Leadership Group Minutes
Assembly Mennonite Church
September 16, 2025 @ 7:00pm

Present: Trevor Daugherty, Moriah Hurst, Tom Kauffman (chair), Kathy Meyer Reimer, Anna Yoder Schlabach, Scott Coulter, Karl Shelly, Lisa Kauffman, John Blosser, Ben Sywulka, Lynn Diener (taking minutes)

Opening

1. Opening - Tom Kauffman opened the meeting with a devotional reflecting on the Trinity, using the icon of Andrei Rublev's *Trinity*, noting we work best when everyone's wisdom and voice are valued. It's the holy work and sacred privilege to do this work together.

2. Please note the schedule for doing the opening & bringing snacks.

3. May 5, 2025 Leadership Group Minutes - Tom
    a. **Minutes were approved.**
4. May 18, 2025 Congregational Meeting Minutes -Tom
    a. **Minutes were approved with minor corrections.**

Discussion/Action

5. MYF Coordinator Job Description Changes- Bethany Swope.
    a. Bethany noted we'd had a two-year experimental revision of the MYF Coordinator position, prompted by difficulty recruiting new leaders, role overload, and lack of coordinator support or overlap. Now that that time has passed, it's time for a more permanent revision of the job description.
    b. Changes:
        i. Remove weekly teaching requirement: shift Sunday School teaching responsibility to regular CE/SS teaching, allow Coordinators to focus on relationship, event planning, and overall support.
        ii. Reintegrate Coordinators with Christian Ed/Sunday School Committee: To prevent coordinators becoming isolated or "siloed."
        iii. Clarification and division of roles: allow for skill set splitting (e.g., event planning, communication, facilitation, parental engagement).
        iv. Increase parent communication: Regular meetings and touch-points with parents.
        v. Safe Church Policy Updates: background check and child safety language.
        vi. Incorporate baptism education: Begin regular, Sunday School series led by pastoral team, rather than opt-in only.
        vii. Pastoral Team "Class Sponsors": Each pastor assigned to a class to provide ongoing relationships and yearly check-ins with youth.

viii. Minimize burnout by expanding coordinator tenure beyond traditional two-year cycles.This aligns with SafeChurch practices, too, if staggered.

c. Not ready for formal approval; intention to finalize and approve by end of 2025 for Spring 2026 hiring. Potentially need two readings and congregational approval since it's a paid staff role.

6. Treasurer Transition Plan- Scott

a. Dancy Hirschler has made significant improvements in her position as treasurer, but is ready to complete her term by the end of this calendar year.
b. Dennis Landis will fill the budget preparation portion of the role, with some other tasks distributed to the Finance Committee, and the office administrator, ensuring overlap and coverage of responsibilities. Finding one person to replace what Dancy was doing proved too difficult.
c. Currently the offering manager & treasurer are still unpaid positions.
d. Affirmation from the Leadership Group to keep moving in that direction.

7. Budget Build Process- Scott

a. Committees are currently submitting aspirational budgets.
b. Finance Committee collects, creates an aspirational budget informed by requests, then presents It to the congregation for pledges in late October/early November.
c. Actual budget drafted in January once pledges are in, with congregational approval in February.
d. Leadership Group Budget: a review of the specific line items e.g., conferences ($3,000), mutual aid ($8,000), mission support ($1,000), office supplies, photocopying, childcare, sabbatical coverage, new equipment, etc.
e. Currently, we have 4 pastors and there's an expectation of 1 pastor being on sabbatical per summer, though because of when Moriah started as pastor, that won't happen this year. And for Moriah, a summer sabbatical feels difficult to cover because of her role. So she'd likely take a winter sabbatical. This means in 2026 there would likely be no summer sabbaticals.
f. When considering the Sabbatical line- Discussed the merit of a rolling reserve fund versus a one-year budget line; consensus to propose creation of a modest rolling reserve (possibly 1% of pastoral salaries) for emergencies, with the Finance Committee to formalize the approach. (**Scott will communicate to Finance**)

8. Solar Panel Report- Glenn Gilbert & Maynard Miller

a. There is support for the expansion of the church's solar panels, leveraging external funding (MC USA grant, federal funds) to cover two-thirds of the project, with $4,800 left to raise.
b. Using a multi-pronged fundraising- soliciting congregational donations, reaching out to EV users, and exploring the possibility use of surplus building reserve funds- it feels like

the $4800 can be covered. Thinking about a 30-day focused fundraising campaign before the pledge drive for the budget begins.

c. Glenn will proceed with the contract. If funds are needed up front, Glenn will talk with the treasurer about floating funds from the general fund to cover it until the grants and contributions are in.
d. Possibly getting an announcement out this week & maybe some discussion during the congregational meeting on Sunday, September 21.

