

Assembly Mennonite Church

Congregational Meeting

Sunday, March 19, 2023, 11am

Minutes from this meeting:

- Pastor Karl Shelly is leading this meeting.
 - He begins with a statement explaining the need for and process of Assembly congregational meetings.
 - The Welcome Statement is projected (also on handout).
 - Karl speaks on the ‘why’ behind this revisiting of the Welcome statement (see handout).
 - Karl reads out the three thinking questions (see handout).
 - This meeting is for an initial discussion; if we decide to go forward with a new Welcome statement, there will be a smaller team that will work on it further and propose a new one.
 - It is yet to be determined whether we need a smaller team to do this
 - It is yet to be determined who would be on that team
 - Karl notes the last bit on the handout that states that the statement is not enough to make us a welcoming congregation.
 - Those present, including Zoom, will get together in groups of 4 to discuss these three questions, after a while, the group members will change into new configurations to discuss further.
 - Groups of four meet, in two different configurations
 - Meet for about 6-8 minutes each time
 - Participants on Zoom also met in break out rooms
 - Karl asks for open sharing responses, both to the questions and to the process this morning
 - Group wondered about the phrase “reconciling faith community”; seems like it might be obsolete
 - That was seconded by several other groups
 - Remove “regardless of” to replace with something more positive
 - Where is the Welcome statement to be found?
 - On website
 - Several said they saw it there as they were considering coming to Assembly, and it was instrumental in their decision
 - Note that it was previously on the AssemblyLine
 - Should it be returned there?
 - Should it be more “in front of us” as a community?

- As we periodically review and remind ourselves of the rights and privileges of the child, should we do the same with the Welcome statement?
 - Should we change 'gender' to 'gender identity and expression'?
 - Should we change 'physical abilities' to 'all abilities', as a way to also include cognitive, etc.
 - Should we add 'cultural context'?
 - Should we add 'interfaith'?
 - Should we add 'are welcome to attend and are welcome to participate in ALL aspects of church life'?
 - This process of breaking into small groups is affirmed by some, especially those who feel more comfortable sharing in a small group

Respectfully submitted by:

Maria Wenger

Approved by Leadership Group on April 11, 2023