Discussion about our Church’s vision.

On Sunday, September 16, 2012, Kalamazoo Mennonite Fellowship had a productive, freewheeling discussion around these questions:

1. What's going well?

2. What's not going so well?

3. What are you looking forward to in the next three months?

4. When (or if) should we begin to move beyond our small house church?

Jim Carpenter's questions:

1. What is your group's vision for the next 3-5 years?

2. What are you learning about the community around the church as you pursue this vision?

3. What are the challenges around implementing your vision? What underdeveloped gifts exist within your group, and how might those be encouraged?

4. How can we [the Conference] strengthen communication with your group? What resources would you like conference staff to help you identify and connect with?

Carolyn Ruth wrote up these notes, and brought them to the meeting:

Church Vision

* To show the light of God through our words (prayers, Bible readings, teachings) and actions (giving, supporting a student, children’s church).
* Provide a casual and welcoming service
* Sharing our lives with each other (Sunday Service, Email, Facebook, Home and hospital visits, childcare, transportation)

What’s going well? We are well connected. Because we are small, we are able to freely share our life together. This is what we have wanted to be, and we are.

The original vision of the church imagined us having the local community be important. As it has turned out, we attract people from a very wide geographical area (Martin/Battle Creek/the East and West sides). We don’t have much of a corporate ministry (that is, an outreach ministry we share in the community), but we are strong in supporting each other’s individual ministries.

What’s not going so well? We are small, and even shrinking a bit.

How are things going for parents in raising children as grown up Christians? It would be better if we had more peers for Isaac and Maya (in the future). We wonder if there might be other house churches or Conference resources for this; perhaps meeting monthly, or something. We wonder if there might be other parachurch organizations (like Awana) that might be good. We wonder if it might be good to do something with the Friends’ Meeting across the way.

Because we are small, we really miss one another when we are not here. Cancellations should be few and far between, and communicated as soon as possible ahead of time, with Council agreement. But we’ll try not to cancel if we can. It’s caused problems the two times we’ve done it. We hope that, with Will in town, we’ll have to do it less frequently.

It’s been challenging for Bess to coordinate so much; she is ready to do everything, but not everything needs to be done every week. It’s been great to have Angela regularly bring soup. It might be good for others to bring a meal (Janine volunteered). It’s been a bit challenging to know when church school will be needed.

We want to be the kind of church where Jesus will send people to get to know him better. We want to be growing, serving, ready to welcome others.

We could do a better job of letting people know about the church. Perhaps we could do more marketing and advertising, even have T-shirts and sweatshirts. We want people to know that children are welcome here. It would be good to fix our Mennonite flag so we can fly it on Sundays and people can know we are here. We should reach out to Conference about students and other Mennonite referrals.

Things people agreed to do:

Will is going to contact the Friends’ Clerk about Sunday / First Day school.

Will is going to write Jim Carpenter about Jim’s questions.

Janine will plan to get on the meal rotation.

Council should discuss these questions, and how to market the church.

Bess and Jason agreed to fix the flag holder (DONE!)