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KPMB: CHURCH PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

This church profile has been developed by the Pastoral Search Committee in the process of finding a suitable new pastor for Killarney Park Mennonite Brethren (KPMB) church. It has been compiled from written records, the survey “Confirming Who We Are As Killarney Park,” and conversations and discussions over several months.

It is an abbreviated version of a longer document that is a reference for the congregation to confirm understanding of church life and help in orienting anyone in leadership, whether on staff, on the Board or councils, or as volunteers.

MISSION STATEMENT

God is calling Killarney Park MB Church to be a Christ-centered, Spirit-filled people who embrace the City’s multicultural identity by welcoming and caring for all people. Through Biblical teaching, service and worship, we celebrate our gifts and talents in our desire to impact the City with righteous living and God’s message of hope.

OUR FAITH FOUNDATION

Killarney Park is a church that stands fully in the Mennonite Brethren (MB) tradition. From an 1860 origin in southern Russia, the MB church combines a Mennonite Anabaptist foundation with a keen thirst for a vigorous, personal and living faith. Over time the MB church has become global, with over 36000 adherents in Canada alone.

MB CONFESSION OF FAITH

Below is a condensed version of the Confession of Faith. For full text and discussion, see <https://www.mennonitebrethren.ca/mb-convictions/>

We believe in God as eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God created and sustains the universe. The eternal purpose of God the Father is to create a people who will bring glory to God forever. God alone is worthy of worship.

We believe that God became human in Jesus Christ. Jesus came to restore the world because humans have rejected God in disobedience. Jesus taught and modeled the way of God’s kingdom. He died on the cross, making it possible for us to accept a renewed relationship with God. He rose from the dead, broke the power of sin and death, and freed us to live in obedience to God’s will.

We believe that God the Holy Spirit invites all people to be reconciled with God and to join the global family of faith. Believers confess their faith, are baptized, and join in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Through the power of the Holy Spirit and guided by the Bible, members of the church seek to live as followers of Christ and invite others to experience this new life.

As Christians we are called to turn

- from ignorance of God to a personal relationship with God
- from bondage of sin and past mistakes to freedom, forgiveness, and healing
- from individualism to interdependence with others in the local Church
- from lifestyle choices that harm us, others, and the earth to choices that nurture wholeness, healing, joy and peace

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- from hating enemies and ignoring neighbours to showing love and justice to all
- from loving possessions to sharing with all in need
- from aimless existence to a mission of representing God's kingdom on earth.

As Christians we look forward to the day when God will once again send Jesus to bring all things under God's eternal rule.

KEY VALUES

In line with the MB Church in Canada, Killarney holds similar key values:

- A faith that trusts the words of the Bible and asks, "What does the Bible say?" We want to understand and follow the guidance of Scripture.
- An understanding that Jesus Christ is the centre and source of our faith and life and the saviour of the world. We are Christ followers, following his example in our world.
- A perspective that the church is the community of faith, with formal membership in the community based on baptism and confession of faith. We support, share, help and are accountable to each other.
- An emphasis that following Christ changes us to become reconciled and at peace with God. We earnestly seek to make Christ known by sharing that peace and reconciliation with the world around us.

For further information see <https://www.mennonitebrethren.ca/nflt-resources/mennonite-brethren-tell-me-about-them/>

In particular, Killarney has developed additional key values related to being the body of Christ

- An appreciation for diversity in our congregation that encourages us to share from our inter-cultural backgrounds. We want to better understand each other, to accommodate differences, and to work creatively so that everyone is welcomed and included.
- An understanding that leadership can and should be shared. We want to encourage people to support the work of the pastor actively and to support men and women who participate out of their giftings and longings to be included in all activities of the church.
- A recognition that the Great Commandment is an important guide for our life as individuals and in the Body of Christ. We want to love God and love others as we love ourselves.
- A perspective that our relationships with one another require effort and grace. We want to foster genuine interactions, encourage each other to be ourselves and to grow in our journeys of faith and life, and to aim for unity, even in our differences.

OUR JOURNEY

We are currently a small congregation that is active in the Killarney area of South Vancouver. During COVID-restrictions, we have met primarily through Zoom, which has meant that our services and activities occur in real time and allow us to see one another in our own spaces. This has encouraged us to stay in close contact, getting to know one another better, and finding creative, but safe and appropriate, ways to worship, pray, learn and grow as well as connect with our neighbours. When restrictions change, we seek to make adjustments.

Who we are today reflects the times we live in now, but our history also reveals a great deal about who we have become as a congregation. KPMB was planted in a particular place at a particular time, and the

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seeds planted in earlier decades and seasons of the life of our church have born particular fruits. Through the influences of the founders and previous leaders and congregants, we have grown through flourishing and diminishing times and have established a unique church community. We are a local Body of Christ, which has come together as learners and seekers within a culture that is intergenerational, intercultural, active and interactive, welcoming, and faithful in serving God and others.

