

**College Mennonite Church
Minutes – Congregational Meeting
March 26, 2017**

1. **Opening:** Max Mertz, congregational moderator, convened the meeting about 6:00 p.m. Becky Horst led the group in singing “You are all we have,” and Max led in an opening prayer. Max introduced the agenda for the meeting.
2. Don Garber reviewed the **minutes** of the congregational meeting of January 22, 2017, which were approved.
3. The moderator highlighted the summary of **Daniel Yoder’s term review**, which had been distributed with the agenda. He introduced a recommended motion from the church board:

College Mennonite Church calls Daniel Yoder to a five-year term of service on the CMC pastoral team beginning July 1, 2017.

Ron Kennel led in prayer, and then Max invited comments on the motion.

- I affirm Daniel’s gifts, but we can’t depend on the minister to do the work for us. Youth need other adult mentors to work with the program—on Wednesday nights, at weekend retreats, at conventions. (Marilyn Graber)
- Youth of the Genesis group sometimes ask who they can go to with their questions and concerns. (Michelle Ramer, interpreted by Justin Yoder)
- I appreciate Daniel’s goal to keep the Anabaptist vision before us. (Leonard Gross)
- My appreciation to Dan Schrock for his commitment to working with youth, and I encourage other adults to follow his example. (Rachel Hartzler)

Max invited participants to cast their votes by ballot. The motion passed: 183 yes, 11 no (94.3% affirmative).

4. The moderator highlighted the summary of **Talashia Keim Yoder’s term review**, which had been distributed with the agenda. He introduced a recommended motion from the church board:

College Mennonite Church calls Talashia Keim Yoder to a five-year term of service on the CMC pastoral team beginning July 1, 2017.

Rebecca Sommers led in prayer, and then Max invited comments on the motion.

- It is obvious that Talashia’s life is centered on helping others. (Phyllis Miller)
- Talashia has been a strong support for my daughter, especially as she was preparing to join the church (Michelle Ramer, interpreted by Justin Yoder)
- With Talashia’s help, the Growing Roots class has grown in the past three years from three couples to 20 regular participants. (Seth Yoder)
- Special recognition to Talashia for her help in organizing support for the Gunawan family. (Max Mertz)

Max invited participants to cast their votes by ballot. The motion passed: 198 yes, 6 no (97.1% affirmative).

5. Becky Horst of the LGBT welcome group appointed by church board highlighted the discernment process that led to the **proposed welcome statement** and addressed some continuing concerns. She introduced a motion to approve the following statement to inform and represent our practice of welcoming people into our congregational life:

We believe that all individuals are created in God's image, and all people, regardless of age, gender, race, citizenship status, abilities, or sexual orientation, are welcome as full participants in the life of our congregation.

Becky led in prayer, and then the floor was opened for discussion.

- Quoting Carol Wise, executive director of Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Interests (BMC): "This is a statement for each of us for ourselves." (Kent Beck)
- Thanks to the committee for planning a variety of storytelling and educational activities. (Don Garber)
- The conditions for welcome cast a broad net, but not everything is included. Do we have a problem with age, is that why that is included? Both citizenship status and sexual orientation are included; does this mean approval of same-sex marriages? (Don Blosser) Response (Becky Horst): Approval of same-sex marriages is there implicitly. The committee chose not to include marital status because it is not a condition like the others.
- I have appreciated the welcoming atmosphere of CMC; it will be good to be able to say to the community what we are and why. (Elise Garber)
- Eighth Street Mennonite Church recently approved a similar welcoming statement and also approved joining the Supportive Communities Network of BMC. (Anne Hershberger)
- I have been on a journey with these issues. Earlier I would not have signed a statement like this; I believe it is growth on my part to be able to affirm this statement now. (Tim Lichti)
- I appreciate the work of the committee. My hope is that we will not lose people who cannot support the statement. (Carl Rutt)
- I am glad that the coordinators of our deaf and Hispanic ministries expressed their reservations about the statement at the March 12 congregational forum. My hope is that we can continue to love and support each other despite our differences. (Rachel Hartzler)
- As a member of the Deaf Christian Fellowship board, I too have reservations about the statement. I want our church to be welcoming, but I personally struggle with what this means for our children. DCF may choose a different location due to our different understandings of this issue. (Michelle Ramer, interpreted by Justin Yoder)
- We want to have a big tent, but what does it mean if we have a lopsided vote on a controversial issue. (Seth Yoder)

Phil Waite led in prayer. Max invited participants to cast their votes by ballot, noting that absentee ballots will be included in the total. The motion passed: 184 yes, 17 no (91.5% affirmative).

6. **Other business:** Max Mertz expressed appreciation for the congregation's support in the death of his mother three days ago. He also announced that Don Garber is resigning as congregational recorder and invited suggestions for a replacement.

The meeting was **adjourned** about 7:10 p.m. Attendance: 135, plus 2 guests; another 95 people participated in absentee voting on one or more of the three actions.

Recorder: Don Garber