

Congregational Meeting
Minutes
May 21, 2017

In Attendance: Tammy, Teresa, Gail, Anthony, Mark, Billy, Lisa, Terry, Jen, Bob, Aaron, Melissa, Walt, Kathy S., Judy, Dan, Rachel, Amy, Jason (for second half)

Prayer - Aaron

Delegate Assembly report (4/29/2017, Auburn NY) - Mark

- Delegate Assembly is a gathering of representatives from conference participants from across NY state in Auburn. This occurs in the Spring and the Fall of each year.
- We heard the stories from the life of the gathered churches. We also heard the stories of activities among diverse ministries. This includes the activity in urban farming and Youth for Christ in Buffalo, part of the active ministry of Rod McCullum.
- The bylaws were amended to allow active participants in some ministries closely related to NYMC to serve in positions of leadership in the conference, even if they are not members of a Mennonite congregation.
- The conference is active. There is a search on for a new Conference Minister. There continues to be some angst regarding our continued deficit budgets. Evan Zehr presented a biblical study of first fruits giving.

Education Ministry Report – Gail and Anthony

Gail drafted a letter to reach out to the 5 mosques in Rochester (see attached). She'd like to have LT members to sign to arrive before Ramadan that starts next Friday night. We agreed to send these letters out.

Anthony explained that Mohammed Shafiq wrote to apologize for missing the Adult Hour he was scheduled for. We will invite him back for July 9. Amy will put in midweek announcements and we will all advertise to our networks. Our concern is that we'd like to make sure there are enough people here to make it worth his time. 11:15 -12:15.

Just a few weeks left, then we'll take a break until September. 3 week series on Israel/Palestine coming up. We need some folks to join us on the ministry team.

Stewards Report – Aaron

Work day yesterday- thanks to all you helped. We got a lot done. If anyone notices anything that needs to be done, please let us know.

Finance Report - Jen

A follow-up from our March congregational meeting and the action items that were approved: Kathy sent \$800 checks to each of the 5 organizations (or a total of \$4000): Mennonite World Conference, MennoMedia, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Partners in Restorative Initiatives, and Beaver Camp. In return, we have received appreciative thank you notes as well as some updates/ newsletters from them. Jen sent the additional \$2000 towards our mortgage principal. We will open an additional \$6000 CD for our Capital Fund in early June. This means our Capital Fund will be held across two 12-month CD's, one maturing in early December, one in early June.

We are on track budget-wise for our fiscal year. At the close of our first quarter we had received about \$27,891 for our General Fund or about 40% of our expected income. This is not to say we are expecting to receive greatly more than our budgeted offerings, but that a few families have front-loaded their giving for the beginning of our fiscal year. Our expenses and charitable giving are at about 25% of our budget and held no unexpected issues.

Fund balances:

General Fund \$21631. (\$6000 of which is earmarked for the CD)

Sharing Fund \$2722. (this includes \$1459 collected as our February special offering plus a designated gift and minus a \$100 disbursement)

Education @ Mennonite Institution Fund \$6081, with no expected draws in the next year or more.

Immigrant Education Fund \$526. This money is still being held for Artie to finish his LPN/ RN degrees.

Savings \$9132.

Capital Improvement Fund \$5339; soon to be \$11339.

Outreach Fund \$3294 (this was previously called our MVS Fund)

Also of note, our April special offering of \$1360 was sent to NYMC for the Utica church's van.

If you wish to suggest a recipient for a special offering, we have a form on our website or you can ask a member of Finance to help you.

The Smoker family, missionaries in Guatemala who come in our fellowship support, will be in town this summer. We will invite them to come sometime this summer when we have a free Sunday.

Worship ministry report - Amy

We have been using materials for a series on Ephesians for the past few weeks. We would love feedback from those who have led and those who have attended these services. Do people like these materials? If so, we plan to use more from this publisher in the future.

We will use materials in the Leader for a Summer series titled "Bind Us Together."

We want to remind the congregation that over the summer, there is no song leader cycle. If you sign up to lead a service, you need to also find your own song leader.

We are looking for a date in August for our annual worship at Letchworth with Sojourners. Will publish as soon as we have it.

Outreach Ministry report – Melissa

Had a lot of people involved when taking Bobby to games and practices. Things are quieter now. Planning a trip for the whole family to go to Niagara Falls. Stay tuned for a date. Also will be inviting them to Letchworth. Main thing now is relationship building/hanging out. If you'd like to do that, let a member of the ministry know. We've raised \$150 so far in the money jar for Zytumi's wedding.

Pastoral Ministry –

Continues to work behind the scenes to meet needs of those in our fellowship who may need help. We seem to be planning a lot of going-away parties. Next one is 6/25, for the Kurtz family

Retreat Committee – Tammy

Theme will be worship music and traditions from around the world and ways to worship that are mentioned in the Bible. Need volunteers to help with childcare, Sunday worship, and other things. If you'd like to help, see one of the following people:

Friday potluck - Judy

Saturday morning lesson - Julia

Saturday evening fun - Billy

Sunday morning worship - Tammy

Leadership Team -

Thank you to Anthony, who is stepping down after a 3-year term. Kathy Shelly will be joining.

