.
- 3) Report from the Auditing Committee—Chuck Friesen, presenter.
Members of the Auditing Committee (Megan Leary, Diane Born, and Chuck Friesen) worked with Mike Claassen to conduct the annual audit. The BCMC auditing guidelines were used for the records and reports for the 2020 fiscal year. After reviewing the financial information and examining the financial records, the Auditing Committee believes that appropriate financial procedures are being followed and that the financial reports provided by the Finance Manager accurately reflect the financial condition of the church. A consensus of thumbs up on the screen accepted the report as presented.
- 4) Presentation of 2020 financial reports—Mike Claassen, financial manager
Mike provided on-screen data to explain some financial items during the year 2020, including:
 - a) The Living Stones II Fund will pay for the project to renovate the Fellowship Hall and kitchen, including the creation of an accessible restroom, and upgraded basement hallway flooring. The project was approved by the congregation at the January 2019 congregational meeting. Regier Construction has committed that they will honor the original estimated expenses of \$330,000. At the recommendation of the Finance Committee and with approval from Church Board \$208,525.41 was transferred to Living Stones II from Bequests towards Fellowship Hall renovation expenses. To date \$199,977 has been expended for Fellowship Hall renovations from contributions, bequests, and monies in The Everence Praxis Money Market.
 - b) The Plant Fund covered elevator repair expenses.
\$63,586.00 spent on elevator repair
\$19,690.00 received in new contributions
\$19,800.00 received from Bequests
 - c) Union State Bank PPP Loan. An SBA Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan was received for \$62,000 to cover employee and utility costs and maintain employment levels during the pandemic. We have submitted the application to have this loan forgiven because those expenses were incurred.

- d) Total Income received in 2020 was 96% of the budget with Total Expenses only 95% of the budget resulting in end-of-year distributions to Benevolences equivalent to 109% of their total annual budget (except for Corinthian Plan Access.)

Carol Buller had a question about Utilities natural gas expenses. Mike explained even during the construction the heating system is used. Margaret Goering asked if we had to pay for trash pickup even though we were not generating a lot of trash. Answer: Yes.

Action: A Vote was held via the Zoom poll function to approve the 2020 Financial Reports as presented. The question was displayed on the live Zoom screens with the capability for two separate persons to report their vote. The vote tallies were:
Yes: 50 + 26 = 76 and No: 2. **The motion carried with a 97.4% affirmative vote.**

- 5) Presentation of 2021 proposed budget—Mike Claassen, financial manager
Changes in the proposed 2021 budget from the 2020 budget were presented.
Followup questions by Margaret Goering and Charles Graber asked for details about the difference in bank charges for credit/debit online payment versus automatic bank payments or personal check payments.

The Church Board recommends the following: *It is moved that the congregation approve the proposed general fund budget of \$526,213 for 2021. During the year, if income is less than expenses, the first \$10,000 will be covered by general fund reserves, then from benevolences up to \$8,000. Any additional amount necessary will be taken from general fund reserves.*

The motion was displayed on members' live Zoom screens with the capability for two separate persons in a household to report their vote. The vote tallies were: YES: 50 + 25 = 75 and NO: 3.
The motion carried with a 96.1% affirmative vote to approve the 2021 budget.

Elizabeth Schmidt, moderator, voiced appreciation to the Finance Committee (Judy Friesen, Paul Harder, Gwen Neufeld, Al Peters, and LaVern Stucky) and Mike Claassen, Financial Manager for their hard work throughout the year.

- 6) Report from Abuse Prevention and Response Committee — Associate Pastor Renee Reimer
- a) The congregation's original study schedule was paused in March due to COVID-19. The committee's work has continued. New members have started their terms: Jill Robb (chair), Jim Robb, Dale Schrag, Yolanda Kaufman, Bethany Schrag and Pastor Renee Reimer.
 - b) The committee has met for study, and training. A representative from Dove's Nest provided training about trauma-informed policies and practices. A review by Faith Trust Institute of the first policy draft has been received.
 - c) The committee is working on a proposed policy for the congregation to review at its April meeting. The committee is accepting the responsibility to provide Safe Sanctuary training for volunteers and Faith Formation teachers.

Elizabeth Schmidt, moderator, expressed appreciation to the committee and Pastor Renee Reimer for her leadership as the congregation learns and heals together.

- 7) Faith Formation update—Julianna Schrag, Faith Formation Intern
A video presented by Julianna Schrag, college intern for fall semester, reported activities from 2020.

- a) Dec. 20 a Nativity re-enactment at Josh Brubacher's farm.
- b) Sunday School groups have begun meeting in-person alternate weeks because the Harvey County COVID-19 positivity rate is below 10%, the criterion required in church protocols.
- c) Sunday School adult class meetings via Zoom are available to be scheduled. Contact Renee to schedule one.

Elizabeth Schmidt, moderator, expressed gratitude to Julianna Schrag for the enthusiasm she has brought to Faith Formation activities.

- 8) Reopening Task Group Update—Pastor Dawn Yoder Harms reporting.
The current COVID-19 positivity rate in Harvey County is now under 10%, permitting small groups to now meet in person, wearing masks and keeping social distance. On Feb. 17 Ash Wednesday services to receive ashes are planned. (Five short sessions, with sign-up attendance.) Looking forward, Lenten worship will begin in a modified format.

Elizabeth Schmidt, Moderator, thanked the members of the Reopening Church Task Force for their work on careful ways to do church together: Elizabeth Schmidt (Moderator), Renee Reimer (Pastor), Nathan Koontz (Pastor), Monica Lichti (Office & Facilities Manager), Barbara Thiesen (Worship Coordinator), Jim Robb (Deacons Rep), Jeanette Stucky (Faith Formation Rep), Suzy Swartley (Worship Rep), and Doris Whillock (Hospitality Rep).

- 9) Living Stones II—Basement renovation update—Monica Lichti, Office and Facilities Manager
- a) A video prepared by Monica Lichti and her granddaughters of the progress to date was enjoyed by members onscreen.
 - b) Annette Lamp, project coordinator, reported last week that Regier Construction will come in at budget for the total cost of the project, hopefully by the end of February.

Elizabeth Schmidt, Moderator, thanked Annette Lamp and Monica Lichti for shepherding this project.

- 10) Other
Carol Buller thanked Elizabeth for taking over for Patty Shelly as Church Moderator. Patty was on screen and reported on her medical progress.

A closing prayer was offered by Pastor Dawn.
The meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Friesen, Clerk