

PMC Congregational Meeting
25 July 2021 via Zoom

Joanna opened the meeting with prayer

1. Treasurer's report (submitted by Roberta Renz)

Net income looks negative. This reflects our donation of unneeded PPP funds to three WDC churches. Pledge income has come in at about 95% for the first half of the year. Roberta will be sending out pledge status letters soon.

Expenses have been much as expected except for our contributions to other organizations; we have not made our Q2 contributions to them yet.

Growing Peace has received its pledged donations; has been paid down on schedule.

2. MC-USA delegate assembly, July 10, 12-2:30 p.m. as a remote session, report from Andrea, the PMC delegate.

There was a brief and inconsequential agenda for the delegate session, with reports from various constituency groups (Mennonite Women, racial/ethnic constituency groups, Mennonite Men, etc.) as the highlight, demonstrating the diversity and heartbeat of our denomination through the faces of us. Business decisions had to do with approving minutes and the leadership for the next biennium, along with some pro forma revisions to the MC-USA bylaws. There will be a special delegate session next May in Kansas City to process the retirement of the membership guidelines. It became clear during the Zoom proceedings why it's not a good idea to process consequential content during a remote session, namely the lack of interaction between attendees and leadership, so the special session will take place in person. Expressed appreciation for the current MC-USA leadership, which is diverse, listens well, responds well, and seems capable of conducting the conversation in a way that is much more inclusive than has been the case in the past.

3. Worship update

We will continue our current outdoor/Zoom two worship services for the foreseeable future. Today was the first time worship met indoors. The coordinating committee is always open to hear concerns and questions about the logistics; the worship committee is always open to hear concerns and questions about what worship services are like.

4. Church staffing needs

Building manager position has not been filled for a number of months; administrative assistant duties have shifted a little. Our staffing proposal includes two positions, dividing the responsibilities of our two existing positions a little differently and adding some other administrative tasks to relieve some of the burden on Joanna. One is a bookkeeper at about 6 hours per week. The other would be an administrative assistant of 10-12 hours per week to be trained and supervised by Joanna. At the next congregational meeting we will present a proposal for these two position descriptions and a timeline for filling the admin. assistant (LaVonne will do the bookkeeper position).

5. Building and grounds update

Parking lot:

Survey on parking lot project from end of last meeting produced good input. Priorities were safe handicapped parking and improved bike parking.

They had identified an engineer (Justin Milburn) but after two meetings they decided that this wasn't a good fit. He lacks experience working in Lawrence, and since we will likely be seeking some variances, we will want someone who knows the building code in Lawrence. Matt suggested another engineer, Chris Storm, whom they've met with a couple of times and who looks like a better fit. The engineering fees will be in the range of \$5-10k. Committee is meeting again soon to establish a formal contract and get the process moving again.

Matt has received a nonbinding estimate on cutting and replacing the pavement we had, mostly as a benchmark and to update an earlier bid we had received. Those bids were well under the budgeted amount. Committee believes that they are in a position to move ahead with something meaningful soon.

Decision needs to be made on what to do with the gravel area in addition to repaving the currently paved area. The city has some questions about the function of that area based on an aerial photo that shows it.

Fence:

John San Marco is building a house in the next lot to the east and is building a fence with a 60-40 split on cost with PMC (PMC is the 40%). The fence is about half built, with accumulated expenses for PMC in the neighborhood of \$1k (cost to church is approx. \$75/panel, and there are about 13 yet to install). PMC work days are helping accomplish this.

We appreciate the efforts of all who have volunteered to help build the fence.

Pantry shelves:

Not a good practice to be storing food for the little pantry in our cleaning closet (including chemicals). There will soon be new shelving in the south Sunday school classroom, so please put donated items on those shelves instead of the closet (if shelves are not up yet, please leave items in the Sunday school room).

Mower sale:

After 4-6 weeks of listing, the mower has been sold for \$1,800. Thanks to Ron Renz for fixing up the mower with an investment of around \$500. The balance of the proceeds will go back into the church budget. We do not have our own mower at present; we have been using a mowing service instead of investing in a new mower. The decision will be revisited in the future regarding the value proposition of mowing ourselves versus paying someone to do it.

Shed:

The shed is being cleaned and prepped for painting, with Jim Russo taking the lead. Because the mower is not in there, there will be storage room.

Library floor:

New concrete has been poured to repair the concrete cut made to address the plumbing problem. Roger G and Rob C are prepared to stain the new area with instructions from the company that did the original concrete staining.

6. Peace & Social Justice Committee report (Roger G., read by Sonja)

Committee has begun overseeing LINK with Joe Casad helping Gwen.

Relationship with Woodlawn School (North Lawrence) continues. We have provided grocery gift cards and some supplies.

Little pantry will need volunteers after September. Funds are available for reimbursement if you purchase items for it.

Manhattan Mennonite has reached out to us about participating in justice issues in Kansas.

7. Indigenous justice group:

Becky Janzen reports that the group will be presenting the morning message on August 8. Here are highlights:

- Working draft of a brief land acknowledgment has been read before services. They will finalize the language of a longer land acknowledgment and present it for acceptance by the congregation
- Expect to have a proposal within a year for PMC to begin paying real rent (reparations payments to Kaw Nation and the Konza people). Konza people are original inhabitants; other Indigenous groups were forced to move here, but it is the Konza people's ancestral home.
- Would like the Indigenous justice group to become a standing committee
- City of Lawrence has agreed to return the big red rock to the Kaw Nation. PMC wants to be part of whatever event the city plans to formalize that.
- Plan to hold a formal land acknowledgment ceremony on our property; timing not certain. Would like to invite tribal members from Konza and Lenape to participate.
- A peace pole (or other appropriate artwork) has been proposed for our property, created by Indigenous youth. It's been suggested that we incorporate some medicinal plants in our gardens. We already have some of these plants. This would represent a healing effort between PMC and the Indigenous people who inhabited the land before we did.
- Are working on a letter to President Biden asking for a land acknowledgment for the land around the White House.

8. Church growth

Katie, Joanna, and Jill have done a lot of brainstorming about church growth. First step in thinking about growth is to clarify who we are and know our identity, then to know what we have to offer people. Two questions for breakout group discussion: 1. Why do you attend PMC? 2. What first attracted you to the church?

Ideas from groups: Progressive ideas, involvement with community. Returning to or finding PMC made them feel like they were coming home (having grown up Mennonite). Appreciation for our world view, how we work in the community.

There are no doubt people in the community (and beyond, via Zoom) who resonate with our values but don't know we are here or know about Mennonites. How can we show our identity?

Brainstorming ideas:

- Showing up and working with people, showing them who we are.

- Show the way among other faith communities (such as with the big red rock). (Idea to ride bicycles from where people were taken from to where they were sent, and then riding back: demonstrate activism and community building.)
- Activism and involvement could lead to media articles, photos, which calls attention to the existence of a group that cares about, works toward an issue.
- How do people know who we are when we attend community events? T-shirts, nametags, something else?
- Facebook and social media -- using our own page to amplify coverage of what we do, may help reach a younger audience
- Facebook **group** versus Facebook **page**: some of what goes on in our closed group (which tends to be more active) could go on in the open Facebook page to let more people know what we are doing and talking about
- The intimacy of a small church is appealing but messaging to show values helps more people be aware of what is happening here

Joanna expressed appreciation for how our community has held together during the COVID-19 pandemic and demonstrated our love for each other and our commitment to what we do.

9. Adjourned at 12:45 p.m., with closing prayer.

Submitted by
Andrea Zuercher, recorder and moderator-elect