REVIVE update: see attached

"Please pray for us and we'll keep you informed along the way"

Discussion about signing and publicizing the Public Call to Protect All People (attached)

Question is to accept as is, to accept with changes, or not to do this at all.

Ron brought this to LT. Unfortunately not here with us today.

Tammy - "protect and support" and "oppose," etc. How are these defined? Without understanding what these terms mean, she doesn't know whether she could support it or not.

Gail - according to the creators of the document, each church gets to decide what those terms mean

Amy read a hand-written statement from Tim (that Julia also agreed with). They couldn't be at the meeting but wanted to let everyone know they are very open to discussing this more. The statement is a little long for the minutes, but here are some quotes from it: Our concern is the tone coming off as "*We are Democrats.*" Not just the focus, but also ideological phrases steeped in views overwhelmingly from the left, oppose the call to "*reach* across creed, class, ethnicity, race and party *preference.*" And This statement saves mention of God until the third paragraph and *doesn't* mention the Bible or Jesus at all. I believe it will send the wrong message for our church. (Amy will put the written statement with the minutes kept in the Congregational Minutes binder in the kitchen so that others can read the entire statement if they like).

Amy - shares Tim and Julia's concern that, while stating the it embraces "all," the tone and message overall doesn't really communicate that

Bob - our actions will carry infinitely more weight than statements. He thinks it is overtly political in tone, even though it probably doesn't mean to be. Concerned it will cause inflammation, not really help.

Gail - wonders what kind of wording that folks, like Tim and Juli, would feel comfortable with

Dan - Aren't we/can't we do these things without posting this? Seem to be political values primarily, Biblical values secondarily. What's benefit/purpose of posting vs just doing? Seems too political.

Anthony - Acknowledges that it's clear that we aren't ready to sign something like this. And also needs to acknowledge that Yes, it is political, just as the Bible is political. We need to, at some point and in different ways, discuss how we handle this question of how we speak Truth.
Gail - observes that it's possible that a few years ago, this same wording might not have seemed political

Melissa - Ron's concern: during WW2, no churches made public statements against Hitler. We don't want to err in that direction.

Mark - could we post a sign similar to the lawn sign of welcome that we have on our website. He proposes that we do that. Many people nodded in agreement to this idea.

Anthony proposes that, if we want to discuss a possible statement to go on our website, we postpone to September meeting

Terry - there might be other Menno churches in conference that are also interested and we could find wording together

Gail - We would be willing to take action, but wording of a public statement needs more discussion

Conclusion – We did not affirm the proposal that was brought to the congregation today.

Talking with Terry Zehr, session 3

Review of past sessions:

- Level of anxiety inversely proportional to level of effectiveness
- Individual anxiety and also group anxiety - each one of us bears responsibility to manage own anxiety as constructive as possible as a participant in the group
- Anxiety is a secondary emotion - tells you something else is going on. Get curious and ask yourself what it's really about.
- What's personal rarely remains private - we think we can mask our anxiety, but that's pretty doubtful. We leak what's going on to others around us

Presentation of “**The** Four Emotional Horseman of the Apocalypse” – see attached handout

Attachment:

REVIVE report for May 21 congregational meeting

At the last congregational meeting, I (Kathy) shared about the opportunity to join a cohort of churches from NYMC in a year-long exploration of renewal in our churches. There was much affirmation along with some caution, and after discussing further with the LT the following evening, it was decided we would pursue it if there were 3-4 people to be part of it. We officially joined this cohort in mid-April, with several churches only recently joining, so it has been a bit of a slower start than expected. We want to keep you all updated often, and if you are ever interested in knowing even more, please do not hesitate to contact us. The team is Bob Carter, Aaron Stuckey, Chrissie Walls and myself.

Not only are there ~ 8 churches from New York Mennonite Conference in this cohort, but several from Kansas and Iowa. With technology what it is, we can join a meeting with the leaders, Howard and Cathy Wagler in KS, and we just have to remember they are scheduling in Central time/ 1 hour difference! I don't think I will make that mistake again.

We've been asked to purchase several books (we are happy to share the list), but have only gotten started on the first book, *The Forgotten Ways Handbook* by Alan Hirsch, that Chrissie shared about last week during her meditation on the passage in Ephesians 4. We've also done several online tests (DISC and APEST) to better understand ourselves –why we do/ say things the way we do, and also understand our gifts. These tests are available to you to do online also, and we would encourage anyone interested to do that. (Let us know and we can point you in the right direction).

All along this year-long process, we will be having cohort meetings (with Zoom technology) with Howard and Cathy, and individual coaching meetings from them with the 4 of us. Before we begin a 6-month process from July to December, we will be doing a congregational assessment. We have no idea at this point what that will look like, but as I mentioned before, we will keep you updated.

As we get to know Howard and he us, we are anticipating there will be ways to make the reading and conversations both helpful and yet challenging to us. We hold values as a church – now how do we practice these values? How can we as a church embody the core values that we hold? We sense our congregation wants to impact the world (at least a little corner of it in Rochester) and we are hoping this process will help stimulate new ways of looking at ourselves and guide us in that direction.

Please pray for us and for this process. We want to keep you in the loop and part of this as we journey together!

Bob Carter, Aaron Stuckey, Chrissie Walls, Kathy Shelly