

## Minutes of Congregational Meeting 16 Oct. 2011

**Agenda:** Affirmation of decision to request ordination for Sonya Sauffer-Kurtz

**Attendees:** Christin & Bryan Babcock, Judy Bernhart, Maria Calderon, Bob Carter, Ron Lugbill, Gail & Anthony Ricciuti, Mark Shelly, Wendy & Rob Shelly, Rachel & Aaron Stuckey.

The proposal shown below in the MCRC report for the 2 October Congregational Meeting. This was reviewed and the feedback that the MCRC had gathered from the congregation was summarized. There were no further comments, and the proposal was affirmed unanimously with no one standing aside in the decision.

The next step is for the MCRC to send a written request that Sonya be ordained to the Leadership Commission of the NYMC on behalf of RAMF. The Leadership Commission is comprised of our conference minister (Gene Miller), our overseer (Terry Zehr), a pastoral rep and a lay rep. They will meet with Sonya and then make a formal decision sometime in the next month or so. The folks on the Leadership Commission all know Sonya and have worked with her in the conference, and there are no anticipated issues with her ordination being approved. We are planning to have the ordination early next year.

### MCRC Report for 2 Oct. 2011 Congregational Meeting

The members of the Minister-Congregation Relations Committee (MCRC) wish to thank all in the congregation for providing your individual feedback regarding the proposal of Sonya's ordination. We are glad to report that the congregation is at a point of consensus on the proposal: nearly everyone has voiced support, and a couple have expressed some reservations but are willing to allow the proposal to pass. Therefore, the MCRC would like to move forward with a formal decision. We had not completed our survey of the individuals in time to include the official proposal on the agenda for the 2 Oct. Congregational Meeting agenda two Sunday's prior to the meeting. So, we are providing the official proposal now and are called a special Congregational Meeting for Sunday, 16 Oct. for the congregation to make the decision.

The official proposal is provided below. We have slightly amended it from the draft that was used in our feedback-gathering to address a question that was raised by several folks regarding whether the leadership structure of RAMF would change as a result of having an ordained minister. The intention is that this new role would not change RAMF's leadership structure, and this is now reflected in the proposal. Many of those who voiced strong affirmation of the proposal also expressed a sense of grief over how difficult and at times harmful this process has been over the past couple years. It is the prayer of the MCRC that the congregation will have grown through this process of discernment, and that we can move forward with a strong sense of affirmation of Sonya's gifts and call in the final decision.

Respectfully,  
Bob Carter, Jason Poole, Gail Ricciuti, Mark Shelly, Chrissie Walls

### For Congregational Decision on 16 Oct. 2011

The members of RAMF, having undergone a period of discernment, agree that

- Sonya's call to ministry is genuine,
- and her words, actions, and character in the context of her roles as a Licensed Minister show that a life-long vocation in ordained ministry is appropriate.

Therefore, it is proposed that we affirm her in her call by requesting of the New York Mennonite Conference that she be ordained to continue in her varying roles of leadership and ministry within RAMF in areas she feels led by the Holy Spirit under the guidance and advisement of the Leadership Team and as described in a written covenant of understanding to be approved by the congregation. It is understood that this is not meant to change the existing leadership structure of RAMF.