Killarney Park Mennonite Brethren Church (KPMB) started as a church plant of Fraserview MB in 1961, which is in Richmond, B. C. The history reflects the changing lives of people in response to living life in changing times. It reveals God's faithfulness to a community of believers who wanted to be part of a local neighbourhood and make a difference in their city. The following years are full of seasons and stories of growth and attrition, regularity and change.

Soon after COVID restrictions began, the pastor moved to Alberta for family reasons, so the congregation has experienced a radical change in what it meant to participate as the Body of Christ at Killarney Park. The building was basically closed, and the lay leaders of the Board and councils as well as teams and individuals have been finding creative ways to continue church life. Through zoom, emails, phone calls, and some walking in pairs to have in-person but distanced contact, the church continues to grow in relationships and in appreciation for how God's Spirit can move in unexpected ways.

We are grateful for the lifting of many COVID-related restrictions, and are currently integrating more in-person services and activities into our life together.

MANAGING THE WORK

STAFF

Pastoral

Currently there is one full-time pastor position.

Non-pastoral

The part-time administrative assistant works with the pastor and the congregation to achieve smooth running of regular activities. A part-time bookkeeper manages all the daily finances.

The pre-school, located in the basement of the church and uses the playground adjacent, is a non-profit organization operated by KPMB, but it manages its own administrator as well as teachers and helpers.

Contract

Part-time contracts are used for other jobs around the church: janitorial as well as ground and building maintenance, which includes the rental properties adjacent to the church.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers assist in various tasks, making decisions and fulfilling duties as required. People are encouraged to participate according to their gifting, skills, and interest, and men and women are treated with equality. Killarney Park encourages people to develop gifts and skills by taking on challenges in various kinds of leadership and service.

GOVERNANCE

We are a faith community with a non-hierarchical organizational structure. Grounded through agreed-upon practices, we also recognize the mystery that is the Body of Christ and the importance of

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responding to God in present circumstances. We encourage servant leadership and participation of all, and we value collaboration, creativity, and mutual respect.

AUTHORITY

We recognize that God is our ultimate authority, and so we seek wisdom for good governance through prayer and prayerful consideration, which includes open discussion and due process within the community when matters need discerning. Our constitution provides guidance as we try to listen to God and to one another.

Governing Policies: Congregational Rule

Neither the pastor nor the board hold greater authority than the congregation. The constitution outlines policies that determine how the people of the congregation relate to and work with the leadership of the pastor, the board, and each other.

Attendees and Membership

A person is welcomed into membership based on confession of faith in baptism, or transfer from an M.B. church or, if already baptized, recommendation by the board based on testimony. A member is expected to participate in church life as is possible and to attend meetings and vote on issues as required by the constitution. Adherents are able to participate fully in the church community, except for voting.

Relationship to the Mennonite Brethren Conference

As a member of the B.C. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and an affiliate of the Canadian Conference of M.B. Churches and the General Conference of M.B. Churches of North America, Killarney Park MB shares the same Confession of Faith and accepts the Bible as the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

DECISION-MAKING

The constitution outlines the protocols and conventions, based on policies, and identifies how we work together in the body. Decisions are made at many levels by various leaders and groups so the church community can function and thrive.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The constitution and specific practices are in place to ensure that we hold each other accountable under God and respect one another.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Board and Councils

The board and councils are volunteers elected for a term to serve and provide leadership in key activities of the church: worship and learning, relationships and connections (within and beyond the congregation), and practical matters related to administration, finances, and building maintenance.

Committees

Working Committees—standing and ad hoc—are created to support the work of the church: some to specifically support the pastor with resources and available skills; some to focus on long-term or short-term projects.

Teams

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Teams are organized to provide practical help, for example, praying, playing and leading music, providing technical assistance, offering hospitality, maintaining the buildings/yards, creating special events like plays or special services, caring for the library, supporting the pre-school, and so on.

LIFE IN THE KPMB COMMUNITY

Killarney Park MB identifies itself as a group of believers and searchers who gather to be a body together for personal, spiritual, and shared life through a variety of activities and practices on Sundays and during each week. Being intentionally intercultural, we try to pay attention to personal growth and experience as well as community connections within the church, in the local neighbourhood, and in the wider world.

People can experience KPMB in various ways because of our programs, as well as those of affiliated groups that use the building throughout the week. Over the years we have shared our space with a Baptist church congregation, newcomer language classes, an immigrant settlement organization, a youth ministry of another church, and Alcoholics Anonymous, as well as the pre-school and our own affiliated programs for the wider neighbourhood. The congregation is small, but it crosses generations and continues to reflect the multi-cultural nature of life in Vancouver.

Through the Spirit, we become the Body of Christ. Beyond gathering on Sunday mornings worship, Jesus invites us to create a life together where we can encourage one another to grow in our faith and in our daily lives.

The second part of the Great Commandment in Matthew 22 calls Christ's followers to "Love your neighbor as yourself," which means seeking justice and offering hospitality through actions that offer welcome, respect, and mercy. We seek to reach out into the community to meet people and respond to needs, as well as encourage people in exploring Christian spirituality and personal growth—through special events and programs, as well as with practical helps as needs arise and with prayer.

