

Bahia Vista Mennonite Church  
**Overseers Update to the Congregation**  
February 24, 2013

1. The Overseers met on Tuesday, February 19, 2013.
2. Treasurer Beth Ebersole presented the January 31, 2013 financial report.
3. The newly appointed Finance Committee includes Beth Ebersole, Treasurer; Gene Yoder, Administrator; Galen Swope, Bookkeeper; Jerome Yoder, Overseer; Lonnie Rychener, Congregational Representative.
4. The SCS Tuition Program fundraising efforts are being closely monitored to ensure that the fundraising goal is met.
5. Pastoral Report: Pastor Roger Shenk

The stories I hear and tell these days are of smiles and affirmations: “We love what’s going on here!” “We affirm what Bahia Vista is doing!” “We feel so at home here!” “Keep preaching the word.”

I hear stories of how people have found new joy and life in their relationship with God. People are praying with greater boldness and God is answering their prayers. Our Bahia Vista family is taking care of its own in spectacular ways. New people are coming in and feeling inspired to follow Jesus their very first Sunday here. People who have been here for some time are deciding that it’s time to become members here. People are returning. Young adults are finding meaningful friendship! I hear stories about *Change for a Dollar*, and service projects, and how meaningful this *21 Days of Prayer* emphasis has been!

In my prayer times I hear God saying: “Stay the course. Do the things that only you all can do, and let me do the things that only I can do. Ask, expect and work boldly toward the accomplishment of the mission I’ve called you to.”

God is with us. So we continue to focus our attention on *inviting people into friendship with Jesus and his Church* by *including* them in our inner circle of friends, by *inspiring* them with the hope of the Gospel, and by *involving* them in meaningful ministry.

As we pursue this mission, it continues to be my conviction that we won’t have any sustainable effectiveness without prioritizing our local relationships. We have lost ground here in the past, and are working hard to make it up. In the winter months many come into our community. Some are what could be considered “seasonally local,” and many are visiting for a shorter time. Because of this, we triple and quadruple in size for just a few months each year. As I keep saying, the energy our winter friends bring is such a gift and pleasure for our congregation. But it’s also a logistical challenge that has the power to disrupt local relationships if we don’t manage it well.

Our challenge each winter is to figure out how to accommodate our winter friends without making our local friends feel displaced, and to honor our local friends without making our winter friends feel unwelcomed. The decisions of the past have not been effective for many of our local people, so this year we took a different approach, and asked our winter friends to find a spot in one of our services. I wanted to send a clear message to our local people that they are not “off-season” for us—that they are clearly a year-round priority in all our decisions. And I’m pleased with how our winter friends have helped so joyfully in that.

We need to remain resolute about reestablishing Bahia Vista as a viable, self-sustaining, thriving local church. We need to keep repurposing our ministries around the goal of reaching as many unchurched people as we can, and bringing them into lasting friendship with Jesus and his Church. This serves our entire mission of *befriending*. In it we will thrive, and from it we will be made new. So it's to this end that we must pray and work with diligence and urgency—the Lord is near!

## **COMMUNITY**

- We are beginning a “Meet and Greet Pastor Roger” following the Family Service starting March 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- With Dave Kniss’s retirement as Minister of Visitation, all visitation activities are being directed by Shirley and conducted by a team of volunteers, Carolyn Stoll, and members of the Pastoral Team.
- Shirley and Carolyn Stoll attended Mennonite Health Service assembly in Orlando this past week.

## **WORSHIP**

- Our Family Worship service has shifted to a more contemporary format to ensure a stronger connection for our younger and newer people.
- We kept a careful eye on the rising attendance through January, and decided to keep our two-service schedule through the winter season.
- Our February OneConcert set records with 36 musicians on stage and 226 in attendance.

## **SERVICE**

- We had a work day at Pine Ridge February 2<sup>nd</sup>, with 26 volunteers
- Will be serving Ice Cream at Salvation Army on February 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- We are planning a work day for Iglesia Menonita Arca De Salvacion, in Ft. Myers, to help prepare their facility for an Easter grand opening.
- BV Community Builders is becoming a 501(c)3. They are hoping to have the Meadows house back on the market by the end of March. While technically not a Bahia Vista investment, all profits are designated for Bahia Vista, so we are promoting this as a venue for volunteer service at Bahia Vista.

## **CHILDREN**

- The kids start the Eggucation fundraiser next week and will be more involved this year.
- We're preparing for an Easter Egg Hunt on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Saturday before Easter weekend.
- We are planning for VBS this summer.
- Kayla took a field trip to Bayside Community Church to see how they do children’s ministry.

## **YOUTH**

- Zack and staff put together a committee of Juniors and Seniors to plan and promote their events.
- They are working to offer a Monday night Bible study group for the students who want to take their faith a step further. They will focus Wednesday on reaching new and unchurched students.
- Eleven students plan to attend the Mennonite Church USA conference in Phoenix this summer.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

- Treva is retiring the end of March. A retirement party is planned for Sunday March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2-4 PM.

Nancy I. Yoder, Chair  
Nancy B. Yoder, Secretary

