

Rochester Mennonite Fellowship Congregational Meeting Minutes, 5/18/14

Present: Kathy Kern, Rob Shelly , Arnie Pederson, Judy Bernhart, Nancy Price, Bob Carter, Aaron Stuckey, Rachel Stuckey, Jen Carter, Jason Poole, Dan Giles, Tammy Besse, Rebecca Enns, Kathy Shelly, Mark Shelly, Anthony Ricciuti, Bryan Babcock, Walt Nickeson, Wendy Shelly, Melissa Carlson, Gail Ricciuti, Austin Pettigrew

Dan opened with a devotional, with a time for each present to share what RMF as a body means to them.

Trustee Election:

Trustees serve 3 year terms. Bob Carter's three year term is ending this year, and he was elected to serve another 3 year term by unanimous decision. Rachel Stuckey's term continues 1 more year and Kathy Shelly's term continues 2 more years.

Gift-Pledge Process:

Sign-up sheets have been placed in the foyer listing our Ministry Team positions as well as individual tasks that are carried out by volunteers from the congregation. These sign-up sheets will be available for at least the next two weeks. All are encouraged, but not required, to consider the ways that they are able to contribute to the life of the Fellowship and sign up accordingly.

New Leadership Team:

The current Leadership Team solicited nominations for Leadership Team from the entire congregation, and spoke with each nominated person as to their willingness to serve. New Leadership Team members are Anthony Ricciuti, Roger Kurtz, and Dan Giles. Wendy Shelly and Kathy Shelly will continue on Leadership Team. Jason Poole and Walt Nickeson are completing their time on Leadership Team in June.

Song: Hymnal Worship Book 407, "We Are People Of God's Peace"

Congregational Decision-Making Process:

Jason reviewed a model for congregational decision-making that was formulated by the Leadership Team based on input from the congregation and our prior decision-making practices (see attachments). They asked for input from the congregation and proposed that we test this model to see how it functions in practice.

Discussion points included:

There is some uncertainty as to the degree of autonomy that Ministry Teams have in making decisions, and which decisions need to be brought to the Leadership Team and/or congregation for discernment. Fellowship Bylaws do provide guidance as to which decisions require input from the entire congregation. Historically, close communication between Ministry Team members and Leadership Team has led to satisfactory resolution in cases of uncertainty.

The current model filters all “ideas for change” through the Leadership Team, who then decides if the matter is appropriate for consideration by the wider congregation. To safeguard against a circumstance in which the Leadership Team might not represent or respond to the concerns of congregation members, it was suggested that there be a stated mechanism by which congregation members could bring an “idea for change” directly to the congregation for consideration.

We will decide steps #9 and #11 via simple majority vote. As per bylaws, for step #12 a 2/3 majority is required to pass a proposal.

The new leadership team will delineate a consistent process for step #7 “Is there consensus to affirm?”

It was unanimously agreed to “give this model a try,” and to re-visit its usefulness in one year.

Song: “Hymnal Worship Book 322, “For We Are Strangers No More”

Follow-up on “Listening Meetings” regarding Sexuality:

Wendy summarized a common theme in all of the Listening Meetings that were held: We desire as a congregation to extend a clear welcome to all who wish to participate in our Fellowship. (All members present affirmed this statement).

Each member present was given an opportunity to express what we might say and do as RMF to express this welcome. Ideas and related discussion included:

- We could make explicit on our website and in our core values our welcome to LGBTQ persons.
- We could meet with NY Mennonite Conference Leadership to listen to one another, articulate our commitment to welcome the LGBTQ community and seek mutual understanding on this issue.
- We have room for improvement in creating a welcoming space for LGBTQ persons.
- Offering welcome to people from diverse backgrounds is not equated with an “anything goes” acceptance of all varieties of sexual expression.
- We should be loving, gentle, and respectful of those who have a perspective on these issues that is different from our own.
- The Leadership Team was asked to formulate proposals, using our new decision-making model, how we might add wording to our website that articulates welcome to the LGBT community, and how we might engage in conversation with NY Mennonite Conference leaders about this issue.

Jason closed in prayer.

Minutes recorded by Rob Shelly.

Addendum: Reports from Worship ministry and Treasurer on next page.

Worship Committee Report 5/18/14

Summer materials have come in. We will be starting a seven-week series on Paul's journeys July 13th. This will take us through Sept 7th, as there will be two weeks of not doing this – one worshipping with Trinity which we have picked for July 27th (Bryan will see if this is ok with Trinity) and the other when we worship with the Houghton congregation at Letchworth in August.

This leaves several services that still need leaders until we start the series. The first in which we need a worship leader is Pentecost, June 8. Then we have 6/22, 6/29 and 7/6. There are no materials for these Sundays except the Lectionary scriptures which people can use or you can be creative with a theme you have been thinking about, but be sure to have some scriptures that go along with your theme. On June 22nd, we need to include the commissioning of new church leaders and 6/29/14 will be breakfast at the church. If that day is a nice warm day, we might want to have the church service outside also.

There is also a four week series on Recovenanting in the Leader magazine that we thought we would do in the fall as we have moved our Recovenanting to the fall.

We do not have assigned song leaders during the summer. Currently with Ting and Roger away we only have Anne and Ben, so ask one of them or if anyone else wants to lead it is ok also. In the fall we will probably start up the rotation again.

Treasurer's report: May 2014

As of 17 May 2014 approximately one-quarter through our fiscal year, we have \$ 15,048 in our General Fund. We also have \$ 9081 in the Mennonite Education Fund, \$ 1702 in the Immigrant Scholarship Education Fund, and \$143 in the Sharing Fund. The CD and Savings remain at \$5319 and \$9118 respectively.

The high general fund balance is due to be brought down by disbursing a number of our giving categories later this month.

We have received \$ 27,942 in offerings of a projected \$69,100 or approximately 40% of anticipated income. I suggest that we are unlikely to double our projected income, simply that we have received some of our offerings front-loaded in our fiscal year. We look to be on track for both spending and receiving.