

Bethel College Mennonite Church Board Minutes

Pending approval at the August 2023 Board Meeting

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

Board Members Present: Ada Schmidt-Tieszen (Moderator), Mary Ann Boschmann, Judy Friesen, John Kliewer, Margaret Toews

Board Members not present: Brad Kohlman (Moderator-elect), Tim Hodge, Doug Penner, Karen Penner, Lois Preheim, Jon Zerger

Staff Present: Nathan Koontz (Pastor), Mike Claassen

Staff not present: Roger Neufeld Smith (Interim Pastor)

Others attending:

- 1. Welcome and Opening Prayer** – Ada Schmidt-Tieszen offered a short meditation and prayer for the meeting.
- 2. Consent Agenda** – Margaret Toews gave a brief report on meetings of committees and commissions found online at the BCMC website. There was a question about consistency of sound quality in the sanctuary. There has been feedback that it is easier to hear online than in person, depending on where in the sanctuary one is sitting. **John Kliewer moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Judy Friesen seconded the motion; approved by consensus.**
- 3. Financial Report** – The Treasurer’s Report was emailed prior to the meeting. May was another good month for income. There was a brief discussion as to why this might be. Would it be possible to bring back the offering during the service? There is a shortage of ushers, but it should be considered. Several assistant treasurers are needed. The board was invited to submit names of people who might be interested. **Judy moved to approve the Financial Report. Mary Ann Boschmann seconded; the motion carried.**
- 4. Screen and Living Stones Projects: Report and Action** – After questions at a previous board meeting about the status of funding and payment for the sanctuary screen, Ada talked with Bill Swartley, chair of the former Sanctuary Screen Committee and LaVern Stucky, chair of Finance Committee. They confirm that the screen fund is complete and went exactly as planned, that is, some money came from donations, some from bequests. The Finance Committee reports that Living Stones is still on the annual pledge sheet because the board has never asked that it be removed. Living Stones will be removed from the pledge sheet for next year’s BCMC Express. **Mary Ann moved that the balance of the Living Stones will be moved to the plant fund, since the Living Stones campaign was primarily a physical plant improvement effort. Judy seconded the motion; the motion carried. Ada will contact those who are contributing specifically to Living Stones this year and will make a bulletin announcement in a few weeks to inform the congregation of the decision to move the balance of funds from Living Stones into the Plant Fund.**

5. **Bequests: Plan for New Policies** – After some research by Doug Penner, Ada learned there was a policy for the handling of bequests in 2010. Brad and Doug Penner agreed to explore this area and offer advice about possible new or additional policies. Everence also has some resources in this area. We will wait for the report from Brad and Doug.

6. **Report and Discussion Concerning Creation Care Committee Solar Project** A smaller group within Creation Care is interested in installing solar panels at BCMC. They have communicated with the Facilities Committee and continue to lay the groundwork for bringing this idea to the congregation. They plan a Kingdom report and discussion with the Finance Committee and Witness Commission. The group talked with Kauffman Museum and Bethel College about working together on the project, but it doesn't seem probable at this time. Ada asked if the board had questions or comments to take back to the committee. Current questions and comments include:

- Don't take down trees.
- Fund-raising - are there other things we should spend \$100k on?
- Aesthetics?
- Facilities have been invited to consider questions such as strength of roof, where is the conduit, etc.
- What does Witness Commission say about priorities? Is there a critical mass of support in the congregation?

A broader question is how or whether BCMC should prioritize these efforts. Should we follow the passion and commitment of some who do the work of building support for a particular project, such as the sanctuary screen project? Or should we prioritize efforts we think are important. Congregational decision-making – how should it work? There may be further discussion of this broader question at another time.

Ada will send out email to missing board members to see if they have questions to add.

7. **Committees Appointed by the Church Board: Progress Reports**

- Gifts Discernment Committee (2 members)
- Bethel College Relations Team (2-3 members) – Tim Hodge and Matt Koontz have agreed to serve on this team.
- Staff Congregation Relations Committee (1 member)

John moved to approve these appointees. Judy Friesen seconded; the motion carried.

8. **Approval of Church's Master Calendar** – Judy made a motion to approve the dates of congregational meetings for the next year as follows: **September 10 after lunch, January 28, 2024, at 12:45 after the youth group fund raiser soup lunch, and May 5, 2024, during the SS hour.** Mary Ann seconded; the motion carried.

9. **Reports and Announcements**

- Update on work of the Credence Report Task Group – There are two current efforts: 1) **Increase intergenerational activities.** Adam Robb reported on the wonderful evening at Judy Friesen's home. He and Brad Kohlman will talk to several churches who have small group programs to find out how they are structured. 2) **Work on Structure.** Judy will be meeting with Richard Friesen and Roger Neufeld Smith later in July to talk about how to proceed. How much change needs to be made before hiring a new co-pastor? How do we identify the areas that need work? We don't know the time frame. **Ada will meet with Roger prior to the meeting with Judy to establish some possible directions.**

- Elizabeth's Schmidt's credentialing update – Elizabeth has completed the forms needed for the Western District Conference committee. There will be an interview with WDC in August. A celebration of the credentialing will be planned.

10. Executive Session – 8:23 pm entered.

11. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35. Next meeting will be held August 3, 2023 at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by Margaret Toews, clerk

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