

# Rochester Area Mennonite Fellowship Congregational Meeting Minutes

## 2012 January 29

### Attendance (23)

Babcock, Bryan & Kristin	Nickeson, Walt	Shelly, Kathy & Mark
Bernhart, Judy	Passaneau, Chris	Shelly, Rob & Wendy
Carter, Jen & Bob	Poole, Amy & Jason	Stauffer Kurtz, Roger & Sonya
Giles, Dan	Price, Nancy	Stuckey, Aaron
Langdon, Drew	Ricciuti, Anthony & Gail	Weaver, Ann & Jeffrey

### Worship

Drew Langdon led us in worship, including a reading from Acts 1.

Bob Carter was facilitator for the meeting.

### Last meetings minutes

have been lost and are being reconstructed. They will be circulated for review later.

### Decision Making Model

Walt reviewed our decision making history. We first worked with consensus. In order to make decisions, we decided that sometimes we would need to vote, but that hasn't always worked well either. We have moved back to a desire for consensus, but we find we still lack skill in this. At the encouragement of Alan Newton, and as an experiment, we will try this more detailed model of consensus:

#### State of Consensus model:

1. I need more information in order to decide anything (You must say what questions remain, and what you need to know so you can decide something.)
2. I want to block until my concerns are addressed (You must state what it would take to get to consensus, otherwise you are counted as a level 4.)
3. I will go along but still have minor issues. (You must be willing to state those issues, otherwise you are at level 4.)
4. I am not in total agreement but feel okay about this overall.
5. I am fully supportive and would even help implement this decision.

Goal is to all arrive at somewhere from 3 to 5 for consensus. If there are objections they need to be expressed specifically. At a decision point we can poll the group for consensus according to this model, and proceed accordingly.

### Budget review

#### Review of this fiscal year ending 1/31/2012

Past year was in balance: we received income and had expenses that were almost exactly the same.

Spending was more than we anticipated:

- We kept our mortgage payments at \$1,705 even when the infeterest rate fell, to reduce the outstanding principle.
- Hospitality & Gifts was over budget, now \$800, with departure gifts, coffee expenses, etc.
- The furnishings come out of our residual building fund, which is not down to \$589.
- Congregational Support & Speakers includes \$300 given to PiRI in appreciation for the work Alan Newton has done with us as a consultant.
- Bethsaida support was \$400 plus the \$361 we would have otherwise spent on the extra phone line, given to NYMC to help fund a car for Tadelich and Ephraim.

Remaining payments: We expect to pay \$2,197 for insurance. Exact amounts not known at this time.

Income appears more than we anticipated: \$84,078, due largely to special offerings and designated income of \$1,870.

### Special offerings (Other Projects)

MCC for earthquake relief in Japan	\$2,556
Mennonite Disaster Service for flood relief in South & Midwest	\$1,640
Amish families after accident in Jasper, NY	\$840
Harvesting Hope for Farmworkers (matched by Everence \$750)	\$1,237
Student Aid Fund for Non-registrants (MCUSA)	\$1,423
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,696</b>

At the end of this fiscal year, our accounts are as follows:

Account	as of 1/29/2012	1/31 (addendum*)
Building Fund	\$589	\$589
Education Fund	\$5,381	\$5,381
Sharing Fund	\$1,406	\$1,466
General Fund	\$4,030	\$1,665
Total in Checking	\$11,406	\$9,101
Savings	\$9,106	\$9,106
Capital Expense fund (COD)	\$5,298	\$5,298
Total Funds	\$25,810	\$23,505

\* This reflects expenses paid through 1/31/2012, and a sum of \$2,197 earmarked and not included held back to pay our insurance bill.

**Proposed budget (attached)**

Explanations:

- Inflows from formal pledges and adjusted up for giving patterns (visitors, etc.), expected rent.
- Outflows: Most categories are close approximations based on last year.
- Facilities: decor line added, in contrast to furnishings which come from the residual building fund.
- Mennonite Disaster Service has been added as a budgeted item.
- Bethsaida line removed since they no longer have a tax exempt ministry. We will continue to support with love offerings or from the sharing fund as needed. Some discussion as to why; a difference from budgeted amount to private individuals vs. sharing fund or special offering, which responds to a need.
- National Campaign for the Peace Tax Fund removed as a budget item per our October 2011 decision.
- Education fund increased by 2700 in anticipation of future students needing it.
- The stewards are planning to repair and improve the shed. These funds will come from our Capital Expense fund as needed.

After discussion, we polled each person for their state of consensus. Twenty-one 5s, one 4. Budget adopted as submitted.

We affirmed the hard work of our budget committee and treasurer with applause: for Jen (treasurer), Aaron and Kathy S.

**Covenant**

We have a RAMF Covenant that has been used in various ways through much of our history. Signing a scroll once a year in June has become a ritual commitment to our fellowship. What role or value should this document have in our church life? How should it be introduced to new members of our community.

