

History of Mennonites in Rochester, MN

Mennonites have been living in Rochester over 40 years as they moved here for employment at Mayo Clinic and IBM. Until about 1972 these Mennonites affiliated with other churches in the absence of a Mennonite congregation. Then Mennonites began to be aware of other Mennonites and decided to meet for social times, meals, singing (a favorite activity of Mennonites!), Bible study and prayer. Soon an established group of Mennonites formed and met regularly in homes.

In 1989, Rochester Mennonite Fellowship was formed and officially recognized by the General Conference Mennonite Church. In 1997 RMF joined the Northern District Conference of the GC. Although without a pastor they formed the nucleus of a congregation and began to generate a commitment to one another and to the Fellowship, and determined that they would like to form a congregation and call a pastor. With additional families and individuals relating to the Fellowship they out-grew their homes and decided to rent space at Assisi Heights for Sunday services. They also committed themselves to contributing to the treasury in order to call a pastor.

In 2001 they called their first pastor, Rev. David Brunner, who arrived July 25 that year. They formalized their status as a congregation and became known as Rochester Mennonite Church. They continued to meet at Assisi Heights until January 2004 when they moved to rented space at Schaeffer Academy. They continue to meet there for Sunday worship and Sunday School.

Currently there are 22 baptized members of the congregation, coming from a wide variety of backgrounds. Professionally, many of them are medical personnel working at Mayo Clinic and other facilities. Some work in information technology. Others include teachers, organic farmer, stay-at-home moms, students, and several retired persons. We are involved in many community service projects including The Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity, Ronald McDonald House, tutoring, Catholic Charities, Southeast Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers, Tent of Abraham project and the Historic Peace Churches of Rochester.