9. Raising GMP giving from General Fund — Tom

a. GMP uses the church building under Assembly's nonprofit "umbrella." Previously required no direct funding, but market and funding changes have left GMP seeking increased support from AMC.
b. Clarification about how support for GMP relates to support for other ministries, especially those serving marginalized populations is wanted. GMP primarily serves families able to pay, though some need scholarships; comparisons drawn to other congregations' preschool models. Though this is shifting.
c. Question of whether to fully/partially waive rent, increase AMC subsidy, or restructure partnership. Perhaps have GMP leadership present their current financial situation, ministry scope, and needs to the congregation during a second hour (target: October 19)?
d. Other decisions:
    i. Affirmation for a trial of Soccer Shots. If it isn't a match after this season, it doesn't need to happen again.
    ii. Removable cameras (ones that can be easily taken down) are recommended, to be put up and taken down by GMP on a weekly basis, and only used while school is in session. This is for the hall where the mailboxes are and MP space.

10. Subcommittees:

a. Building Use Subcommittee- An entity to relate to those who use the space (like GMP) and could help work through those conversations and agreements so that LG doesn't have to do that work, which has been more significant lately. This would address ongoing building use questions, reduce burden on staff (esp. Scott), and foster greater engagement, consistency, and timely decision-making regarding facility priorities. Recommending a pastor, elder, finance rep,a representative from Christian Ed, and a congregational member (chosen by the LSC). This would align with what GMP has been asking for, too.
b. Building Tithe Subcommittee- to decide how to disperse this year's tithe — Scott

i. Formation of a short-term, ad hoc subcommittee (including Scott, an elder and Finance Chair) to recommend where the tithe should go. Ben Sywulka volunteered to serve. **Scott will call the meeting.**

11. Agenda for Congregational Meeting, Sep 21:

Myf job coordinator spot
Solar expansion project
Safechurch update on where things are at/preview

It'll be a Zoom meeting- only 30 min

Information/Reporting

1. SafeChurch update- Moriah
    a. Draft of policy has been reviewed up to page 9; integrating previous work with best practices and Safe Church templates.
    b. Still in progress:
        i. "Approved Adult" Status: Centralized background check, application, and training process; list maintained by office/admin. All adults regularly working with youth/children to complete a one-time 3-hour training (possibly coordinated area-wide). Then annually a 1 yr training on another area of SafeChurch (that's churchwide).
        ii. Background check every 10 years or on return after 1+ year away.
        iii. Ongoing annual education for both children and the whole church (e.g., online safety, boundaries).
        iv. Rethinking "ice cream visits" and best practices for 1:1 adult/youth interactions.
        v. Only adults over 21 can serve in child/youth positions.
        vi. Goal for policy and implementation to be in place for fall of the next school year.
        vii. Collaborating with CDC, MC USA, and local partners moving toward more uniform, streamlined policies.
        viii. There will be ongoing updates and eventual congregational approval will be needed.
2. Reparations Summit- Karl Shelly
    a. November 15, 2025, at Assembly. Speaker will be Dr. Drew Hart, to expand conversation about reparations, repentance, and repair among regional Mennonite congregations; build on prior Assembly efforts and connect with national energy. Event is free, includes lunch, will involve Assembly volunteers for hospitality and tech; Drew will do a Sunday sermon at 8th Street Mennonite.
    b. Next steps: Promotion through church communications underway. Grant support being sought for speaker expenses.

3. Pastoral reports

Karl: Sabbatical summary; extensive report already circulated. Reiterated the importance of and gratitude for structured sabbatical time.

Moriah: To note- Moriah didn't have May on hers. Summer focused on Christian Education, bible school, camp pastoring, and intense pastoral care; fostered connections within the congregation and broader community; the summer was full but life-giving.

Anna: Slower summer, attended MennoCon and Women's Summit, contributed to Bible resources, benefitted from slower rhythm before busy fall.

Scott: Noted both rest and other projects (e.g., safety marshal training, classwork); expressed gratitude for downtime and the importance of maintaining family/garden-life balance.

Prayer for the Congregation - Scott

Bob smith - words for worship

Executive Session (without Lynn & Pastoral Team)

Conversation with pastors about current FTE and how it is working — Tom

Upcoming Meetings

Congregational Meeting – September 21, 2025 @ 7pm

Leadership Group — October 7, 2025 @ 7pm

Noted that Moriah will be absent at the next meeting due to travel & John Blosser will be unable to attend.

Future Agenda

Minutes submitted by Lynn Diener