

Shalom Mennonite Church
Commission Chair Team
Meeting Minutes
July 29, 2024

The Commission Chair Team convened on July 29, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. EST via Zoom. Present were Frank Kandel, Pastor Brian Bither, Pastor Craig Oury, Brittany Bither, Carol Bixler, Linda Showalter, Zenebe Abebe, Mike Wigginton, Becky Wigginton, and Nizeet Deiter.

Introduction

Frank opened the meeting by asking the team members what they remember from their first year of school or first grade. Following the icebreaker, Frank initiated the meeting with a prayer.

Discussion

1. Frank announced that Coralyn has stepped down from her role as Chair of the Spiritual Gift Discernment Commission. Consequently, the VAT is now seeking a new Chair for the Spiritual Gift Discernment.
2. Becky Wigginton will be speaking as a representative of the kitchen committee.

Commission Teams Updates

3. Carol provided an update on behalf of the **Discipling Commission Team**.

The key points were as follows:

- No new announcements since the last meeting.
- The team is discussing the actual start time for Sunday School.
 - Mike stated that Andrew Martin made a new announcement indicating it starts at 11 am, and instead of including a phone number, a website will be provided.

4. Linda provided an update on behalf of the **Community Life Commission Team**.

The key points were as follows:

- The team is focusing on the retreat.
- There will be a community Thanksgiving dinner, which will be led by the team, happening organically.
- Brian asked if there would be a Halloween activity since the last one was very successful as a community outreach.
 - Linda stated that they will host a Halloween party but might need additional help.
- Brian asked about the small group.
 - Linda stated that they announced it for two weeks but have not received any responses.

- Craig stated that he has had two responses and will provide the information to Linda.
- Brittany asked if there would be a Christmas dinner.
- Becky stated that it would happen.
 - Brian suggested that early preparation could allow for a Christmas program in conjunction with the dinner.
 - Becky mentioned that Bonnie, a former church member, used to manage the program, but it is now difficult since she left. She proposed that all commissions need to be involved in this effort.
 - Linda stated that the Community Life Commission will work on the program while the kitchen team focuses on the dinner.

5. Pastor Craig provided an update on behalf of **the Spiritual Gift Discernment Commission Team**.

The key points were as follows:

- The team is looking for a chair for the Outreach Commission and a congregation representative (CR) for the VAT.
- Bethany Martin, Beverly Smith, and Mike Wigginton agreed to serve another term.
- Awaiting responses from the Discipling Commission and for Administration Commission.

6. Zenebe provided an update on behalf of the **Outreach Commission Team**.

The key points were as follows:

- They met last week and discussed several important issues.
- One item was to plan the National Night Out. One possible issue is that the crowd may be larger than usual, and as Becky Wigginton announced on Sunday, more volunteers are needed.
- The second item is reducing the budget for Meseret Kristos Seminary (MKS) support. Pastor Brian will provide more details.
 - Pastor Brian stated that cutting the funding in half might elicit feedback from the congregation, so they made an announcement in the Journey Together, but have not heard back. He asked for feedback from the group, wondering if the message was not reaching people. The original proposal was to redirect the funds to another organization that helps Ethiopia, such as a tutoring program led by MCC. However, MCC does not accept funds for specific purposes. The other proposal is to keep the money due to a deficit in the church's funding this year.
 - Linda asked if there could be another country to support.

- Pastor Brian stated that since the church's beginning, there have been ties to Ethiopia. The main reason for the funding was to provide higher education for Ethiopian youth. However, he is open to supporting another country.
 - Zenebe mentioned the church's history with Ethiopia and the original purpose of the funding, which was to help with the liberal arts program benefiting Ethiopian youth. However, since the program is no longer there, they are working on redirecting the funding, as they have been talking about it for two years.
- Zenebe is completing his term as Chair and has informed Craig to work on a replacement.
- Their next Outreach Commission meeting will be on August 14.

7. Mike provided an update on behalf of the **Administration Commission Team**.

The key points were as follows:

- They are working on new signs for the church.
- There will be a ceremony celebrating the woods trail.
- A defibrillator was provided by an organization thanks to the hard work of Andrew Martin. He stated that Andrew was able to see God's hand in the whole process.
- New smoke detectors were installed.
- There are ongoing issues with the lift, but Jim Showalter is working on it.

8. Brittany provided an update on behalf of the **Worship Commission Team**.

The key points were as follows:

- No major announcements.
- Frank thanked the commission for the communion services.
- Zenebe suggested welcoming the new kids during the children's story time.
 - Brittany thanked Zenebe for the suggestion and said she will discuss it with the team.

9. Pastor Brian and Pastor Craig provided an update on behalf of the **Pastoral Team**.

The key points were as follows:

- Pastor Brian supported the Mara church when they went to court and will continue supporting them.
- Regarding Indiana AIDS, the renovations have increased the number of detained undocumented migrants, making it hard to support everyone. If Pastor Brian were to support all of them, he would have to stay until midnight.
- Starting in the fall, the pastors will focus on a series about the Sermon on the Mount during Sunday sermons.

- There have been new visitors, and a new member/orientation class will be offered early next year.
- Carol asked about Lilly Grant.
 - Brian stated that they will know by the end of August.
- Pastor Craig stated that he has been working with the Spiritual Gift Discernment Commission and will be teaching a Sunday School class on the Sermon on the Mount.
- Pastor Craig represents Shalom Mennonite Church in the Leadership Enhancement Team and is working on the pastoral retreat.
- Pastor Craig is still working 4 to 5 hours a week with First Mennonite Church, but the church has a candidate, and hopefully, this will be over soon.

10. Frank reported on behalf of the **Vision & Accountability Team**.

The key points were as follows:

- Mark Stockdale's term as a CR is concluding, and they are working on finding a new CR with the Spiritual Gift Discernment Commission Team.
- The team has been working on the Shalom Welcoming Statement IN PROGRESS. The team worked on a second draft on June 18. On July 14, the church members gave their feedback. The team decided to cancel the August 4 Sunday School discussion to meet as a VAT first and discuss the next steps.
- The theological debates about LGBTQ are scheduled for fall 2024.
- Pastoral Evaluations: 39 people responded to the evaluations. The VAT summarized it and will provide the summary to both pastors this week.
- Pastor Brian will take a sabbatical even if the Lilly grant is not awarded. The following year, Pastor Craig will have his sabbatical.
- Zenebe asked where the Shalom Welcoming Statement IN PROGRESS will be added.
 - Frank clarified that no decision has been made, but there has been a proposal to add it to the website.
 - Brittany stated that the Dismantling Racism Committee has a statement to be read at the beginning of worship, but they are waiting for the Shalom Welcoming Statement IN PROGRESS to be finished to avoid confusion.
 - Frank thanked Brittany for waiting.
- Brian proposed that maybe both statements could be combined.

Next Meeting

The next Commission Chair Team Meeting is scheduled for **Monday, September 16th at 6:30 pm EST via Zoom.**

Adjournment

Frank recited the Priestly Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26. He then adjourned the meeting at 7:39 pm EST.

Recorded by Nizeet Deiter