

MAY 2021

Ridgeview Mennonite Church

BUDGET

Budgeted	\$127,100.00
YTD Received	124,574.00
Education Fund	1,200.00

THE IDI (INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY)

Task Group began meeting monthly in February. Our task is to suggest ways our congregation can focus on building the capacity to interact with differences. The goal is to eventually have conversations about racism.

Members of the Task Group are Jill Heine, Evie Hershey, Robert Kanagy, and Merv Landis. After a few months of brainstorming, we have named ourselves the Journey to Multicultural Understanding group or JMU for short.

During each meeting, we reflect on scripture, share how we are implementing personal goals of growth along the IDI continuum, and share new learnings. We also develop suggestions for action steps to help ourselves and the congregation build the capacity to interact with differences.

Please pray for us and contact us if you have any questions.
~ Jill Heine



BIRTHDAYS

- 14 Donald Martin
- 18 Audrey Kanagy
- 19 Alex Kauffman
- 20 Amos Zook
- 24 Jan Stoltzfus
- 26 Dan King
- 28 Rhoda Beiler
- 29 Laura Glick
- 31 Scott Smith

ANNIVERSARIES

- 18 Lance & Marsha Horst
- Steve & Bethany Jacke
- 19 Cliff & Carol Wenger
- 20 Tony & Christie Gehman
- 25 Scott & Lisa Smith

OUR DIGITAL PRESENCE INCREASES!

One of the many “firsts” we experienced this past year was worshipping online. It took some getting used to as well as upgrades in equipment, but now we have a regular presence in the digital world. So what does that mean? Beyond our own personal experience, negative or positive, it means that between 190 and 200 people are viewing our public Facebook per day according to the data they provide.



Two hundred sixteen people have “liked” Ridgeview’s page and can follow what’s happening. This past Sunday’s morning worship service was received by 141 people with 72 people engaging in it in some way. Many of you have shared your appreciation for the Christmas Eve service which was shared with 642 people and 180 watched at least part of the service. This is far more activity than our pre-pandemic digital presence.

What do all these numbers really mean? To be honest, I’m not sure. What I do know is that the digital world is here to stay. We can dismiss it, complain about it, or choose to see it as an opportunity. Our presence on Facebook has certainly grown in the past year and while there is nothing that can fully substitute being together in the flesh, why not use all the resources we have to share God’s love and hope with as many people as are open to receiving it! Let’s trust in God’s promise from Isaiah 55:11 “It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.”

POLLINATOR BED DEDICATION, JUNE 6

Join us in dedicating the effort of many people in creating the pollinator bed on the east side of the parking lot. Marcy Hostetler, Lindsey Leiningner, and Emily Smedly from the Lancaster Watershed Leadership Academy partnered with Heidi Loncosky in this project and will be a part of the dedication. We pray that it will bloom and grow, reminding all who enjoy its beauty, both people and bees, that



“When you give them your breath, life is created, and you renew the face of the earth. May the glory of the Lord continue forever! The Lord takes pleasure in all he has made!” Psalm 104:30-31

RIDGEVIEW AND BRANCH SIGNS

Work is being done to design signs to help persons new to Ridgeview or new to Branch Community or Branch Network. The changes in the foyer will include an information center to help welcome visitors. Also, plans are being developed for directional signs inside the church building.

A roadside sign is needed to identify the facility where Branch Community meets. Signs outside the building are also needed to direct people to either the Ridgeview or Branch offices. Work is underway to find solutions to these needs.

RIDGEVIEW AND BRANCH COMMUNITY

There are numerous articles about the state of the church in the United States post-pandemic. Some persons are predicting that a significant number of congregations will close in the next few years. Many congregations are smaller than they were in the past and are being forced to make changes such as sharing their building with another congregation or other organizations.

I am glad that we are already sharing our facility with Branch Community and that we started to do that out of a vision of faithfulness. Several years ago some Ridgeview participants began to pray that we would find a way to use what had become an underused facility as the size of our congregation changed. Then a person from Branch Community stopped by the church one day and asked if we would have interest in renting some space to them.

There were careful discernment sessions to some of which the entire congregation was invited to attend. At the same time another group also approached us about rental of our facility and rental to them was also part of the discernment. That time of communal discernment led to our saying yes to Branch Community and no to the other congregation.

Branch Community has grown and is now using more of the facility, including the sanctuary for their every other week church service. Branch leadership is clear that without this facility they would not have experienced the growth that has happened in the past two years and they continually express appreciation for this partnership in the gospel. The pastors of the two churches are in regular communication and pray for and support each other.

Branch also communicates well with the Administration Commission keeping us informed and it seeks counsel on advertising some events they sponsor. One such recent event was included in the ACC Currents magazine. In addition to paying rent for use of space, Branch Community has gifted one section of new roof, provided volunteer labor to reduce the cost of another section of new roof and has paid half of the cost of upgrading technology for more successful live streaming of our church services.

We are now working together on the foyer and library upgrades to better serve the two congregations in these changing times. After plans for the area were approved by the Ridgeview congregation, Dave Smucker has been providing leadership in finding a construction company and getting a quote for us together to do further planning. This is another example of the partnership that has been developing between our two congregations. Ridgeview and Branch are looking at a collaborative fundraising meal to provide funds for the foyer project with Elton Horst giving leadership to the meal.

The rental income is important in our church budget to sustain both our congregational programming and our church and mission witness beyond the congregation. We want our facilities that are dedicated to God to serve kingdom purposes in our community and Ridgeview and Branch together means increased service in our community and around the world. As I learn more about Branch Community, it becomes clearer to me that they are reaching people that we are not likely to reach and we may be reaching people they are less likely to reach. They reach more persons coming out of the "plain" Anabaptist community in much the same way that Ridgeview did in an earlier period of her history. Thus, together we provide a more holistic ministry in our community than either could do alone.

For those of us working with Branch Community and Branch Network, what began as a rental agreement has grown and changed to be a partnership between two congregations that bless and support each other. Such working together in these divisive and polarized times is a witness to the gospel of peace. May both congregations continue to grow in walking in the way of Jesus Christ!
Dick Thomas, Minister of Administration

GO! SUNDAY, MAY 30

Yes, it is Memorial Day weekend and many of us have plans with family and friends. But we would like to invite you to find a way to care for God's creation as an act of worship on this GO! Sunday weekend. **Why?** As Rob Bell says, "The way you treat creation reflects the way you feel about the creator." In caring for what God created, we are acknowledging and giving thanks for this precious gift that continues to point to the character of the Creator. To preserve and restore creation is to participate in the witness of creation to Creator God (Romans 1:20).

What can you do? There are many ways families or individuals can participate in creation care wherever you are. Here are a few ideas: pick up trash around your home or in a local park, spend time in quiet contemplation/prayer in nature, plant a native tree or plants, or go for an educational hike – getting to know aspects of God's creation.

We are also planning a service opportunity to do together for those who would like to participate in a group activity on Sunday, May 30. We will gather at the church mid-morning for instructions and prayer before heading out to a location. More details to come.



May 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 10:15 Worship 11:15-12noon Listening together	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 MOTHER'S DAY 10:15 Worship	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 10:15 Worship 11:15-12noon Listening together	17	18	19 7am Men's breakfast	20	21	22
23 10:15 Worship Fellowship meal dine-in or take-out	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 GO SUNDAY	31 MEMORIAL DAY					