Currently, KPMB is financially strong, with members and adherents making contributions that has meant meeting 100% of financial obligations, both for the budget and ministry shares.

LOOKING AHEAD

As a congregation, we recognize that despite future uncertainties, there is much hope. Staff are active and able to respond to needs in the congregation and at the church; the board, councils and other volunteers continue to commit time and energy as needed; and a relatively high percentage of the congregation maintains contact through Sunday Zoom services as well as various formal and informal activities during the week. Our early and creative use of Zoom has been important in staying connected and building our relationships in new ways. Therefore, there are both challenges and opportunities to anticipate, recognizing that these are often inter-connected.

CHALLENGES

Here are some areas that we are paying attention to:

- Demographics – all ages are represented at KPMB, but in disproportionate numbers: most attendees are over 45 years of age, with very few attendees in the 35-45 range and low numbers of children, teens, and young adults.

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- Meeting needs of children and youth - difficult to stay connected to children and youth through Zoom; concerns about low numbers after COVID
- Elderly congregants (especially those in care homes) – less likely to use Zoom so connections are sparse; difficulty in visiting or offering consistent support.
- Real and perceived losses – pastor leaving after 18 years; not able to hold in-person services because of COVID; difficulties initiating contact because of aging, changing lifestyles and needs
- Concern about how to increase active involvement – developing new leaders and supporting volunteers within the body
- Access for people with disabilities – limited access inside the building for anything more than being in the sanctuary and lobby areas
- During the pandemic, fewer opportunities to experience the Body of Christ in person – being together for singing worship, discussion, sharing and helping, celebrating, and learning

OPPORTUNITIES

- Valuing relationships and diversity – building on what has been strengthened through Zoom services: for example, discussions that allow for differences of opinion and personal stories; increased awareness of cultures and languages as well as gifting and differences within our congregation; interacting with each other, often in personal spaces; special efforts to connect with congregants outside of church activities
- Strengthening a posture of welcome in a culture of hospitality and inclusion – continuing to be informal and friendly, to encourage openness and honest sharing, to invite people to serve
- Creative responses to needs in the community – with heightened awareness of isolation, insecurity, and poverty, finding new ways to be neighbours in the local community
- Strengthening discipleship and personal development – possibilities for increasing the number of small groups who could meet virtually for Bible study, discussions, and prayer
- Growing as a congregation – determining what is important for growth, in, not only numbers, but also depth and breadth of learning, worshiping, and being and sharing the faith community

COMPENSATION

Competitive remuneration based on experience and education, with negotiated **benefits**.

PHYSICAL FACILITIES

KPMB has extensive facilities to support the church activities and ministries, which include

- Upstairs
 - An upstairs sanctuary and stage with room to support 300+ attendees
 - Ample office space, meeting area, and library
 - Professional sound system, organ and grand piano
- Downstairs

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- o Various rooms - large and small gathering spaces – that are used during the week for the current large preschool
 - o professional kitchen
- Outside Areas (adjacent properties)
 - o a fenced-in yard that includes a children’s playground
 - o a detached garage for youth facilities
 - o Community garden
 - o Two houses, managed by the church, used for refugee support and community care

VANCOUVER’S KILLARNEY NEIGHBOURHOOD

Our neighbourhood is highly diverse with a mix of high income and low-income households and a high percentage of immigrants (57%, majority from Asia) and ESL.

- *Wikipedia* description: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killarney,_Vancouver
- Sample realtor description: <https://faithwilson.com/neighbourhoods/killarney/>
- Churches in the area: <https://churchforvancouver.ca/vancouver-neighbourhoods-killarney/>
- Newspaper description: <https://www.vancouverisawesome.com/courier-archive/community/killarney-the-neighbourhood-at-a-glance-2926590>
- Detailed demographics report:
http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/media/yvr_demographic_profiles/killarney_demographic_report_final_07jan2019.pdf

HOW OTHERS SEE US

- Well regarded Preschool, that has been running for decades, of significant size and facilities
<https://kpmbchurch.org/preschool/>
- Host location for 2021 summer Kid’s camp
<https://salvationarmyvancouver.com/programs/seasonal/boundless-fun-camp/>
<https://kpmbchurch.org/events-2/6979/>
- Comment from Dan Unrau (2021): “Seeing numerous stories and references to it in the MB Herald in the early heyday of the Church back in the 1960’s and 70’s. From my teen-ager perch in Manitoba in those days, it seemed to me that KPMBC was something of a wunderkind in the Canadian MB scene, and knowing I had a number of relatives in its benches enhanced my interest and impressions.”
- Online reviews of the church
 - o “This church changed my life.”
 - o “A family-oriented church. Everyone is welcome and very diversified in ethnic group.”
 - o “This church is the place where everyone is welcomed. My family and I love how people love each other; their faith and actions work together. They have been supporting us since we came to Canada.”
- Online reviews of Preschool

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- o "A lovely school with warm-heart[ed] teachers. Very patient and caring for kids. Highly recommend."
- o "Great preschool, great teachers and well organized. Overall, a great experience, and would definitely recommend to others."
- o "Amazing caring teachers and staff."