

Sarasota Community Church  
Overseers Minutes – December 18, 2017  
Green Room

***“Befriending all with the love of Christ through community, worship and service.”***

<b>Members Present:</b>	Danny Remchuk (Chair)	Dave Kniss
	Karissa Miller (Vice Chair)	Miriam Nauman
	Dave Polen	Doug Graber
	Renee Krabbe	Nic King
<b>Member Absent:</b>	Ben Sprunger	
<b>Pastoral Team Present:</b>	Roger Shenk	Mike Christner
	Shirley Good	Kevin Bowder
	Dennis Bontrager	

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Danny Remchuk declared the meeting open at 5:06 pm
2. **Devotional:** Pastor Roger Shenk reflected on what the three members leaving the Overseers brought to the committee during their term of service. God has gifted each of us with “gifts”. Pastor Roger led in prayer and encouraged others to pray, commending them for “the gifts” they brought to the committee. Pastor Roger led in closing prayer.
3. **Minutes:** Danny Remchuk declared the November 27, 2017 minutes approved as distributed.
4. **Open Floor for Members Comments:** none.
5. **New/Unfinished Business:**
  - a. Ratify congregational vote on pastor’s contract extension: M/S/A Doug Graber, Dave Kniss.
  - b. Ratify congregational vote on amended 2018 budget: M/S/A Miriam Nauman, Dave Polen.
6. **Reports:**
  - a. Pastor Roger Shenk reviewed his monthly report (attached)
  - b. Finance: The November statement was reviewed. It showed a YTD net gain over \$15,000.

**7. Committee Reports:**

- a. Finance Committee: Doug Graber reported that the 2018 budget was amended to add \$1,500.00 to the bottom line, allocated to Mennonite Mission Network.
- b. Membership Policy Task Force: none
- c. Conference Affiliation Task Force: Pastor Roger gave a brief update. (attached)
- d. Building Fund Committee: none

**8. Recommendations:**

- a. Recommendation: That the Overseers approve the housing allowances for the ministers, Roger Shenk and Kevin Bowden. M/S/A Karissa Miller, Nic King
- b. Recommendation: That the Overseers appoint Mike Gervasio to a three year position as Overseer. M/S/A Dave Kniss, Dave Polen.

**9. Other Business: none**

**10. Executive Session:** none scheduled.

**11. Closing Prayer:** Pastor Roger Shenk closed in prayer.

**12. Adjournment:** Danny Remchuk declared the meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.

**Upcoming Events:**

- Overseers, Monday January 18, 2018, 5pm.

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Secretary, Renee Krabbe

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Recording Secretary, Hertha Kornhaus

# PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2017

## *Sarasota Community Church*

### “Grace Happens Here”

This year we became Sarasota Community Church and chose to tag our new name with the three word message that has come to describe us: “Grace happens here.” I have heard it so often that I know it’s true! By God’s grace we have been winning the trust and affection of family and friends, co-workers and neighbors, each with a story and a name. And with each one I am encouraged that God wants to restore even more people to faith in him and fellowship in his Church.

I believe that’s true here in Sarasota, and all around the world, and so we press on with conviction! As a church family we give our lives to this mission of “befriending all with the love of Christ through community, worship, and service.” We ask for God’s wisdom and great love as we seek his blessing in it.

### A Time to Look Back

At the end of each year, we look back and note what stands out, partly for posterity, and largely to respond appropriately in celebration or lament.

**New Name.** In 2017 we began and finished a conversation about what to call our congregation. I posed the question this time last year, and officially asked it in January: “Should we remove Mennonite from our name in order to reach more people?” We invited the congregation to speak into it and over the next few months had a thoughtful, gentle, and honest conversation. We found that two-thirds of our worshipping community thought it a good idea, so by May we had committed to finding our new name. We took suggestions, and ultimately recommended to the overseers a new name that had no ties to either of our two former names (Tuttle Avenue Mennonite, 1950-1980, and Bahia Vista Mennonite, 1980-2017). We believed that the new name should represent more than the deletion of a word; it needed to represent our mission to befriend the Sarasota community with the gospel of Jesus Christ. So, on September 10, Bahia Vista Mennonite Church began doing ministry as Sarasota Community Church.

**New stage.** This year, along with various cosmetic changes to the campus, we added some 200 square feet to the stage, making it more flexible for the many ways in which we use it.

**Staff Changes.** Like last year, we again saw changes to our pastoral and administrative staff:

- **Children/Youth/Families.** We began the year still looking for a half-time Children’s Minister. Then, in February, David (and Jessie) Denison resigned the half-time Youth Minister position to focus on personal health. We saw God’s timing in this and combined the two half-time positions into one full-time Families Minister position to which Kevin Bowder was hired in May. (David and Kayla both continue to volunteer in various ways at the church.)
- **Worship.** In May, Rodney Shenk resigned his seven year position as Modern Music Director, citing differences in theology. As a stopgap, I stepped into a temporary position to plan and direct the worship of the second service, especially mindful of sharing worship leadership. Our worship style has moved toward more prayerful. We do have a need for a fulltime Worship Minister who can oversee both services, and hope to begin looking for such a person toward the end of 2018.

