

What is it that I appreciate about the shared leadership model currently used at RAMF?

Group 1

- Learning from everyone, growth for myself, appreciate the opportunity to grow
- With worship leading, I appreciate the different styles, different perspectives. Appreciate that many are encouraged to learn more about preaching, teaching, worship leading
- Energized by asking a basic question, “what is church?”... Appreciate seeing current fruit of something that I helped in the beginning of the idea. “Current reflections of past contributions.” Appreciate variety and surprise of Sunday worship. Appreciate over the many years, time on, time off, time on, time off, Leadership Team
- I really like getting to know people with the different worship leaders. Each week I look forward to “who’s it going to be, what style are we going to get?”

[back to more reflection on large leadership, not just worship]

- Really appreciate leadership of building the building
- When we share, it’s wonderful to see how other’s skills blossom/work when I myself couldn’t no matter how hard I try, and see how my skills fit in.
- I usually see how I lack skills. Appreciate how we trust each other and work together and feel like I’m a part of that and fit in.
- Appreciate growing in what my gifts have been, and participating in shared leadership model. Appreciate “new” structure as a way to help many grow in their gifts; participation by many.
- Appreciate shared power over time and in each moment appreciate the amount of time so many leaders especially, but also everyone, has given to leadership.

Group 2

- Church is blessed with skills/talents/resources
- People take initiative/broadly shared
- Way to develop leadership gifts
- Opportunity to try things
- Way to bless each other and the broader church
- A good match with Anabaptist theology
- Active participation—learn more by leading
- Enjoy a variety of services—different voices/ideas
- Okay to make mistakes—this can help pull in others
- Flaws can be a blessing—less “perfect”
- Normative for children—this is what they know
- Movement among leaders/changes

Group 3

- Variety (in worship leadership)
- Completeness (in general leadership)
- Non-hierarchical, though bureaucratic
- Non-institutional
- No one is set apart
- Shared, as family
- Consistent with the teaching of Jesus

- We expect/anticipate participation
- Many voices, many supports holding up the structure, many viewpoints

Group 4

- Amazed at dedication of others. Anxiety about my own ability to contribute (time). I see the benefit of paid administrator/pastor.
- Leadership team is an opportunity to utilize gifts and grow. (I have ambivalence and frustration at the loss of grace with one another regarding workload/burden ... leads to resentment. Leadership team limited to administrative role ... not free to truly lead and be visionary ...)
- Appreciate that no one person carries all the burdens of leadership. Our team burden contrasts with the weight of responsibility that I see carried by pastors and spouses at NY conference ministers retreat.
- Value /appreciate openness to using everyone's gifts. We are not encumbered by other's (broader Mennonite church) definitions of leadership. No restrictions based on gender, race, divorce, or sexual orientation.
- Appreciate flexibility to learn and grow ... easy to get involved and participate. No entrenched "old guard". Open to the Spirit ... organic ... open to new ideas/initiatives. Current structure open to change—maybe.
- Unique ... distinctive ...
collective charism ... EGALITARIAN and Intentionally Non-Hierarchical.
Open/fluid/organic
LEAVING ROOM FOR GOD/SPIRIT TO MOVE

What is it that I most hope to see happen in regard to leadership as we move into the future?

Group 1

- We will continue to value our current model
- That we will continue to foster (leadership/individual gifts) and call each other out based on those gifts
- That we will become better at dealing with conflict
- Encouragement, exhortation
- Healing, trust—that people will *dare* to offer gifts and be allowed to fail
- That our appreciations will continue
- That some consolidation of responsibilities will be made
- That we will learn to agree to disagree
- Recognizing and addressing individual hurts, and being vulnerable with our own hurts
- Deeper understanding of teachings of Jesus
- Broaden practice of social justice
- Consolidate values internally and externally—take leadership role in the community

Group 2

- Continue to be respected so as to avoid burnout, that we would continue to recognize peoples' gifts and help develop them
- Hope that we can trust, support and encourage people in developing their gifts
- Hope that we could identify, trust, support, and encourage people in identifying and developing their gifts

- Many things have changed over years in ways couldn't foresee.
- Hope that 10 years from now still more parts of the story would be written that amazes him then. Not just more of the same, but new. That our leadership structure continues to allow for and support new endeavors, directions
- I would like to see us maintain many of the things that make us RAMF like shared leadership, but that we be open to allowing for change as people recognize their individual calls, supporting that.
- Trust, support, encourage; but also I hope that looking forward we can remember/try to see what God wants to do and be as a church
- I would hope that we would learn healthy ways to respond to each other when we don't agree
- Hope that as we have this shared L. model, when we aren't in a role of L., we can be good followers—trust, support, encourage.

