

Bahia Vista Mennonite Church  
**Overseers Update to the Congregation**  
April 21, 2013

1. The Overseers met on Tuesday, April 16, 2013.
2. Pastoral Report: Pastor Roger Shenk

As I pray for Bahia Vista and for Sarasota I want two things to be so true of us that we are known for it even in the unchurched community. When people think about Bahia Vista I want them to automatically think of a church that:

- 1) Loves Jesus.

Far above any other thing we appreciate or admire or stand for is a central and passionate love for Jesus. He is the Name above all other names, the Salvation above all other salvations, the Solution above all other solutions, the Purpose above all other purposes—Jesus is the Love above all other loves.

We must not shrink back from this identifying trait, that Jesus is our first love. If we don't have this love, anything else we have amounts to nothing. Any good we can do anywhere else will be most effective when we follow the "Most Effective One" out of a love that puts all on the line for him.

Then, because of our love for Jesus, my prayer is that we will be known for a second, nearly indistinguishable love. Jesus told us that the greatest command is to love God with everything we have. But then he said that the second greatest command is just like the first—to love our neighbors!

Loving God and loving our neighbors is inseparable! So, when people think about Bahia Vista, I want them to automatically think about a church that also:

- 2) Loves Sarasota.

The question that haunts me is this: If Bahia Vista went away, how long would it take for our neighbors to notice?

I've been doing some checking and there are over 40,000 households within a fifteen-minute drive from Bahia Vista. This number swells by probably 20% in the winter. We need to love on all these people so much that they feel absolutely loved on. If they can get to us in fifteen minutes we can get to them in fifteen minutes. What would make them feel loved? I'm sure that the most essential need is for them to be right with God through faith in Jesus. But I'm also sure that a gospel that doesn't "stretch out [God's] hand to heal and to perform signs and wonders in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:29) is not the gospel that makes people right with God.

Our love for Jesus will be seen in our love for those he loves. For Bahia Vista that means Sarasota. May God continue to make our love for Jesus and for Sarasota effectively inseparable as we befriend all with the love of Christ through community, worship and service.

#### COMMUNITY

- The majority of our winter residents have returned to the north. In the past month and a half over 700 people have returned north. I'm still amazed by this, but not surprised. We are working to create connection opportunities this summer to energize friendships and a sense of "ownership" at Bahia Vista.
- I announced last month that we are looking to host contemporary concerts. Since then we were able to confirm Sidewalk Prophets with Jason Castro who will be performing on May 18. This is a ticketed event and was figured into our 2013 budget.
- We received two members on April 14, one through baptism, and will be receiving five more the end of April. To date, since October 2009, we have baptized 25 persons and received 62 into membership. This is great; it needs to be more.
- Our community groups have slipped somewhat in attendance, partly reflecting the loss of winter residents, which helped to energize them. We are starting a new community group soon on marriage.

- There has been a shift in leadership for our Family Service ushering team. Larry is visionary direction while looking for a volunteer to invest in leading these teams. Colored polo shirts will soon be purchased to help people identify who is serving on any given week.

#### WORSHIP

- We set four attendance records during the first three months of this year. Attendance at our Easter worship services was 1,022 with an additional 175 at our sunrise service for a total Easter attendance of 1,197.
- We are one church with two cultures, which is most readily apparent in our varied forms and styles. We continue to celebrate the diversity of these two cultures by offering two styles of worship service. Our goal in each is to use the “language” of the culture to give expression to the “call and response” of the gospel, and so inspire faithfulness to Jesus Christ. We will continue throughout the summer to monitor the times and logistics of how we offer these services.
- Choir will conclude this month and is scheduled to resume again in the fall.

#### SERVICE

- Change for a Dollar continues to be a vital “compassion” that we offer our community. We are looking to more consistently tell those stories.
- Our friendship with Pine Ridge Mobile Home Park continues to grow.
- We hosted Family Promise the first week of this month.
- BV Community Builders held a dedication service for its house in the Meadows and is now in the selling process.

#### CHILDREN

- The Children raised \$4,134 for Orphans Know More through their Eggucation program.
- Planning for Vacation Bible School, July 22-26, is in full swing. It will be a “Christmas in July” theme called: Presence. We are recruiting volunteers and taking donations of decorations and other items.
- Wednesday night Kids Club is meeting around a revolving three-week theme of Community, Worship and Service, where they focus each week on one of our core missional values.
- Our nursery coordinator needed to resign to attend to her family, so Kayla is filling that role while looking for someone who can lead that position.

#### YOUTH

- The youth held a silent auction and meal on April 7, which raised approximately \$4,000 toward their trip to the MCUSA youth convention in Phoenix.
- Nineteen youth and ten adult leaders attended a three-day campout, April 12-15, at Lake Manatee State Park. The theme was developed by student-leaders who chose “Perseverance: Following Jesus Against All Odds.”
- Last month Zack attended a youth ministries workshop and heard that many youth ministries are experiencing what we are—where we have little difficulty attracting students to youth events but little success at moving them into fellowship with Bahia Vista as their “home church.” The style of youth ministry that has been effective with past generations is not as effective with this generation. We cannot rely on past assumption. We are looking for new ways to make sure that students 1) have a personal faith and 2) recognize the necessity of belonging to a home church that carries them into adulthood.
- On May 3 we are helping to kick off an area-wide “40 Days of Prayer” for youth and young adults that will culminate in a conference called Consecrate. We are one of over one hundred churches participating in Sarasota, Bradenton and Venice.

#### ADMINISTRATION

- With Treva’s retirement her thirty-hour position has opened up two fifteen-hour positions. Gene offered the one position to Wendy Shenk and is looking to fill the other position next month.
  - We have taken the opportunity of the front office transition to do some updating and standardizing of office procedures to accommodate a multi-staff office.
3. The work of the Master Planning Committee was affirmed, and the MPC was asked to present an outline of their congregational report to the Overseers at their next meeting. The Ministerial team was also asked to present a future-programming plan to the Overseers, to supplement the physical facility part of the Master Plan.

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