

RAMF CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

19 March 2004

7:30 pm at Carters', Honeoye Falls

Present: Kathy Shelly (facilitator), Michael Brennan-Burke, Bob Carter, Jen Carter, Kathy Kern, Nathan Klassen, Sue Klassen, Victor Klassen, Chris Passonneau, Mark Shelly, Sonya Stauffer-Kurtz, Walt Nickeson (recorder).

REPORTS

LEADERSHIP TEAM (SONYA).

1. Inspired by the Delta Lake Leadership Conference held February 6-8, at which Phil Bergey spoke about how church structures help make the church missional, the LT is considering RAMF's structures. An ad hoc group composed of Sonya, Sue, Kathy Shelly, and Eileen Metzger is looking into mission and structure and their relationship to RAMF. The possible new building and the congregation's growth are driving this consideration over the past few years.
2. Eileen would like RAMF to consider the idea of the congregation compensating her for providing spiritual direction to those members who desire it, with the individuals paying back the congregation as they can. If this idea is implemented, RAMF may later be asked to consider expanding it to cover non-members.
3. The baptism exploration class is continuing.
4. A new small group is forming.
5. Milton Zehr, New York Mennonite Conference Pastor, is RAMF's overseer, and will be meeting with the Leadership Team and other area churches.

TREASURER (KATHY SHELLY).

Numbers reported:

Building Fund	\$16,600
Savings account	\$9,400
Checking account	\$3,700
Received in pledges this fiscal year	\$8,400
Paid out (primarily to colleges, mission, etc.)	\$7,000
January's special offering given to support Kim McGlinchey's trip to Haiti (now Guatemala)	\$966
March's special offering for Mennonite Publishing Network	\$466

WORSHIP COMMITTEE (SUE).

1. Worship leaders have signed up through the end of Lent and for some Sundays in Easter. Materials for worship are in hand.
2. The quality of worship continues to be good, as measured by answers received to the question: Did the service help you worship?
3. While the children's bulletins seem to have been well received by the children, they will not be used this summer. The bulletins are expensive and must be ordered in large quantities.
4. Milestones/Transitions
 - ◆ Two events are planned: Bible presentation to the school-age children, and Pre-school blessing.
 - ◆ The Service of Questions is not being planned.
 - ◆ No event is being planned for the middle/junior high school group. The idea of a Service of Questions for this class was raised, but Nathan urged rather conversations than formal questions, which he remembered as feeling awkward.

OTHER BUSINESS

CO-SPONSORSHIP OF VISIT OF RUBEN GARCÍA TO ROCHESTER.

Michael asked if RAMF would be willing to co-sponsor the visit to Rochester in May of Ruben García, director of Annunciation House in El Paso, Texas; Michael is on its Board of Directors. Catholic Family Center would help coordinate the visit, the purpose of which is to raise funds and provide education. The immediate cost of this sponsorship would be a contribution of \$50 toward a plane ticket. Michael suggested that during Ruben's visit a fund-raising dinner of rice and beans could be held, perhaps at the Quaker Meetinghouse the evening of May 22, for all in the progressive community. [Note: Later changed to May 15]

- ▶ Co-sponsorship of Ruben García's visit was approved.

NEXT QUAKER POTLUCK CHANGED.

- ▶ The Rochester peacemakers fellowship potluck, originally scheduled for March 27, will be held May 22 in conjunction with Ruben García's visit to Rochester. [Note: Later changed to May 15]

JUSTICE FOR FARMWORKERS CAMPAIGN.

Michael asked if RAMF, as a congregation, would be willing to sign a Resolution in Support of the Justice for Farmworkers Campaign. He brought packets of information about this ministry and the March to Albany at the end of April. Discussion was mainly about how RAMF supports and involves itself in the interests and activities of its members. It was noted that several members of RAMF are active in ministries to farm workers and migrant laborers.

- ▶ The question was tabled (no decision was made).

Michael committed himself to bringing more information to RAMF about issues of farm workers and migrant laborers, and also about RAMF becoming a covenantal member of Rural and Migrant Ministry.

LEHMANN/SCHRAG ISSUES.