- **Executive Minister.** In July, Executive Minister Mike Christner reduced his hours from half-time to quarter-time in order to focus on his own mounting business responsibilities. This, too, is a temporary adjustment, but we are aware that it needs resolution. We are budgeting for a ¾ time Executive Minister in 2018.
- **Administrative & Facilities.** We hired Kathy Cydrus (June) to the Administrative Assistant vacated by Kayla Virkus who resigned to start a daycare in her home. And we hired Tim Wyse (August) to ¼ time maintenance position.

**Trends.** Trends give us a sense of direction and momentum. We often use numbers to tell the story, even if they do not tell the whole story.

- **Baptism, Membership, Child Dedication.** This year we baptized ten people, held three child dedication ceremonies, and received ten new members. We lost eleven members: eight who died, two who moved, and one who renounced the Christian Faith.
- **Funerals.** In 2017 we held eleven funerals: twice the number of 2016, and closer to our average. This year our Pastoral Care Minister, Shirley Good, presided over eight of the eleven. She is such a gift to this congregation, as well as to me in helping care for grieving families.
- **Attendance.** We are running about the same attendance as last year. Visitor flow has increased noticeably since our name change. Others have chosen to leave for various reasons.
- **Weekly Per Capita Giving (WPCG).** North American churchgoers give an average of \$26 a week. We averaged \$28.05 in 2016, and this year (to date) we are at \$27.40. But for May through October (representing our year-round church) we averaged \$31.49, up from \$30.09 in 2016, and \$27.80 in 2015. This reflects an increased ownership of our year-round congregation. And again, we thank those who support the church financially during their seasonal attendance as well.

## Looking Ahead

We can't predict the future, but we can anticipate needs and opportunities.

**Global Disciples.** Our mission in Sarasota is to give people another opportunity to hear the gospel in a way they can understand and respond to. That is a very necessary mission. We must not become lax in that. At the same time, 29% of the world's population has never heard the Gospel the first time. And 91% of those people live in areas that restrict Christian witness. In fact, fewer than 10% of all missionaries work among these least-reached people groups.

Missionaries have long been associated with the Western Church. But now churches even in the least-reached areas have the vision and ability to send their own missionaries. The gospel usually travels best through a common language and culture. But these church planters need training so Global Disciples provides discipleship, leadership, and small business development training which has proven very effective.

In the past year, Global Disciples trained and sent 10,363 disciple-makers and leaders to plant churches in least-reached areas. Their efforts led to 43,856 new believers worshipping in 1,969 new churches. They also trained 235 church planters in small business so they could become self-sustaining.

This year we have opportunity to sponsor such a program in Nepal with a three year commitment of \$13,000 a year. I believe God has blessed Global Disciples with a very effective ministry, and that we would be blessed to bless these brothers and sisters in Nepal.

**Denominational Affiliation.** I believe we will need to discuss our denominational affiliation more openly this year than we have. To understand that we need to look back.

March 25th of this year, the Southeast Mennonite Conference to which we belong notified Mennonite Church USA: *That given the SMC shared understandings around the issues of homosexuality, that Southeast Mennonite Conference go on record as planning to leave Mennonite Church USA should the forbearance resolution passed last summer (Kansas City 2015) become a permanent position or practice for the church.*

This summer Bayshore (Sarasota), the third largest church in SMC left the conference in objection to MCUSA, and became provisionally affiliated with a new network called Evana. The largest church, Cape Christian (Cape Coral), has made no new decision about their relationship to conference, but notably provides no financial support and remains in contact with Evana. We are the second largest church in the conference, but have been funding roughly one-third of its budget.

The SMC Leadership Board has a task force working on a two year plan to explore options. They had planned to finish their work by mid-November but were unsuccessful, and have no projected finish date. While we continue to defer to the discernment of SMC regarding our future relationship to MCUSA, we will likely find it necessary to hold this discussion more directly as a church family in 2018.

**Facilities.** It seems I say this every year, and I again hold it in front of us. Our campus is heavily used, and in need to renovation. We have a comprehensive master plan that just needs funding. We do not want to take on debt. We will continue to look for the right time to start this.

## SUMMARY

There is such joy among us when we gather. We can say with confidence that our friends and neighbors experience grace here. And to be sure, we give grace to each other as well. I am filled with gratitude to God for what he is doing among us, and to you for allowing me to serve as pastor of this wonderful congregation known as Sarasota Community Church.

With faith, hope, and love,



Roger Shenk, Pastor  
December 3, 2017