

Rochester Mennonite Fellowship Congregational Meeting Minutes, 1/26/14

Attending: Tammy Besse, Arnie Pederson, Walt Nickeson, Kathy Shelly, Rebekah Enns, Rachel Stuckey, Aaron Stuckey, Melissa Carlson, Ben Price, Anthony Ricciuti, Jen Carter, Stephanie Giles, Drew Langdon, Gail Riciutti, Roger Kurtz, Dan Giles, Mark Shelly, Sonya Stauffer Kurtz, Wendy Shelly, Rob Shelly, Ron Luginbill, Bob Carter.

Opening Song: Hymnal Worship Book 407, "We are people of God's Peace"
Dan opened the meeting with prayer.

Budget (Jen)

- Highlights of Jen's presentation and subsequent discussion:
 - We incurred a \$262 deficit for the year, which will be covered by floating down our General Fund balance.
 - We received slightly less income than what had been expected.
 - Our mid-year decision (recommended by MVS Local Leaders & Finance ministry and approved by Leadership Team) to pay for the MVS unit car insurance created additional expense.
 - Facilities: Grounds Maintenance line was much lower than anticipated because the stewards assessed the pavement sealant as sound for another year.
 - Jen highlighted the congregation's giving to special offerings, apart from our budget income and expenses.
 - The 2014 proposed budget includes an optimistic estimate of income, and our planned expenses/sharing may need to be revisited later in the year depending on actual receipts.
 - New expenses for 2014 include the "detailed analysis" by an outside accountant, an anticipated \$500 related to expenses involved in our name change, and ongoing MVS vehicle insurance costs.
 - Amendment to proposed budget: Add \$1200 to Facilities: Grounds for driveway sealing this year. A corresponding additional pledge of \$1200 brings anticipated income to \$ 70,300.
- See approved 2014 Budget (attached) and detailed treasurers report at the end of this document.
- **Decision:** The proposed budget for 2014 was unanimously approved with the aforementioned amendment.

Dan read Scripture passage from Ephesians 4

Proposal to amend our Articles of Incorporation (Walt)

- In order to implement the change in our name to Rochester Mennonite Fellowship, Monroe County law requires that we amend our Certificate of Incorporation.
- The only changes to our original Articles of Incorporation are the change in our name and a statement that we took a vote to change our name.
- **Decision:** The proposal to amend our articles of incorporation as above was affirmed by consensus, with one participant abstaining/standing aside.

Retreat Committee Requesting Input (Roger)

- About 10% of our annual budget is spent on our Annual Retreat at Beaver Camp, a reflection of the value we place on this event.
- The Retreat Committee seeks input from the congregation regarding two questions:
 - What is retreat for? [What activities do we value the most?]

- Who is retreat for? [To what extent do we desire the participation of people who do not regularly attend RMF?]
- Roger distributed a survey instrument to the group pertaining to these two questions. A compilation of the responses will be made available to the congregation.
- Until our wishes as a congregation are clarified, the Retreat committee asks that members check with them prior to inviting guests to our annual retreat.

Middle Song: Hymnal Worship Book 226, "You are salt for the earth"

Seek approval of our Church Bylaws (Bob):

- The document DRAFT RMF Bylaws PROPOSAL was distributed with the agenda.
- Over the past year, we have had several discussions about our church bylaws. The Leadership team acknowledges that further discernment and clarity may be desirable about several issues, particularly regarding our decision making process and the process of becoming a member of RMF.
- Rather than seeking resolution of all potential issues related to our Bylaws, the Leadership Team has drafted a Bylaws document that is descriptive of our current practices at RMF, and seeks our approval of this document. Individual Articles could then be discussed and revised at a timing and pace deemed appropriate to the congregation.
- Walt highlighted a number of changes in the current draft compared to earlier drafts:
 - Article IV: A statement that "older teenagers" may participate in decision-making, rather than stating a specific age.
 - Article VIII: A statement that a quorum of 6 members is required to hold a congregational meeting [this is a legal requirement].
 - Article IX: A statement that a balanced budget must be presented to the congregation has been removed.
- After discussion, the word "responsible" was changed to "accountable" in Article VI, 8, A.
- Discussion by the group included these sentiments:
 - Ben expressed the view that it may be beneficial to continue our discussions of the Bylaws in the near future since the issues and recent discussion are fresh in our minds, and because the issues under discussion are important to how we function.
 - Mark expressed appreciation for the draft document, and feels comfortable that this document reflects the practices, character, attitudes of RMF..
 - Gail and Drew expressed that Bylaws serve as general guidelines for practice, but allow for flexibility in how we implement these guidelines.
- **Decision:** The proposal to adopt the proposed Bylaws with one word of amendment as stated above was affirmed by consensus, with one participant abstaining/standing aside.

