

Bethel College Mennonite Church Board Minutes
Pending approval at the January 2025 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: Brad Kohlman (Moderator), Bill Eash (Moderator elect), Ada Schmidt-Tieszen (Past Moderator), Mary Ann Boschmann, Tim Hodge, Carolyn Penner, Doug Penner, Lois Preheim, Margaret Toews, John Waltner

Board Members not present: Jon Zerger

Staff Present: Joanna Harader (Co-pastor), Mike Claassen (Treasurer)

Staff not present:

Others attending:

- 1. Welcome and Opening Prayer** – Brad Kohlman read a meditation from the Advent devotional, Expecting Emmanuel by Joanna Harader. He offered a prayer for the meeting.
- 2. Consent Agenda** – Brad asked for questions on the reports and minutes included in the board packet. Lois Preheim asked if there was follow-up information from the last meeting regarding the church's rate structure with Everygy. Margaret Toews reported that Jon did talk to Everygy, but it isn't clear yet if there are any more beneficial rate structures. Brad reported that Faith Formation is packing treat bags for children participating in the Christmas program. Bill Eash expressed appreciation for all the work the pastors continue to do. **Lois moved to accept minutes from the previous meeting, pastors' reports, and online minutes of commissions and committees. Bill seconded the motion; approved by consensus.**
- 3. Financial Report: Mike Claassen** – Reports were sent out ahead of the meeting. November income was down. December is usually good. The Finance Committee may give an update in the bulletin. Hopefully December will bring in sufficient funds to meet expenses. **John Waltner moved to approve the Financial Report. Doug Penner seconded; the motion carried.**
- 4. 2025 Budget** – The 2025 Budget Worksheet (Version 20251106) was distributed. A discussion followed about the Benevolences list. Do small donations to many recipients diminish the focus of our budget? Do we need to take a look at the list and reevaluate? Does the church want a smaller budget and instead recommend that individuals give to benevolences of their choosing? Should the church itself tithe? Benevolences have become a smaller part of the budget, about 15% this year. Intents made in 2023 and received in 2024 cover about 60% of the 2024 budget. No action was taken.
- 5. Agenda – January Congregational Meeting** – The next congregational meeting will be held on January 26 during the Sunday School hour in the sanctuary. Presentation and a vote on approval of the budget is on the agenda, as well as approval of Melanie Mueller, appointed to the Witness Commission. Other agenda items may include a report on the student intern for the solar panel data analysis project, and some highlights from the past year possibly including the Peace Pole and the trip to the First Nations Museum in

Oklahoma City. The church has come through many transitions in the past few years, it's time to focus on good things that have happened. The meeting will be followed by a lunch provided by the youth.

6. **Agenda – January Leadership Retreat** – The church leadership retreat is scheduled for Saturday, January 25, 2025, typically for several hours in the morning. Ada Schmidt-Tieszen reported that Tim Schrag is very excited to give his presentation on helping churches become more welcoming. He expects to use 1 to 1 ½ hours followed by discussion. He would then meet with ushers and others at a later time. Who needs to hear this message? Typically, all commissions and committees are invited to attend. Brad will look at the numbers. The venue might be Dyck Arboretum or Grace Hill Mennonite. Brad will check into options.
7. **Reports and Announcements**
 - a. **Moving the January 2025 board meeting from January 2 to January 9 was discussed and approved.**
 - b. Joanna reported on staff safety concerns around having the building open during the day. APRC has determined that all doors should be locked when only one staff person is here. A note with a phone number will be posted on the north door. A video intercom system is being investigated and will most likely be installed in the next few months. Most church buildings are not open during the week. **Bill moved that the Church Board accept the recommendations of APRC to increase security in the building. Ada seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously.**
8. **Future Agenda Items** – No future agenda items were brought.
9. **Executive Session** - The board moved to enter executive session at 8:23 pm.
10. **Adjournment** – The board adjourned at 8:30 pm. The next meeting will be held on January 9 at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by Margaret Toews, clerk.

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