

**UMC Congregational Meeting (Quarterly)
In person and on Zoom**

Sunday, September 8, 2024

11:15 am to 12:15 pm

Present in Sanctuary (29):

Joel Weidner (Chair); Krista Weidner; Carmen Groff;
Ken Litwiller (Secretary; Minutes); Laura Litwiller;
Jim Rosenberger (Treasurer); Gloria Rosenberger
Terry Yoder; Cathy Bresee;
Carolyn Brubaker; Rodney Brubaker;
Hope Brubaker; Evelyn Bartsch; Karl Bartsch;
Marvin Hall; Joyce Hall;
Faith King; Ruth Kitchin Tillman;
Doug McPherson; Rick Stehouwer;
Leah Witzig; Doug Yoder; Vonda Yoder;
Karen Rath; Becky Kephart; Nel Kopp;
Jim Prowant; Rob Bies; Jenn Bies;

Present on Zoom (4):

Tim Groff (Assistant Chair); Kathleen Stehouwer;
Ben Wideman; Meredith Wideman;

[Secretary's note: much material is contained in the links to the various reports. These minutes focus on special emphases and feedback in this meeting.]

Opening

Joel noted that various UMCers have been affected by COVID and other illnesses.

Joel presented a "Global Wealth Distribution Chart" which showed that 1.1% of the world's people control 46% of the world's resources while 55% of the world's people control 1.3% of the world's resources. May our budget reflect on proper use of wealth and commitment to addressing injustice in the world.

Joel noted the excitement of a new church year. He encouraged the various committees to get active, choose a chair, and begin meeting.

[Review & Approval of minutes from May meeting](#)

We reviewed the minutes for the May meeting. We made some changes in names and added some last names. The revised minutes were approved unanimously.

[Chair Report](#)

Joel Weidner presented the report. He noted that UMC leadership meets every other month on zoom.

Leah Witzig has been welcomed as a new elder. Doug Yoder plans to continue to serve as an elder until the end of September 2024 when Kate returns from sabbatical. A pastoral review for Kate and Ben is planned.

Creation Care Committee Report [[Seed Fund for Energy Efficiency Upgrades](#)]

The committee presented a proposal for a “Rotating Fund for Energy Efficiency Upgrades”. The fund is intended to assist congregants in financing energy efficiency upgrades in their homes.

Finance Committee Report

Jim Rosenberger and Terry Yoder present the report with focus on the following documents:

- [Balance Sheet](#)
- [Budget vs. Actual Income and Expense and Budget Proposal](#)
- [Income and Expense by Class](#)

The budget looks a lot like last year with a few notes:

- ❖ The committee encourages people to use Zelle to contribute to UMC; there are no fees and no checks for the committee to handle.
- ❖ The bulletin coordinator has been removed.
- ❖ Pay for the janitor has been increased from \$10 to \$15/hour.
- ❖ There were unexpected capital expenses for elevator and sewer this past year.
- ❖ A new heat pump and play area have been procured and installed.
- ❖ Churchwide mission remains the same; we do have a Mennonite student to support at GNTCS in Ghana.
- ❖ A request has come to support new MMN workers in Ghana who will not be placed at GNTCS; We decided not to support that this year; unless we get more information.
- ❖ Households supported by food bank have doubled since last year, see the Food Bank report below.
- ❖ Camp Hebron is still in budget although we may not return there; the funds could be seed money for a church retreat.
- ❖ The Mennonite Church USA conference will be in North Carolina this year.
- ❖ UMC is supporting Bethany Spicher Schonberg to attend AMBS.

The budget hit the UMC website this week. UMC members are encouraged to provide feedback before the November 2024 UMC meeting. The budget was approved with the understanding that amendments can be made until November.

Support for UMC Staff

We then moved to a discussion concerning support for UMC pastoral and administrative staff. Ben Wideman left the meeting for that discussion; Pastor Kate was not present at this business meeting.

Joel presented some history on compensation for Ben. While on the PSU campus, Ben was supported according to MCUSA pastoral compensation guidelines. This compensation practice continued when the PSU campus ministry ended and Ben assumed duties at UMC, including helping significantly with the

technical aspects of Zoom services during COVID isolation. This included the development of the weekly collage of pictures concerning what UMC congregants had done that past week.

Eventually, Ben settled into a quarter time position with UMC which included both pastoral and administrative functions. Recently, Ben has been appointed to assume the duties of administrative assistant for UMC, a position created and advertised internally within UMC over the past half year. The congregation believed that the role could best be filled by someone who is local and engaged in the congregation. Ben fits that description.

Joel and others summarized some questions that have emerged concerning Ben's role and compensation:

- A. There is confusion on Ben's role: is Ben a UMC pastor? Many of his duties are administrative. Bulletin preparation takes about 2 hours per week.
- B. We have never decided to hire an assistant pastor.
- C. Last year, Ben's compensation changed to \$37.5 per hour; more than we intended to pay for admin work.
- D. As part of his UMC role, Ben is expected to preach eight sermons per year. At current compensation that would be over \$400 per sermon. In contrast, our honorarium for visiting speakers is \$200.

Here are some considerations for the way forward:

- The finance committee would like to keep Ben's pay the same for an entire tax year.
- Keep Ben's compensation for the remainder of 2024 the same as last year while taking on additional duties. Ben would track his duties more closely and report to Joel monthly.
- We like to have outside speakers at UMC. Even with Ben preaching eight times a year, there are many Sundays available for outside speakers.

Meetinghouse Committee

The meeting house committee (Gloria Horst Rosenberger, Doug Yoder, Marvin Hall, Sam Yoder, Jim Prowant) continues to do incidental maintenance concerns such as light fixtures, bathroom paper towel containers, repairing folding chairs, painting as needed, picnic table umbrella, fire extinguishers, Rotor router plumbing, and keys.

The major item this year was upgrading the children's playground. The playground set was bought from Noah Kanagy's woodworking business in Belleville, PA for \$1590. The playground mulch was bought from Metzler's landscaping in Belleville, PA for \$385.

Food Bank Report

Mary Derstein prepared an update before this meeting which is included here in the minutes.

September is Hunger Action Month.

The [State College Food Bank](#) staff and volunteers are enjoying the new space opened in 2024 at 169 Gerald Street, State College. Groceries and monetary donations continue to be needed to meet the

increasing demand. Heather Lee, business manager for the State College Food Bank, said over the past six months the food bank has seen an increase from serving about 250 to 300 households a month to serving 400 to 425.

Non-perishable donations can be brought to the church and placed in bags or boxes under the coat rack at the parking lot entrance. Non-perishable donations can also be taken to the 24-hour drop-off location at 169 Gerald Street, State College. Monetary donations can be made on the [website](#) or checks can be mailed to State College Food Bank, 169 Gerald Street, State College, PA 16801.

The committee thanks UMC for helping to end food insecurity in the Centre Region.

Library Committee report

Mary Derstein and Diane Gingerich prepared an update before this meeting which is included here in the minutes.

New and used donated books of current or historical importance continue to be added to the library collection. This year we are displaying books in the elevator lobby which are relevant to the current sermon series. In Room #1, there is a display of recent issues of *Anabaptist World*, *Christian Century*, and *Sojourners* magazines as well as issues of educational and denominational publications. UMCers are encouraged to check out this helpful resource in the basement Room #1.

Ten Thousand Villages (TTV) Report

The State College TTV shop has closed; items continue to be sold in Bellefonte with monthly sales of around \$1,000. There may be holiday sales in late 2024.

Closing

We sang a blessing for our fellowship meal: "God is great and God is good".