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3 **Bethel College Mennonite Church Board Minutes**

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5 *Pending approval at the January 2023 Board Meeting*

6
7 *Our faith in a God of love leads us, by the power of the Spirit, to follow Jesus in doing*
8 *justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God.*

9 **Board Members Present:** Ada Schmidt-Tieszen (Moderator), Brad Kohlman (Moderator-
10 elect), Mary Ann Boschmann, Judy Friesen, Tim Hodge, John Kliewer, Lois Preheim, Adam
11 Robb, Bill Swartley, Margaret Toews

12 **Board Members not present:** Karen Penner, Jon Zerger

13 **Staff Present:** Nathan Koontz (Pastor), Mike Claassen (Finance Manager)

14 **Staff not present:**

15 **Others attending:**

16
17 **1. Welcome and Centering Prayer** – The board read the BCMC purpose statement
18 together and Ada offered a prayer.

19 **2. Consent Agenda.** Online minutes of commissions and committees, pastors' reports,
20 and November board meeting minutes were presented. A correction was made to a
21 date mentioned on line 22 of the November minutes. Pastor Nathan's report
22 prompted a discussion about how knowledge of congregational traditions and
23 practices get passed on to people new to BCMC. **Tim Hodge moved to approve the**
24 **Consent Agenda and Judy Friesen seconded the motion; approved by consensus.**

25 **3. Financial Report for November, 2022** - The Treasurer's Report was emailed prior to
26 the meeting. Income was higher than expenses again in October, however
27 contributions did not increase as much as is needed to meet the budget by the end of
28 December. Some contingency money is available. **Tim moved to approve the**
29 **Financial Report. Brad Kohlman seconded; motion carried.**

30 Discussion about the shortfall seen in the bcmcXpress drive followed the Financial
31 Report. There are about 30 fewer pledges this year than last and a large shortfall in
32 the total pledge amount. Reasons for the shortfall may include the short timeframe
33 for returning pledges, very few reminders which include the button linking to the
34 online pledge page, not having door-to-door contact among congregants during the
35 pledge drive (as was the case prior to Covid), and fewer people involved with the
36 church. Brad would be willing to consult with the Finance Committee. It isn't the
37 Finance Committee's job to be a fundraising group, so how should fundraising be
38 done at BCMC? **Ada will give feedback from the board's discussion to LaVern Stucky**

39 **of the Finance Committee.** The board will wait a month to see how additional
40 pledges come in after reminders are emailed out.

41 **4. Staffing -**

42 **a. Approval of Roger Neufeld Smith’s MOU (action item)** A summary of the
43 MOU includes these points:

- 44 – position is half-time from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 with
45 possibility for extensions.
- 46 – MC-USA salary guidelines are followed in the proposed salary. A
47 supplemental amount is paid in lieu of health insurance.
- 48 – Allowance for other expenses is included: travel from Topeka of \$125 per
49 month and housing of \$250 per month.
- 50 – BCMC agrees to contribute to Roger’s pension fund.
- 51 – BCMC will cover disability, life, and accidental death and dismemberment
52 insurance.
- 53 – Vacation, holidays, and funds for professional growth are all in alignment
54 with our church’s policies for pastors.
- 55 – BCMC agrees to provide necessary equipment, furniture, and supplies.
- 56 – resignation requires 30 days of notice; termination on the part of BCMC
57 requires 60 days of notice.
- 58 – Roger will not attend meetings of the search committee, though he may
59 serve as a liaison in some capacity.

60 **Brad moved to approve the MOU with Roger Smith as outlined, Judy**
61 **seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

62 **b. Interim Congregational Care Coordinator (report)** One application was
63 received. Brad will be the interviewer representing the board. Nathan, a
64 representative from SCRC, and a representative from the Deacons will also be
65 part of the interview process. Brad will be interview coordinator for this
66 position. **Tim moved to proceed with the interview process for the candidate;**
67 **Mary Ann Boschmann seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

68
69 **c. Resignation of custodian (report)** Steve Schurr, Facilities Committee, will have
70 a conversation with the custodian to thank him and to get a detailed list of
71 what he does. The Facilities Committee will write an updated job
72 description/list of tasks and make a recommendation to the board about the
73 amount of staffing needed as well as more explicit supervision processes. It is
74 likely that a part-time contract will be suggested – other churches in the area
75 have part-time custodians. There is a possibility for interim staffing of the
76 position. A thank you gift will be given.

