

WPMF Pastoral Team Minutes – July 11, 2016

Present: Carey Davis, sabbatical pastor; Laurie Callan, elder; Nick Lordi, elder; Amanda Esh, elder; Mark Michalovic, elder

Nick, facilitator; Laurie, time-keeper; Mark, scribe

7:36 Centering and Prayer

7:39 Updates

1. Laurie has received word from the board of Tel Hai Camp and Retreat that WPMF is welcome to continue using their facilities both for our annual spring church retreat and for women's retreat in the fall, despite our differing stances on LGBT inclusion.
2. WPMF has received a \$5000 Missional Operations Grant from Franconia Conference to be used in our preparations for our involvement with Redemption Housing.
3. Rebecca Yugga has expressed interest in participating the the MCC Young Adult Learning Tour to Pennsylvania. Update: Rebecca Yugga will participate. A gift of \$150 to cover the registration fee for participation is in the works. This is to come out of the Elders budget.
4. Carey and Brenda Rich have prepared welcome folder to be given to church visitors, which will include response cards and information about the congregation, the Mennonite denomination, and Anabaptist beliefs.
5. Carey and Brooke Blough discussed the latter's role as Brethren-Mennonite Council representative and the responsibilities of the position. The two agreed on a suggested title change to "LGBTQ+ Advocate" or "LGBTQ+ Ally." Any name change will be announced this fall. In these discussions, Brooke expressed that it would be helpful to have an assistant to aid her in carrying out the responsibilities of the position. In the elder's meeting it was agreed to make an announcement during Sunday services asking for a volunteer to fill that role.

8:13 Action Items

1. WPMF received an invitation from the organization Food and Water Watch to participate in a rally on July 24, 2016 during the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. The rally would call on the DNC to address environmental and energy issues. While it was decided that the congregation would not participate in any formal way, it was agreed that an announcement would be made in the church bulletin that individuals are invited to participate in the rally.

2. The recent sermon and seminar given by Jill Schellenberg concerning restorative justice was discussed. After the seminar, some individuals raised concerns about issues concerning boundaries should returning citizens become attendees of our church as part of our participation in Redemption Housing. Another concern was raised about the dangers of an us-and-them mentality developing with regard to long-time church attenders and returning citizens. Finally, concerns were also raised about members of the congregation whose loved ones have been victims of violent crimes.
3. Elders discussed ideas for using the \$5000 Mission Operational Grant as we prepare for our involvement with Redemption Housing. Several ideas were discussed, and a good number of them involved helping individuals in the congregation become more knowledgeable about issues related to incarceration. Several ideas of how the congregation could prepare for our involvement were discussed, some of which involve costs that could be paid for using the grant funds. A list of ideas is presented below:
 - the purchase of books for book studies
 - a prison tour, facilitated by Ron Mews
 - building connections with other organizations involved in work related to incarceration and returning citizens, such as I'm F.R.E.E. (<http://imfreeonline.org>) or Healing Communities (http://www.healin_gcommunitiesusa.com)
 - Participation in a workshop conducted by Roots of Justice (<http://rootsofjusticetraining.org>)
 - Having sermons related to the issues of racism and mass incarceration (in fact, two such sermons are already planned for the fall)
 - Involving other congregations in any training programs or workshops in which we participate
 - the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program's involvement with prisons/youth detention centers as a possible way for members to connect with the incarcerated
4. The issues of marriage support and parenting and faith formation support were discussed. Amanda agreed to look into available programs. Nick suggested that we focus first on marriage support, and added that there should be annual or biennial events (such as workshops or retreats) to that end. Carey agreed to ask Gerry Davis for input since he works in the area of couples' counseling. Carey also noted that Circle of Hope also had existing programs of this sort.

9:06 Pastoral Care and Prayer

Next Meeting

The next Elders meeting was tentatively scheduled for Monday August 8, 2016.