

FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH BOARD MEETING – August 20, 2026, 7:00 p.m. FMC Church Basement

Chair Brett Esau called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The lamp was lit symbolizing the presence of the Holy Spirit over the meeting. Attending: Brett Esau; Pastor Josh Janzen; Deacons Don Esau, Vicki Hinz-Ensz, Sue Gerber; Lori Thimm, Dorothy Zimmerman, Jim Ensz, Jane Esau, Pastor Sarah Neher Reimer, and Adm. Assistant Vicki Frerking. Jim Ensz was in attendance for the Building Committee. Lori Thimm led devotions on 1 Cor. 15:10. Pastor Sarah will lead devotions in September, Grace in October, and Dorothy in November.

OLD BUSINESS

1. ▼Lori Thimm moved to approve the **June Board meeting minutes**; seconded by Don Esau. Motion passed.
2. Dorothy Zimmerman reported that the **July 23 – 25, 2027 FMC Sesquicentennial Celebration Committee** will send out postcard invitations to current and previous members who no longer live here. A tentative list of activities for the weekend was presented. The board thanks the Committee for their work on this and the projects commemorating the anniversary including reprinting of “God’s Love in Action” to include the last 50 years, a church cookbook, and a 2027 church calendar.
3. Pastor Josh, John Penner, Brett Esau, and Dorothy Zimmerman presented a draft proposal of FMC’s **Constitution and By-law changes** for the Church Board to review before presentation at the Congregational meeting on Sept 13. Board members proposed changes to the document. ▼Dorothy Zimmerman moved to present the Constitution and Bylaws with the changes suggested by the Church Board to the Congregation for their information. Sue Gerber seconded the motion. Motion passed. The September 13 congregational meeting is for presentation and questions only. No vote will be taken until the annual meeting in January 2027.
4. ▼Lori Thimm moved to approve the Safe Church Policy as presented to the board; Seconded by Jane Esau. Motion passed. The policy will be presented to the congregation on August 23.
5. Discussion of an Emergency Management Plan was tabled until the October meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

1. ▼Vicki Hinz-Ensz moved to approve the new lease for the office copy machine as presented. The current lease expires Sept 21. Seconded by Dorothy Zimmerman. Motion passed.

PASTOR’S REPORTS: Senior Pastor Josh:

1. He is working on a sermon series for Labor Day through Thanksgiving.
2. He has plans to resume lunch visits with elementary FMC students at Tri County, Thayer Central, and Beatrice.
3. He presented a proposal for his Sabbatical May 3, 2027 – September 6, 2027, with exceptions of being present for Vacation Bible School, if needed, and the FMC Sesquicentennial Celebration. His sabbatical will be four months long as he receives one month per year of pastor service and completion of his fourth year is on September 1, 2027. His central focus will be on Faithful Rural Ministry in a Post-Christendom Culture. It will include reading a number of books on the church in rural America, attending a conference at the Univ. of the Ozark in Arkansas, attending Cohort Conversations in Dubuque, Iowa, two weekend guided retreats at Christ the King Priory at Schuyler, NE, and one or two vacations for family time. Funding will come from WDC, the NE Mennonite Pastor Cluster, and FMC’s continuing education fund.
▼Vicki Hinz-Ensz moved the board approve Pastor Josh’s Sabbatical timeline and focus of study as proposed; seconded by Don Esau. Motion passed.

Associate Pastor of Faith Formation Sarah:

1. The Safe Church Policy was distributed to the Church Board and will be presented to the congregation on August 23 with training on August 30.

2. A training and workshop for Sunday School Teachers was held August 16. Sunday School will begin Sept 13.
3. Brett and Darcy have agreed to be Youth Sponsors for one more year. Mike and Debbie Goossen will be Youth Sponsors for two years following that.
4. Her Ordination interview is scheduled for September.
5. She will have completed three years of service at FMC at the end of January, 2027 when the congregation will need to renew her term. This could be done at the Annual meeting. The Education Council oversees her position and will begin working on a review of her position and job performance.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mission, Peace & Service Council:

1. Dorothy Zimmerman reported that Shepherds have been assigned food to bring to the church picnic on September 27, Tracy Crawford will provide ice cream, and Dan Kunzman will provide pulled pork.

Worship Committee: Judy Lichti has been added to the piano/organ Sunday rotation. Thanks, Judy!

Education Council: Teachers for fall have been secured. There are eighteen children in Peace Club to be led by Kathy Casey, Barb Thimm, and Jane Esau.

Building Committee:

1. Jim has repaired the plaster and paint upstairs damaged by condensation. This is a recurring issue. To resolve it, Tracy Crawford will install a lift sump pump.
2. The bearings in the air handler have been replaced.
3. Discussion was held on installing a handrail going up and down the steps to the chancel area for choir members, etc.
4. The highway sign is weathered and not as visible as it could be. Jim Enszt got estimates to replace it with a digital LED sign. The estimated cost is \$25-40,000.

Central Treasurer: Lori reviewed the July financial reports.

Other Agenda Items: None brought to the Board.

With no further business, Chair Esau adjourned the meeting with prayer at 9:50 pm and extinguished the lamp, signifying that the Holy Spirit goes with us into the world. The next meeting will be on September 17.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vicki Frerking, Adm. Assistant