

Shalom Mennonite Church
Commission Chair Team
Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2025

The Commission Chair Team convened on March 11, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. EST via Zoom. Present were Frank Kandel, Pastor Brian Bither, Pastor Craig Oury, Carol Bixler, Mike Wigginton, and Nizeet Deiter.

Introduction

Frank opened the meeting with an icebreaker, asking team members what they were looking forward to in the new Spring season. He then led the group in prayer and provided a recap of the past Sunday's service.

Commission Teams Updates

1. Frank and Nizeet reported on behalf of the **Vision & Accountability Team**.

The key points were as follows:

- The team will meet next week, with one key discussion topic being how the church can respond if ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) arrives at the church. Attorney Lydie Assefa will attend the meeting to help brainstorm and develop guidelines.
- Other agenda items include preparing for Pastor Brian's sabbatical in 2025 and Pastor Craig's in 2026.

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

The key points were as follows:

- The first month of Pastor Brian's sabbatical served as a helpful preview for his upcoming three-month sabbatical in the fall.
- Pastor Craig has been actively visiting members and meeting his monthly visitation goals.
- On February 28th, Pastor Craig attended a conference focused on how Mennonites should prepare for the current migratory situation.
- Pastor Brian and Pastor Craig will meet tomorrow (March 12) to catch up.
- Pastor Brian expressed gratitude for his sabbatical, which allowed him to catch up on several projects.
- Pastor Brian is considering teaching a new class introducing Shalom Mennonite Church.

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

The key points were as follows:

- The team will meet tomorrow afternoon (March 12).
- A primary focus will be organizing classes to prevent overcrowding.

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

The key points were as follows:

- The team is finalizing renovations, including:
 - Installing shock absorbers in the lift.
 - Adding a light to the back of the church, which will be helpful for evening meetings.
- Routine maintenance continues, including passing the lift inspection.
- The church's internet provider has been changed.
- Pastor Craig spoke with the cleaning provider, but further discussions are needed regarding cleaning guidelines.
- Frank inquired about adding the welcoming statement to the church's website.
 - Pastor Brian will discuss this with Charity Bauman and Andrew Martin.

5. Pastor Brian provided an update on behalf of the **Worship Commission Team**.

The key points were as follows:

- The team is working on Lent and Easter services.
- Pastor Brian sought feedback on the Easter service schedule.
 - It was proposed to hold the service at 10 a.m., with the Community Life Commission determining the timing for breakfast.
- Interpreter earpieces are not functioning as expected. The team will explore alternative brands within budget.
- Planning has begun for the 500th anniversary of the Anabaptist movement.
- The team is considering incorporating a foot-washing service.
- There was a discussion about alternative ways to incorporate the offering into the service.

6. Pastor Craig provided an update on behalf of the **Community Life Commission Team**.

The key points were as follows:

- Linda Showalter sent an email outlining agenda items for the next meeting. One key discussion will be suggesting ideas for the next church retreat, including a potential trip to the Underground Railroad sites in Cincinnati.
 - Pastor Brian inquired about logistics, including transportation.
 - Pastor Craig noted that, due to budget constraints, a local alternative will be planned instead.
- Reservations for the 2026 retreat at Jameson Camp will be made.

- The team will discuss ways to encourage more people to help with Sunday cleanup at the next meeting.

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

The key points were as follows:

- Frank thanked Pastor Craig for leading the team while they search for a chairperson.
- Conference delegate nominations were approved by the congregation.
- The team discussed bylaws regarding conference representation.
 - Pastor Craig will ask Cheryl Martin to write the clarifications for future reference.
- The next meeting is scheduled for May.
- Pastor Craig reminded members whose commission terms are ending soon, noting that new representatives may be needed.

8. Pastor Brian provided an update on behalf of the **Outreach Commission Team**.

The key points were as follows:

- The team is involved in the 500-year Anabaptist celebration, collaborating with First Mennonite Church for an event on May 17th.
- Indiana AID update:
 - Detention centers are at capacity, leading to increased need for support.
 - Contributions and participation from younger members have risen.
 - Some tension exists between Indiana AID members and detention center staff.
 - Pastor Brian is mediating between both groups.
 - A potential grant opportunity exists, but it would need to be requested through Shalom Mennonite Church.
 - Pastor Brian will discuss this at the next VAT meeting, considering any potential risks or retaliation Shalom may face for its involvement with Indiana AID.
 - The group is moving closer to applying for nonprofit status.
 - Frank noted that this would be a natural next step and agreed to bring it up at the next VAT meeting.

Next Meeting

The next CCT Meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 13th at 6:30 pm EST via Zoom**.

Adjournment

Frank thanked everyone for their dedication and hard work. He closed the meeting with a prayer. The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m. EST.

Recorded by Nizeet Deiter