

April 19, 2015  
WPMF Church Council Meeting

Present: Lorie Hershey., Alex Bauman, Brooke Blough, Bryan Geib, Reuben Wetherbee, Laurie Callan, Ken Beidler, Mark Michalovic

- Bryan Geib led in a word of prayer.
- Alex outlined goals for our meeting time: review feedback/priorities from March congregational visioning time. Focus on next steps based on visioning not generating new ideas. No decisions are being made today.
- Spent a few minutes reviewing notes/summary that Lorie put together from March congregational meeting. Notes included top ideas generated for the three areas: outreach/community Involvement, Youth and Children's Ministry and Faith Formation.
- Lorie asked us to reflect on: **What stood out to you about the meeting?**  
**Where was the energy in the group?**
  - Building relationships was a theme in all three areas.
  - Relational work is intense, takes time. Question: Does having 1 year volunteer positions in many of these areas address the goals/needs we identified?
  - There is a lot of overlap in the three areas. For example, church youth group might be a way to reach out to youth in our neighborhood who are looking for a place to connect/belong.
  - Heard a focus in larger group discussion (after small group gatherings) about youth and their needs.
  - Tension in the community/outreach group between starting something new and partnering with groups in our community that are already doing some of the things we want to do.
  - Heard a balance between new ideas about reaching out to others and also creating a culture/environment at church that is hospitable.
  - Youth and Children's Ministry Group focused on practical things that people thought could be implemented, more solution oriented, "responsibility" more than dreaming.
- Lorie invited us to take some time for silent reflection on our own to focus on the question: **In light of the congregational meeting, where do we see God at work in our congregation in the next 2-3 years?**
  - Create an educational curriculum for youth that welcomes faith investigations/questions. We have done some of this in this past but its been topic focused. Need a structure, equipping for teachers, continuity from year to year that does not depend on any one volunteer. Curriculum would include overview of biblical story and Mennonite history/identity.
  - Need for a youth forum/coordination group made up of people involved in different aspect of youth faith formation: youth S.S. teachers, youth sponsors, pastoral team members, mentor coordinator.

This group might meet quarterly to coordinate, equip volunteers and create a structure of youth program.

- A strength of our congregation is intergenerational relationships. Look at ways to coordinate and plan more intergenerational activities and use these relationships in faith formation.
- A next step for outreach and community area would be to create a task group that would gather information. What does our community actually need? Talk to community groups/partners like POWER congregations in our area (Sweet Union and others) to find out how what we can be involved with.
- Continue our recent focus on sexuality. Inclusion of LGBTQ, working against sexual violence and promoting understandings of healthy sexuality in our congregation.
- Look at organizational structures of the church. Are there ways that we can simplify what we do so that we can focus more on the priorities/new directions that the congregation identified in the visioning meeting.

#### **Steps moving forward:**

Identified 3 areas to continue to work on in the next months. We will present these ideas to the church council at our next meeting on Wed. May 13 for feedback and approval.

After Council approval Alex B., as chair of Church Council, would present to the congregation on a Sunday morning in May. The three areas for further investigation are:

- **Analysis of our Organizational Structure to identify ways to simply, better coordinate resources and organize around our congregational goals.** *Alex will do some research about the possibility of having an outside consultant come and help us look at this area.*
- **Explore the possibility of planning a series of intergenerational community projects.** *Mark will bring this idea to the outreach group he is coordinating for initial feedback and to generate ideas for groups that we might contact to help us plan these projects.*
- **Continue to explore setting up a Youth Formation Coordination Group.** *The Pastoral Team (Lorie H. and elders) will take the lead to continue developing this idea and set up a possible structure/meeting for the future.*

Minutes taken by: Ken Beidler