

Rochester Area Mennonite Fellowship

Congregational Meeting 18 May, 2001 Carter Residence, Honeoye Falls

Present: Judy Bernhart, Dennis Lehmann, Kathy Kern, Kathy Shelly, Jen Carter, Bob Carter, Victor Klassen, Eloise Schragg, Walt Nickeson, Nancy Price, James Wall, Roger Kurtz (recorder), Nathan Klassen

1. DEVOTIONS: From Judy, focused on Psalm 19.

2. REPORTS, PART I

a) Selection Committee:

The committee is grateful for a miracle, which is that despite needing to find three additional teachers for the new Sunday School class next year, enough people volunteered to meet all our needs perfectly. The duties for the next year are:

- i) **Leadership Team:** Kathy S. and Roger (continuing), Thom and James (new)
- ii) **Worship Committee:** Eloise and Mark (continuing), Bob (new)
- iii) **Sunday School Teachers:**
 - 2 year-olds: Teresa, Eloise, Sonya
 - 6 year-olds: Dennis, Chrissie, Sandy
 - 10-11 year-olds: Nancy, Walt, Sue
 - 12-14 year-olds: Judy, Roger, James
 - Lauren: Jen will continue working through the *Confession of Faith*
 - Kathy Kern is available as a substitute, when necessary

b) Leadership Team

- i) Calendar items were noted:
 - June 3 will be a celebration of the baptism of Sandy Orem.
 - June 10 will be recovenanting Sunday
 - Breakfast in the park will be June 17 at the Evergreen Shelter of Mendon Ponds Park. Maps were distributed.
 - The church camp-out will be July 21-22. Dennis is arranging details.
 - The September congregational meeting will be September 14.
- ii) Otherwise, the LT has been working at formulating a congregational statement about baptism, at investigating the need for incorporation, and at coordinating the rest of the summer schedule. It will be asking the congregation for its summer plans in order to arrange the best two weeks (one each in July and August), to include Sunday School.

c) Worship Committee

- i) The Lenten Retreat was cancelled; Summer schedules are being formulated.
- ii) Victor is the contact person through Pentecost, after which Eileen takes over.
- iii) The worship materials for the first Sunday in July are missing; if they were inadvertently placed among other materials and you find them, kindly get them to Sue.

d) Retreat Committee (Kathy K., Jen, Thom and Dennis)

- i) The dates for retreat this year are September 28-30.
- ii) This year will be a home-grown retreat. The committee proposes a 2-hour session in the morning and a 1-hour session in the afternoon, featuring six different panels in which everyone gets a

chance to tell about what they do: their jobs, hobbies, etc.. General approval was voiced for this idea.

iii) For next year (2002), Eloise proposed bringing Lois Preheim Janzen as the resource person. This idea also met with general approval; the retreat committee will bring us more information later about exactly what sorts of topics and input she might offer.

3. MEETING PLACE COMMITTEE (Kathy S., Victor, Thom, Jen, and Mark S.)

a) The survey on congregational priorities for a meeting place revealed the following information:

i) Most important considerations

- Room for 60 people
- 5 classrooms
- Accessible to the handicapped
- Kitchen present
- Safe neighborhood
- Low maintenance
- Other weekday uses

ii) Important considerations

- Central location
- Affordable (less than \$75,000)
- Acoustics
- Parking
- Outdoor area
- Potential for future additions
- Space for fellowship
- Like a church on the inside
- Storage space

iii) Not important considerations

- Needs no renovations
- Like a church on the outside
- Office space
- Rental attached

b) Location preferences: The committee brought a map of Rochester featuring an expanded area in which we are interested in looking. Everyone is encouraged to let the committee know if they see any potential properties within the preferred area. They will ask the realtor to bring us options from within this area, as well as to include slightly higher-priced options than previously. They are also investigating the possibility of leasing.

4. INCORPORATION

Roger reported on the Leadership Team's investigations into the merits of incorporating RAMF. It appears that this is useful if we are to apply for a mortgage, especially as it means any property that is purchased would be in the name of the corporation rather than an individual. Incorporation in New York requires naming four initial directors, giving one mailing address, and a one-time fee of \$75. Milton Zehr, our conference minister, highly recommends that we take this step.

