Assembly Mennonite Church Congregational Meeting Minutes

April 22, 2025

Minutes Taken by Jeannette Hughes

Glenn Gilbert: Financial Update

Handout: 2025 Budget Report (from: Dancy Hirschler, Treasurer)

2024 Surplus Proposal (First Reading)

Roughly $21,000 surplus from last year; proposal is that $9,000 of that money will be committed to tithe for building that was deferred. $4,000 will be applied to pay back loans members gave for building.

Sara Morris: Extra 2024 Compensation for Karl Shelly (from 2024 Surplus)

$8,064 from the 2024 surplus is also proposed to compensate Karl for all the extra time he has spent in the past year. (Handout) He served on the pastoral search committee, and he helped with pastoral team coverage while Scott was on sabbatical and Moriah had not yet started on the team. Karl has not asked for this, but the elders feel like it's good to compensate for all the extra hours he put in.

We want pastors to feel cared for and not overworked. This extra money is not setting a precedent, however. Bethany Swope also stepped in a lot during this transitional time. Other pastors are okay with this. Karl had more responsibilities than normal because he reduced his hours, and then life happened. Moving forward, Karl is at 0.4 FTE, while the other pastors are at 0.6 FTE.

Karl is also taking a sabbatical this May-August 2025; each of our pastors is eligible for a 3-month sabbatical every four years.

First Reading of Student Aid Policy Proposal: Ben Sywulka

We've been doing this since 1986, and it's changed many times.

Status quo will not return to what we currently have.

Proposal is to do an interim plan for one and a half years.

Meeting attendees filled out form to signify their support or lack thereof. If overall support was expressed, a second reading can be done, even with slight tweaks. If there still is not broad support, this will go back to leadership group, which would probably put this to a vote. Sara Morris emphasized, “It’s not ‘Get behind this or else.’”

Key Points from Ben Sywulka’s Presentation

Pastoral context: deep difference and deep emotions, values clash, we need to be called to grace, coming to consensus is challenging

We affirm public education, and we affirm Mennonite education (Bethany Christian Schools)

Answers to Questions

Money is for K–12 students in covenanted families, whether their kids or in public school, in private school, or are homeschooled. There could also be needs beyond Assembly, but an AMC sponsor would be necessary.

Student aid committee will have a lot of work. They don’t want the responsibility of finding grant recipients, but anyone in the congregation is welcome to do homework and communication with teachers/schools and to bring requests to the committee on teachers/schools behalf.

Committee will consider a cap as to how much a teacher/staff person can request.

Bethany Christian Schools emails Assembly every January to see what commitment is, but we don’t pay BCS until August. If pledges don’t come through, Assembly is still committed to that number. Larry Gautsche said that Assembly does have a 5 percent reserve fund it could use to give a little bit of grace.

Conflict

Ben Sywulka: We have done our best to listen to all voices. Four people left the committee for various reasons..

Somebody needs to lead conversations beyond the interim plan, but it won’t be the existing committee.

minutes approved by Leadership Group 5.7.25