

Shalom Welcoming Statement Final Revision: May 14, 2015

We embrace all people in the name of Christ. Everyone is a unique creation in the image of God. We are an open and affirming congregation that seeks to follow Jesus. We welcome into full participation in the life and ministry of the church, persons of every race, immigration status, culture, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, education, economic status, and life situation. We welcome diverse perspectives as we gather around God's table together.

After participating in the congregational meeting where the Shalom Welcoming Statement was affirmed by the congregation, and reading and discussing the comments afterward, the ministry team has decided to make three changes in the original statement. These changes were affirmed by the Congregational Board on Thursday, May 14, 2015.

- 1) “people” instead of “persons”
- 2) changing “congregation who seek to follow Jesus” to “congregation that seeks to follow Jesus.”
- 3) adding “life situation” to the line that describes current people who are now often outside of the church's welcome. Some comments were made about still others who are excluded, and some were made about the need to have a list at all. We feel at least a partial list is crucial and since a complete list would be impossible, we are adding “life situation” as we had in our original statement, which we changed because of board comments. We reinstate the phrase now.

There were also comments made about not using the phrase “We embrace...” and some thought “We seek to embrace” would be more honest. The ministry team believes that just as we say, “We are Christian,” not “We seek to be Christian” holds us to a higher standard, psychological literature tells us that we should say what we hope to do, thus leaning us towards our goal. “We risk love” is an excellent example of how Shalom Mennonite Church has already embraced that clear, unflinching commitment and

accountability to following Jesus. This does not necessarily denote agreement in personal choices, but a commitment to embracing people at the core of their being. This attitude is no different than the many other issues we may not see eye to eye on. We risk love.

In peace,

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