

**RAMF Congregational Meeting**  
14 September 2001 at Shellys

**Present:** James Walls (facilitator), Jen Carter, Victor Klassen, Roger Kurtz, Eileen and Thom Metzger, Walt Nickeson (recorder), Nancy Price, Eloise Schrag, Kathy and Mark Shelly, Chrissie Walls

**Leadership Team Report (Roger)**

- The Leadership Team for 2001–2002 consists of Kathy, Roger, James, and Thom.
- Chrissie is the Flower Committee.
- The newly reorganized small groups should begin meeting!
- The October adult hours will be on firstfruits giving to introduce the structure of the new Mennonite Church USA and how giving fits into it.
- On 21 October some Bethsaida people will be leading the service, although this has not yet been confirmed.
- We are encouraged to attend the 15th annual Music and Worship Leaders Weekend at Laurelville Retreat Center, 11–13 January 2002. Money is available to help meet expenses. This event features Alice Parker, Marilyn Houser Hamm, and Ken Nafziger.
- We will help meet rental expenses for Darren and Maria's wedding, which we expect to amount to \$100–\$310. Help is needed for decoration and cleanup. During the reception there will be a time for offering testimonies and other comments about our relationships with Darren and Maria.
- In the coming months the Team will be thinking about how to work on the top five items we indicated we expected a pastor to help us with:
  - Developing the ministry of the laity
  - Teaching
  - Youth/young adults
  - Evangelism/church growth
  - Spirituality
- Ideas are sought and welcomed for special offerings, especially for groups with which RAMF members have connections.
- Ideas are sought and welcomed for service projects. Another InterVol sorting night, perhaps in November, is suggested as a possibility.
- The RAMF Youth Group (or MYF) sponsors are the Walls and the Stauffer Kurtzes, who welcome ideas for activities to do with the youth. Money from the budget has been set aside for this purpose. Roger suggested that this group might be able to take the place of individual mentors for each of the youth.

**Retreat 2002**

Eloise has talked to Lois Janzen Preheim about next year's retreat, and Ms. Preheim will be in touch with us soon about planning activities for the retreat.

**Worship Committee Report**

- The Worship Committee consists of Bob Carter, Eileen, and Mark.
- The Committee invites evaluations of the worship material it provides.
- The Committee has appreciated the adult level of the past year's worship services.
- The worship materials for most of the rest of the year until Advent will be The Whole People of God; other material is being sought for evaluation for use.
- Mark is the contact person until Advent, when Bob takes over.

- In response to the question of why it seems to be so hard to get people to fulfill their pledges to lead worship (although the gift pledge forms indicate worship leaders sufficient to direct 71 Sundays), comments included:
  - The Committee should be proactive and call people who have pledged to lead, rather than simply leave the signup folder open on the table.
  - Some people are actively resistant or even hostile to being so reminded. Perhaps those who do not object to a call should make that known to the Committee.
  - Some people may be reluctant to lead now that expectations of having a “message” have been raised and (to some extent) institutionalized.
  - Materials should be placed in the signup folder as far in advance as possible, as people may be more likely to sign up early.
  - Summer may be a hard time to get people to sign up.
- When is a good time for a footwashing service? Nancy responded by mentioned that Saint Joseph’s House of Hospitality periodically has a service of washing the feet of homeless people, and suggested that this might be a project RAMF could consider. She thought the next service was scheduled in November.

### **Retreat Committee Report**

- Directions to Beaver Camp, Camp rules, and the schedule for the 28–30 September retreat are ready for distribution.
- Five panels are planned on the topic “So, what do you do?” Panelists will speak for a few minutes on their vocations and avocations. Questions will be distributed to help us think about what we might want to say. The panels are to include these general subject areas:
  - Medical
  - Education and library
  - Technical
  - Childcare and teaching of small children
  - Mixed
- More free time has been built in to the schedule.

### **Western New York MCC Relief Sale**

- This is scheduled for 9 November at Clarence.
- Roger would like to work with the youth to offer a coffee and baked goods booth.
- Nancy will ask someone from Bethsaida if that church is interested in repeating last year’s popular Ethiopian food booth. If there is interest, Jen will help. Otherwise, little support was expressed for active involvement in this sort of contribution this year.

### **Meeting Place discussion**

- Victor announced that new calculations indicate:
  - that with a down payment of \$51,000 (using only RAMF funds (savings, contributions, and loans) and Mennonite Mutual Aid money),
  - and estimating maintenance costs (including utilities) at a rate of \$0.035 per dollar of property value (based on experience with his own house),
  - that therefore ☞ RAMF can afford, at current mortgage rates, to purchase a building in the price range \$115,000–\$140,000.
- Pledges of labor toward initial renovation, cleanup, etc. (for the first three months), totaled 250 committed hours and 600 uncommitted hours.

- Larger questions, formulated with the help of Don Rensberger, remain. The Meeting Place Committee wonders: What qualities of any specific neighborhood would incite RAMF to move to it? Do we want to have a church in a neighborhood in which we would not want to live? Some issues and questions raised in the ensuing discussion:
  - The Committee has not felt a mandate to go to any particular place or to support any particular ministry. The interest in purchasing a building arises more from pragmatic causes.
  - Proximity to arterial routes of car transportation is important.
  - However, since Rochester is an easy area to get around—few places are really inaccessible—perhaps location is not so important.
  - On the other hand, the west side of the river is too far from the geographic center of the congregation’s homes.
  - Our church should be close to where at least some of us live.
  - If we want to offer our building for the use of Bethsaida, that restricts the area in which we should look to roughly the South Wedge (between Mt. Hope and South avenues).
  - While a location can’t be changed, a building can.
  - People in the suburbs need the Lord as much as do people in the city.
  - How do we expect to grow if we are in a neighborhood much different from us?
  - We are deceiving ourselves if we think we can really be a neighborhood church.
  - The location must feel comfortable if we expect visitors to return.
  - Although many people felt Lynam’s bar on Webster Ave. had possibilities, that neighborhood was not viewed positively. Furthermore, it is already well served by churches, reducing the possibility that passersby would simply drop in to visit RAMF.
  - Strong support exists for owning a multi-use building, and it may not be hard to find uses for it.
  - Any apartments that come attached to a building we buy could be used for temporary housing.
  - Raising the price limit will open up more possibilities.
  - No church buildings are presently available.
- The Committee reported feeling frustration when individuals object to the present state of a property being considered, but are unwilling or unable to see its potential. (The two buildings the whole group has looked at have indeed appeared rather shabby at best.) The negative reactions from those persons has undercut the efforts the Committee has expended in finding the properties.
- People were asked at what stage in the process they would like to see a property being considered for purchase; most would like to see it earlier rather than later.
- Every week spent at Strong Ties saves \$150 that would otherwise go toward mortgage or rental payments. At present, our continuing use of Strong Ties seems assured.

#### **Treasurer’s Report**

- The balance in the Savings Account is about \$14,400, and in Checking, about \$4,700.
- Money for the MYF will be drawn from the Sunday school line. Money for church rental for Darren and Maria’s wedding will be drawn from the Facilities line.

#### **Hymn Sing**

Strong support was expressed for continuing the Hymn Sing in October, December, February, and April, with most people preferring that it be held Sunday afternoon.