

Bahia Vista Mennonite Church  
**Overseers Update to the Congregation**  
August 17, 2014

1. The Overseers met on Tuesday, August 12, 2014.
2. **Executive Minister**  
Mike Christner was appointed Executive Minister after receiving congregational approval on July 20, 2014.
3. **Board of Overseers**  
Overseer Wes Oswald was appointed to fill the Overseers Vice-Chair position vacated by Mike Christner's resignation after his appointment as Executive Minister. The Vice-Chair term ends December 31, 2014.  
  
Jerome Yoder was appointed as Overseer to replace Mike Christner, term ending December 31, 2014.
4. **Financial Committee Report**  
The Treasurer was authorized to transfer up to \$50,000 from the Hurricane Reserve account, as needed to cover general operations expenses through the end of 2014.  
  
Authorization was granted to spend up to \$23,000 from the repair and renovation reserve for replacement of the 30-year-old air conditioning unit in the Children's Department.
5. **Delegate and Representative Appointments**  
Nancy B. Yoder was appointed to complete Zack Morris's term as delegate to Southeast Mennonite Church Assembly, term ending 2015. Danny Remchuk was appointed to complete Zack Morris's term as a representative to the Sarasota Christian School Corporate Board, term ending 2017.
6. **Charis Center**  
The final hearing has been set for September 29, 2014.
7. **Pastor Review Committee**  
Pastor evaluation forms were made available to the congregation beginning August 11, 2014. All submissions must be received prior to August 25, 2014. Contact Overseer Wes Oswald with questions.
8. **Southeast Mennonite Conference Assembly**  
Church Administrator Gene Yoder reported on planning for the Southeast Mennonite Conference Assembly that will be held at BVMC on October 3 and 4, 2014. The church will be responsible to serve the catered meals and snacks. The youth will be participating in the conference youth program.
9. **Student Ministry Transition Team Appointment**  
The Student Ministry Transition Team selected Nori Yoder to serve as Interim Youth Director through December 31, 2014.
10. **Pastor Roger's Sabbatical**  
Pastor Roger's three-month sabbatical is scheduled for 2015. Policy states sabbaticals are to be scheduled between Easter and Thanksgiving.
11. **Pastoral Report (attached): Pastor Roger Shenk**

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

# PASTOR'S REPORT TO OVERSEERS

*August 9, 2014 (Rev Aug 12)*

## Looking Forward

This has not been an easy year. We have had very hard decisions to make, and difficult situations to respond to. But many of us found consistent encouragement by the Holy Spirit to just “stay the course.” So we followed God’s leading, patiently but confidently. And today I’m encouraged to see the cloud of discouragement lifting at Bahia Vista. Let’s be reminded by this that God sees around corners. We can only speculate. Wisdom is known by its outcome; faith is known by its obedience. This may have been a dark year for us, but the light is breaking through! May faith and wisdom continue to lead us forward in this great eternal mission to which God has called us.

## Staff

**Executive Minister.** Three weeks ago we asked the congregation to approve Mike Christner’s appointment to Executive Minister, and he received a decisive 93% vote. There is good enthusiasm for this restructuring, and for the next season of ministry here. Mike spent his first week meeting with staff members, and beginning to develop a plan for invigorating small groups programming, which is one of his first priorities.

**Pastoral Care Minister.** In her reassigned position, Shirley continues to oversee visitation and offer pastoral care, but has handed over community programming responsibilities to Mike.

**Youth Minister.** Zack Morris concluded his employment August 3rd per his earlier resignation. We had a farewell following each of the morning worship gatherings. Our plan is to hire an interim, part-time youth director/point person (see “youth,” below) to oversee the programming while positioning ourselves for a permanent youth minister (God-willing) next year.

**Seniors Minister.** As shown in the new organizational chart, I believe we need a “Seniors Minister” on our pastoral team to attend to the specific programming and pastoral care needs of our seniors. I said verbally a few weeks ago that I anticipated being able to announce a recommendation to this position soon. I am excited to now recommend Dennis Bontrager to the position of “Seniors Minister.” Dennis has been on the pastoral team as “Minister of Service” since 2011. If affirmed, he will remain on the Pastoral Team in this reassigned role, without interruption.

**Administrator.** Gene’s job description is similar to what it has been. He will continue to be responsible for administration, facilities, and finance, under Mike’s direction.

**Special Events Director.** As part of the comprehensive plan for restructuring of staff, I have created this new ¼ time position to direct the planning and coordinating of special events and initiatives related to our ministry programs. Kayla Miller has been performing this function in addition to her Children’s Ministry responsibilities, and will now fill this additional role in an official capacity.

## Caring Community

**Events.** On July 30th we had our second summer event, “Chili Cook-Off and Drive-In.” Nine people participated in the chili contest. There was a wonderful sense of “family” and togetherness.