This is not an effort to rewrite the covenant, but to consider its role/use. We spent 2 minutes in private consideration, then 20 minutes discussion in 5 groups.

Some of the ideas shared on return:

**In general:**

- Affirmed the value of the covenant.
- We value living out the relationship. This is a symbol.
- Our distinctive feature is that we don't make much of it. Our life is more important.
- Not required.
- It is a way to to draw a circle without exclusion.
- Some have a much shorter history of the covenant.
- Should there be a link between covenant and communion?

**Introducing the covenant:**

- We could communicate better about the existence of the covenant. We could have a brochure with covenant and core values.

- Introduced by pastoral team for regular attenders.
- Need to discuss more things in each other's homes.

**About signing:**

- Signing is my decision, not decided for me.
- Perhaps it should be available more than once a year for signing
- Provide a mechanism, probably ad hoc, for signing at other times.
- Public better than private signing.
- Provision for those who could not be there on a given Sunday.
- A sign for the rest of the congregation.
- Finding a better rhythm; June is the end of the year in some respects.
- Move the time, to Fall for example.

**About the language:**

- We language is a good way to put it.
- Captures a relational focus. Not a litmus test of specific beliefs.
- What is the commitment to? What are the actual expectations?

We closed in prayer before leaving.

Submitted by Mark Shelly, note-taker

2012 Feb 9

## Ministry team reports

### Education Ministry Report

We are now about half way through our school year. Children's Sunday School is going smoothly, although we could use more coordination and volunteers for working with Asher at the youngest age. The gathering time with all age groups has been discontinued. For the adults, we continue with two groups, Library Discussion and the Book Study groups. The Study group is working through *Jesus Matters*. We have had two Life Fares where people share from their lives outside Sunday mornings. We plan to continue this about every 6 weeks, the next 3/4/2012.

Chrissie has decided to relinquish her leadership role on this ministry; she will be missed, but will still continue to help with children's Sunday School.

(Jeffrey Weaver, Mark Shelly, Jason Poole, Jen Carter, and Chrissie Walls until now)

### Leadership Team report

We've been doing a lot of work on our core values statement, primarily. We've met with each other individually and with Alan to discuss the three major focal points relating to faith, community, and peace & justice. We've also looked at a number of statements from other churches and organizations. So far we've got a few rough drafts but are finding the task challenging! Most recently, we are looking at relating our values to our initials RAMF, so they will be easier to remember and be reinforced every time we use the acronym. We haven't settled on the particulars yet, but some words we've talked about are Reconciliation, Acceptance, Affirmation, Mutuality, Mutual Aid, Followers of Christ. As always, we welcome input and feedback from the rest of the congregation! Alan has been incredibly helpful and gracious with his time and we gave a donation to Piri in his honor because of it.

As some of you saw at our last congregational meeting, we came up with a new method of determining consensus, based on five levels of comfort with a particular proposal. We also are getting more comfortable with using the smaller circle technique when it comes to discussing issues in congo meetings and that seems to be working well so far.

We decided recently that we need to assess our organizational structure, since it's been a good five years since we started using it and we haven't done that yet.

Overall, we've been talking a lot about and trying to find ways to increase and improve communication with the congregation about what we've been working on, as well as trying to incorporate more time during meetings for us to check in with each other and show care for each other by not interrupting and asking questions.

### Minister Congregation Relations Committee (MCRC) Report

Following the congregational approval of the proposal to request that Sonya be ordained for her Ministry roles in RAMF last October, a letter with this request was sent to the New York Mennonite Conference's (NYMC) Leadership Commission. The Leadership Commission will be meeting with Sonya for the "official" interview in February, and this is largely seen as a formality since most of the members have worked extensively with Sonya over the past several years in various NYMC leadership functions. The ordination is planned for March 11 and will be during the worship service.

(Bob Cater, Chrissie Walls, Gail Ricciuti, Jason Poole, Mark Shelly, Sonya Stauffer-Kurtz)

## **Outreach Ministry**

Outreach is exploring the possibility of hosting a Seasons for Nonviolence labyrinth sometime over the next month. Also, recognizing all the work that is already being done by the congregation, there has been discussion about RAMF taking on a project where we might all serve together. Any thoughts or suggestions should be directed to Drew. (Drew Langdon)

## **Pastoral Ministry**

The Pastoral Care Committee (Teresa, Kathy S, Wendy, Rachel) has been working on:

- Getting small groups going. We would like the congregation to know that there is one small group currently meeting and more groups can form if there is interest. Please let one of us know if you would like to be in a small group and what kind of things you would be interested in discussing/doing. The dates for retreat this year are Sept 28-30. The retreat committee is welcoming new members to help plan this retreat. Don't let this opportunity pass you by!
- Looking for another date for a small group to go sing to Aunt Elaine. She very much enjoyed last time.
- Alan Newton's training (Restorative conversations) on Feb. 11 – still has openings, although this may need to be rescheduled. Several of us attended the last training and would highly recommend it to others. Contact Kathy S if you'd like more information.
- Supporting our marriages/relationships. The group is looking for a proactive effort but uncertain what form that would take: a marriage encounter weekend? or retreat? Or a one day event?