Moved and approved: That RAMF incorporate.

5. REPORTS, PART II

a) Delegate assembly (New York Mennonite Conference)

i) Budget: The NYMC budget is adjusting to some changes during this year: there is no longer a need to subsidize a pastor's salary at Bethsaida, and the Syracuse church closed and left some money to the conference. However, at the current rate of spending there will still be trouble breaking even by year's end. The Delta Lake conference was expensive because there were

two speakers to pay and because attendance was down. Next year, a change in the configuration of overseers will also make for some changes in the budget. Starting in February, we will automatically be part of the new Mennonite Church USA (assuming it is approved this summer). The way congregations send their money to church agencies will change.

- ii) Pastoral changes: There have been quite a lot of changes in pastoral positions across the conference. New pastors have started duties at least a half dozen congregations, a couple others have resigned, and one congregation (Rema, near Lowville) is withdrawing from the conference entirely.
- iii) Nashville 2001: The NYMC executive committee is considering RAMF's concerns that conference delegates be permitted to vote as the spirit leads at the national convention at Nashville this summer (rather than be required to vote according to a pre-ordained position established by the conference).
- iv) Nashville 2001: Mark Shelly is an alternate delegate for the NYMC. Katy K. is our congregational delegate under GC guidelines. NYMC delegates will be attending cluster meetings across the state to receive input on the issues to be voted upon at the convention (there will be such a meeting in Buffalo next Tuesday; Dennis is going and perhaps Mark as well).
- v) Delta Lake Leadership Conference: The dates next year will be Feb 1-3.
- vi) RAMF Letter to the Executive Committee: Dennis asked if this letter had been sent yet. It has not. It was suggested that it be emailed to Connie Finney.

b) Treasurer's report

- i) Year to date: Kathy distributed a report on the fiscal activities to date this year. The checking account balance is \$4832; savings is \$9347; the CD is as before. Inflows are as expected. There is the question of what should be done with our \$1500 pledge to NYMC for Bethsaida, given that the conference is no longer supporting Bethsaida financially and given that we are paying \$1600 toward the health insurance of one of its members. Should we use that \$1500 line toward the health insurance? Yes we should, it was decided.
- ii) Credit card: We now have a RAMF credit card, which may be used to purchase items for the church.

c) Insurance for Adone

RAMF is paying the health insurance for Aregash, a member of Bethsaida. Should we increase the premium payments in order to cover her newborn child, Adone? Since Adone is eligible for children's health insurance under Medicaid, there is no need for this, it was decided. Judy will ask Adrienne about some of the logistics of Medicaid; Dennis will talk with Takelech, an elder at Bethsaida, to make sure this is communicated to Aregash.

d) Growth meeting

At the most recent special congregational meeting on growth, four actions were suggested that RAMF:

- i) follow up to visitors in writing
- ii) be ready to invite visitors to lunch
- iii) have brochures and other information on hand to hand to visitors
- iv) create a newsletter to send out

General approval was expressed for these ideas and their implementation, with the following observations:

- Sometimes a phone or email follow-up is also useful.
- Pre-assigned lunch invitations can be too stiff and even off-putting. Continue as we have. Also, if someone calls our church telephone for directions, Roger can alert people about the potential visitor-cum-luncher.

- We will update our brochures; Thom is at work revising an old RAMF brochure; Kathy usually has calendars on hand in the accordion files.
- We will again precede our picnic with a newsletter.

6. BAPTISM STATEMENT

The Leadership Team presented a proposed congregational statement on baptism. Moved and approved: That the congregation adopt the statement as is.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Tomorrow, Adrien is moving. Be at Judy's at 3:30 if you wish to help load the truck.
- Sunday, May 27, over lunch at the Shellys', there will be a restorative justice program lunch.
- Saturday, June 23, from 9:00-11:00 a.m., we will do a service project with Intervol. James distributed information.
- Paperwork is due for the next Mennonite Directory. Who can help Kathy with the paperwork? Jen volunteered.
- Who will help Kathy coordinate the fall picnic, which is scheduled for September 9? Judy and Bob volunteered.