

Bahia Vista Mennonite Church
Overseers Update to the Congregation
March 16, 2014

1. The Overseers met on Tuesday, March 11, 2014.
2. The Overseers approved the recommendation of the Finance Committee that the \$25,000 previously approved for the planning consultant services contract with Bo Medred be taken from the Everence Trust Youth Building fund.
3. Approval was given to Kayla Miller, Minister of Children, to use any additional fundraising raised beyond the budgeted \$7000 for WinShape Camp for additional camp scholarships.
4. A meeting was held on March 10, 2014 with Southeast Mennonite Conference (SMC) representatives concerning the petition sent by 51 BVMC members. The petition sent to SMC requested additional dialogue with BVMC Overseers concerning the resignation/termination of Larry Diener, Minister of Worship, as well as decisions made concerning the Charis Center. The conference personnel will review the actions of the Overseers to determine if the parameters of the BVMC Bylaws were followed.

Those attending the meeting from BVMC included Overseers Nancy I. Yoder, Mike Christner and Wes Oswald. SMC representatives were Conference Minister Marco Guete, Roy Williams who serves as SMC Chair of the Ministerial and Church Development Committee and Sarasota District Minister Lee Miller. Please pray for the Lord's guidance in the BVMC and SMC conversations.

Larry Diener has reported to us that he is actively pursuing employment opportunities in Sarasota and elsewhere. We ask that you pray for the Lord's guidance in Larry's search for employment.

5. BVMC will host the annual assembly of Southeast Mennonite Conference on October 3 and 4, 2014.
6. Pastoral Report: Pastor Roger Shenk

A couple weeks ago I took the Pastoral Team to a local one-day conference called "Relate." The premise is that churches grow and thrive through relationships. It was good to get away and spend time focusing together on this vital aspect of Bahia Vista's mission. The pastoral team is committed to meeting this goal of reaching Sarasota with the love of Christ. There are so many people around us who need Jesus, and they're waiting for us to love them with a radical love. I'm sure Bahia Vista has loved many very well. But we have not loved enough very well. Even where we have done well, we can do better.

We need to be gentle with each other, but strong and courageous against the Enemy--even against our own fears. We need to create a renewed Bahia Vista that inspires, includes, and involves people of all ages--believers and not yet believers--through both the traditional and modern expressions of our culture. I still see Bahia Vista as one church, even with multiple expressions. I am committed to that. But I am also aware that some are so upset about decisions they don't agree with that any talk of change feels very threatening to them. As a church we must not abandon or speak disparagingly of people who are hurting, even if they leave. At the same time, we must also not abandon or speak disparagingly of our mission to reach the unreached here in Sarasota. That is the great command and commission of Christ.

Several years ago I said that the point of involvement for most people at Bahia Vista would need to shift from decision-making committees to service-based ministry teams. I believe our service for others is where the mission and vision of the church takes root and grows. Without that our talk of love is just "all talk." This year we need to focus on the service aspect of who we are together. So I'm excited about putting

together a regular All Ministry Teams meeting where all the volunteers of the church meet together around our common mission. Then we'll break into our individual ministry teams to work on creating the unique connection points of that vision. We will learn from each other and encourage each other at the point of our service--where we are spent in love for each other.

Thank you to the many among us who continue to pray. It is an act of faithfulness and worship on your part. Your love honors God, and the effect your prayers are having is real.

COMMUNITY

On February 23rd, our Adult Christian Education hour (9:30) was privileged to host Ervin Stutzman, Executive Director of Mennonite Church USA, for a time of Q&A. Questions were compiled ahead of time with a large number expressing concern about those in the denomination who are advocating for a change to our confession of faith. I was glad to hear of such unity among us, even in our winter months when so many congregations are represented. We continue to lift up Ervin in our prayers.

WORSHIP

We have experienced video broadcast problems outside our control. We are currently test-driving a new broadcast service to see if it is more consistent. We will keep the old viewing address (bahivista.sermon.tv) available for archives until we migrate a significant number of archives to our new viewing address at bahivistachurch.org/watch.

SERVICE

- We raised \$5,613 for our support of missionaries Brad and Brenna Steury-Graber.
- Our BV Community Builders had become an exciting place for people to volunteer their trade experience and construction labor. It has been a very beneficial season for the church.

CHILDREN

- We are planning an Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 19th.
- We are partnering with Abundant Life and Sarasota Alliance to bring WinShape Camp for Communities to Sarasota at Sarasota Christian School from July 14-18.
- We will still have Vacation Bible School the first week of August.

YOUTH

- Youth continues to host its middle and high school groups on Wednesday night.
- There's a Youth Girl's Night Out scheduled for March 21st.

ADMINISTRATION

- Generosity Sunday was on February 23rd and raised \$42,632 plus an additional \$1,100 given to it the following week.
- We are working on a plan to replace more of the facility's thirty-year old fixtures, like lighting ballasts in the Fellowship Hall.
- The facility continues to be rented out to weddings and many other community functions, which contribute over \$30,000 to our budget annually. Not only is it ministry to those groups, but it also helps make our ongoing ministry happen.

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