

First Mennonite Church Board Minutes – December 17, 2020

The meeting was held via Zoom and called to order at 7 p.m. by Chair Dorothy Zimmerman. Present were Dorothy Zimmerman, Barb Thimm, Lori Thimm, Mike Goossen, Erin VanderSchaaf, Jerry Reimer, Jim Ensz, Pastor Roger Neufeld Smith, Administrative Assistant Vicki Frerking, and guest Pam Kunzman. Bryan Heinz was absent. Devotions were led by Jerry Reimer.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. The **November meeting minutes** stand approved as presented.
2. **A technology report** was given by Pam Kunzman outlining short term and long term goals for video production of FMC services (**see Pam's attached report**)*. Currently the service is being streamed on face book live using personal cell phones. Pam was thanked for providing the information. * Mike Goossen moved to continue using cell phones to stream the service until this can be discussed further at the Annual meeting; seconded by Erin VanderSchaaf. Motion passed on voice vote.
3. **Schedule for speakers on Sunday's Roger is off:** Dorothy is working to fill these Sundays. Of note, AMBS has recorded messages that may be used.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **COVID 19 report:** Dorothy updated the board on the Corona Virus activity in Gage, Jefferson and Saline County. The community is showing a downward trend of infections. With this information, the board determined that it would be okay to begin meeting again in person in the sanctuary beginning December 20 with a mask mandate (in accordance with the Beatrice City Mask Mandate) and other safety precautions continuing. There will not be a service on Christmas Eve. There will be a Communion service on New Year's Eve. Cottage Prayer Group meetings will not be held. WMS will decide when they begin meeting again. Chair Dorothy will write a congregational letter informing the congregation of the changes.
2. **Annual Meeting:** It was determined that the Annual meeting will be held in person, meeting in the sanctuary with masks and other safety precautions in place. Members may also attend in the parking lot. Votes will be gathered from the parking lot.
3. **Annual Meeting Agenda Items:**
 - We will act on a recommendation from the Education Council: **Proposed Revision to the By-Laws regarding Adult and Youth Sunday School Superintendents:** The Education Council recommends that "the positions of Adult and Youth Sunday School Superintendents be dissolved, and the duties be absorbed by the Adult and Youth Resource Directors. These positions will be appointed by the Education Council."
 - **Everence Report** from Vern Jantzen.
 - Discussion on **options for long range broadcasting** of worship services. May include equipment upgrades.
 - **Pastoral Search Committee Report.**
4. **Administrative Assistant annual review/salary** discussion. Dorothy conducted a review with Vicki Frerking. The board recommended an increase in salary of \$1/hour effective December 1, 2020.
5. **The Property Tax Exemption** form was submitted to the county last week.

6. **The Gift and Service Fund offering** scheduled for Christmas Eve will be moved to New Year's Eve. Contributions to this fund may be sent to Lori Thimm.

Pastors Report: He is participating in presenting, with Pastor Tim of Beatrice Mennonite and Pastor Mary Beth Tuttle of Holmesville Church of the Brethren, a daily Advent message on face book.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mission, Peace and Service Council: No report.

Worship Council: Thank you to Vicki Hinz-Ensz for taking the children on a journey through Advent with Children's Stories. The new hymnals have not arrived due to a printing delay. There will be a launch event when they arrive.

Education Council: The Children's Christmas program has been cancelled. Children's Sunday School will not begin until February.

Building Committee: No report.

Central Treasurer's Report: The reports were distributed via email showing no major new expenses. *Vern Jantzen moved to approve the report; seconded by Jim Ensz. Motion passed by voice vote.

- **2021 Proposed Budget:** The Board examined the proposed 2021 budget and made suggestions and changes. *Jim Ensz moved to approve the proposed budget and present it to the congregation at the annual meeting for approval; seconded by Vern Jantzen. Motion passed on voice vote.

OTHER AGENDA ITEMS:

Don Jantzen has contacted Chair Zimmerman regarding **AgriUrban** funds. The fund has around \$6,000 in it. AgriUrban began with seed money from Western District Conference but was discontinued by WDC a number of years ago. The funds generated were to be for WDC, Bethel College and MCUSA. At the time AgriUrban ended, there was some thought of leaving the money here for local use. However, nothing has been done. The Church Board now recommends that Don disperse the fund giving WDC 50%, Bethel College 25%, and MC-USA 25%.

ADJOURNMENT: With no further business brought before the board, the meeting was adjourned and closed with prayer. The next meeting will be January 21, 2021 at 7 p.m. with both outgoing and incoming board members to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicki Frerking, Administrative Assistant

*Pam's attached report can be found on page 2 of the Annual Report.

Short-Term Goals:

1. Good quality video and audio for viewing church service on Facebook or YouTube
2. Good quality audio if listening on the radio

There are some variables that need to be considered:

1. Internet service provider and the circuit or plan you have purchased: FMC recently upgraded their plan to 10 MBs of bandwidth. This appears to have helped. If we stream with a higher quality camera, this may not be enough.
2. How you are connected to the internet: The best connection is direct connect to the LAN with an RJ45 cable. Second best is Wi-fi, and the third best is cellular connection.

When Dan uses his phone to stream the service he is connected to the church Wi-fi. Rodney wasn't sure if he was on cellular or wi-fi, but will make sure he is on wi-fi next time. Van uses his cellular connection and should use the Wi-fi.

3. Microphone issues: an external microphone helps a lot. Even the inexpensive ones work great. We must speak directly into the microphone and project our voices. Some of the feedback was that it was more difficult to hear higher pitched voices. Women should try to lower the pitch of their voices if possible.
4. If those who are doing the streaming don't want to use their personal cell phones, the church could consider buying a video camera that connects to the Wi-fi and stream the church service using that camera instead. The Mevo Start is a \$400 wi-fi camera that is advertised as being used in churches to cope with the COVID-19 situations. If we plan to continue streaming our service, we may want to invest in a more expensive camera, but this one could be used to verify if we have the bandwidth to stream at 1080p HD.

Long-Term Goals:

1. Good quality video and audio for viewing church service on Facebook or YouTube
2. Good quality audio if listening on the radio
3. Option for projecting service to the basement for overflow seating
4. Streamline our process for duplication of DVDs and eliminating duplicate work

Nick from the Computer Doctor is researching video cameras and will be happy to consult for us. If the Diller church has a video camera that works well, we should check that out. Now days video cameras will zoom in or focus on the person who is speaking. It would be nice to have a camera that can connect to the sound board and connect to the Wi-fi for internet access. The same camera we use to stream will also burn the DVD from the same video feed.

If we have a connection to a smart TV in the basement, we could use the basement for overflow seating for large funerals and other events.

We may also want to reconsider where the camera is positioned. Do we want it at the front of the church so that we can see who in the congregation is speaking during sharing time? Do you want the camera to be able to focus on the children during children's time? (maybe not?)

If a higher end camera is purchased, we will want to first verify the bandwidth needs for streaming higher resolution video and make sure Diode has that available to us.