

West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship  
Church Council Meeting ó 11/13/14, 7:00 pm  
Meeting Minutes

All in Attendance:

Bryan Geib (deacon), Alex Esh Bouwman (deacon), Brooke Blough (deacon), Tim Martin Johnson (HRC), Reuben Wetherbee (HRC), Brenda Rich (Elder), Ken Beidler (Elder), Lorie Hershey (Pastor), Dorianna Lordi (Administrative Assistant)

All in Absentia:

Mark Michalovic (Elder), Laurie Callan, (Elder), Emily Leischner (HRC)

I. Minutes from September 11, 2014 meeting approved via email

II. HRC Items:

- a. Lorie's Sabbatical moved from 2015 to 2016

III. Misc. Items:

- a. Website
  - Showed council Website and logo draft
  - Website will be completed this year to stay on budget for 2014

IV. Deacons Items:

- a. Budget
  - 3.8% increase
  - Factored in world conference for youth and Lorie's health care
  - Received about 30 responses from survey monkey

V. Pastoral Team Items:

- a. Hosting new attenders group in January, February or March
  - Lorie asked Council members to host to get to know new people
  - There are several new attenders and group is going well
- b. Congregational needs and staffing
  - Lorie shared notes from pastoral teams discussion and Hannah's research (See attached Addendum)
    - Lots of engagement and participation from new attenders
    - Discussed building limitations
    - Reviewed attendance from 2011 - present, 2014 average is 92
    - Discussed staffing options in past and history of how WPMF has dealt with growth
    - Attendance stayed consistent through decision to become welcoming
    - Trying to also focus on what's next, not just what now
  - Lorie has a lot on her plate, it is becoming difficult to reach everyone
  - Lorie reflected on where her time is spent, noticing less time to spend on pastoral care
  - Elders are going to have one elder be the hub for outreach

- Plan to have World cafe/Congregational discussion in Spring 2015
- Formed committee (Brooke, Lorie, Ken, and Tim) to decide 3 firm questions to ask congregation during World cafe
- Jennifer Erickson Morales from Franconia Conference can help with questions and is willing to facilitate congregational discussion

VI. Next meeting will be Thursday, February 12 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm

Meeting minutes recorded by Dorianna Lordi

### **Addendum:**

#### **Notes from Pastoral Team's Discussion of Church Size and Growth 2014**

In Hanna Heishman's research around church size, function and growth, she listed several signs that indicate a church is growing and reminded us that **growth is more than numbers:**

- increased opportunities for participation in church life, including for new attenders and members to commit and share their gifts
  - variety of preachers,
  - new members/attenders sharing gifts and getting involved, i.e., Brooke, as new member, worship leading on 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sunday; Nick and Dorianna leading Bible study small group; Tim, Sarah, and Debby joining worship committee
- more engagement between the congregation and other institutions
  - POWER
  - Hosting MCC Festival
  - Calvary building users' more relationships than previous (may not be looking for this, but happens to be our reality)
- development of healthy internal organizational structures
  - new role for ushers as needed for care of individual and community
- not being able to recognize every face one sees at church on a given Sunday, feels uncomfortable or awkward as congregation moves from family-size to larger size
- pushing against the limitations of a congregation's physical building.

### **Other observations about a growing congregation:**

- Some who have been members longer may resent losing power in the growing congregation, while others will be less comfortable with unfamiliar faces in the congregation.
- Assimilation of new members especially important, as not everyone will be drawn in by relationship as in past with smaller church size
- The role of the pastor often changes from being one of a shepherd to one of an administrator.
- Dynamics change: in small churches, policy is decided by many and ministry done by few. Larger churches, ministry is done by many, and policy is decided by few.
- The role of small groups in providing places for intimacy may become more important as the Sunday services become less intimate.
- Dialogue about growth can be a hurdle. Differing ideas about how big a church should be, losing personal contact, etc.
- Trend is to hire a second credentialed pastor, but could also hire a layperson (counselor, overseer of small groups, supervisor of certain programs)
- Focus tends to be either on internal care/programming, or on outreach/community

#### **Additional Discussion related to WPMF:**

- How did WPMF deal with the challenges of growth in years past? What's the biggest our church has ever been? How did we operate then? What type of pastor? (more administrative, outward focused, organizationally focused?)
- After having two services, why did we go back to one service? (decrease in numbers? congregational feedback around 2 services?)
- The growth in the congregation may not be so much numerical growth but spiritual growth. The attendance numbers have been steady, but a higher proportion of regular attenders are becoming involved and taking on responsibilities in the congregation.
- There is a lot of talent and human potential in our congregation that can be harnessed and put to use.
- We as a congregation can prepare for growth, whatever the nature of that growth may be, by anticipating staffing needs and filling them ahead of time.
- What type of growth are we striving for? Are we striving for growth, or is it a by-product?
- What's our vision and then how do we get there? Beyond just hiring
- What are our values? What is it that we want to maintain as we grow?