Ministry Team/Committee Reports:

Leadership Team:

- The current Leadership Team includes Kathy Shelly, Jason, and Wendy. Bob and Rachel have recently completed extended terms on the Team. Since the workload is considerable and our Bylaws state that the Leadership Team will have at least 4 members, additional members are needed.
- The Leadership Team has worked frequently this past year with Conference Minister Terry Zehr on issues related to our name change discernment and our Bylaws.

- The Leadership Team's upcoming tasks include coordinating the work of our multiple ministries, prioritizing agenda items for Congregational Meetings later in the year, and clarifying the composition of the Leadership Team for the coming year.
- We had a discussion about the most appropriate means Leadership Team communication with the congregation, highlighting that Walt is now posting the contents of our Mid-week announcements on our website. We discussed the utility of this practice, and whether the contents should be available to the public or only on the part of the website requiring member log-in. Walt will continue to post these announcements on the website for now, but the utility of this practice will be reconsidered in the upcoming months.

Name Change (Melissa):

Our new church sign will look very similar to our old sign, and we will be adding a sign to our main (side) door. These changes will happen sometime this spring.

Stewards: There were no specific issues reported by the Stewardship Ministry.

Education (Mark):

To encourage shared life experience, we are going to put questions on round tables at potlucks to encourage discussions in mixed groups.

Second "Semester" Curriculum:

Scripture 2/9-3/2 - **Conversations with the Bible: reading texts we don't like** (Anthony)

Spiritual formation 3/9, 23, 30, and 4/6 - **Forgiveness** (Amy will organize)

Mennonite studies 4/13 & 27, 5/4 & 11 - **Peace Theology** -why we believe what we believe (Mark)

Current issue - **Politics of Food** 6/1, 6/8, 6/15, and 6/22 (Jason)

5/25 - "Free" Sunday. Content yet to be decided.

Worship (Sonya): There is a sign-up sheet available to any members willing to lead worship on specific Sundays, as well as an Ash Wednesday service, and a Maundy Thursday service if someone volunteers to lead it. We are trying out a set song leader rotation rather than asking each worship leader to recruit their own song leader each Sunday.

MVS (Roger): Keturah recently attended mediation training. Rebekah will be attending a Peace Fellowship Conference at EMU, which will include the Peace Clubs from many Mennonite schools. She will be recruiting for MVS volunteers. Keturah and Rebekah have appreciated the hospitality of many who have invited them to their homes for meals. They are using their enrichment fund for YMCA memberships. Recruitment for 2014-15 volunteers will begin soon. One barrier to finding appropriate volunteer placement sites is the substantial stipend that the host organization must pay to MVS—the committee will be looking at options for helping organizations offset this cost.

Pastoral Care (Teresa, written report):

As a pastoral care team, we try to determine if there are emotional, spiritual, physical needs of people in our church that we can address. We have recently been focusing on coordinating support and meals for those who have had medical issues; we got infant child care up and running, we are planning women's gatherings and perhaps an upcoming retreat for women. As far as special events like Snow Day, it has been decided to have an impromptu gathering either

at Rob and Wendy's or at church for those who wish to participate. We are still determining if people would like to join a small group.

Closing Song: Sing the Journey 98, "All will be well". Dan closed the meeting with prayer.

**Treasurer's Report updated 31 January 2014 to reflect final close of FY2013
(from treasurer, Jen Carter).**

We closed FY2013 with a \$ 261.38 deficit of our General Fund.

