

Congregational Meeting, November 17, 2013

Present: Amy, Austin, Megan, Bob (facilitator), Kathy S., Nancy, Rob, Drew, Aaron, Jen, Roger, Sonya, Rachel (note taker), Kathy K., Ben, Anthony, Judy, Ron, Melissa, Mark, Christin, Bryan, Bekah, Walt, Teresa, Gail, Wendy, Jason

Kathy – reading from Henri Nouwen, Col. 3

Name Change Discussion

- Results of poll:
 - Rochester Mennonite Church/Fellowship: 69
 - Hillside Mennonite Church/Fellowship: 43
 - Cobbs Hill Mennonite Church/Fellowship: 41
 - Cherry Tree Mennonite Church/Fellowship: 10
- Leadership Team recommends using Fellowship rather than Church based on standing poll
- The proposed change would be a dba (doing business as) change rather than a full change to the incorporation paperwork (IF a dba can be done).
- The name Rochester Mennonite Fellowship was affirmed by all present, except the following:
 - Standing aside: 4, Walt, Bekah, Anthony, Ben
- A task force will be developed to help with the paperwork, sign, website, and determining the extent to which we should change our name with mortgage, phone, etc.
 - Melissa, Walt, Ron, Jen

Ministry Reports

- Worship Committee
 - Worship committee continues to coordinate Sunday morning worship. We are always looking for volunteers to lead each Sunday. Advent - Epiphany series materials are in the worship sign-up book. This is an easier time to lead, with suggested calls to worship, prayers, etc in the materials prepared by MCUSA. After Epiphany we will be following the lectionary. Mark your calendars for our Christmas Eve service at 7:00 December 24.
 - Thank you to the many people who contribute to our multi-voiced worship every week!
- Minister Report
 - I am continuing as Moderator for NY Mennonite Conference for another two year term. This includes chairing the Coordinating Council of NYMC, as well as moderating twice yearly delegate sessions. A good chunk of time this quarter went into co-chairing with Kathy Shelly the planning committee for the annual Day of Celebration. We got good feedback on the new one day format, our speaker, youth track, and the breakout workshops including Chrissie Walls on the new Sunday School curriculum which she edits.
 - Another part of moderator responsibilities is attending Constituency Leaders Council meetings twice yearly. This fall CLC met in Michigan for 3 days. Moderators, conference

ministers and agency representatives look at issues affecting the broader denomination and give counsel, somewhat like an elder board, to the denomination.

- As part of my continuing education, I took a 6 week on-line course at AMBS on the writings of John Howard Yoder. JHY was a significant scholar who articulated peace theology and ethics. He is in the news again as victims of his inappropriate advances prior to his death have called for a response from the denomination and AMBS where he once taught. I am heartened at the response from the denomination, and encouraged at the conversations happening across conferences detailing better policies and procedures for dealing with sexual misconduct and bringing unfortunate happenings into the light for healing. As part of CLC I co-led a breakout session with Ervin Stutzman to get feedback from conferences/agencies about what they have in place to assist victims of sexual abuse and what they need from the denomination for further training.
- On Nov 10 I participated in the installation service for Ken Landis as coordinator of the new Fort Drum Healing and Hope initiative in Watertown. This project has been two years in the forming. I coordinated a quarterly mission/prayer group for the past year which will continue as a support group to Ken and his work. I also helped Watertown Church write up a proposal to the conference outreach fund to help support this project. I continue to make contacts for Ken with others in the denomination who are doing this sort of work, and connecting to resources to educate myself and other Mennonites who want to learn more. A one day seminar at CRCDS with Col. Herm Kaiser on Moral Injury, which I attended along with Ken Landis, was part of our ongoing education in this area.
- November 1 I started a new role as a District Minister with oversight responsibility for Sojourners Fellowship in Belfast. This role is a “pastor to the pastor or leadership team” role. I will meet with Connie Finney, the leadership group and the congregation on a regular basis. I also hope to take a one week training in Interim Pastor work in Franconia conference that is good background for oversight work.
- Church planting is another aspect of conference work that takes some of my time. I spent two days with a potential church planter and Samuel Lopez, executive director of the Lancaster, Pa-based Spanish Council, as they explored Rochester, Syracuse and Utica as possible sites for a Hispanic church planting effort that would be supported by both NYMC and the Spanish Council.
- I continue to meet with this congregation’s Minister Congregation Relations Committee (MCRC) quarterly for support and accountability regarding my work in the congregation and the conference. Thanks to the MCRC for meeting with me!
- Education – hasn’t met since the last Cong. Mtg.
- Pastoral:
 - Started one-year-old childcare. Reminder – keep children’s time early in the service if possible.
 - Small group sign-up in library

