Trustees Update by Ken Longacre

First of all, we want to welcome a new addition to the Trustee's. Dane Landes has agreed to join the Trustee's! Thanks Dane!

As I write this article the Fellowship Hall AC unit has been completely installed. They are still working on the Lobby unit, but that may also be completed by the time this newsletter is distributed. We also will be replacing a couple of the Sunday School wing split-system basement units. We discovered a bad compressor when we were doing our spring AC checks, and because some parts are not available for the older unit that we have, we decided the best long-term course of action was to get a new system. The Endowment Fund will be used to cover the cost of that project.

We are grateful to all who came out to help spread the new rubber mulch in the playground. We decided to switch over to rubber mulch because the wood mulch deteriorates too quickly and was more expensive in the long run than using rubber mulch that lasts much longer. The rubber mulch we installed is specifically for playground use. It is non-toxic and meets federal flammability standards. It retains its cushiony softness year-round and will not freeze. It drains and dries quickly, is odor free, non-staining and non-abrasive. It will not rot, attract insects, or promote insect breeding.

The new window inserts were installed in the Fellowship Hall. Thanks Russ Haas!

A new blind will be installed in the library to replace a shade that was not working anymore.

As always, if you see anything that needs Trustee attention, let any Trustee know. They are Ken Longacre, Brian Rush, Terry Landis, Will Sadler, and Dane Landes.

2026 Summer Youth Schedule

Wednesday, July 1
Hangout Night 6:30 pm
Wednesday, July 8
Regular Night 6:30 pm
Friday-Sunday, July 10-12
Jr. Youth Retreat @ Hemlock Springs
Wednesday, July 15
Progressive Dinner 5:45 pm
Wednesday, July 22
Regular Night 6:30 pm
Wednesday, July 29
Hangout Night 6:30 pm
Wednesday, August 5
Slip 'n' slide kickball 6:30 pm
Wednesday, August 12
Regular Night 6:30 pm
Wednesday, August 19
Pool Party/Fall Kickoff 6:00 pm @ Ken & Cindy's
Events at Swamp Mennonite Church unless noted.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:
Primary/Youth Sunday School Kickoff is September 13
Wednesday Evening Meal & Clubs resumes September 16

2nd & 4th Sundays
in July & August
6:00-8:00 pm

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Ministry Beyond the Program by Pastor Nathan

We crossed the threshold into summer. Whether you define summer as the end of the school year and days over 90 degrees or the time on the calendar when the days start to get shorter again, summer is here.

This year, it felt like we skipped right over spring. We went from cold days, with even some late snow, to summer heat with thunderstorms. I was caught off-guard, unprepared for the heat. Not only were the air conditioning units not in the windows, but our storm windows were still in so we couldn't even get a breeze at night.

When the seasons change, our habits need to change with them. We put away winter clothes and get out the summer clothes. We stop going to the gym and start to run outside. We make less tea and start to garden.

The same thing can happen in life. We have a habit or pattern that served a real purpose. An exercise or dieting plan, a rhythm of hanging out with family or friends, a routine that brings comfort in a time of grief. But then the seasons change. People grow up. Life moves on. And sometimes we hang onto empty routines or practices, doing them simply for the sake of doing them, even though they don't make sense anymore.

We can do the same thing in our discipleship, as we follow Jesus. We are called to minister in the way of Jesus. The Spirit of Jesus moves among us, opening our hearts to the poor, the foreigner, the unhoused, the hungry, the orphan and widow. We see pain and brokenness in our world, and we organize ourselves to minister to meet real needs.

Peter tells us in 1 Peter 4:10 that we are to use whatever gift we have received to serve others, as faithful administrators of God's grace in its various forms. Each of us is a minister.

The Spirit moves and ministry happens.

But then, sometimes, the Spirit moves on. The need has been met. But we keep on doing the old thing. The ministry becomes a program. The program becomes a production. And we become captive to an idea or practice that has outlived its purpose.

Jesus points out that you don't pour new wine into old wineskins. The old wineskins have already been stretched, they have already served their purpose. If you put new wine in, new energy with new ideas for kingdom mission and ministry, it will burst the old wineskins and both will be lost.

Tim Chester and Steve Timmis write in their book Everyday Church:

"We need to get away from the idea that a minister, in the sense of an ordained church leader, does gospel ministry in the pulpit on Sunday. In a New Testament vision of church the whole community does gospel ministry in the staff room, on the street, in the workplace, at the school gate, and in the kitchen. Here in the context of ordinary life they minister to one another and to unbelievers. The church leader is someone who is sacrificed from the front line (at least in part) to equip everyone else for the front line. The primary context of mission and community and pastoral care is everyday life.

"When we think of evangelism, we should think of Gary at a meeting of the home owners' association. We should think of Hannah in her office. We should think of Sharon serving a meal to her husband.

"We need to recapture the sense that gospel ministry is not something done by pastors with the support of ordinary Christians but something done by ordinary Christians with the support of pastors."

This summer, we are trying to create a new wineskin with Summer ViBeS. On its own, Summer ViBeS is not a ministry. But, if each of us shows up with a heart to minister to others, it becomes a vessel in which ministry can happen. On its own, Summer ViBeS is not an outreach. But, if each of us connects with unsaved friends, inviting them into our lives and community, it becomes a vessel in which outreach can happen.

As we grow in our capacity to be bearers of good news; as we allow the Spirit to (ad)minister the grace of Jesus through us to others; the Church will be built up, the kingdom of heaven will go forth, and lives will be changed and transformed, to the glory of God the Father, to whom be all praise now and forevermore. Amen!

