

1 Video record: https://youtu.be/wPxc_A70QR8

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3 **BETHEL COLLEGE MENNONITE CHURCH**
4 **Congregational Meeting MINUTES**
5 **Sunday, May 2, 2021, 1 pm, via ZOOM**
6

7 *Our faith in a God of love leads us, by the power of the Spirit,*
8 *to follow Jesus in doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God.*
9

- 10 **1. Call to order and Centering Prayer** — Elizabeth Schmidt, moderator
11 Elizabeth welcomed all who were in attendance virtually to what may become our last totally
12 virtual congregational meeting. Elizabeth thanked Pastor Renee for hosting today's meeting, and
13 Pat and Chuck Friesen for counting attendees to establish that a quorum was present. More than
14 60 were in attendance; a quorum was present. Moderator Elizabeth Schmidt led all in an opening
15 prayer.
16
- 17 **2. The January 31, 2021 congregational meeting minutes were accepted as distributed.**
18
- 19 **3. Financial Manager's Report** — Michael Claassen, Financial Manager
20 Mike reported giving trends to date for 2021 comparing it to the average for 2016-2020. As of
21 today, giving has dipped (as traditionally happens) and members are invited to support
22 congregational programs through online donations or personal checks.
23
- 24 **4. Officer/Board Member Election**
25 Moderator Elizabeth reviewed the list of officers to be affirmed as printed in the Annual Report.
26 The Annual Report booklet was distributed weeks earlier via email. Pastor Renee Reimer was
27 hosting the Zoom today and posting the question, as well as voting results online. **Action: Vote via**
28 **Zoom poll function, Yes to Affirm, No to Disaffirm There was a unanimous affirmation of the**
29 **slate of candidates.**
30
31 Moderator Elizabeth extended a Thank You to all who have served and are completing terms of
32 service for the congregation (p. 10 Annual Booklet). Faith Formation invites two members to join
33 their commission.
34
- 35 **5. Annual Booklet Reports** — Moderator Elizabeth allowed time for questions and comments. None
36 were voiced.
37
- 38 **6. Abuse Prevention & Response Committee Report** — Jill Robb, Chair
39 Jill reported on the history and intent of creating a Policy for Preventing and Responding to Sexual
40 Misconduct. She reviewed national statistics projecting 25% of the adults in a congregation have
41 experienced sexual abuse or misconduct. Jill reported on the training and education that the
42 committee has provided to date for the congregation, highlighting *Circles of Grace* within the Faith
43 Formation curriculum for children and youth.

44 This committee was formed in Fall 2020 with the purpose of creating a new policy that is easy to
45 understand and would allow others to quickly find information to provide victim assistance when
46 necessary. The policy is victim-centered, challenging our church family and community to place
47 value on victim support and care. Now that the policy is drafted the committee's work will shift to
48 education for the church through Sunday School classes.

49
50 A copy of the proposed Policy will be sent electronically to members tomorrow, May 3, for study
51 and feedback. Those who receive church communications by US mail will receive it by the end of
52 the week. Hard copies will also be available in the gathering space in the church. Feedback can be
53 provided through the Response section of the online survey. The committee will review feedback
54 responses in June and July. Responses should be addressed to the committee, not any individual
55 committee members. Other committee members are Bethany Schrag, Jim Robb, Yolanda Kaufman,
56 Dale Schrag with Jill Robb as chairperson, and the pastoral team.

57
58 Jill publicly voiced support for victims and apologies for any past missteps. Moderator Elizabeth
59 hopes we all move forward into this difficult work with grace and wise hearts.

60

61 **7. Living Stones II – Renovation Report** — Annette Lamp

62 Annette thanked everyone for their patience in this extended process. The first tour of our new
63 space was conducted this week. A new basement family restroom plus renovations of the
64 basement hallway and Fellowship Hall are almost completed.

65

66 Elizabeth thanked Annette for her service as liaison with the contractor for this extensive
67 construction project. "Thank you for your persistence and tenacity to keep the project moving
68 along during this pandemic year."

69

70 **8. Reopening Church Task Group Update** — Dawn Yoder Harms, Pastor

71 Early this March 2021 marked one year of stopping our in-person worship because of the
72 pandemic. At that time a survey was emailed to the congregation, asking them to share what have
73 been losses or appreciations during that time. Pastor Dawn shared some comments from the
74 survey about what we miss as well as what we look forward to after a year of remote worship due
75 to COVID-19 pandemic precautions.

76

77 Jill Robb thanked pastoral staff leadership and the Task Group for putting Safety First, an indication
78 of their caring hearts. Moderator Elizabeth publicly thanked the Reopening Task Group: Doris
79 Whillock, Barbara Thiessen, Jim Robb, Susie Swartley, Jeannette Stucky, Monica Lichti, and pastors
80 Dawn, Renee, and Nathan. (Elizabeth Schmidt was also a member of the Reopening Task Group.)

81

82 **9. Technology Task Group conversation** – Bill Swartley and Dale Schrag

83 Last fall the church board appointed a Technology Task Group to address technology needs in the
84 sanctuary. Technology Task Group members are: Bill Swartley, Dale Schrag, Ken Lamp, Doug
85 Harms, and Dorothy Nickel Friesen.

86

87 Dale and Bill presented the possible installation of a projection screen at the front of the sanctuary.
88 Opportunities the screen would provide, as well as changes to the visual appearance of the front of
89 the sanctuary that would occur during use, were discussed.
90



91 Moderator Elizabeth invited questions online. In conclusion, Elizabeth encouraged the congregation to
92 consider this decision and share our ideas and feelings with the committee: Bill Swartley, Dale Schrag,
93 Ron Preheim, Dorothy Nickel Friesen and Ken Lamp.
94

95
96 **10. Other items. None voiced.**

97
98 **11. Closing Prayer** — Pastor Dawn Yoder Harms read from *Voice Together* #1068
99

100 Moderator Elizabeth adjourned the meeting at 2:09 pm.

101
102 Respectfully submitted,
103 Pat Friesen, clerk