

**College Mennonite Church  
Minutes – Congregational Meeting  
April 17, 2016**

1. **Opening:** Max Mertz, congregational moderator, convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and, after reciting the congregational vision statement, led in an opening prayer. He introduced the agenda for the meeting.
2. Don Garber reviewed the **minutes** of the congregational meeting of March 13, 2016, which were approved.
3. Max Mertz reported that the Church Board has begun working toward **an LGBTQ inclusion statement**. This action idea received the strongest support in our strategic planning process. Since it has implications that are broader than the parameters of a single goal, including aspects of congregational relationships and pastor credentials, it was pulled out of the strategic priorities and goals. Within the next few weeks, the Church Board will appoint a diverse implementation group to map out a process through which the congregation can develop and promote clarity for any proposed statement.
4. Most of the rest of the meeting was focused on **strategic planning**, especially the proposed priorities and associated goals. After thanking consultant Sandra Herron for assisting the Strategic Planning Facilitation Team and Doug Vendrely and Ervin Beck for their supportive services, Sam Miller reviewed the process so far. He noted that the congregational mission statement, vision statement, and core values have guided the work of the team. He highlighted activities of the last two years that led us to this point and thanked the congregation for its active participation.

Sandra Herron highlighted definitions of “strategic priorities,” “goals,” “action ideas,” and “action plans/action steps.” Sue Plank drew attention to “Our Next Steps: Moving from Goals to Action,” a tentative timeline. A worksheet for individual reflection (and to help guide table group discussion) was introduced. The worksheet had the text of each of the proposed priorities and related goals, along with a scale for individuals to indicate degree of support for each (from “do not support” to “strongly support.”) Sue Neeb invited individuals and table groups to bring forward questions to be noted on a flipchart. John Yordy led in prayer, and table group discussion began.

After about 20 minutes, Max Mertz drew the group back together and introduced a motion from the Church Board:

That College Mennonite Church adopt the proposed three strategic priorities and eight associated goals to guide congregational planning.

The motion was seconded. John Yordy and Sue Neeb responded to questions noted on the flipchart. In response to questions about the meaning of “high-bar discipleship” and “decentralized member-led structure,” it was noted that these were ideas that emerged from congregational discussion, and it will be up to the action-step working groups to identify the specific meaning and implications of the goals. It was noted that the purpose of “overall coordination” is to have someone to help pull things together, so that groups do not duplicate efforts and are not restricted by silo thinking (developing ideas in isolation without reference to the whole). Regarding a question about “celebrating diversity” rather than simply “respecting” it, it was clarified that this refers more to theological differences among us than to racial/socioeconomic diversity. In response to a question about the flexibility of the

proposed time frame, it was noted that, while the timeline is admittedly ambitious, the hope is to keep the process moving forward. Strategic priorities 2 and 3 both will include discussion of the nature and role of small groups at CMC.

Table group reporting:

- Our table supports the priorities and goals, but in light of world and community needs, shouldn't we be doing more to address racism, refugee needs, global warming, etc.?
- "High-bar discipleship" implies divisions among us. It is faith that divides us; we are united in doing the will of Christ. We need to be respectful of each other's beliefs.
- Might it be better to say "maturing/growing" discipleship?
- The strategic planning process has been truly congregational—giving and receiving counsel in the body. The priorities and goals represent our corporate thinking at this time.

The motion was approved by a voice vote, with no negative votes.

This is the text of priorities and goals as presented/approved at the meeting:

Strategic Priority 1. Hospitality and Welcoming [External focus]

*We will embrace diversity and improve our practices related to welcoming and actively including and inviting others into our physical space and spiritual community.*

Goal 1.1 By October 1, 2016, we will fine-tune our structure, processes and language to create a more welcoming environment and intentional guest experience.

Goal 1.2 By January 1, 2017, we will assess all ministries and programs for how each is welcoming and meeting the needs of diverse audiences (beginning with young adults and families) and develop a three-year action plan to welcome and grow target audiences.

Goal 1.3 By July 1, 2017, we will transform our physical space to be more welcoming and to promote relationships and a sense of belonging. [Related: Goal 3.1]

Strategic Priority 2. Spiritual Formation and Discipleship

*As CMCers of all ages seek to follow Jesus, we will deepen our faith, strengthen theological understanding – especially of our own Anabaptist traditions – and grow through spiritual practices.*

Goal 2.1 By July 15, 2016, we will develop a list of existing and new spiritual formation and discipleship opportunities and survey the leadership and participation interests of members/attenders to inform program planning.

Goal 2.2 By year-end 2016, we will offer a minimum of three (3) new opportunities to help members/attenders deepen their faith.

Goal 2.3 By January 1, 2017, we will assess all ministries and programs for how each is supporting the spiritual formation and discipleship of members and attenders and develop a three-year action plan to support high-bar discipleship.

Strategic Priority 3. Community and Unity [Internal focus]

*We will grow in our practice of love, caring and unity, respecting diversity within our congregation and community.*

Goal 3.1 By the beginning of Advent 2016, we will create relational and physical spaces to cultivate deeper, intergenerational connections and provide opportunities for CMCers of all ages to share stories of God at work in their lives. [Related: Goal 1.3]

Goal 3.2 By January 1, 2017, we will develop a three-year action plan to strengthen our practices of love, caring and unity using a more decentralized member-led structure.

5. Max Mertz introduced a **resolution of appreciation:**

College Mennonite Church offers thanks to God for the gifts of faith, ministry, and music bestowed on Lee Dengler and Susan Naus Dengler and for their willingness to share these gifts faithfully and generously with us during almost two decades of formal ministry in our congregation. Our sincere love and prayers will follow Susan and Lee as they walk along new paths of Christian discipleship. We wish Susan and Lee God's richest blessings in the years ahead.

The resolution was seconded and approved by a voice vote, with no negative votes.

6. "Coach" (the position formerly known as bishop) Ron Guengerich affirmed the congregation for taking seriously the work of looking to the future in this time of transition. He said that he sees himself as a kind of cultural anthropologist, feeding **observations** back to us to help us see ourselves more clearly. He reminded us that "you don't have to be wrong for me to be right."
7. The meeting was **adjourned** about 7:45 p.m. with the singing of "Gentle Shepherd" led by Becky Horst. Attendance: 93.

Recorder: Don Garber