

Rochester Mennonite Fellowship
Congregational Meeting
31 May 2015

MINUTES

Present: Bob Carter, Jen Carter, Walt Nickeson, Rob Shelly, Anthony Ricciuti, Aaron Stuckey, Tim Armstrong, Julie Armstrong, Kathy Kern, Gail Ricciuti, Sonya Stauffer Kurtz, Judy Bernhart, Dan Giles, Rachel Stuckey, Teresa Nickeson, Nancy Price, Wendy Shelly, Mark Shelly, Chrissie Walls, Roger Kurtz (recorder), Kathy Shelly (moderator).

1. Opening Devotional

Dan shared a “scripture mash-up” on the topics of gifts, love, and the body of Christ.

2. New Leadership Team.

The new Leadership Team, to begin July 1, was announced. Returning members are Dan Giles, Wendy Shelly, and Anthony Ricciuti. New members are Amy Durkee and Aaron Stuckey.

3. Gift Pledge Process

Gift pledge forms will be available for several weeks in the foyer. Please sign up.

4. Finance Commission Report

The congregational treasurer (Jen) reported that as of the first third of the fiscal year, we have received half of our expected annual income through offerings. We do not anticipate that pace of giving to continue throughout the year, and as a result we are still assuming that our total income will be as budgeted. To date we have disbursed about one-third of expected expenses.

Fund balances:

- Checking account: \$23,480 (includes the four items immediately following)
- General fund balance: \$11,511
- Education Fund: \$8,081
- Immigrant education fund: \$2,376
- Sharing Fund: \$1,012
- Savings account: \$9,123
- CD/Capital Fund: \$5,326
- MVS: \$249

This year we have distributed Special Offering contributions of \$591 to Shelter 44 and \$614 to St. Joseph’s House of Hospitality.

Jen also noted that the finance committee is establishing the position of assistant treasurer. Duties include being the primary contact for receiving and depositing offering income; liaising with the finance ministry, Leadership Team, and other ministries; reviewing financial records; and

assisting the treasurer in various other ways. Interested persons may volunteer for this job by signing up for it on the gift pledge form.

Jen also reported that the finance ministry has formalized a seminar reimbursement policy. This is a policy by which the congregation reimburses registration fees for members to attend seminars, trainings and workshops that enrich the life of our congregation. Information is available in the binder in the kitchen, on the website, or from the finance committee.

5. Proposal to hire a Church Administrator

We discussed the following proposal that had been distributed to the congregation 3 weeks prior to this meeting:

Proposal:

The Leadership Team proposes that the congregation hire someone in the role of Church Administrator on a quarter-time basis.

Background to the proposal:

Kathy Shelly has served as Church Administrator for many years, but is withdrawing from this role as of July 1. In recent years, but particularly since moving into our building, the tasks of this position have increased in amount and in complexity. They are, however, tasks that the congregation values highly. In particular, we value good communication within and outside of our congregation, and we value the logistical support the Administrator lends to our various church ministries.

The Leadership Team has tried a variety of approaches to filling the job of Administrator. No-one has responded to appeals to replace Kathy on a volunteer basis. We have also brainstormed ways to redistribute or eliminate the job responsibilities, with no satisfactory solution. The Leadership Team is concerned that if no-one takes on this role, these tasks will devolve to the Leadership Team or simply not happen. This detracts from the Leadership Team's ability to serve its primary function, and it has also made it difficult to recruit volunteers to serve on Leadership Team. We believe that hiring a quarter-time individual to take on this job is in the best interest of our congregation at this time.

Recent congregational discussion suggests we have mixed opinions on the prospect of hiring, but that a majority of the congregation is supportive. The Leadership Team believes that it is entirely feasible to design a job description and compensation package that align with our core values and that fit within our budget. At this point we are requesting congregational approval to finalize the details of the position and to hire a qualified individual from the within the congregation to fill it. We are requesting a clear decision, for or against this proposal, at this meeting.

We broke into small groups to gather responses to this proposal. Upon returning to the large group, we reported and noted the following observations from the small groups:

- That there is affirmation for the importance of the job of Church Administrator.
- That our current volunteer model is not working.
- That when you are paid to do something, you take the job seriously.

- That paying someone is not contrary to our identity, and that adding this item to our budget would be in line with our values.
- That many of us have experience of this working in other churches.
- That we still value volunteer efforts.
- That our community expects a certain amount of order, which is why we're interested in this position.
- That we appreciate the amount of work involved in this position, as well as the lack of alternatives.
- That we value centralizing this job, as opposed to parceling it out.
- That things go best when you can do your job joyfully, and we appear not to have joyful volunteers who are ready to do this job.
- That having the Church Administrator be a volunteer position limits it to someone who can afford the time and lost income to do it. Paying someone makes it an option for more people.
- That there is also a gender issue, in that our volunteers tend to be women, and that relying on the good will of women involves a certain level of exploitation.
- That we affirm the way that this might afford some employment to someone.
- That in setting up this position we are responding to a real need rather than a frivolous benefit.

We also noted a number of questions that were raised:

- Why do we not have people willing to do this job?
- In the future, where do we draw the line between things that should be paid for and not?
- What are the implications of establishing a boss-employee relationship? Does that disrupt the community?
- Would a paid person feel entitled or empowered in ways that they shouldn't?
- Do we have a candidate? Is there anyone who has the skills to fill this position?
- Should we hire someone from within or from without?
- Is a one-year initial trial period enough?
- Who is responsible for the hiring process?
- How do you evaluate or fire someone, especially if they are from within the congregation?
- Does paying someone change the character of our fellowship?

After a chance for further discussion and clarification, Kathy asked who would affirm and who would object to the Leadership Team's proposal. All affirmed, and no-one objected.

Consequently, the Leadership Team will move forward with the task of hiring a part-time Church Administrator. It was noted that we will want to evaluate both the process (how does having a paid administrator work for the church?) as well as the individual (how well are they doing the job?).

Having made this decision, Kathy asked the group to evaluate the decision-making process. Appreciation was expressed for not having to follow a complicated flow chart. It was also noted that it appeared we were united on this topic, which made the decision fairly straightforward.

6. Trustee Replacement

Wendy Shelly was unanimously appointed to a 3-year term as trustee. Continuing members are Bob Carter (2 years remaining in term) and Kathy Shelly (1 year remaining).

7. Reports

Wendy reported that our annual church retreat will be September 25-27, 2015 at Beaver Camp. Teri, Melissa, Nancy, Tammy and Wendy are on the planning committee. They welcome additional members to join the committee (especially if you have a Y chromosome.) The general theme for retreat is celebrating and caring for creation.

Worship committee reported that we will be doing a summer worship series on courageous women of the Bible.

Education ministry reported that adult hour for the next two Sundays will be dedicated to discussing the resolutions for the MCUSA convention. After June 14, there will be no Sunday School for the rest of the summer.

Stewards reported that a quilt will be hung on the back wall of the sanctuary in an attempt to artfully dampen the acoustics of the room. Also, a Jan Richardson print has been framed and is ready to be hung. They are also considering other art placement. The lawn mowing schedule is set. And there may be a midsummer work day.