

# Rochester Area Mennonite Fellowship

## Congregational Meeting

15 September 2006

**Present:** Aaron Stuckey (facilitator), Bob Carter, Kathy Kern, Sue Klassen, Sylvia Klassen, Victor Klassen, Eileen Metzger, Thom Metzger, Nancy Price, Kathy Shelly, Rachel Stuckey, Walt Nickeson (recorder).

### Building Stewards proposal

The proposal was adopted with amendments, as follows:

#### **Building Stewards**

The Building Stewards of RAMF are responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the church building. They shall number at least three, serving overlapping two-year terms. They shall meet as a group several times a year and as needed, and in consultation with the Leadership Team and the Treasurer, be responsible for:

- Coordination of the maintenance of the church and grounds, including
  - Regular and special cleaning of the church;
  - Servicing of mechanicals, etc. (furnace and air conditioners, hot water heaters, alarm systems, etc.);
  - Repair and replacement of what is broken and worn out;
  - Snow removal;
  - Lawn and garden care;
  - Signs and pavement markings;
  - Other general upkeep as required
- Maintaining appropriate and adequate insurance coverage
- Responding to neighborhood issues
- Authorization of payment of related bills (insurance, mortgage, maintenance, repairs, etc.)
- Ensuring compliance with relevant City of Rochester codes and regulations
- Establishing guidelines for appropriate behavior within the building
- Applying congregationally-approved guidelines for building use
- Bringing proposals to the congregation regarding remodeling and renovation, and continuing with planning and implementing such remodeling and renovation as have been approved.

“Coordination” should not be construed to mean that the Building Stewards themselves must accomplish the task.

Leadership Team will coordinate the building’s use calendar.

Other items discussed:

- **Selection process.** For this year, Stewards will be drawn from the list of those who expressed a willingness to serve on their gift pledge forms, considering that that willingness was given before the adoption of this current job description. In coming years the selection process will include the Selection Committee, the same way other offices in the church are filled.
- **Length of term.** In response to the idea that continuity is especially important in this job, it was pointed out that a Steward may continue in the job for longer than the two-year term.
- **Number of Stewards.** For this beginning period the congregation recommended the Stewards number four.

## Reports

1. NYMC Delegate Assembly (Eileen, supplemented by Sue and Victor)
  - Budget: 85% of the Conference's budget goes to staff
  - A deficit budget was adopted; the Conference will draw from reserves this year
  - Congregational monetary pledges come in too late for the adoption of the budget in the fall, so next year they will come in the spring
  - In general, congregations want a balanced budget, no personnel cuts, and the Conference to work with the amount of money pledged, resulting in conflicts between desires
  - Staff. Some Western District churches don't want budget cuts or overseers but prefer a full-time conference minister. Don Siegrist is now the Central District overseer (The Western District includes Alden, Clarence Center, Buffalo Westside, and Harris Hill; the Central District includes RAMF, Bethsaida, and Community of Faith)
  - Transitions: Leroy Mast was confirmed as conference minister. Milton Zehr, Emmanuel Gingerich, and John Powell were honored in their retirement. Sue received the Peace Mug
  - RAMF's contributions. Our delegates want RAMF to consider what it gives to the Conference. One suggestion is that we give 10% of our total budget. Our November special offering will go to the Conference.
2. Leadership Team (Kathy Shelly)
  - This summer we had a transition in our Leadership Team, where Thom stepped down in early July due to work responsibilities. We appreciate Eileen filling this vacancy
  - We have been planning the RAMF calendar and adult hour topics
  - Other work involved setting this meeting's agenda and specifically looking ahead at what might develop as the purpose of future congregational meetings
  - We spend part of our meeting discussing a book we are reading together, looking at relationships and challenges, striving for a healthy congregation
  - The Houghton group, Sojourners, has asked us to meet with them again, to help give them feedback and guidance as they look to make some major decisions in their group (That will happen September 24)
  - We have been meeting quarterly with Milton Zehr, our "overseer," and leaders from Community of Faith (Williamson) and Tadelech and Ephraim (Bethsaida). Don Siegrist will be our new overseer beginning October 1, replacing Milton, who is retiring
  - We are always looking for suggestions for adult hour studies, or volunteers to lead a topic of interest to them.
3. Worship Committee (Jen Carter)
  - The Worship committee (Amy and Jen, together with Leadership team representatives, Eileen and Kathy) have planned worship topics and assembled materials through Advent. A third Worship Committee member is sought.
  - Thank you to all those who led worship over the summer and to all those who brought a willing spirit and their presence to our services. We also appreciated the many outdoor worship experiences.
  - We are excited about a series in October called "Becoming Bread"—an opportunity to look at how God uses us as a congregational body broken for Him. There will be an adult hour on November 5 to share concluding thoughts and prayers from this series.
  - Through all of our transitions the Worship Committee has not specifically solicited feedback about worship as we last planned. However, as always we invite you to approach us with feedback.
4. Building Oversight Committee (Bob)
  - Bob presented a brief overview of the progress on the building and how we might expect to be able to use it by early December.

## Congregational meetings

The Leadership Team was seeking some answers to the questions: a) What is the purpose of Congregational Meetings?, and b) What is the best time and place to hold those meetings? These questions have been spurred by the generally low rate of attendance at Congregational Meetings and attendance by the same group of persons.

What happens, or ought to happen, at Congregational Meetings?

- Minutiae are examined
- RAMF's course may be set
- Anything that may involve change is discussed
- Budget

What do we want Congregational Meetings to be?

- A good representation, demographically, of the church (this may require arranged child care)
- Receptive of congregants' input on questions of change and structure
- Raising members' awareness of what's going on in RAMF, what's happening behind the scenes
- A time to examine our vision, such as how we relate to our neighborhood, why we are a church, what we want to do as a church

From this discussion it was apparent that we see two different aspects of Congregational Meetings:

- Business is attended to (minutiae and structure)
- Vision is articulated

When is a better time for these meetings?

- After an early afternoon potluck
- Will having our own building change things? It's a more central location, and children will have a place to go; but not meeting in a home will result in a change in the tone or feeling of the meeting
- Meeting after a meal can be less threatening and easier for casual attendance to happen.

The question of attendance at Congregational Meetings may be a subset of the question of why some RAMF members seem less invested than others. The idea was voiced, and found support, that there is somewhat of a generation gap within RAMF, and that the longer-term, older members are more likely to attend Congregational Meetings than the younger, newer members.

The LT will keep this issue on its agenda in the future.

## WNY Relief Sale

The recommendation that RAMF not staff a coffee booth at this year's Relief Sale in November received strong support.

## Laurelville Worship Leaders' Retreat

Reservations for this January event need to be made soon.

## Building occupancy

Because the time in which we can move in to the new building will come before the building is completely finished, when do we want to move in? It may be that when we receive our Certificate of Occupancy, the kitchen will contain a sink and countertops, but no cabinets; there will probably be no table storage cabinets in the sanctuary; and not all the trim may be finished. The sense of the group was that most of the painting and trimwork should be done before RAMF moves in.