Ministry Highlights by Pastor Tracy

As we have finished up our ministry year and now lean into summer, we can look back with gratitude on what God has done. Some things have come to an end, and other things are just beginning!

- Clubs celebrated the end of the year with the always fun and exciting Pinewood Derby and ice cream party. It was held inside this year due to the weather, but even though it was wet outside, the kids' spirits were not dampened! Thank you Clubs volunteers!
- The youth ended their year with an overnight lock-in which included mini-golf, disc golf, all kinds of other games, snacks, hanging out, and not much sleep. Wednesday night youth group took a break from mid-May to mid-June. I took the youth sponsors out for Mexican food during that time as a way to say thank you for all the time and energy they put into serving the youth throughout the year. Then the youth group kicked off the summer with a pool party at Bill and Katie's. Thanks again Bill and Katie!
- Most of our Sunday School classes ended for the year the week before Memorial Day weekend. Thank you SS teachers! It is nice to have a break for the summer, but we will also be offering an elective this summer taught by me and Jim King, as well as a couple sessions of Child Protection Training facilitated by Moraya Longacre.
- The Baptism/Membership Class came to an end through culminating in a new beginning. Sara Rush, Franklin Cooper, Rachel Snedigar, and Chloe Hoch were baptized into membership and began a new chapter in their faith journey with Swamp. Dane Landes and Dennis and Cara Derstine were welcomed into membership on confession of faith. On top of that, that Sunday was also Covenant Sunday where we began a new year of covenanting with one another, and we also began our new relationship with LMC by being officially welcomed into the conference. And a fellowship meal to boot! What a full and awesome day that was!
- We began a new era of intergenerational summer activities as Summer ViBeS kicked off! We had a great turnout, and everyone seemed to enjoy the fun activities and relaxed atmosphere. The pickleball courts were rockin, the snacks were just what the doctor ordered, and the live music provided the perfect atmosphere for it all. Thank you to all those who are helping to pull it off!
- LMC began a new era as well with their first Assembly/ YouthCon which was held at Millersville University. Pastor Nathan and I along with a couple youth sponsors and a couple senior youth guys attended for the weekend. We enjoyed pretty much everything except the cafeteria food. The speakers and workshops were engaging, the connection opportunities were valuable, and we even got out and played some disc golf during free time. We're excited to continue to build our relationship with LMC.
- Here's a bonus new thing that is happening! If you have a hard time keeping up with all the kids and youth at Swamp. If you're not sure who's who, who's with whom, who likes what, and how old they all are, you're in luck! Keep an eye out on the Swamp Family Board in the coming weeks and we'll help you out.

Church Board Highlights

The meeting started with a devotional on Romans 8, led by Brandon Longacre, where he compared living in the Spirit and living in the flesh.

After handling some administrative details, the board approved the 2026-2027 MEP list recommended by the MEP team. The list of students is Will Commons, Franklin Cooper, Caleb Snedigar, Esther Snedigar, Isaac Snedigar, Rachel Snedigar, Abigail Troyer, and Evelyn Troyer.

Two decisions made by email were reviewed. The board approved the purchase of rubber chips for the playground and a new compressor for the basement air conditioning system.

An update was given on the transition to LMC. Pastor Nathan reviewed our by-laws, making a list suggested updates for the change in affiliation. Laura Rush offered to review them.

Laura presented a request to use our facilities from a new hybrid homeschool group known as Rivendell Academy. They are looking to use the Sunday School wing and basement areas on Thursdays and Fridays. There are approximately 35 students K through 4th grade. The trustees are willing to prepare a one-year agreement. After discussion, the board approved this use of the facilities.

Laura addressed a conversation that she had with Pastor Nathan about an article that appeared in the March/April issue of Growth Matters that was written by the Rev. Mark R. Wenger on the topic of immigration. Pastor Nathan recognized that the article was not received how he intended it. Anyone who is still bothered by the article is encouraged to reach out to Pastor Nathan, Laura Rush, or Dan Cooper for further conversation and clarification. The board discussed more effective ways to address and talk about things that can be divisive.

The restructuring of Mission Outreach as noted in Pastor Tracy's report was highlighted. The change will separate out "mission" and "outreach" to be renamed as Kingdom Partner Liaisons for long-term, budgeted needs and Community Support Team/Fund for short-term, spontaneous needs.

Pastor Nathan's report addressed how we view wedding and funeral receptions. These are family events, however, when the congregation is invited, we will treat them as congregational activities. They will be listed in the church calendar as a congregational activity, not a rental, and will be advertised in the bulletin. This was inconsistent in the past but will be done consistently in the future.

The board discussed questions from Ministry Team regarding the criteria for new members. There is a discrepancy between the Church Board Policy Manual and the by-laws. The board decided this warranted further review and will be discussed at the July Church Board meeting.

Jim Landis reviewed his Audit Report for 2025. It was approved by the board.

Isaac Longacre offered the closing prayer.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 7 at 7:00 pm.

Family Bulletin Board

The bulletin board in the fellowship hall is the "Swamp Family Board"! We would love for you to post flyers, kids' sports schedules, information on concerts, plays, fairs, or anything else our Swamp families are involved in. Please speak with Pastor Tracy if you have any questions.

Updating Directory Information

Are you moving, getting a new phone number or email address? This includes students going to/from college. Be sure to let your church secretary know to update your information for future editions of the Church Directory and to place an update in an upcoming Sunday Bulletin.