**242 Groups.** One of Mike’s priorities as Executive Minister is to invigorate our 242 Groups (aka small groups, cell groups, home groups, life groups). We’re excited to kick off the fall schedule on Wednesday, September 3rd, with what we’re calling “242 New 4 U.” There will be a meal and time for discussion. Again, “242” represents our desire to include many in a thriving faith community like the early church experienced, as described in Acts 2:42.

## Christ-Centered Worship

**Word.** I concluded my series called, “What to Do When You Really, Really, Really Screw Up.” It used the story of David and Bathsheba to talk through the basics of repentance, confession, restoration, renewal, and redemption. Many told me that it was just what they needed to hear. For the fall, I am planning a series about the basic beliefs of the christian faith. Old and new believers alike will do well to spend time thinking about what we believe, how we know it’s true, and why it matters.

**Attendance.** Our average July attendance was 34 people less than last year (a 13% loss). The traditional service was down 28 (26%), and the Modern service was down 6 (4%). We have also been blessed with several new families during this same time period. We have had no official notices or requests for transfer of membership (except Larry and Doris Diener to their new church assignment in PA), but it is reasonable to assume that forty of our year-round people have left. Where possible I have spoken with the pastors at their new churches, and have asked that they lovingly accept them, and help them process their disappointments in a healthy way that does not sow rumor or division.

**Traditional Music Director.** I am working with Marco Guete to post a job opening in the MCUSA database for a ¼ time music director position.

## Compassionate Service

**Change for a Dollar.** We continue to help people with these timely gifts of very practical love. It continues to be an inspiration to other churches to do similar things.

**Family Promise.** We hosted Family Promise, July 27th through August 3rd. The nature of such a ministry is that it requires flexibility. We try to give the families space to make their own family decisions, so we had some evenings when they weren’t here at the times we had planned. But this is such a worthwhile ministry. Thank you to all who went out of your way to feed and care for them.

## Children

**Vacation Bible School.** We hosted “Schoolhouse Rock” the week of August 4th. The childrens ministry team again developed this program from scratch and did a great job. Because of our involvement in Winshape last month, we had decided to host VBS right before school starts. We didn’t fully know how this would affect participation, but assumed it would. Seventy-nine children registered this year, compared to 99 last year. We ended it with a “Graduation Program” Friday night for parents to see what their children had been doing all week. There were approximately 150 people present.

Thank you to our 48 volunteers who made it all happen!

**Kids Church.** The children continue to worship with the larger church during the Modern service, and then are dismissed to Kids Church.

## Youth

**Transition Team.** Last month we assembled a Student Ministry Transition Team. We have met weekly since July 13th, and there is great energy for helping love our middle and high schoolers in this next phase of youth ministry. The transition team was formed by open (word of mouth) invitation, and so far eighteen people are helping: Erika Augsburg, Ashley Cheshire, Mike Christner, Nick DiDonna, Wendy Donovan, Shirley Good, Rudy Graber, Bonnie Telinger, Kristin Helmuth, Mitch Helmuth, Alma Ovalle, Danny Remchuk, Jennifer Shenk, Wendy Shenk, Roger Shenk, Nathan Slone, Kayci Stone, Marlin Yoder, and Nori Yoder. From this transition team an executive team is being formed to handle behind the scenes planning.

**Interim Youth Director.** The transition team will be naming, as part of the executive team, an interim youth director/point person. This will be offered as a ¼ time paid position. I would ask the overseers to affirm my understanding that a director position such as this is to be appointed by me, without the same congregational process as would be required for a ministerial position.

**Programming.** Wednesday evening program will be largely uninterrupted from what it has been, with games, worship, and teaching. We are reinvigorating small groups with adult leaders who will lead age-appropriate discussions for middle school boys, middle school girls, high school boys, and high school girls. This past Wednesday, August 6th, was the annual end of summer pool party at Marlin and Nori's. The "walk-up" of incoming sixth graders is August 13th. Then on August 20th we will start the twelve-session video curriculum, "Alpha for Teens." It will be supported by age-appropriate small group discussions. On August 27th, the youth will join the Family Bowl-A-Rama planned for the whole church. We are also beginning a "Rally in the Balcony" for youth and leaders at 10AM on Sundays, to help the youth connect to the Sunday morning worship gathering.

## Administration

**Finances.** We are mindful that our offerings are down, and so we continue to control our expenses. It would be tempting to stop all new expenses, but I believe we need to intentionally direct our resources to areas with potential to stimulate growth. The changes to the pastoral team are designed for growth, while also bringing us in below the approved budget for that category.

**Facilities.** We are tending to another thirty-year-old A/C unit which may soon need to be replaced. Door locks have also given us problems. We continue to make repairs with an awareness that a larger scale renovation will soon be necessary.

**Office.** We have decided to minimize expenses by keeping our summer office hours into the fall for as long as we can. Office hours are Monday through Thursday, 9a-3p.

With hope!

