

Bahia Vista Mennonite Church
Overseers Update to the Congregation
October 19, 2014

1. The Overseers met on Tuesday, October 14, 2014.
2. **Finance Committee**
Pastor Roger met with the Finance Committee to share his vision for the Church. The proposed 2015 Ministry Goals are being prepared for presentation to the Overseers at their November 11, 2014 meeting.
3. **Membership List**
Pastor Roger reported on the process for updating the Church membership list. He presented a proposal for BVMC Membership Renewal. The Overseers asked Pastor Roger and Executive Minister Mike Christner to form a task force that includes representatives from the Traditional and Modern services, members and non-members, to discuss membership renewal.
4. **Charis Center**
Charis President Dale Stoll signed the legal Settlement Agreement on September 22, 2014 and Pastor Roger signed the agreement on September 24, 2014. The Church agreed to allow Charis to remain on the premises until July 31, 2015. Charis has paid \$4500 for rent during this time.
5. **Nominations for Overseers**
Nominations for Overseers will be accepted in written form and online October 26 – November 9, 2014. The Chair of Overseers and one Overseer will be selected by written ballot at the Annual Congregational Meeting scheduled for December 7, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.
6. **Pastoral Review**
A Task Force has completed the Midterm Annual Review. They, along with the Chair of Overseers, are meeting with Pastor Roger to discuss the feedback received from the pastoral review survey. Comments addressed to the Overseers will be processed at future Overseer meetings.
7. **Pastoral Report (attached): Pastor Roger Shenk**

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

PASTOR'S REPORT TO OVERSEERS

October 13, 2014

Southeast Mennonite Conference Annual Meeting

I was proud of our church for the hospitable welcome we gave our sister churches! Thanks to staff who carried an extra load, especially Gene and Kayla who gave direction to hosts of volunteers, who deserve just as much appreciation! We “befriended” people. Thank you thank you!

Conference Minister, Marco Guete, asked me to bring a report to the delegates. I asked Mike and Shirley to each add their own report to mine. Together it served as a snapshot of this time in Bahia Vista's life. The reports are attached herewith in their entirety, but for the purposes of this report, they can be summed up with my beginning statement: “We have had a tough year, and God is good.” And my conclusion: “He always takes care of his church.”

Let's continue to prayerfully pursue faithfulness and wisdom, that Christ would be honored among us.

Community, Worship, & Service

New Worship Service Times. I am thrilled to be able to announce that, following much dialog and creative problem-solving, we are finally going to be able to offer both worship services at optimum times. Beginning November 2nd, the new service times will be 9AM for the traditional service and 10:45AM for the modern service. My sincere desire is that this will 1)make both services attractive to anyone who wants to attend, and 2)encourage those who have feared that the first service was “being phased out.” We are publicizing this with personal invitation cards, and a mailer to the north.

Christian Ed Classes. With the change in service times (above) we are asking the traditional Sunday morning classes to decide for themselves when they want to meet, with two obvious choices being 8AM, ahead of the service, or 10:15AM, after the service. We recognize that this creates a dilemma for a handful of people who want to attend both a Christian Ed class, and the second service. (Of course, there's nothing that would preclude a class from gathering during the first service, such as 9:30 or 9:45, but generally the people in these classes prefer the first service.) Likewise, our winter residents class, will likely choose their meeting time around attending the first service. I don't want to ignore or dismiss the frustration this may cause, but I believe the change in service times will serve the greater good. And I would respectfully encourage people in the second service to take advantage of other “small group” opportunities throughout the week, and to consider serving in some capacity on Sundays.

Membership & Directory. We are working hard to update all information in our database, with forms available at the Welcome Center where people can proof and correct as necessary. We have also begun the process of creating a new church directory. Pictures are being planned for fall and winter.

Family Promise & OneConcert. We are hosting our next OneConcert this Saturday, October 18th, to raise funds and support for Family Promise. Our next Family Promise week is November 2-9.

Lifestage Ministries

Children & Youth. I was proud that so many of our youth attended our conference annual meetings. We are currently running between 15 and 20 youth, mostly middle schoolers, with half a dozen adults volunteering each week. Nori is adjusting the youth schedule to line up with the other Wednesday night programming so that families with children and youth can plan their arrival and departure around the same times, from 6:33-8PM. Kayla is asking people from the Wednesday night 242 groups to consider serving in the nursery one Wednesday night a month. This, of course, is open to anyone.

Seniors. Dennis is back, and on the job as our new “Seniors Minister”! I believe and pray that this appointment is by God’s blessing for Bahia Vista. Please pray for Dennis as he works not only to meet the program needs of seniors but, with Shirley’s help, offers pastoral care and encouragement, including redemptive conversations with people who are open to restoring fellowship with us.

Administration & Facilities

Charis. I am glad to report that we were able to settle the tenancy disagreement with Charis Counseling Center. They will continue to occupy their current space through July 31st, 2015, and have prepaid that rent as a demonstration of goodwill. As a part of this agreement, the church no longer has access to module 18, or the restrooms. We have notified the groups that rent module 17 that they must now use the restrooms in the main building. We will make other accommodations as necessary.