## **Stewards report**

Since the last congregational meeting, the Stewards have worked on two main projects: Organizing the fall Cleanup Day on Nov. 12, and starting to plan the fixing up of the shed this summer. Another project in the works, which will probably be done by early spring, is installing a rack to display a quilt in the foyer of the church.

## **Worship Team Report**

In addition to the usual worship season planning we have been working on a revised worship leaders' handbook. This is something that was last put together about ten years ago. The aim is to provide reference resources and suggestions for various elements of worship planning and leading. It has been more difficult this year than in past years to keep the worship leaders sign-up sheet full for upcoming weeks. The worship team encourages any newer folks who have any interest in worship planning and leading to contact one of us to discuss ways you can get involved.

(Anne Weaver, Anthony Ricciuti, Bob Carter, Nancy Price, Sonya Stauffer-Kurtz)

## RAMF Fiscal Year 2012 Budget and Final FY 2011 Expenses

Category	2011 Budget	2011 Actual	Approved 2012 Budget
<b>Income</b>			
Offerings	72,360	71,976	69,100
Special Offerings	0	7,746	
Interest	75	36	
Rental Income	2,400	2,450	2,400
Designated Income	0	1,870	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>74,835</b>	<b>84,078</b>	<b>71,500</b>
<b>Outflows</b>			
<b>Local:</b>			
Facilities			
Cleaning	1,200	1,200	1,200
Custodial & Supplies	450	420	450
Mortgage	20,500	21,160	20,500
Maintenance of Building	1,000	1,074	1,000
Maintenance of Grounds	1,100	1,509	1,100
Furnishings	0	555	
Utilities & Refuse	3,200	2,941	3,200
City & County Fees	1,100	1,082	1,100
Insurance	2,250	2,197	2,250
Decor			150
<b>Total Facilities</b>	<b>30,800</b>	<b>32,138</b>	<b>30,950</b>
Administration			
Office/Postage	100	163	150
Leadership Team	600	277	450
Telecommunications	650	617	650
<b>Total Administration</b>	<b>1,350</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>1,250</b>
Miscellaneous Local	170	277	200
Hospitality/Gifts	400	530	750
Subscriptions	1,100	1,012	1,100
Library	300	252	300
Retreat	6,000	5,812	6,000
Seminars	3,000	2,887	1,500
Congregational support/speakers	500	300	250
Sponsorships	250	500	500
Youth	75	155	75
<b>Total Local</b>	<b>43,945</b>	<b>44,920</b>	<b>42,875</b>
<b>Ministries</b>			
Education:			
Adult Hour	150	182	150
Sunday School	800	855	900
Safe Ministry for Children/Youth	100	138	100
Worship	425	157	420
Outreach	75	0	75
Pastoral Care	75	65	75
<b>Total Ministries</b>	<b>1,625</b>	<b>1,397</b>	<b>1,720</b>

## RAMF Fiscal Year 2012 Budget and Final FY 2011 Expenses

Category	2011 Budget	2011 Actual	Approved 2012 Budget
<b>Sharing:</b>			
Churchwide Ministries			
Mennonite Church USA	500	500	500
Mennonite Central Committee	1,500	1,500	1,500
Mennonite Disaster Service (NEW)	-	-	500
Mennonite Mission Network	700	700	700
Everence/Corinthian Plan	815	814	830
Mennonite Men/Join Hands	500	500	500
Mennonite Voluntary Service	800	800	800
Mennonite World Conference	175	175	175
Total Churchwide Ministries	4,990	4,989	5,505
Education			
Mennonite Colleges (4)	1,000	1,000	1,000
Mennonite Education Agency	1,000	1,000	1,000
Minority Education	1,000	1,000	1,000
Mennonite Seminaries(2)	500	500	500
Total Education	3,500	3,500	3,500
Home Missions			
Beaver Camp	1,500	1,500	1,500
Bethsaida	400	761	
Christian Peacemaker Teams	2,250	2,250	2,250
MVS unit in Rochester	1,200	1,200	1,200
New York Mennonite Conference	6,500	6,500	6,500
New York Mennonite Women	1,500	1,500	1,500
Partners in Restorative Initiatives	2,250	2,250	2,250
Peace Tax Fund	175	175	
Total Home Missions	15,775	16,136	15,200
Projects			
Sharing Fund	0	500	
Education Fund	5,000	500	2,700
Other Projects	0	7,686	
Total Projects	5,000	8,686	0
<b>Total Sharing</b>	<b>29,265</b>	<b>33,311</b>	<b>24,205</b>
<b>Total Outflows</b>	<b>74,835</b>	<b>79,628</b>	<b>71,500</b>
Transfer to Education Fund 2/1/11		5,000	
Transfer to Sharing Fund		80	