

College Mennonite Church
Minutes – Congregational Meeting
November 19, 2017
Fellowship Hall

1. **Opening:** Joe Springer opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m., and then offered an opening prayer. Becky Horst then led an opening hymn, “Blessed Be the Tie That Binds.”
2. **Review of Minutes:** Bill Clemens reviewed the minutes of the August 20, 2017 congregational meeting. Becky Horst moved the approval of the minutes. Max Mertz seconded. They were approved by hand vote.
3. **Development of the Vision for Small Groups:** Pamela Yoder reported on behalf of the Community Life Commission. The Commission has had many conversations about developing this vision as a way to strengthen our practices of love. At this point, they don’t have a complete proposal or a three-year plan, but they are working on numerous things. Among her remarks:
 - In large congregations such as ours, it is essential for members to also find smaller settings. For some members, this already happens in K-groups, Sunday school classes, and other groups. But we need to note gaps and create more **ports of entry**.
 - The Building Bridges and Take Good Care worship series have nudged us in this area of congregational life.
 - There are many small groups already. However, many of these do not have room for new people. Most are not intergenerational.
 - For some, the term “small group” is loaded and carries baggage. The Commission may use some other term instead (an example: “connection groups”).
 - These connection groups could take many different forms. Some could be short-term, others long-term. Some could be interest-geared, others composed of members with diverse interests. All are encouraged to agree on a purpose and a set time to meet, to maintain confidentiality, and to find a purpose outside themselves.
 - The Community Life Commission welcomes our prayers as they go about this.
4. **Capital Campaign:** Joe noted that several people have wondered about why there was no specific congregational action to approve a capital campaign. The board views the campaign as an outcome of the congregation’s approval of current strategic priorities, a way to provide resources useful in implementing those priorities. In 1991 the congregation did vote specifically on a capital campaign to add a major addition to our structure—a campaign that also committed CMC to borrowing large amounts of money over a decade. The current campaign does not propose borrowing any money, but rather uses the collective responses of members to permit progress as funds are available. (The 2007 campaign for sanctuary renovation was for CMC’s share of an Amity project. Congregational action authorized the Administration Commission to determine how to fund the project, with the commission in turn determining that a capital campaign would be needed.)

Marty Lehman then noted that there have been several meetings for this current campaign, with two more coming up on November 30 and December 2. The goal for this current campaign is

\$1,000,000 over 3 years. Of that, over \$535,000 has already been pledged. The Capital Campaign Committee is composed of Jim Caskey, David Lapp Jost, Caryl Guth, Phil Waite, Scott Litwiller, and Marty Lehman.

5. **Solar installation project:** Joe reported that \$130,000 has been raised for this installation, well over the initial \$100,000 goal. The intention is to place the solar panels somewhere on Goshen College property. We will proceed with this as soon as we reach agreement with GC about the location.
6. **Vision for Hispanic ministries:** Phil Waite reported on developments in this area, which is an outgrowth of our Strategic Priority #1 (Hospitality and Welcoming):
 - An example of something that might be funded by new ministries funds contributed to the campaign could be to create a new pastoral position for someone with ministry skills useful in building relationships with the local Latino community. This person would be a full member of the pastoral team. He/she would be theologically at home in our congregation, would provide leadership and vision for Latino opportunities in Northern Indiana, and in the use of Spanish—whether in our services or in separate services. We may be able to bring a proposal for congregational consideration in the first quarter of 2018.
 - Phil had Luis Tapia spoke about his current work with the Spanish language group. Luis reported that the group has studied Palmer Becker’s book “*What Is an Anabaptist Christian?*” and is currently studying the gospel of Mark. They are considering starting a Hispanic small group that would meet during the week.
7. **Questions and Answers about the above updates:**
 - What happens after 3 years if this proposal for a Latino or bicultural pastor is approved? **Answer:** During the period of special funding we would begin assessing whether/how we are able to create space in our CMC Ministries general fund to support the position going forward.
 - How close is the capital campaign to completion? How many have responded? **Answer:** Less than half of the congregation have attended campaign events and have committed funds or pledges.
 - How many participate in the Hispanic group Luis leads? **Answer:** About 15 are present on Sunday mornings, but more than 30 participated in studies Luis has led.
 - Should previous interests from older small groups be considered in the new vision for groups? **Answer:** Yes, as Pamela mentioned—she imagines the congregation as a sort of trellis framework, on which many plants and flowers can be connected and grow.
8. **Core values discussion:** In the spirit of the Philippians 4:8 admonitions, in which we are encouraged to think on things which are honorable, commendable, and worthy of praise, attendees told stories at tables about where they have observed CMC core values practiced in our congregation. Becky Horst guided these table discussions. Table groups then shared one of their stories with the larger group. [Stories shared at tables eventually will be available in literature racks.]

9. Other Business Items:

- Phyllis Miller. – At a recent event, a person with a walker arrived at our back door and found it locked. **Response:** GC Campus Security is responsible for having doors locked and unlocked at appropriate times, but they don't always do it. Notify the Church Office about these episodes.
- Rachel Hartzler. – She recently went to Houston, TX to help with hurricane relief distribution. She felt like she was representing us down there and she brought back prayer requests from the Houston area churches.
- Elaine Schrock. – With the departure of the Denglers, and of Gwen Gustafson-Zook, is the pastoral team over-burdened? **Response:** Yes, they are. This fall has been a time of testing and experimentation. As pastors and other staff members adjust to new responsibilities, the Board is trying to remain alert to whether/where gaps necessary tasks may need additional coverage. We invite the congregation to be sensitive to and extend grace if there are things that are not being done in accustomed ways.
- Russ Liechty. – What is the status of the theft problem at our church? **Response:** There is a problem. Conga drums and a set of bells have been stolen recently. Security cameras are being installed.
- Jon Smucker. – If the pastoral team workload is re-distributed, are we providing adequate compensation, do we need to re-evaluate salaries for these persons. **Response:** Pastoral salaries are pegged to denominational guidelines which factor in several variables. It is valid to question how we set salaries.
- Dwight Grieser. – Dwight reported that money that CMCers and others invested in the Chicago Mennonite Learning Center in past years is now being used to promote and further our core values in Chicago area communities.

10. Adjournment: Joe adjourned the meeting at 5:31 p.m. Our next congregational meeting will be on January 21, 2018 at 6 p.m. (47 people signed attendance sheets.)

Recorder: Bill Clemens