Group 3

- Shepherds
- Freedom from fears, renewed trust
- Peace of mind, release of frustration
- Leaders will feel appreciated/supported
- Freedom for *all* people to give gifts—unapologetic
- I won't feel constrained
- Trained ministers' gifts would be honored and welcomed
- Freedom from ghost fears
- Empower leaders to lead
- Recognize the leadership that *is* happening and that we are *not* all doing the work
- We can envision models of leadership that are not black/white
- It's not authoritarian OR totally shared. Can be middle.
- Hire a pastor/pastors.
- Pay some people to do some of leadership.
- More ministry and outreach to community
- Open to leading of spirit
- People give from heart—not burned out
- Re-think structure—how leaders get to be on LT
- Children are involved in leadership
- Erase the fear of splits/differences
- Take shared leadership model and allow it to change as the group changes

Group 4

- Resolution and Positive energy ... CARING AND GRACE to triumph over Fears
- Expand Leadership structure to incorporate individual gifts (e.g. ordained minister in our midst), while simultaneously addressing fears—so all are comfortable with that.
- L less of an issue—so that we can focus/move outward as a church. MISSION . . . working in the world ... o navel gazing.
- *Keep the core values of RAMF intact* ... (but open to alternative structures)
- Grow to accept change in structure ... the way that we can (accept change in worship). Expand Recognition of GIFTS ... to include ministry/Pastoral Leadership.

- That the *SPIRIT* speak *loudly* and *clearly* at this (and all subsequent) historic moment in RAMF's journey ...

What are my greatest fears in regard to leadership for RAMF as we move into the future?

Group 1

- That those opposed to ↑ leadership structure/responsibility ... unwilling/unable to step up and take more responsibility. Therefore resentment/burnout
- That not *all* gifts being affirmed and encouraged ... including idea of minister ...
- Fear of hurt feelings ... not fully understanding what feelings were (e.g. Thom and Eileen) ... Baffled by what is at root of conflict over leadership and fear of not resolving it.
- Burnout of those who have been doing the “heavy lifting” of leadership. Potential for a “hole” in leadership ... Lovely building, but ... Stuckness on this issue ... Talking about it forever ...
- (Further) **Congregational split**. Big enough issue ... Fear that we stop talking about it ... Needs to be revisited regularly ... Maybe in ten years “pastor” right model ... Fear of drifting into hierarchy ... Be *cognizant of drift* towards hierarchy.
- That we won't recognize/deal with someone with a God-given gift for ministry ... Rare gift ... Don't want to see it go to waste ... That de facto structural “old guard” won't articulate the fear, so that conflict not understood and never resolved.
- **Fractured** church ... fractured hearts.

Group 2

- We will be run/paralyzed by the negative/worst abuses of other denominations/traditions regarding leaders (Mennonite understanding of ordination does not involve leaders ruling over, etc.)
- People will be chipped away/lost due to leadership issues
- We are burning out our leaders
- We are being driven by the fears of a few
- Changes—might lose community-feel
- Upsetting people—they won't like what I do/judge
- Lack of vision or resources to do all work
- Lot of gaps—dependent on the time/talents of individuals. So if there is no one who can “do” pastoral care this month, it doesn't happen

Group 3

- Leaders will feel **not** trusted and get burned out/not want to serve
- Fear that people won't want to develop their gifts, that people would be afraid their gifts won't be well received. If we spend too much energy trying to hold on to what we have, we'll lose both something that we had and also lose where we're going (hope that we could be open to God's direction)
- Fear of people not willing to share gifts. That apathy would allow us to say “Someone else will ...” Fear that no one else might bring their gifts (“show up”)
- Wants to focus on what God wants us to be. Fear that in our humanness with need for control we won't be listening for what God wants for us
- If we don't address our hurts and respond to conflicts, afraid we won't survive. “Afraid that people will want to leave, that I'll want to leave.”

- Afraid that if we can't have a culture of gratitude, we will not want to keep serving. Afraid that I won't be thankful enough for all that so many do to facilitate our time/life together.
- 1 Jn 4.18-19: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us."

Group 4

- Self-absorption; delayed response to needs in community; too much or too little deliberation (to where it becomes unhealthy)
- Until we deal with our healing/trust-building needs, we will be forever frustrated!
- Unresolved needs → people will leave!
- Schism
- Decisions made too quickly
- That we will spread ourselves too thin
- A disconnection between Leadership Team and congregation will increase
- A pastor—or that others will want one, which will lead to a loss of shared leadership
- Growth in numbers not matched by growth in imagination or energy
- Leadership that is set apart

Facilitated by consultant Alan Newton