

## **Rexton Mennonite Church Withdrawal**

Rexton Mennonite Church, Rexton, MI in the Upper Peninsula, was started in 1948. In 1998 they partnered with Naubinway Christian Fellowship in calling Tim Miller of Goshen, IN, as their pastor. He has served them well ever since. Many know Tim for his worship leading at conference sessions and his engagement with other leaders in the conference.

Rexton's Anabaptist values have brought hope to many in the community who have been disenchanted with church. Reaching out to their neighbors, members have given hope to many. Sharing Jesus Christ as savior is a strong commitment of members. They are continually seeking ways to be relevant in their setting.

The congregation has been working together with Naubinway Christian Fellowship to align their mission and vision to more effectively witness to the two communities. God has been blessing this endeavor.

Congregational leadership started discussing Rexton's conference membership in 2014 and brought the discernment to the congregational level in 2015. Tim responded with dismay to the Ministry Credentialing Team April 2015 credential decision. In response to a pastor performing a same sex marriage, the MCT decided to note in his file his variance with MC USA and IN-MI teaching positions.

In a letter dated May 29, 2015 congregational chairman John P. DeWyse said:

This letter is to inform you of our recent decision by Rexton Mennonite Church to withdraw from the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference effective June 1, 2015....

RMC will continue to live faithfully in the Anabaptist tradition and will remain independent until another affiliation is found with a target date of August 2016.

The Ministry Credentialing Team will acknowledge their withdrawal at our next meeting, planned for June 20, 2015. While we are saddened by their decision, we also want to bless them as they seek another affiliation.

Submitted by Doug Kaufman, conference pastor for leadership transition, and John Powell, regional pastor