

January 7th, 2024

Indeed, as Patrick has just noted, ... in our own muddled way we as a board have been practising the examen. In fact, during the seven years that I have been on the board I have experienced a process of reflecting back and discerning forward at each meeting. I am proud of the work of our board and proud of the work of our church. I am humbled each time I hear the reports of all of our deacons. These reports demonstrate the vitality, the energy and the commitment of our deacons and our church family. All of us come together each week, each month to respond to the needs of our members and reach out to the broader community. Susanne's resignation gave us a new opportunity to reflect back, to appreciate all that Susanne has done to enhance the spiritual and emotional lives of our members and to look forward and consider a plan without Susanne as we enter a new year. We have appreciated the opportunity for open discussions with you, our members and it has helped us consider options for a new plan without Susanne but a plan that will continue to provide programming and support mechanisms that support us and unify us as a church family.

As you are aware, we have not established a pastoral search committee but have been attempting to secure more active involvement from you, our members. As has been demonstrated, many people have stepped up to share their talents in many and various ways. We have been encouraged by this positive response. It has given us confidence to consider that we can do things differently, that we can all contribute to ensure we thrive in a different way.

So, Next steps..... in the interim we are proceeding with one primary pastor with a plan to bring a motion to our Annual General Meeting at the end of March for a plan forward. At this point we feel that we should continue with one primary pastor for a predetermined period of time and then assess how we are doing, This predetermined period could be six months, it could be a year, but regardless we plan to bring forward a plan for your consideration and your vote. And of course, we continue to welcome your thoughts and considerations over the next 2 1/2 months leading up to our AGM.

I would also note that Patrick has been continuing to serve and support Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church as he has for the past two and a half years. He commits 20% of his time to Tiefengrund. Patrick has enjoyed his time in the country and I am well aware (given than I am related to everyone in Tiefengrund) that Tiefengrund is very appreciative of his contribution to the nurture and vitality of their small rural church community. At this point it is not our intent to alter this arrangement but we will be voting on continuing for another year at our upcoming board meeting this month.

We are also very appreciative of Luke Bushman who has been serving as our Pastor of Children and Youth for over a year. You may recall that we hired Luke in partnership with Osler Mennonite Church. Luke serves Osler 75% of his time leaving 25% of his week with us. We know that Luke will continue to contribute to not only the program needs of our children and youth but also serve our broader congregation by sharing sermons and contributing in other ways.

I look forward to our continuing discussions and look forward to seeing all of how at our Annual General Meeting at the end of March.