- Stewards:
 - Fall Clean-up Day had a great turnout, thanks to everyone for all the help cleaning up our building and lot. During the summer this year, the shed was painted by the Leadership Team. Also, thanks to everyone who participated in our lawn mowing rotation.
 - As we approach the winter months, we want to remind everyone to watch for ice along the sidewalk along the driveway. Also, the thermostats are set in the heat mode, and should be
- Outreach:
 - We're getting confused with Megiddos
 - Want input on what people think outreach should be
 - Austin met with Muslim missionary from Pakistan regarding peace. An interfaith service is being planned. More info to come.
- Finance
 - As of 31 October 2013, the end of our 3rd quarter, (rounded to the nearest dollar) we have received \$51,300. in regular offerings or appropriately 3/4 of our projected total. Including Special offerings and rental our total income has been \$68,555. Our general expenses are also in keeping with our projections.
 - As noted recently in bulletins, we have given \$68.11 to MCC for relief kit projects and we have given \$2917.00 to Spiritus Christi for their "responding to violence" initiative. We also collected and gave \$460.00 to our MVS Unit having enjoyed a delightful breakfast hosted by Keturah & Rebekah.
 - In December the Finance Ministry will be offering pledge forms to assist us in the planning of the proposed budget that is brought to the January congregational meeting for approval for our fiscal year beginning 1 February 2014.
 - Our account balances to the nearest dollar are:
 - Checking: \$20,704 of which Education Fund is \$9081, Sharing is \$643. Special which holds the sum of our special offerings until they are disbursed is \$0 because \$5411 was removed from Special and placed into the newly created Immigrant Education Fund. As approved by the Immigrant Scholarship Committee, Arturo will be able to use this to pay tuition for up to 2 years. This leaves \$5569. in our General Fund.
 - Savings: \$9117.
 - Certificate of Deposit (our Capital Fund): \$5318.
 - We owe \$181,711.45 to Eastern Mennonite Missions as mortgage.
- MVS
 - We're in our 4th year, have 2 great MVSers this year. They were recently at retreat with other area MVS groups
 - Want to be intentional about having meals with people of the congregation – possibly a rotating meal on Sundays.
- Leadership Team
 - At the next meeting in December, Wendy and Austin will join, since they have expressed interest in stepping on

Hymn: SJ#38 – Beloved, God’s Chosen

Bylaws Discussion

- Walt began coming in the summer of 1982, along with 3 other families. Before then, decisions had been made pretty easily. They started to experience more problems in decision-making with the larger group, and made a formal decision to use voting to make decisions. They generally used a 2/3 majority, but for a decision on a pastor looked for an 80% majority. With Alan Newton’s assistance we focused more on levels of affirmation rather than simply yes/no.
- Nancy remembered her first congregational meeting going until 11:30pm with a discussion of the budget, with a lot of opinions expressed but no decisions made. She didn’t feel it was a good use of her time.
- Judy remembered her first meeting being a lot of fun
- We separated into small groups for further discussion
 - Some people might have concerns with signing a covenant/oath
 - We’ve historically had flexibility with teens, younger people participating
 - Need more clarity of when we go to a vote? Decide to vote at a future meeting?
 - Include younger teens, dual memberships
 - Transition from consensus to voting – may need to define