

**Congregational Meeting  
Minutes  
September 18, 2016**

Facilitator: Dan

Welcome - Dan

Devotional - Anthony

Anthony discussed how a thick tradition, meaning a lot of detail and text devoted to a particular topic in the Bible, generally indicates that the story is particularly important. In particular, the Exodus story in Ch. 14 highlights that the most important part of the story to bear witness to the fact that God saved the Israelites, not the administration of that saving. If we get our purpose settled, then the strategy will fall into place. In today's terms, how does our current and proposed path bear witness to the salvation of God?

Outreach Ministry – Dan, Chrissie, Anthony, Melissa

1. Stated purpose – to determine how we will engage in the community
  - a. Plug into existing ministries
  - b. Form our own, perhaps?
2. Outreach team examined outreach opportunities that were proposed by RMF members
3. The idea is to try a few things, find the energy behind them, and go from there
4. Proposals:
  - a. Rochester Refugee Resettlement Service – Melissa presented
    - i. Started in 2012 after seeing housing need for refugees at Mary's Place
    - ii. Maplewood/Edgerton area, on Dewey
    - iii. Own 30 houses, Burmese and Nepalese communities, African community
    - iv. Driver training, temp agencies, interpreters, sponsors, work exchange program
    - v. Needs:
      1. Advocates to work with families
      2. Someone to do plumbing/electric repairs & teach others
      3. Data entry
      4. Saturday driver training, 8am-2pm every week
      5. Grant writer to help collect money
      6. Fund raiser to collect money for high schools
    - vi. Nancy asked if they have sponsors before arrival. Melissa explained that Catholic Family Services brings them here, then RRRS helps them settle/integrate
    - vii. Wendy noted there are a lot fewer strings to this commitment than to being the initial sponsors
  - b. Sweet Beez – Bryan Babcock presented
    - i. What they do in Rochester:
      1. Largest community garden in the city – Lexington near Mt Reed
      2. Bee-keeping
      3. "The Hive" – house that offers transitional housing to young men involved in Spiritus' Urban Youth Outreach and also houses BJ (a volunteer with Mission Year). Austin runs the house
    - ii. Started in 2011 as part of FoodLink, occupy 4<sup>th</sup> floor of FoodLink warehouse
    - iii. Needs
      1. Volunteers, to staff bee-keeping educational events in the summer (they would train us)
      2. Help with the hives around town
      3. Sweet Beez house – the "Hive"
        - a. House needs financial support; they overspent grant by \$10k.

- b. Currently subsidized by Bryan and Christin, ~\$10k to house someone for the year.
        - c. Help fixing up the house, especially winterizing. If RMF wants to schedule a work day, please contact Bryan or Christin to do so.
      - 4. Grant writing
      - 5. They can always use financial assistance, since the all the work is mainly funded by Bryan and Christin
    - iv. They also have a Guatemalan bee-keeping co-operative
      - 1. Anton has been going for the last 17 years
      - 2. Employee a local man to be in charge of the co-operative
      - 3. Anyone can sponsor a hive for \$100
  - c. Spiritus Christi Mental Health Center's Urban Youth Outreach – Amy and Dan presented
    - i. Over 100 kids served on Minor's Unit at county jail and in community; approximately 20 kids a year supported as they re-integrate into the community
    - ii. Needs:
      - 1. Financial assistance
      - 2. Hoodies, warm socks, gift certificates for clothing, food
      - 3. Security deposits
      - 4. Hit or miss on opportunities to "help out"
      - 5. Opportunity to relate to youth living at "The Hive"
    - iii. Kathy S. reminded us that Eileen visited for an Adult Hour a few years ago; she is the social worker who works with the youth in this program
    - iv. Outreach Ministry thinks it would be best to offer assistance to this work via a special offering instead of as an outreach project, since the opportunities for hands-on work are so few and sporadic
    - v. Amy will continue providing information, through the midweek announcements, about what the youth need.
5. We took 5 minutes to break into small groups for prayer and discernment –
  - a. Affirmed that we would support Spiritus Christi financially, via special offering
  - b. Melissa pointed out that the Outreach Ministry is really "Mission Ministry,"
  - c. Dan agreed, saying we're looking for places to plug into, not trying to bring new people to the church
6. Dan led us in an activity to measure the congregation's energy for these proposals. Outreach team can work with the groups to set up specific events after our interest has been engaged. Also, it was made clear that we are in no way locked in to volunteering with these two groups, or ONLY with these two groups. It's just a place to start. This is just a response to the congregation's request for outreach opportunities.

The dot exercise, involving Sweet Beez and RRRS, was meant to measure whether members of the congregation valued the particular mission and whether they had energy (i.e., time to commit) for the particular mission opportunity. Valuable the congregation finds these missions and time energy available for Sweet Beez and RRRS. Both groups had strong interest, with RRRS getting 9 Energy votes and 3 We Value votes and Sweet Beez getting 6 Energy votes and 2 We Value votes. 2 votes were placed on the wall between the two posters.

Results of the Exercise: Overall, appears there is nearly even energy for both, which is great to see. RRRS had 9 Energy, 3 Value. Sweet Beez had 6 Energy, 2 Value. There are 2 stickers on the wall in-between to two ministries.

7. Tsegaye's tutoring program - Wendy
  - a. The program is going to continue this year, primarily driven by U of R students, starting October 1. They will have adequate volunteers, but we are always welcome to attend and help out.
  - b. The program will probably be here for only one or two more years, since Tsegaye and his partner are going to be buying a large building with space for tutoring.
  
