

Congregational meeting
Minutes
September 20, 2015

1. **New Website:** Walt introduced us to the new website, still found at rochestermennonite.org. It now has a slightly different layout. Once you log in, you will have access to the Members tab. Under the Members section, you'll find congregational minutes, forms such as gift pledge, building use request, reimbursement. You will also policies, our core values statement, and much more. You can also see the worship calendar and even sign up to lead worship online. You can also check the building use calendar. Only certain people can add items to the building calendar. If you want to reserve a space, use the building use form to do so. The form sends a request directly to our Administrator. There's also a news section that Walt updates regularly. We discussed putting more photos up on the site. If you have photos you'd like to see posted on our site, send them to Walt.

2. **Update on new Administrator position** - Anne left the position at the beginning of August. Amy is still getting feet wet. Generally setting aside time on Mon Wed and Fri for Admin duties, but is able to be available other times if needed. Prefers email and phone to text but will try to accommodate texting if needed. Congregation affirmed that, if the current tools aren't working, we should consider new/better tools (such as the church's computer and copier). Amy always checks in at church Mondays and Fridays. At this point she does not have set office hours at the church but is open to considering if that serves the congregation better.

3. **Congregational discussion: "Looking back, looking forward: are we where we want to be in this chapter of our story?"** - We had an open sharing time for people to talk about what drew them to RMF, what keeps them at RMF, and/or what they'd like to see changed. The following is Amy's summation of what was said:

Anthony - church should be both a house of study (singing, reading, articulating our faith) and a house of service. He says his expectations are very high and they are being met. "There's nowhere else I'd rather be worshipping."

Walt - came with small expectations since he had never been a part of a church before

Judy - had attended many churches, but introduced to Mennonites was a bible study in Wilkes Barre, PA. When she moved to Rochester, she was invited to lunch by former RMF members the Knapps. "We were welcomed and the sense of welcome has continued." She is grateful for how her children were cared for here.

Nancy - looking for family when she came, to help her figure out how to live as a Christian family. Believes this congregation still does that today.

Jen - moved to Rochester in part because there was a Mennonite church. RMF is still Mennonite in spirit, not just in name. She was looking for "nurturing a family within a family." Expectations continue to be met.

Melissa - came to see what things were like. Looking for family. Didn't know what to expect. She remembers hearing someone announce, "My brother needs a car." She was amazed that everyone knew the brother. "Wow! You all know each other! The community drew me in. I am known. This is family."

Gail - Needed a church to settle herself in but didn't know exactly what she was looking for. Didn't know what to expect. Folks genuinely glad I walked through the door. Then we weren't strangers anymore. She realized that this was what she was looking for. "The boundary is permeable, so newcomers can be embraced easily and quickly." This is rare in her experience of churches. She acknowledges that community is risky.

Rachel - Both of she and Aaron grew up in Mennonite churches. Expected community, family. They found that. Found some traditional Mennonite things and other things that were not. Sometimes she misses some of those traditional elements (church structure, sermons) and sometimes not. It's a mix, she says.

Roger - Has always attended Mennonite churches. "I just knew I had to have a church when I moved here. Keeps me centered in the rest of my life. I really appreciate that."

Dan - When he and Steph first came, they were invited to a game night the next weekend, then to Beaver Camp the next. Enveloped quickly. As time went on, he saw more and more of what this place is and continued to find it a better fit. His hope for us is more developed and intentional care of children and youth. Appreciates what we have done over the years for children and youth. Wants to affirm those efforts even as he states his hope for more.

Aaron - Had been in a small Mennonite church before and knew how one or two strong people could tear a fellowship apart. Wanted care of his kids, care of young families. He is happy with that and also would like to see us work to be an even better place for them. Would like his kids to stay part of the church long term.

Sonya - Came 18 years ago when Vince was 2. There was a children's Sunday School curriculum she felt good about and folks were singing from the Mennonite hymnal, and those two things were very important to her. Her hope for us is that we would be a place where everyone, not just kids, are formed in their Christian faith through education hour, small groups, more substantive teaching in worship services. "I know that if people come over a long time Christian formation happens, but if you only come once, you might not see it because our Sunday services vary so much."

Nancy - hopes that we will become more diverse. She wonders if maybe that could happen by getting children from diverse families here.

Gail - hopes that we find another mission for us to be active in - not to replace MVS but, but to use some of the time and energy we put into that. Could it possibly be that we receive a Syrian family or two? Whether it's that or something else, she's like us to have some mission we could carry forward into the world. This is just one example that's on her mind right now. Hopes we

will continue to be permeable to new people, especially young people. That they will be welcomed to participate and change us.

Roger - We care for each other well. And also a lot of things fall through the cracks. Would like to see more intentional pastoral care, especially when people are hurting and also more consistency in worship services. Wishes we could be known in the community for something. A little bit more on people's radar.

Rob - Wanted/wants a supportive community and meaningful Sunday worship that prepares me for the week ahead. Those expectations are met. He has a bit of fear that we are fragile because of our size, so that if one "key" family, couple or individual were to leave, it seems like it could destabilize us. He's not sure if this is just his fear or has some basis outside of his perceptions, but he hopes for some growth in congregational size and for the stability that could come with that.

4. Ministry Reports

Education - Planned to meet the day after the congregational meeting to plan the rest of the semester and will communicate that plan to the congregation soon. Mark, Gail, Anthony and Sonya are on this ministry. Sonya is excited about her new role as Sunday School Coordinator. She is hoping to connect Sunday morning worship with what's happening with the children at various times throughout the year.

Worship - Theme at retreat is Creation Care. Recovenanting will be first Sunday in October. We are coming up on a series on the Psalms that will take us through advent. We need worship leaders for October and November. Please consider signing up.

Stewards - Our annual Fall Work Day is coming up. Stewards will try to plan it for after most of the leaves have fallen. Planning to put up a dry erase board for people to write building issues on for the stewards. So if you notice something that needs to be attended to, you can write it on the board. Still working on a way to dampen the sound a bit in the sanctuary without deadening the sound entirely, and doing it in a way that's both aesthetically pleasing and easily reversible. The acoustics are great for music, but when we are speaking it is hard to hear what people are saying. Carpeting might be the best option because it is reversible. If we were to do something to the ceiling, it would be expensive and hard to reverse.

Pastoral - nothing to report (ministry members: Kathy Kern, Nancy and Teresa)

Finance - Pledge forms were distributed today. Finance Ministry would like to present the budget for approval at the November congregational meeting, so requests that pledge forms be in by October 11. Ministries also need to submit budgets by October 11. If a ministry would like to know what they've spent so far, ask Jen. This year, Administrator position is funded by tapping into our savings and also out of the general budget. It will be built into the 2016 budget.

We have a new process/form for reimbursements. It's now on the Members section of our website. Directions are there as well. Please use this form if you need a reimbursement. It helps our treasurer out tremendously.

As of 20 September 2015 we are about 2/3 through our fiscal year; have received about 3/4 of expected offerings, have incurred about 3/4 of expected expenses and have disbursed around 3/4 of budgeted giving.

Our Checking Account balance is \$19,266 which includes \$10,762 General Fund; \$1,012 Sharing Fund; \$7,581 Education Fund; and \$-95. in our Immigrant Education Fund.
Savings: \$9123; Capital, CD: \$5326; MVS: \$249

Additionally we have given \$1,400.00 to Beaver Camp's campership fund as Special Offering in June and are still collecting for relief kits and for "Rebuilding Saipan" through the month of September.