

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

1. The Overseers met on Tuesday, March 19, 2013.
2. Pastoral Report: Pastor Roger Shenk

We are beginning a series on Peace that focuses on how to be at peace with God, self and others. Please pray for me “that the message of the Lord would spread rapidly and be honored.” (2 Thessalonians 3:1)

This time of year we celebrate Easter as the core event of our faith. As a church on a mission, we also recognize that it is a focal event of our outreach. I believe Bahia Vista has something very attractive and helpful to offer people who don't currently have a church family so we are working to make Easter a very inviting event. We are mailing a postcard to people within a one-mile radius of the church. We are also running an ad in The Observer. But personal invitations are always the best, so we are making cards available that we can all use to invite our family and friends who aren't connected to church. Easter is still a time when many unchurched people are inclined to accept a personal invitation.

We continue to attract local residents to our congregation, and each week we are excited to see people return. This is a key to our mission at Bahia Vista as we help people find lasting friendship with Jesus and his Church. We are working hard and prayerfully to help them feel included, inspired and involved. To that end, on March 1st we introduced a weekly “Meet Pastor Roger” event after each Family Service where new people can make an immediate personal connection. The goal is for that connection to expand to other friendships within the church. We will continue to evaluate how best to facilitate this.

The winter crowds continue to reveal how much our facilities need updating. But we have done a better job of managing our crowds this winter season. I have heard fewer complaints about not being able to find a parking spot or about feeling like the crowds were hard to navigate. And I'm especially pleased to note that we accomplished this while setting a thirteen-year attendance record of 1310 people (February 24th) along with two other week-for-week attendance records (1st and 2nd weeks of January). I'm praising God for his favor on Bahia Vista.

I'm encouraged by how many people spend vacation time in one of our church services. I continue to hear from people that their experience here is inspiring to them. Vacationers are a privilege that beautiful Sarasota affords us and I want to be a good steward of that influence. Likewise, as we begin to see the first of our winter friends return to the North I'm reminded of the privilege Bahia Vista has in sending people home with a blessing. My prayer is that the message and hope of Jesus—as we are attempting to live it here—will be carried and expanded and enhanced wherever its influence reaches.

I continue to pray my own paraphrase of the believers' prayer as recorded in Acts 4:29-30 and I invite you to pray it regularly with me: *Lord, consider the threats and obstacles that stand in our way. Enable us to speak and live your word boldly. Stretch out your hand to heal and to perform signs and wonders in the name of Jesus. May we see it here in our life time, for your glory. Amen.*

COMMUNITY

- Our Community Classes continue to meet throughout the week, with a couple new women's studies being introduced recently with about twenty-five women attending. Our young adult groups continue to meet every Thursday evening at two locations for two different studies.
- We will be bringing a couple individuals and one family into membership soon.
- Our Visitation Team continues to visit our members who are experiencing need.
- Our winter resident's class was very successful this year, most likely fed by the decision to have one Traditions service.

WORSHIP

- Our winter attendance distribution between the two services has fluctuated, ranging from 68% Traditions and 32% Family to 58% Traditions and 42% Family.
- We are trying to move away from “high church” language such as “Holy Week” and “Maundy Thursday” in favor of language that needs less explanation. We will offer our regular “Easter Week” programming but are positioning the Sunday worship services as our primary focus since it is when we can expect the most people.
- We are forming a planning team to bring contemporary Christian concerts to BVMC.
- We are working to strengthen our usher teams in both services as well as our various media teams.

SERVICE

- BV Community Builders now has its own 501c(3) status under the umbrella of Fuller Center, so that it does not have to pay capital gains and can direct more money toward Bahia Vista. They are trying to complete the remodeling of the house in the Meadows by the end of the month.
- We are hosting Family Promise the week beginning March 31 (Easter).
- We took a team of eleven to Iglesia Menonita Arca de Salvacion in Ft. Myers to help ready their new facilities for worship. We are in conversation with Marco Guete about making similar connections with other churches in our Southeast Mennonite Conference.
- We are continuing our contacts at Pine Ridge Mobile Home Park. The VP of the homeowners association is now attending our services on a regular basis.

CHILDREN

- Kayla Miller was affirmed as our new Children’s Minister on March 10. Kayla has chosen to brand the Children’s Ministry as "Little Eden: Discovering God's truth... From the beginning." Aesthetic changes are being made that help highlight our children’s programming: little painted footprints in the hall that lead to the children’s area, a painted title above the children’s courtyard, new bathroom décor, a painted tree on one of the walls in the corridor, and a more visible CM office that opens to the courtyard.
- For security reasons, we will soon start having parents pick up their children at the children’s area rather than the back of the sanctuary.

YOUTH

- Eleven students have signed up and paid deposits toward the biennial youth convention. A fund-raising meal for the MCUSA trip is being planned for April 7, and a silent auction fundraiser is being planned for March 31 – April 7.

ADMINISTRATION

- On March 3rd we had a Generosity Sunday emphasis. I didn’t set it up quite like I have in the past, and we received just over \$50K dollars toward our general budget. I am again aware of the competing invitations to generosity that we put in front of people this time of year. Some of it contributes to our budget, such as the \$7K received for Brad and Brenna Graber support, but the many requests and opportunities can create “donation fatigue.”
 - A fee structure has been presented to Charis Center for the monthly portion of the overall operations of BVMC.
 - February was a very busy month for facility usage.
3. An updated plan was presented by the Master Planning Committee (MPC) and was accepted by Overseers with the recommendation that the MPC continue to provide the leadership for moving the congregation forward in the planning process.

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