8. Ministry Reports –Aaron
  - a. Retreat Committee – Kathy S. gave last-minute reminders about retreat
  - b. Education Committee – Gail and Mark (and Ron)
    - i. Going to be talking about the book *Rewilding the Way*, and the author will be in town on Saturday, October 29. (To sign up to attend, check [spirituschrst.org](http://spirituschrst.org) or call 325-1180). With book studies, we know that not everyone reads the books, but we make sure you can attend and get value from it.
    - ii. We are interested in input into what we're going to be doing through the year.
      1. We haven't set the agenda
      2. Christian formation, developing as ever better disciples, is an important activity. What are people's needs? How can they be met?
      3. If you're not at our planned activities, why is that? Do you not like the material? Other feedback? What was your favorite?
    - iii. Wendy let us know that, while we don't have a preschool class, some of us are prepared to jump in to accommodate visitors if needed. And pastoral ministry provides care for babies and toddlers during worship, if needed.
  - c. Stewardship Committee – Aaron, Bob, Melissa, Walt, Tim
    - i. Will be planning fall workday based on leaf coverage – most likely early to mid-November
    - ii. Keeping eyes open to needed maintenance, so make sure to pass anything you see on to the committee.
    - iii. Planning winter snow removal and cherry tree trimming
  - d. Pastoral Team – Theresa, Wendy, Kathy K., and Nancy
    - i. We "try to facilitate the spiritual needs of the congregation through prayer and worship"
    - ii. Work "below the radar" to attend to emotional needs and determine what we can do to support difficult situations
    - iii. We do outward work as well - for retirements, farewells, etc.
    - iv. Sharing Fund, which is usually done in private. Two recent uses of Sharing Fund that we can disclose are:
      1. Artie's family and their community – send \$200
      2. Judy's daughter (Susie's) airfare to visit her father when he was ill
  - e. Worship Ministry – Billy, Amy, Nancy, Sonya
    - i. We will be using the lectionary for our main resource for the fall, up until Advent. As always, worship leaders can feel free to use the lectionary scriptures or do their own thing.
    - ii. We have started an experiment in an effort to make leading less daunting. Sonya has been shoulder-tapping folks who signed up to bring a message and signing them up for particular Sundays, the letting those who signed up to plan the rest of the service know that those dates are available. This way, no one person needs to take responsibility for the entire service. We've just started this experiment so we'll see how it goes. For those who prefer to take responsibility for the entire service, that's not a problem. Just sign up to be worship leader and to bring the message and the service is yours.

- iii. Billy invites those who are interested in be leaders/coordinators for music to contact him. We'd like to have more folks involved in music.
  - f. Finance Committee – Aaron, Jen, Kathy S. and Tammy
    - i. Kathy Shelly talked about handling of the remaining MVS funds, since our unit has been discontinued. Roger, Rachel, Kathy S., Jen and Amy met this month to decide what to do with the funds. We unanimously decided to give \$1000 to NY Mennonite Conference (who provided us with \$10,000 in start-up funds back in 2010), \$500 to Nathan to assist with car trouble, and to keep \$2000 in the "startup fund," to possibly be used as a seed fund for outreach activities.
    - ii. Because our budget is being built in October to be presented for approval at our November 20 congregational meeting, both household pledge forms and budget requests from each ministry are due by October 9. Budget Pledge Forms are in members' mailboxes, on the church website, and will also be sent out electronically with the midweek announcements.
    - iii. Jen let us know that, budget-wise, are on track.
      - 1. We had approved a "stretch" budget
      - 2. Last quarter, the budget seemed to be on track
      - 3. As of 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2/3 year up, almost all of our categories are around 65%, +/- 15% (which is best as can be specific)
      - 4. We have over \$23,000 in our general fund, which will fund retreat and autumn giving
      - 5. Sharing fund as \$1213
      - 6. Education fund at \$6581, AFTER we pay for Vince's spring scholarship
      - 7. Savings and CD at \$9100 and \$5300
      - 8. The Immigrant Education fund is at \$526. We'll take special offering if Arturo wants to take another course
    - iv. Kathy S. reminded us that we usually do a special offering in September/October for children's' books for city schools. Since we haven't heard that they are doing this again this year, our October Special Offering will be for the Gandhi Institute's school program. Stay tuned for more information.
  - g. Delegate Report – Mark & Kathy Shelly
    - i. Mark and Kathy went as delegates. Wendy and Rachel were also there
    - ii. For a small conference, it was well-attended (~100 people)
    - iii. Multi-cultural groups, and solid sense that we come from many places and speak many languages
    - iv. We discussed that, in our cultural context, we need to be more intentional in sharing/teaching our faith not only within the church but also outside of it.
    - v. They approved a budget running an \$8000 deficit. How can they turn it around?
    - vi. Their budget is about the same as our budget, and they also have significant (\$250k capital) that can be used for church planting
- 9. Congregational Conversation discussion topic –, Dan
  - a. Last year, our congregation came up with a list of topics we most wanted to discuss. Last year, we addressed the topic of financial priorities and values and also began a conversation about outreach, by which we now realized we actually meant "missions" – in other words, "missions" refers to service in the community, while "outreach" refers more to reaching out to the community with the intent of growing the church and connecting with other faith communities, etc. We have now addressed both of those topics and are ready to move on to the next topic that we deem as our highest priority.

- b. Dan identified the 5 other topics and asked for a show of hands for each one. Results were as follows:
  - i. Worship – style of service, what do we do well (8 votes)
  - ii. Mission/Values – look at them again, make sure they resonate (8 votes)
  - iii. Decision Making (1 vote)
  - iv. Outreach (i.e. growing the church, networking with other faith communities, etc.) (4 votes)
  - v. Leadership – overall structure, (12 votes)
- c. Based on the above results, we'll discuss leadership at our October 30 congregational conversation

We sang to close the meeting.

Next meeting: Sunday, November 20, 2016