

**Rochester Mennonite Fellowship  
Congregational Meeting Minutes  
February 17, 2019**

**In attendance: Gail, Anthony, Kathy, Dan, Steph, Aaron, Rachel, Jen, Bob, Judy, Nancy, Amy, Izzy, Rob, Wendy, Paul, Kirsten, Carol**

**Opening Prayer** (Amy)

**Ministry reports**

Worship Ministry (Nancy): We are currently in the middle of a 4-week series “Seeking Justice and Peace,” based on RMF Vision Statement. This will be followed by a Lent series, and there are people signed up to lead for every week up until Easter. To allow time for worship, fellowship, and adult hour, we are attempting to start Gathering Songs at 9:55 am sharp. Some members prefer that worship leaders find scripture readers ahead of time rather than on the day of the service. Theresa will be leading a Maundy Thursday service. We do not yet have anyone signed up for an Ash Wednesday service.

Pastoral Ministry (Wendy): We continue to disperse Sharing Fund money to meet the needs of people in our fellowship. Most Pastoral Ministry activities are confidential.

Education Ministry (Gail): We are in the middle of a series “Decolonizing the Bible.” Future weeks will include a “getting to know you” Sunday in which we interview fellowship members to get to know them better, Rachel Long will present one Sunday on her recent medical work in Guatemala, Chris Phillips will talk to us about his work in mindfulness and meditation, then we will have a new series on the topic of either Climate Change or Mass Incarceration.

Stewards (Aaron): Nothing new to report. Bring concerns to us regarding building maintenance as you observe them. Spring work days will be scheduled.

Leadership Team (Aaron): Rachel and Aaron went to NYMC seminar on “Healthy Boundaries” pertaining to maintaining healthy relationships, geared toward lay and ordained church leadership. We are discussing how to express and maintain our Anabaptist identity in the context of a church where many do not come from an Anabaptist background and also how to nurture leadership in the church. In June, we plan to plant a tree and install a bench in memory of Chris Passaneau.

**Discussion Regarding Use of Our Building by Outside Groups**

A bit of background (Amy): Occasionally, outside groups use our space on evenings and weekends. These groups include: PiRI-related activities (often on weeknights; rarely on weekends); NY Mennonite Conference (usually on Fridays or Saturdays, 4 - 6 times/year); Sacred Harp singing (one Sunday afternoon per month and two all-day Saturday events per year); meetings by community groups like the Colonial Village Residents, the Quakers, and The

Gandhi Institute; and events for friends of RMF members who request to hold music recitals, baby showers, or the like. For the past couple years, mindfulness meditation instructor Chris Phillips has been using our space for half- and full-day trainings on Saturdays and for one-on-one coaching sessions during the week and on Saturdays. Priority for scheduling on evenings and weekends is given to RMF activities, then NYMC events, then PiRI events. We have a standing agreement with Sacred Harp with regard to their use as described above. Other groups are only able to schedule if a member of RMF agrees to host them.

#### Current Criteria for Building Use (per current policy, presented by Lizzy)

“Used productively all week long”

“In ways consistent with our values”

Furthering community and fellowship

Promoting peace, justice, and reconciliation

Furthering understanding of the faith

Spiritual direction and discipling

Worship

Informal gatherings, parties, weddings, meditation, workshops

#### Order of priorities for use:

-Sunday Worship

-RMF Activities

-NYMC and other denominational activities

-PIRI [contract is for use of building on weekdays until 7 pm]

-Other renters

#### Other criteria

-Manageable to administer by Administrator

-Does not interfere with cleaning or maintaining the building.

*Chris Phillips’ use of the building on Saturdays requires coordination and clarification of how we will clean and set up the church.*

#### Current strategies to meet competing needs on Saturdays

\*Mindfulness groups meet consistently on first and second Saturdays of the month, with exceptions made for the prioritized groups above for requests made at least 3 months in advance

\*If cleaner for that Saturday isn't able to clean the area in which mindfulness is happening, Chris will clean it after he is done. Cleaning of the rest of building happens as normal during mindfulness sessions

\*If worship leader is unable to set up for worship because of mindfulness activities, Chris will set up when he is done. He is happy to work from a diagram or photo if a unique setup is desired

### Discussion about revising our Building Use Policy (Izzy)

We discussed criteria that will be used to formulate the new policy:

- Central importance of ease of set up for worship
- Need for predictability of building use and cleaning
- “Better to be used than to sit empty”
- Need for clarity and consistency regarding how any group will leave our space: supplies, orderliness, cleanliness.
- The policy should provide a mechanism for accountability
- The policy should foster trust among all of us that use our building and also requires trust in order to work
- We want to show generosity in the sharing of our space
- We want to balance consistency and predictability with flexibility in unusual circumstances.

During the discussion, a variety of specific policy options were mentioned, as well as issues that need to be addressed:

- We need to clarify how PIRI would like us to leave the chairs when we finish our activities on Sunday
- Because we often use the building in the evening for meetings, we could change our contract with PiRI for building use to include the hours of 8 am to 6 pm instead of 7pm
- While PIRI is typically out of the building by 6 pm, if they are running a multi-day training, they leave the sanctuary and kitchen set up for the next day
- While PIRI is typically out of the building by 6 pm, they sometimes fail to leave the conference room clear for RMF evening use.
- It would be beneficial to have more advance notice of planned events and trainings that use the sanctuary [for example, 6 weeks]
- Consider adding to policy that any group using the building on Saturday needs to be finished by 4 pm on Saturday.

Bob, Dan, and Izzy agreed to develop a revised Building Use Policy, using the above criteria, and bring it back to the congregation.

### **Discussion of Year-end Financials and of what to do with Surplus (Jen)**

-The year-end summary for fiscal year 2018 was reviewed, questions were answered [see attached].

- Treasurer report as follows:

Our General Fund \$15185.90 (of which \$5008 is opening balance buffer, \$3000 awaiting the purchase of tree and bench, \$7000 abundance to be discussed)

Sharing Fund \$1513

Education at Mennonite Institution Fund \$6081

Education for Immigrant Recipient Fund \$526

Savings \$10641 (total of two accounts, our longstanding act at CNB and our new one with Everence, opened with \$500)

Capital Fund \$12430 (total of 2 CD's plus \$1000 held in designated awaiting maturity)

Outreach Fund \$3294

Additionally, \$2472 was sent as Special Offerings/ Projects last year (\$775 to MCC meat cannery project; \$855 to Beaver Camp for their counselor scholarship fund; \$842 to MennoMedia for the hymnal project)

-There was a \$7000 surplus for fiscal year 2018. Finance Committee presented a possible distribution of these funds:

- \$2k to “replace” the cuts we made in planned 2019 giving due to decreased pledged giving.

- \$1k to NY Mennonite Conference, general budget

- \$2300 towards the purchase of chairs

- \$2000 towards the mortgage principal

- In addition, in 2019 we would like to hold special offerings for CPT, Beaver Camp, and Open Door Mission

-The above proposed use of the 2018 surplus was affirmed by those present. We will formally present this as a proposal for approval at our next congregational meeting.