

Minutes for September Church Board Meeting
Eighth Street Mennonite Church
September 15, 2021 – 7:00 pm via ZOOM

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 and Julia Gingrich, Administrative Assistant – Rita Herrmann

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 opened with a prayer from the Church at Prayer by Julia
2. Approval of August 18 meeting minutes – Motion to approve made by Leonard and seconded by Leanne. Minutes for August minutes were approved unanimously with no amendments or changes.
3. Treasurer’s Report (John Nyce) - Giving through August was \$1,431.03 above the estimate to meet the budget. This is farther into the year than normal to have the budget receipts be above budgeted needs. The congregation is giving well in these unusual times. As you might expect, spending is below budget, but by more than normal at this point in the year-- by \$31,184.84. The September report will likely show giving below budget. Also spending will increase as the third quarter payments to benevolences will be made in September.
4. Annual review of Commission and PCRC by-Laws DUE in October (Laurie) – Every year, each commission is asked to review their purpose/description/duties as laid out in the church by-laws. Rita will send out an email to each commission chair with these descriptions. Each commission should review, discuss, and then bring back to next month’s board meeting, naming any needed revisions. Otherwise, they will stand as written for another year.
5. Worship during pandemic (Laurie) – The Executive Committee has discussed worship at 8th Street during the pandemic and based on the rate of infections in our county, feels that the best

plan is to continue to worship outside for as long as possible and to make future plans as it becomes necessary to do so.

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

a. Christian Education (Stacie Short)

- i. Sunday School teachers: The work of finding teachers for the winter and spring quarters continues in hopes of filling those positions ahead of time.
- ii. New Bibles: There will be a new Bible given to kindergartners starting this year. The Shine Bible contains pictures and simplified Bible stories that will be a good fit for this age group. Going forward, the Holy Bible (NRSV) will be given to third graders and The Message Bibles will continue to be given to sixth graders.
- iii. Storybook Trail: Planning is moving forward, gathering additional information including cost. More details will be shared as they become available.

b. Congregational Care (Betty Schrag)

- i. Visiting the 80+ aged members/attenders: With the pandemic, there has been less need for church visits as families seem to be checking in more frequently during COVID. The need for church connections is still an important one so the commission will continue to check on those who still desire visits.
- ii. Instant Church Directory: Eighth Street currently subscribes to Instant Church Directory which enables members and attenders to access directory information on a secure website and by smartphone/tablet application. Rita is connecting with Berkey Avenue Mennonite Church who have utilized Instant Church Directory since 2017. The member/attender information has been transferred already and could be available to the congregation within the next couple of months. One feature of Instant Church Directory is that members/attenders can upload their own photos and edit their information themselves. This would eliminate the need for scheduling a professional photographer during the pandemic. Someone could go to Waterford Crossing and Greencroft to help those individuals with their photos.

c. Fellowship (Jay Hostetler)

- i. Fellowship gathering: The previously discussed fellowship gathering for fall has been postponed for now. Alex Dugger has expressed an interest in having a fundraiser for the preschool that would involve him preparing and serving food in a carry-out manner. If the weather permits, attenders could gather outside as desired. More details on this will be coming as the planning continues.

d. Mission and Service (Brian Wiebe)

- i. Relief Sale Smoothie Booth: There will be no booth this year due to COVID concerns. In lieu of the funds that would have come from sales, 8th Street will give a gift of \$1,000 to MCC. In addition, there will be upcoming Shalom Gifts designated for MCC.
- ii. "Eighth Street Engaged": There is a plan to curate opportunities for engagement in the community, focusing on justice issues. This is something that anyone can participate in and will include working with groups such as: the Poor People's Campaign, Cosecha, Faith in Action and continuing work with Land

Acknowledgement. There will be a kick-off on Sunday, October 10th during Second Hour.

- iii. Invitation from Camp Friedenswald: The Hoosier Interfaith Power & Light group has drafted a letter to the state legislature and desires to have 8th Street sign (along with other groups) to encourage change in regard to climate concerns through the legislative process. A copy of this letter will be sent by email to Board members, along with a supportive motion from Mission & Service for review. Responses from the Board will be emailed to Laurie and further action will be taken as needed.

e. Stewardship (Leanne Schertz)

- i. Budget worksheets: Commissions will receive budget worksheets soon. There are currently no changes (increases or cuts) to proposed budgets. Instructions for review and deadlines will be included. All responses from commissions should go to Leanne.
- ii. Expected giving: There will be a letter going out to each family at 8th Street about expected giving for the coming year. The return deadline for responses from members/attenders will be November 5th.
- iii. Gift Discernment: On September 16th, an email reminder from Gift Discernment will go out to all members/attenders encouraging them to complete the nomination form with the hopes of generating a better response. Following the collection of nominations, commissions will receive the list of nominees for their commissions along with instructions.

f. Trustees (Mel Friesen)

- i. All Gender/Family Restrooms: The changes to the downstairs all gender/family restrooms are continuing. Two diaper changing stations were ordered, but only one was delivered. Mel is working to solve that problem.
- ii. Furnace replacement: The five church furnaces need replacement. This was confirmed by the last energy audit. Starting with the educational wing, Bill's Plumbing and Heating will work to replace these units as the preschool schedule allows, utilizing breaks in the fall and at Christmas. This is a large project and there are funds available in the budget to allow for this.
- iii. Outdoor church sign: The outdoor sign is deteriorating and needs replacement. The trustees would like the Board to affirm the current wording on the sign. A picture will be sent by email to Board members for review. Responses will be sent to Laurie so that further action can be taken.

g. Worship (Leonard Beechy)

- i. The series "Outside Our Walls" continues until October 3rd, ending with World Communion Sunday. Leonard, Julia, and Brenda met to discuss the next series which is tentatively titled "With Courage and Humility" and will use the foundation of 8th Street's vision and who we are: celebrating the image of God in all people, extending to our neighbor, and affirming our differences. This series could potentially go until Advent, knowing that at some point during that time worship may move back indoors.

7. Pastors' Reports

- a. Julia
 - i. On behalf of the Land Acknowledgement team, this has been a great month so far. Both pastors went as part of a group of twenty on the Trail of Death last Sunday. It was very moving to experience this in such a visual/physical way as opposed to just reading about it. A meaningful litany and response were given at each site. This Sunday will include a multigenerational Land Repair event that will include 8th Street youth and adults.
 - ii. Chandler Elementary: The relationship with Chandler has been more distant in the past year due to COVID and staff changes. Upcoming meetings will help reestablish connections. There is a possibility of 8th Street playing a role in a possible food pantry program at Chandler.
- b. Brenda
 - i. ZOOM services: Due to the pandemic, ZOOM funerals have become more commonplace, allowing people from all over to connect and remember their loved ones. Glendon Jantzi's service was this past week and the legacy he left of 33 years of facilitating Clinical Pastoral Education speaks for itself.
 - ii. Webinar invitation: The Brethren Mennonite Conference occasionally sends invitations to webinar training events that pertain to the LGBTQ + community. One of the upcoming webinars, "Welcoming Gender Expansive Children" will focus on how to prepare congregations through training. This is a free webinar in two parts happening in the next two weeks. Both Congregational Care and Christian Education Commissions have been invited to attend. Any Board members wishing to attend, should contact Brenda.

8. Executive Session: Pastoral Evaluations

Next meeting: October 13, October 20, or October 27, 2021 – 7:00 pm – via Zoom – Board members should contact Laurie with date preference.