77

- 78 **5. Reports and Announcements:**
- 79 **a. Worship Commission Task Group (report from Adam)** – This task
- 80 group of Adam Robb, Dorothy Nickel Friesen, Dale Schrag, and Patty
- 81 Shelly has been visiting with current and former pastors, congregants,
- 82 commission leaders and others. They are gathering data and working
- 83 on a more accurate description of the task of Worship Commission.
- 84 The group is working to frame what major discussions and decisions
- 85 need to be made for broader issues in Worship. They have been
- 86 meeting frequently via zoom. The goal is to have an official
- 87 recommendation by either the January congregational meeting or the
- 88 February board meeting. Ada thanked Adam for his work on the task
- 89 group.
- 90
- 91 **b. Worship Coordination Task Group (report from Nathan)** This task
- 92 group of Susie Swartley, Mary Ann, Dale Schrag and Nathan will be
- 93 working to find worship leaders, scripture readers and children’s
- 94 conversations beginning in January. Each member will be responsible
- 95 for two months. This task group’s effort will overlap with the work of
- 96 the new Worship Commission as it gears up beginning in June.
- 97
- 98 **c. Search Committee** - Its work will likely begin in January.
- 99
- 100 **6. Credence and Company Recommendations: Next Steps -**
- 101 **a. Feedback and comments received following final report** - Ada shared a letter
- 102 from John Esau regarding the history of elders and deacons in the Mennonite
- 103 Church. A concern was expressed by a congregant that discussions will be held
- 104 and nothing will change. Most of the board members received no additional
- 105 feedback. Several have expressed the idea to focus on the things that are going
- 106 well in our church. The policy issues in our church are present in other
- 107 churches as well.
- 108 **b. What step or change seems most important for health of congregation?**
- 109 Discussion included the following points:
- 110 – What is going well
- 111 ○ Informal meals together
- 112 ○ Jill Robb’s work of weekly emails inviting families with children to
- 113 participate in Worship which results in higher Sunday School
- 114 attendance for Agape SS class.
- 115 – Ideas to consider
- 116 ○ Start an almanac of the year which lists meals, potlucks, etc.
- 117 Develop a yearly calendar which community building events that
- 118 congregants can look forward to. Bible School would go on the
- 119 calendar.

- 120 ○ Birthday calendar.
- 121 – Things to improve
- 122 ○ Communication – a calendar would be about communication. We
- 123 need to communicate in many ways. Communication has been
- 124 identified as an area of improvement for our congregation, both by
- 125 Credence and by congregants.
- 126 ○ Build a physical welcome center in the entryway or back of the
- 127 sanctuary – has info about all our programs – a visitor can go there
- 128 and get all the info.
- 129 ○ New screen – bring the screen down and show photos,
- 130 announcements before worship – bring the screen up at around 24
- 131 min after 9.
- 132 ○ We have a new kitchen. Invite families from playschool to
- 133 Wednesday night supper.
- 134 ○ Children’s choirs bring in families.
- 135 ○ Put together easy meals for college students who may have to stay
- 136 on campus during holidays.
- 137 ○ Two broad areas
- 138 ▪ how do we continue to find ways to be multi-generational
- 139 such as mentors for older people, pairing up with a check-in
- 140 couple or person
- 141 ▪ understand the work of the APRC – how can we support
- 142 their work. APRC is pioneering – not too many resources
- 143 available
- 144 ○ Letting some things go.
- 145 **c. What step or change seems most necessary for pastoral search?** Leadership
- 146 style and job description are two areas that need attention. The search
- 147 committee will probably start its work in January.
- 148 **d. Smaller group to make recommendations to the Board?** Ada suggests putting
- 149 together a small group, the Credence Report Task Group, that will propose
- 150 more detailed decisions and oversee finding members for other task groups as
- 151 needed. For example, do we need a task group for communication, for
- 152 intergenerational, for APRC support? Is this a direction we want to take? This
- 153 group can be made up of board members and other members of the
- 154 congregation. No pastors will be part of these groups. **The board moved**
- 155 **unanimously to create a Credence Report Task Group for the purposes**
- 156 **described above. Ada will work with Brad to establish this group.**

157 **7. Executive Session. Entered at 9:13. Closed at 9:16 pm.**

158

159 **Meeting adjourned at 9:16 pm. Next meeting will be held January 5, 2023.**

160 Submitted by Margaret Toews, Clerk