1. The congregation needs to begin thinking about taking over jobs done by Dennis Lehmann and Eloise Schrag. Formally, these include Eloise's role as Potluck Coordinator, and Dennis's as Sunday School superintendent. Informally, Dennis has also been delivering the monthly food offering to the Food Cupboard, coordinating collection of the children's offering, and sending notes on services to absentees.
2. Dennis and Eloise also have been storing at their house the coffeepots, Sunday school materials (some 27 cubic feet), candleholders, a box of banners, and some suitcases of felt. A new place will need to be found to store all these items.
3. A sending service has been scheduled.

EVALUATION OF DUAL ADULT HOURS.

1. Since November, two adult Sunday School sessions have been conducted. The primary reasons are to always have a Bible study option, and to reduce the size of the class. The question was whether to continue this practice.
 2. Discussion included these points:
 - ◆ Attendance at the recent video series on First Fruits giving has been usually half that of the Bible study series. No satisfactory answer on why this is so was apparent.
 - ◆ The Bible study materials, the Good Ground series, are especially practical in that they can be used with little preparation. This suits them for a group whose makeup may change from week to week. However, the ability to do little preparation is also a drawback. The suggestion was made that perhaps a small group that so wished could commit itself to a more in-depth study, perhaps using materials from the Uniform Bible series.
 - ◆ It has not proven too hard to find leaders for the two sessions; perhaps such leading provides an opportunity to contribute for those who do not wish to lead worship.
 - ◆ The LT may schedule a single adult hour option when it feels it is appropriate, as when Chad Heatwole spoke about his trip to Nepal.
- ▶ Dual adult hour offerings will continue.

PROPOSAL TO MAKE THE REGULAR OFFERING WEEKLY, RATHER THAN MONTHLY.

1. Inspired by Lynn Miller's observation that offering is central to worship, LT proposed changing RAMF's regular offering from once a month to weekly, and to seek to incorporate it in the service as more of a joyful, rather than a mechanical, event—more an act of worship than the chore of paying the monthly religious bill. The monthly special offering would continue unchanged.
2. Points of discussion included:
 - ◆ Things other than checks could be placed in the basket.
 - ◆ A weekly offering could become just as mechanical and thoughtless as the monthly offering.
 - ◆ Many people may come Sunday morning prepared to offer *something* to the service, not necessarily money.
 - ◆ RAMF's not having an offering every week puzzles some visitors.
 - ◆ A weekly offering may provide more teaching opportunities to the children.
 - ◆ The treasurer's concerns have to do with receiving the special offering all at once, rather than having it dribble in throughout the month.
 - ◆ As part of the service, the offering could be done in as many different ways as there are different worship leaders.
 - ◆ Since this proposal was inspired by the video series (mentioned above), perhaps its implementation should wait until the whole congregation has seen it.
- ▶ The proposal was accepted. The regular offering will be taken weekly during the worship service beginning in April, with evaluation toward the end of the year, perhaps after everyone has seen the video. The evaluation should try to measure if making the offering weekly has increased the sense of offering as worship. The monthly special offering, for special projects or needs, will continue as before.

SUMMER SCHEDULE.

In previous years, Sunday School during the summer has been scheduled for once a month. The question was whether to continue that practice.

- ▶ No Sunday School hours will be scheduled for this summer, although if some people wish to occasionally organize something for the younger children, that would be welcomed.

BUDGET PLEDGES FORMS (VICTOR).

It was proposed that children be included in receiving budget pledge forms.

- ▶ Children aged 10 and over will receive gift pledge forms, along with the adults, this spring, for the recovenanting ceremony. They will also receive budget pledge forms in December. Victor will make these budget pledge forms and give them to parents to distribute.

BUILDING COMMITTEE (MARK).

1. The Committee has released the plans to the architect (Vic Heinrichs) for final drawings, to be done by Allan Bernhart. The drawing will then be taken to contractors (a list of which is being assembled) for bids.
2. Heating and electrical plans have not yet been made.
3. The Committee is debating the use of a general contractor vs. a project manager, the chief difference being the financial risk taken on by the former.
4. The Committee has decided what tasks or parts of the project might reasonably be undertaken by RAMF and its helpers (i.e., volunteers from the Conference and beyond).
5. By the next congregational meeting, if not sooner, the Committee hopes to have cost figures and plans for construction and finance. At that meeting RAMF will need to decide whether to go ahead and build its own church, and if so, how to do it.
6. Victor unveiled a scale model of the building, based on current plans.