

**Minutes for August Church Board Meeting
Eighth Street Mennonite Church**

August 18, 2021– 7:00 pm via ZOOM

Draft - to be approved at the September meeting

Present: Chair – Laurie Nafziger, Executive Committee – Doug Liechty Caskey & Joel Short, Christian Education Commission – Stacie Short, Congregational Care Commission – Betty Schrag, Fellowship Commission - Jay Hochstetler, Mission & Service Commission - Brian Wiebe, Stewardship Commission – Leanne Schertz, Trustee Commission – Mel Friesen, Worship Commission – Leonard Beechy, Treasurer – John Nyce, Pastors – Brenda Sawatzky Paetkau & Julia Gingrich, Recorder – Doug Liechty Caskey

Absent: Rita Herrmann (Administrative Assistant)

Eighth Street Vision Statement:

With courage and humility,
we strive to more fully celebrate the image of God in all persons
and we commit to building relationships with our neighbors near and far
by finding common ground and removing barriers to loving every body.

AGAPE Vision Goals:

Across cultures

Generational interaction

Accessibility and Sustainability

Peace and Justice

Engagement with the neighborhood

1. Opening – Laurie led a prayer using a portion of yesterday’s Church at Prayer email from pastors.
2. Approval of June 16 meeting minutes (with reminder that there was no July meeting). Jay moved; Betty seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**
3. Treasurer’s Report – John
 - A. Income -- as of August 15 we are \$4,537.50 above the planned budget giving. This is unusual, since by August we are often nearly \$10,000 or more behind the planned budget giving target. The congregation has given generously and consistently in 2021.
 - B. Expenses -- At the same time our expenses to July 31 are \$20,784.37 below the budget. Given our unusual year, this is not surprising. Depending on future Covid effects, we will likely be below budget expenses at year end.
 - C. Will Leichy is doing a review of our 2020 financial records. He will report findings and suggestions to the Stewardship Commission.
4. Pastors’ evaluation
 - a. Report to Board at September meeting. Laurie’s written report to the Board is in process and will be shared with Church Board in September.
 - b. Summary to Congregation will follow Board review.

5. Website Task Force.

- a. Dave Troup has informed us that he is planning to no longer host websites as of January 1, 2022 – including Eighth Street’s website. Exec Committee determined that a Task Force should be formed to make a recommendation for a new host site and the re-design and update of our website. Joel will be the Exec liaison and will convene this task force. Joel is inviting a small group to serve as this task force to make recommendations in order to make at least the decision about a new host by the end of 2021 to meet Dave’s deadline. We likely will need to invest some money into this revamp.

6. Adoption of Safe Space policy update (action needed).

- a. The final draft was sent to the board before tonight’s meeting. Brenda reported that Anna Groff from Dove’s Nest provided written and verbal feedback. Additional changes/updates were made resulting in the document before us. Changes to the policy include: 1) a Table of Contents to make it more user friendly; 2) separation of procedures for adults and children; 3) the addition of a section for a “Credibly Accused Offender; and 4) an Appendix with “Best Practices”. This revised document is now ready for approval and will be updated and revised as needed into the future.

- b. **BOARD ACTION: Brenda moved to accept. Doug seconded. Vote: Unanimously approved.**

The policy is posted on the church website for both congregational and public access.

7. Commission Reports -- *Living into our vision*

Thanks to all for the timely submission of minutes and pre-meeting review.

- a. Worship (Leonard B) July and August minutes have been distributed. Discussed copyright issues pertaining to the new *Voices Together* hymnal that limit use when services are publicly available for viewing. Music Committee is working on a legal way moving forward. We are planning to continue to meet outdoors – with services planned through the first Sunday of October. We want to embrace (rather than simply tolerate) our outdoor space as a holy place and look at how our congregation engages the neighborhood. The upcoming series is entitled “Outside our Walls”.
- b. Trustees (Mel) The Trustees, together with Congregational Care, are re-designating the downstairs restrooms to be family friendly. They’ll be lockable with an “occupied” signal. Changes include signage, knobs, and diaper-changing tables. These will be ready in the coming days. More wall-mounted hand sanitizer stations are available in various places around the church. Non-aggressive sandbox wasps have been dealt with. Working to expand our handicapped – designated parking spots to include one closer to the front door. Working with the City

and agreed that we'll request designation for 7 days/week. Agreed that we have accessibility funds that could be used for this change as needed.

- c. Stewardship (Leanne S). Gift Discernment for 2022 leadership, commissions and volunteers is underway. We won't be doing COVID roll-over commission members this year as we allowed last year. Budget building is also getting started as we transition into the fall.
 - d. Mission and Service (Brian W). M&S did not meet in July but met in August and minutes were sent out. MCC Relief Sale planning is underway. The Elkhart County Fairgrounds will be the site again. August 19 is the Relief Sale Fundraiser Meal at Essenhaus. Bob Lerch is hosting a table of 8th Streeters. (See additional comments in Fellowship section below.) There was follow-up discussion about hosting an ice cream social – possibly on September 26 -- to share information on how to be more engaged in community anti-racism events and linking up with established community organizations. The commission is close to announcing details.
 - e. Fellowship (Jay H) Jay wonders if we should participate in the Relief Sale through our typical smoothies booth this fall in light of current COVID numbers. We recognize the likelihood of unvaccinated folks working in the same tent and purchasing smoothies. If not, another option is for 8th St to make a financial contribution similar to our usual cash proceeds of around \$2000 - \$2500. We will continue to offer coffee time outdoors aligned with outdoor worship. Commission members recently helped with hosting some meals for pre-school staff start-up activities.
 - f. Congregational Care (Betty) New restroom signage in the works. Commission currently functioning with 8 members which will go back to the more typical six for 2022.
 - g. Christian Education (Stacie S) Land Acknowledgment events with the children went very well. Lots of good energy even with smaller numbers. Sunday School for youth has started and we're close to having all the teaching spots filled. Stacie is temporarily covering Junior High-level class. Youth activities are going well. CEC is proposing a Tiny Library and one or two storybook trails. One could be placed inside the playground area and another one might rotate. See the example at the Rieth Interpretive Center. Stacie is open to feedback on whether to move ahead with this. Affirmation expressed for reaching out into the neighborhood, and both ideas.
8. Pastors' Reports
- a. Julia. It was a real gift to participate in the annual Land Acknowledgment Team session. This past Sunday (Aug. 15) Luke Gascho's call to action offered much wisdom to the congregation. Plans are underway for a "Trail of Death" event for folks to participate in during September. Julia looking forward to working with the senior youth through Body & Soul activities. Sponsors: Will Leichty (3rd year), adding Gail Gerber (1st time).

There will be a joint Sr and Junior Youth pool party at Kate and Will Leichthy's to start the year.

- b. Brenda. Will be working with Junior Youth (Alex Dugger and Kristin Saner sponsors). Venture Club is resuming after a year "on hold." Trying to navigate these activities knowing this age isn't vaccinated. Parents of this age youth have agreed to take turns hosting the upcoming activities. This is a temporary solution until we find other adults to serve as sponsors in the future. Brenda connected with Jonathan Schramm at Goshen College/Merry Lea to help determine a Summer 2022 youth service-learning activity, locally hosted. Jonathan is full of ideas/possibilities to counter the despair being expressed. Two child dedications and a wedding are planned for this month. Brenda asked us to be mindful of some major transitions among our young people and elderly (job, school and health/residence related).

Next meeting: September 15, 2021 – 7:00 pm – via Zoom.