

Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren
Church Board Retreat Minutes
January 9, 2021 9:00 AM via Zoom

In Attendance: Paula Burke (Chair), Joe Detrick (Moderator), Alyssa Cross (Clerk), Carroll Kreider, Mandy Hileman, Duane Hernley, Frank Rhodes, Pastor Greg Laszakovits, Rich Nornhold, Amy Karr, Jordan Eberhart, Pastor Pam Reist, Pastor Jason Haldeman, Pastor Josh Tindall, Kendra Gottshall, Kurt Sollenberger, Karen Ungemach, Olivia Knight, Ann Pineda, Kathy Nornhold, Craig Coble, Ellen Flury, Jim Hollinger, Barbara Ellis, George Snavelly, Vida Snavelly, Brittany Hoeschele, Lisa Rosenberger

I.	<p>Devotions Moderator Joe Detrick</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opened with devotions with a focus on Epiphany and the experience of the Wise Scholars who followed a star, found a stable, and returned home by a different route. ● Challenge for this New Year: consider new directions God may be charting out for the church board and the Elizabethtown congregation. ● Prayer included a call for healing in our fractured nation, prayers of compassion for our suffering partners in Nigeria, and prayers for the church board and its work and ministry on behalf of the congregation.
II.	<p>Discussion and Approval of December Minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approved as submitted.
III.	<p>Review 2021 Church Board Operation Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Church board meetings will continue to take place on the second Monday of the month at 6:45 PM. ● Jim Hollinger requested a Breeze refresher session.
IV.	<p>Pastoral Reports</p> <p>Pastor Josh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ideas for the future of worship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Our live stream service is being viewed 4x more than other COB congregations. Continuing excellent online worship and maintaining the community we have grown there is a congregational priority. We need to be intentional in being one community with no “second class” member status between those who attend in-person and those who participate online. ○ In order to be able to offer the best of both worship formats (in-person and online), it may be time to reconsider having two worship services. ○ Want to preserve the live element of the online service, but these two experiences won’t necessarily look the same. ○ Currently exploring different models of how it would work. Putting together a team (composed of Pastor Josh, Pastor Jason, Jerry Knight, Karen Ungemach, and possibly Paula Burke or someone from HR) to look at how we can make a worship experience that works well in both formats. The team is currently in the feasibility stage right now. Considerations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff hours required to manage two different worship services that we want to do in an excellent way. ■ Upgrade in production software and equipment to enhance the online worship experience depending on which format we decide to pursue; different set of equipment needs if we have more pre-produced pieces versus cutting into a live service. The Miriam O’Donnell memorial music fund can be utilized for these needs. <p>Pastor Jason</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meeting in-person is in sight for this year. Thinking about what Christian Ed will look like as we come back into the building while maintaining the momentum from online participation. Working on recruiting volunteers for all the children’s programming and a timeline to get everything ready prior to being back in person. ● Small groups launched in a challenging time, just about 3 weeks prior to the pandemic. Some groups have found ways to continue to stay connected and meet. Looking to onboard new small-groups in the coming year. ● Anti-Racism group is continuing to meet and doing great work. ECOB is working on an application to participate in a new program at Messiah University, “Thriving Together: Congregations for Racial

Justice”, led by Drew Hart. The program is designed not only to help congregations grapple with large historical, social and religious contexts of racial injustice, but to delve deeply into local histories and congregational practices. This will help program leaders determine ways individual congregations can come to be characterized by racial justice and participate together in larger regional efforts to achieve a just society—one characterized by the biblical understanding of shalom. The program is seeking applications from faith communities to form a cohort of 12 congregations that will partner and participate in the program.

Pam

- Thankful for prayer and support during surgery recovery
- **Request:** Church Board to make phone calls into homes again in order to reach out and maintain connection within our community.
 - If each Board member will make calls, there would be about 23 households per board member.
 - Pam can provide talking points
 - The office will coordinate the logistics of the list.
 - A shared Google Sheet could keep us coordinated with who has been contacted.
 - Can export data out of Breeze to get the breakdown of Jr High, Intersections, etc. so that people can sign up to reach out to those they are missing connections with.

Greg

- January farewell sermon series has begun with the hope that we will get more comfortable with being uncomfortable. Preaching on things that might be harder to hear so that we reach beyond our comfort zone and come out as more faithful people. Have been very intentional in checking in with Lititz so that the series is not too “Etown focused” knowing that we have folks tuning in from beyond the local congregation.
- Expression of thanks and gratitude for being part of this congregation.

Executive Committee Update (Paula)

- Interest in hiring an outside HR consultant to conduct a review to help give us some clarity as we move forward with staffing needs.
- We are making sure we have things covered as best as we can with Greg’s departure.

V.

Breakout Sessions

The group broke out into small teams to reflect on the 2019 “Start, Continue, Stop” exercise and to determine 1-3 things that we as a church and board should be focusing on for the next 6-12 months. What needs our attention and where should we be directing our energy?

Group 1

1. Keeping the congregation better informed on what the Board and Commissions are working on.
 - Hearing some concerns regarding how we are addressing the change in the pastoral team. How can we reassure the congregation that we are focused on this and working on their behalf?
2. Increasing our capability for connection.
 - There are some people who struggle with technology and don’t know how to participate in the live chat or how to send a video. Do we need to offer training or tutorial sessions so they can better participate?
3. Being mindful of local and global needs.
 - We have to be careful that we aren’t only addressing local needs in our services. Need to provide options for the broader community to participate in local community efforts or to offer a more global option.

