

College Mennonite Church
Minutes – Congregational Meeting
June 11, 2017

1. **Opening:** Max Mertz, congregational board chair, convened the meeting at 6:01 p.m. Richard Kauffman led us in an opening hymn (“Give To Us Laughter”). Max then offered an opening prayer.
2. **Review of minutes:** Don Garber reviewed the minutes of the March 26 and April 23, 2017 congregational meetings. Joe Springer moved the approval of the minutes, and Carol Grieser seconded. They were approved by voice vote.
3. **Strategic Priorities Updates:**
Tim Lichti provided updates on Strategic Priority #2 (Spiritual Formation and Discipleship). Out of over 80 congregational activities, 35-40 focus on spiritual formation. Jan Yoder and her subgroup have developed a new computer-based resource to use in addition to existing activities. This will be put on our website. Margaret Clemens and her subgroup have created a survey (to be conducted August 27 -September 10) to help us assess our current CMC programs.
Joe Springer gave updates on Strategic Priority #1 (Hospitality and Welcoming) and Strategic Priority #3 (Community and Unity). Planning work related to Strategic Priority #1 is largely finished. By the end of this year, a hospitality and welcoming committee (under Outreach) will supervise greeter and usher programs. For Strategic Priority #3, the “Guess Who’s Coming To Dinner” program is a great example of individuals organizing and implementing an idea without added staff time or expense. Enabling and enhancing small groups at CMC has proven to be challenging. Tim Lichti, Karen Stoltzfus, and commissions members from Discipling and Community Life are developing suggestions. Individuals with interests in structural changes that would necessitate by-laws changes have been invited to submit their ideas directly to the church board.
4. **Transition in Hispanic Ministries,** - Phil Waite reported on transitions since Claudia Granados’ resignation. Our guest pastor Luis Tapia from Ecuador has stepped in and led Bible studies, and also led Sunday sermon discussion groups. Luis will preach in our June 25 worship service and begin studies at AMBS in the fall. CMC is working on ways that he can continue to work with this ministry while at AMBS. CMC needs to develop further plans for ways that this ministry might serve as a bridge among communities within Goshen.
5. **Listening/Discerning Session:** Table groups discussed ministries they were glad College Mennonite was involved in, suggested new ministries we are being called to, and suggested ways to reallocate resources. Afterwards, there were reports from some of the tables to the full meeting. [A summary report of responses will be prepared for literature racks.]

6. **2017/2018 CMC Ministries Proposal:** Max introduced the proposal and made the motion for the proposed spending plan of \$981,954. Dan Steiner seconded the motion. There were numerous comments and questions in the discussion which followed.
- Among them:
- How will we pay for the \$164,491 current shortfall (as of May 31) towards meeting the 2016-2017 spending plan? (Margaret Ingold). Response – Scott Litwiller indicated that some of that amount has been covered by the first two June offerings. Also, the amount is the shortfall from proposed spending plan, not from actual expenses. He estimates that we may end up \$40,000 - \$70,000 short. If we don't raise it, then some of the voluntary commitments made in the spending plan (e.g. to outside agencies) will not be met in full.
 - We don't see lower energy costs reflected in the budget. We need to be realistic on what it will take to get lower energy costs. (Dwight Grieser).
 - How will employing full-time pastors for 11 months rather than 12 months? (John Lederach). Response from Max Mertz: They will have 11 month's pay. They will have full-time benefits (i.e. health coverage), but benefits that are calculated as a percentage of pay (e.g. retirement, Social Security) will be lower. The four pastors will not all take their month off in the same month.
 - How much do we save by these four 11-month agreements? Response from Scott Litwiller: about \$20,000.
 - Are we expecting our pastors to do 1/12th less work? (Rachel Hartzler). Response from Phil Waite: We don't know exactly how it will work but are trying this. We will know more in a year. Our goal is to reduce actual work. For example, during the month off, pastors will save time ordinarily spent responding to emails and attending meetings. Perhaps this will encourage more efficiency in those activities throughout the year.
 - How will the proposed \$50,000 cash reserve work? (Weldon Friesen). Response from Max Mertz: We will first meet our other commitments. Whatever we have left over will be put into that reserve. If we wind up with more than \$50,000 in the reserve, we can make decisions at future meetings on how that should be used.
 - Does this change to 11 months violate previously agreed-on contracts? (Felipe Merino). Response from Joe Springer: Pastors and other employees receive annual compensation statements outlining salary/wages and benefits rather than formal contracts. All employees, including pastors are technically hired 'at-will.'
 - Will this violate denominational salary guidelines (John Lederach)? Response from Joe Springer: No, MC USA provides guidelines for establishing basis of salary, which we still are using. MC USA does not prescribe level of employment (11 month, 12 month, part- or full-time).

Max called for the question by hand vote.

Action: The 2017-2018 CMC Ministries Fund Proposal was approved overwhelmingly.

7. **Other business:**

a. Myrna Burkholder made a motion: **“That plenary ‘Open Sharing Time’ become a formal part of each CMC congregational meeting, to be scheduled as the very last agenda item.”** Don Miller seconded the motion. Among the comments in the spirited discussion which followed:

- The Church Board has been concerned about the length of our meetings. The post- adjournment open sharing time (provided tonight) could be an alternate way for members to share announcements and concerns. (Max Mertz)
- Don Garber moved we defer the motion to a later meeting. Richard Kauffman seconded it. After a brief discussion, this motion was defeated by hand vote.
- The Other Business section could meet this need. (Mike Landis)
- If this motion does pass, don’t expect instant answers to questions raised. Pastors and board members need time to research some questions. (Felipe Merino)
- Putting the Open Sharing time after the meeting dilutes its impact. (Don Miller).
- The group proposing this has been patient. Let us give their proposal a chance. (Naomi Lederach)
- Back in 2009 when we had open mike, we were speaking to each other in love. (Leonard Gross)
- Young adults in the church want productive meetings. To formally add Open Sharing to business meetings would discourage younger member participation. (Seth Yoder)
- Open Sharing is not representative of the congregation – instead it favors the strongest and most articulate. (Richard Kauffman)

June Yoder called for the question. The vote was by hand vote.

Result of hand vote: In Favor – 25. Opposed – 38. The motion was defeated.

b. Max reminded everyone to fill out the 2017 Skills and Interests Survey forms.

8. Richard Kauffman led in a closing hymn, “Now on Land and Sea Descending”.

9. Max adjourned the meeting at 8:19 PM. Attendance: 87.

Recorder: Bill Clemens