Leadership Group Minutes
Assembly Mennonite Church
January 7, 2025 @ 7:00pm

Present: Tom Kauffman, John Blosser, Moriah Hurst, Trevor Daugherty, Anna McVay, Anna Yoder Schlabach, Cheryl Shreiner, Karl Shelly, Ben Sywulka, Scott Coulter, Maeve Smucker (taking minutes)
Not present: Sara Morris

Opening

1. Opening - Tom
2. December 3, 2024 Leadership Group Minutes - Sara (*Attached*)
    a. **Minutes were approved.**
3. December 15, 2024 Congregational Meeting Minutes - Sara (*Attached*)
    a. Some discussion of a new name for the Member's Needs Fund. Scott suggested "Participant's Mutual Aid Fund." **Minutes amended and approved.**

Discussion/Action

4. Revisit 2025 Spending Plan - Sara
    a. Student Aid - Ben
        i. Ben Sywulka is meeting with folks in the Advisory Committee and the congregation to determine options for an interim policy and a long-term policy.
        ii. At the next congregational meeting, Ben suggested presenting the history of the current policy, the congregational survey results, and the current student aid policy. Cheryl suggested including information about how other churches navigate student aid. **Ben will have the presentation ready for the January congregational meeting.** Additional congregational meetings would be needed to test for consensus, meaning final approval of the interim student aid policy would likely not happen before March 2025.
    b. ART budget requests (Scott or Karl follow up with ART)
        i. Advocacy and Repair Team had asked Finance Committee and Leadership Group to consider donating $2000 for extra honorariums for the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery. Scott suggested adding a line item to the spending plan for the honorariums, with the final amount to be discussed with Finance Committee and the congregation. **Leadership Group suggests a line item of $1000 annually as a starting point for this conversation.**
    c. Solar Expansion (*Attachment from Glenn)* - Sara/Scott
        i. Will keep Glenn's original proposal on the table to discuss at a later time.
        ii. Green Team will bring a proposal regarding net zero to Leadership Group this spring.

d. Revisit building use rates *(LG Minutes 2024-05-07)* - Scott
    i. Current rental policy does not have half-day rates and has not been adjusted for inflation. **The motion was approved.**

5. Pastoral Housing Allowance (attachment; *see lines 33-35*) - Sara
    a. *Motion: "Pastors may designate up to 100% of their 2025 salary as housing allowance*"
    b. ***Trevor Daugherty moved to approve; John Blosser seconded. Motion was passed.***
6. Next Congregational Meeting Agenda - Sara and Scott
    a. January 19, 2025
        i. Proposed agenda: Student Aid, Participants' Mutual Aid Fund, and the spending plan. Will have a Zoom option available.

Creative Session

7. Leadership Group Elder Evaluation (in preparation for 2025 Leader Selection Process) - Ben
    a. Ben led the group in a brainstorming session to identify challenges in the coming three years, skills needed to combat them, what skills will be missing when Cheryl Shreiner and Sara Morris are no longer on Leadership Group, and what Leadership Group wants to ask the congregation for regarding elder selection/nomination.
    b. Upcoming Challenges
        i. School support
        ii. Aging congregation
            1. Volunteering
            2. Information/knowledge
        iii. Navigating institutional change
            1. New people
            2. Fewer volunteers
            3. Getting to know new people
            4. Ownership
        iv. Safe Church policy
            1. Congregational buy-in
        v. Non-pastoral staffing
        vi. World under Trump
    c. Skills Needed to Navigate Challenges
        i. Training and educating the congregation
        ii. Legal-ese, HR, documents, and best practices
        iii. Deep listening
        iv. Trusted by congregation
        v. Vision for church and be a community
        vi. Weigh in to conflict with courage
        vii. Intergenerational connections

viii. Education
ix. Creative problem solving
x. Follow through

d. <u>What Will be Missing</u>
   i. Parent of youth/MYF
   ii. Optimism, enthusiastic energy, and appreciation for people
   iii. Getting things done/follow through
   iv. Not a man
   v. Pragmatism
   vi. Conflict resolution
   vii. Elder involvement/matrix
   viii. Non-Mennonite upbringing
e. <u>Asking For</u>
   i. Isn't afraid to speak out
   ii. Not a man
   iii. 50-65 years old
   iv. Parent or caregiver of JYF/MYF
   v. Bandwidth to do more than LG
      1. Tackle problems and get things done
   vi. Conflict resolution
   vii. Mature faith, energy for healthy functioning of the church, and vision for being a community
   viii. Experience in the congregation
f. <u>Suggestion to small groups about Leadership Group selection</u>: Please keep in mind that when we have asked women/not men to join Leadership Group, many have turned it down because they are in other roles and were unable to commit. Please nominate these folks anyway as we may ask them to step down from their volunteer role to join Leadership Group.

Information/Reporting

8. GMP Sign Update - Tom
   a. Goshen Montessori Preschool has requested being able to put up a wooden sign outside the building. When exploring this with the office, it appears we will need to make a request to the city given that we have met our allotted "signage quota" already. Does Leadership Group support proceeding with next steps of AMC Office Staff looking into this, with Chris Stump, Goshen Montessori Business Director, as the GMP contact for additional support/questions?

i. Leadership Group affirms the necessity of a sign for Goshen Montessori Preschool, and suggests not having the AMC office staff coordinate this. **Scott will touch base with Chris Stump.**

9. January Second Hours - Verbal Update from Anna and Cheryl
10. Church Retreat 2024 Report (*Attachment)* - Scott
    a. Discussion tabled for the moment.
11. Small Group Steering Committee Update - Sara
    a. Update from Rod Hanby: "We thought after the mini shuffle we are starting now we would see how it goes and then decide if we would want to do it permanently or not. Of course if leadership group has any ideas. I plan on making another announcement this Sunday about the mini shuffle as well."
12. Pastors' Reporting (*Attachment)*

Closing

14. Prayer for the Congregation - Scott

Executive Session

Next Congregational Meeting: January 19, 2025 at 7pm at the meetinghouse
Next Leadership Group Meeting: February 4, 2025

Minutes submitted by Maeve Smucker

Future Agenda

-Solar Expansion Project, Funding
-Job description updates for office staff
-Leadership Group Self-Evaluation (follow up from PCR Recommendations)
-Goals from Apr 23 LG Retreat: (1.Fostering internal community, 2. Involving the congregation in decision making, 3.Supporting the outside community)
-Recommendations from Pastor-Congregation Review:
    *Vision for the next 3-5 years
    *Review LG role and structure - more needs to be done here, in terms of LG self-evaluation
-Review Hospitality Goals
-Spring Retreat
-School Support
-LGBTQ+ Reparations
-Dismantling Patriarchy (ongoing work, follow up from 2022 Oct retreat)
-Impacts/Influences of COVID
-Fostering Emotional Connection
-Welcome Statement