The Checking account has \$12,829.26 divided as follows:

General Fund = \$1403.26

Sharing Fund= \$643.00

Education Fund= \$9081.00

Immigrant Education Fund= \$1702.00

Designated Fund= \$0 (received \$3125 in designated offerings, all disbursed as designated)

Special/Projects Fund= \$0 (remaining \$1032.25 from the 1/26/14 offering reported verbally subsequently disbursed to Eastern Mennonite Missions for the Smoker family)

Our Savings account has \$9117.89. Our Certificate of Deposit (Capital Fund) has \$5319.50.

Our Mennonite Voluntary Service account (MVS Fund) has \$1954.37.

As of 26 January 2014 our mortgage balance is \$179,221.35

In FY2013 we collected \$14,265.43 as Special Offerings outside of our budget. \$8,854.43 was given as Projects (see listing below) and \$5411.00 was given to our newly created Immigrant Education Fund for the college expenses of Artie Martinez. Artie has used \$3709, leaving \$1702 still in the fund.

April 2013	\$233.74	Open Door Mission
May 2013	\$1,324.75	support of Delegate Austin with Convention expenses
May 2013	\$80.00	Foodlink, community garden initiative
June 2013	\$5411.00	Immigrant Ed. Fund, Arturo
June 2013	\$359.00	MVS fundraiser for retreat (Kristeen, Deanna, Artie)
July 2013	\$317.17	Shine Fund, convention offering
July 2013	\$327.16	DREAMer Fund, convention offering
Sept. 2013	\$98.16	Mennonite Disaster Service, Oklahoma hurricane relief
Oct. 2013	\$2917.00	Spiritus Christi, responding to violence initiative
Oct. 2013	\$68.11	Mennonite Central Committee, relief kits project
Oct. 2013	\$460.00	MVS fundraiser for retreat (Ket, Bekah)
Dec. 2013	\$1481.07	grocery and gas cards for farmworker family gifts
Dec. 2013	\$156.02	Mennonite Central Committee, Syrian refugee children aid
Jan. 2014	\$1032.25	Eastern Mennonite Missions, Smoker family support

The Home Missions:MVS line has been switched to function less like a charitable giving line and more like an expense. That is, the line still covers enrichment for our local unit and related sharing, but it will be drawn on as needed and may be more or less than \$1200 per year in the same way that other budget items can vary from anticipated costs.

With our new Aplos software I can track both tangible accounts that the church has (Checking, Savings, CD, MVS) as well as Funds within or bridging those accounts. The MVS Fund now

reported on is the residual of our MVS start-up account plus other transactions related to the Rochester MVS program. It is money that is locally raised, held and administered by our church, not directly accessible by either the Unit or Mennonite Mission Network.

FY2014:

In order to keep our giving equal to last year, the Finance Ministry is proposing a budget that is pretty ambitious. It looks like we are presenting a balanced budget, but the proposed offerings will likely be around \$3000 smaller than stated unless patterns change.

The increase in expected Office/ Postage will cover our Aplos monthly fee, a detailed analysis of our books and bookkeeping practices by CPA Pat Weber requested by Jen & Kathy and approved by LT, and expenses related to changing our letterhead, stamps, and checks. Pat Weber will also help us file Form 1099 for the money we pay Ephraim.

The increase in Misc. Local is in anticipation of the expense of our new sign.

At the request of MVS Local Leaders we are proposing that we continue to pay our insurance bill in entirety to ease bookkeeping tangles and to lighten the load on our MVS Unit's budget.

We have added a line item to pay for the expenses of sending one delegate to our biennial MCUSA Convention. The Finance Ministry thinks it is important to support this function of connecting with the larger denomination without expecting that someone in our midst use their own money to attend. Last year it took about \$1600. to send Austin to Phoenix. In 2015 we can expect that we will budget for a similar expense. A process for deciding on whom to send will be required of our church.

As the congregation has approved our budget, the Finance Ministry will re-visit our balances in May and again in September and propose adjustments to our budget as necessary.