Group 2

1. Leadership moving forward.
 - What does our leadership model look like? What role would a new person take on? It is important that we know as a congregation which direction we want to go so that we have a good fit.
2. Building project and reopening.
 - What does that look like now? Have our needs changed?
3. Fostering joyful volunteerism in the church.
4. Intentionality in maintaining relationships.

- As we move towards a time of being able to gather in person, saying connected with our virtual community, also.

Group 3

1. Pastoral transition and staffing needs.
 - Developing a clear vision for what the future of our congregation looks like and making sure we are staffed for our future needs, not our current state.
2. Planning for a safe transition back to in-person services
 - What will our congregation look like when we are back in-person? Who will return? Can we survey our online community to find out what their intentions are going forward?
3. Producing excellent online and in-person services.
 - Concern for stretching pastors too thin in producing two services.
 - Concern for maintaining deliberate connection as one body and community
 - Opportunity to set the building up from a technology perspective to be able to offer accessibility to online participants in areas outside of worship. (for example, streaming and video conference capabilities for adult SS)
 - Need to determine a metric for success and continue to evaluate what works and what doesn't. Be willing to pivot if something isn't working.
4. Being purposeful and intentional in continuing our openness to all
 - Using our building as a hub to help build community - openness to outside groups or organizations.

Group 4

1. Planning ahead for transition back to in-person worship.
 - Communicating the re-opening plan to the congregation.
2. Revisiting the building project.
 - Have our priorities changed? What is our plan for moving forward?
3. What are our priorities as a church with regards to staffing?
 - Is it time for additional paid staff?
 - Fewer people are available for long-term volunteer commitments. Should we have more paid staff to help manage all of the things that previously were handled by volunteers. The congregation has historically relied on volunteers for many initiatives, but is that sustainable for the future?

Group 5

1. Identifying staffing needs.
 - Being open to new staffing ideas to reflect what we identify as the realities of where our congregation needs to be.
 - Is there a need for an administrator or IT focused position?
2. Being intentional in building and re-building relationships.
 - Celebrating a grand re-opening
3. Building project
 - Don't want to be distracted by the building when we're rebuilding relationships, but don't want it to fall off the table.
 - As society reopens following the pandemic, there is potential for our in-person community to grow, also, which would only accentuate the building challenges we have now.

Group 6

1. Inviting vs Welcoming.
 - Defining what church will look like in-person and digitally and developing processes for reaching out both ways.
 - There may be geographical pockets of online attendees. We could facilitate visits to some of these communities.
 - Outreach to the community via in-person events.
2. Review of the building project.
 - Specific discussions regarding daycare. What is our core mission? Are we a manager or a landlord for the daycare?
3. Addressing staffing needs with regard to an administrator or CEO-type position who would be responsible for what happens in the building.

General Discussion

1. Following the breakout sessions, the majority of the large group discussion focused on the topic of staffing and volunteers to address the needs of the congregation. Paula noted that we still do not have a Board Chair Elect for 2021 after reaching out to seventeen individuals.
 - Increasingly, people have less time to devote to volunteerism.
 - Some church models are increasing the amount of professionalized ministry. How do we identify aspects we could professionalize without discouraging volunteerism or taking away from the community-driven aspect of the congregation?
 - Do we need to reconsider volunteer responsibilities? Is the role of Board Chair too much for one person to handle? Could the responsibilities be divided between co-chairs? This might make the task less onerous and we could go back and ask some of the seventeen "no's" if they would serve if the position were divided between two people.
 - Revisit church structure regarding the bureaucracy around committees and commissions. Form more project-focused teams that can accomplish specific goals in a shorter amount of time. Allows people to commit to projects they feel passionate about without risking burn-out.
 - Finding volunteers and inspiring "Joyful Volunteerism"
 - One staffing model that some larger churches use is a volunteer coordinator of pastoral care that makes use of the resources of some of the retired ministers in the congregation. There is precedence for this at being effective.
 - Framing volunteer requests so that it comes across as an honor to be asked to utilize one's gifts and talents to serve the congregation and further the mission of the church.
 - Recognizing and celebrating the dedication of everyone who has volunteered over the years.
 - Mentoring from current or previous leadership to help encourage newer/younger members towards volunteering; the idea of moving from a passive consumer of church life to an active partner in the mission and ministry.
 - Could have a Sunday School session featuring a panel of volunteers who have done various things over the years who can highlight the fun or uplifting things they've learned via volunteerism. Gifts Discernment could potentially be the "host" group.
2. There has been an intentional effort to keep the congregation informed in the work of the church board via emails and newsletters, but we recognize that not everyone may see them or get a chance to read every detail. In the interest of addressing concerns and to assure the congregation that work is continuing, the Church Board will host a "**Coffee with the Church Board**" Sunday School session on **Sunday, February 7** as a general time of sharing and as a listening session.
3. The Board officially recognizes and thanks Greg Davidson Laszakovits for his years of service to the congregation and is grateful that the Davidson-Laszakovits family will continue to worship at ECOB.

VI.

Closing Thoughts and Prayer

- Pastor Jason closed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Alyssa Cross (Clerk)
January 15, 2020