I believe we have restored peace between the two organizations. With that, I believe it is helpful for posterity to reiterate that our hope was never that Bahia Vista would be disassociated with Charis. Rather, in consideration of their decision last year to rewrite their bylaws without representation by Bahia Vista, we felt it generally advisable to not provide free office space without influence. Specifically we asked Charis to look for new office space elsewhere. They did not see how they could do it on our timeline, and they did not recognize the church’s authority to decide the matter, so after much deliberation we appealed to the governing authorities in Sarasota, hoping to provide the peace of resolution. In the end we decided to accommodate Charis’s wishes, even to the church’s temporary disadvantage. I am at peace with this, and encourage everyone to choose the same, in Christ’s name.

Library & Office Space. Coinciding with this dispute was our determination that we need more office space. While not driven by this, our plan has been to occupy the Charis space once they have left. Yet this new contract delays that process until next summer, so we have decided to create new office space by moving the library to room 12 off the Fellowship Hall, where we will create a reading and prayer room. Mike has worked with the church librarian, Naomi Schwartz, to secure her blessing in this. Once that move is complete, we will divide the current library space into two temporary offices: one for Dennis, and one for Kayla.

Storage Space. Another consideration in this is that our insurance company is requiring that we no longer use the equipment room off the kitchen hallway for storage of paper products. This, and other things, involve a complex shifting around of space usage. It may create some dust and uncertainty as we move things around, but it will soon settle.

I am thankful for good, hard, productive work, in the name of Jesus, in the spirit of Colossians 1:28-29.



Bahia Vista Mennonite Church Report to Southeast Mennonite Conference Delegates

Annual Meeting: October 4, 2014

We have had a tough year, and God is good.

In January, following three months of deliberate and respectful discussions, our Minister of Worship, Larry Diener, resigned his position citing irreconcilable differences with regard to philosophy of leadership, concept of appropriate congregational process, and the balance between the contemporary and traditional aspects of the church. Some, of course, blamed leadership. Some of the blame was accurate and reflected a difference of opinion about how or what we should spend our time doing, but we also bore the brunt of some ugly and untrue accusations.

During this same time our youth minister decided he was being called to make himself available beyond youth ministry, so with a resignation he started a five-month transition process. People thought it was related to Larry's departure, and we had a very difficult time separating the two in people's minds.

Then, to compound the internal tensions, we found ourselves in conflict with an organization that we had given birth to, and our attempts to address that was met with strong criticism by some in our church.

This tension has taken its toll. The stones have hit their targets and left their marks. I'm sure people on all sides feel that. And people on both sides choose to extend grace, and in some cases forgiveness has been exchanged. In other cases, the stones are hurled with no name signed and there's no opportunity for reconciliation.

As a church, our non-seasonal attendance is down by some fifty people. Some people have gone to another church in the Conservative Mennonite Conference, and ironically, others are attending a fairly liberal Presbyterian church. We don't know how our seasonal (winter) attendance will be affected. It had already been dropping prior to these tensions, due to age-related issues. But I expect that this winter we will be missing as much as a couple hundred of the 900 snowbirds we usually see.

That's the hard part. But today, I would like to give God glory for these things. 'We endure hardship as discipline.' God is able to use this for our purification and edification. We hate it, but we love our Father. What children are not disciplined by their father? He is able to make grace abound, and he has!

- Larry has a job at Franconia Mennonite and he tells me it fits him quite well. Last week he was in town and hugged me. He laughed and said that now *he's* the one promoting changes. The Dieners' move was completed this past week.
- Zack has accepted a job in North Carolina, and is in the process of searching for housing.
- We were able to settle our differences with the other ministry.

In addition to those things, so far this year:

- We have baptized 15 people and have several in process
- We have received 13 new members, with four in process
- There is a revived sense of joy here.
- We hired Mike Christner as our Executive Minister. He's responsible to execute the missional programming, making sure that we are "Befriending all with the love of Christ, through community, worship, and service."
- And we reassigned Shirley Good, who was already on our pastoral team, to a newly created position: Pastoral Care Minister
- We also reassigned Dennis Bontrager to a newly created position: Seniors Minister
- We are still looking for a Traditional Music Director but our modern service worship team has formed an acoustic band and is leading the traditional service in worship, and loving it.

God is good. He always takes care of his Church. Even when we don't get along, or when we as leaders wish we would have handled things better. God is good. He always takes care of his Church.

--Roger Shenk, Pastor

Executive Minister's Report

We have been developing and promoting in the past few months what we are calling 242 Groups, AKA small groups, community groups, cell groups. We are calling them 242 Groups based on Acts 2:42 where it reads: "They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer." We believe if we follow Acts 2:42 as our guide, they will be Spirit-filled, life-changing, relationship-building groups that send out Jesus-following disciples who will befriend all with the love of Christ.

--Mike Christner, Executive Minister

Pastoral Care Minister's Report

We have the honor to walk with people through all cycles of life from birth through death and are aware that through each life event we have the opportunity to minister to the individual, family and larger community. We have had 24 funerals in the past 24 months along with the other losses Roger identified so we realize we have a grieving congregation. Grief takes its toll and we have been sensitive to that reality as many have lost family and friends.

One of the programs we offer to our church and local community is GriefShare which is a 13 week video based Christian grief program. Currently we have 10 persons who are in this program, some taking it for the second time. We listened closely and decided to offer it on Sunday afternoon because those who have had losses often report finding Sunday afternoons to be so long.

We are privileged to offer individual spiritual direction for persons who want to further their faith and spiritual growth with an hourly monthly meeting. In addition, we are now entering our second year of offering a spiritual direction group where we do spiritual direction in a group.

--Shirley Good, Pastoral Care Minister