

MINUTES

WEST PHILADELPHIA MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Date: July 29, 2018

Time: 10:45 AM

Facilitator: Elizabeth Hamilton

In Attendance:

Carol Buhrman, Calvin Burnside, Vera Foronda, Andy Gahagan, Bryan Geib, Nancy Geryk, Elizabeth Hamilton, Brent Hershey, Lorie Hershey, Sylvia Horst, Linford Martin, Carol Martin Johnson, Tim Martin Johnson, Sheldon Rich, Brenda Rich, Tim Schellenberg, Joe Syzdek, Ethan Tan, Katie Tan, Rebecca Weber, Lynn Wetherbee, Reuben Wetherbee, JoAnn Witherow, Marcy Zimmerman.

Elizabeth called the meeting to order at 10:45 and opened with prayer. She explained that the meeting is the mid-year budget review and an update regarding facility search, and is not a decision -making meeting.

Budget

Deacon Rebecca gave explanatory information on the budget information sheet that had been distributed. The improvement over last year at this time is 87.3%; however, we are still \$5,170 behind the projected offering income. This deficit is less than it may have been due to reduced rental expenses during the months we were not using Calvary. That we are behind in our income is still a concern. Clarifying questions were addressed.

During the transition from the budget review to the report on building search, a hat was passed to collect donations for the childcare volunteers.

Building Presentation

Deacon Carol Buhrman named the members who most recently visited the Common Place site at 58th Street and Chester Ave. Carol, along with some of the others, explained the space's governance structure and described the space in relation to our needs.

The Common Place is managed by Pastor Shawn of Grace Church which may be merging with New Spirit, the congregation that already meets there. New Spirit has about 25 attenders; Grace has about 200. A member of Wayne Presbyterian Church is the director of the Board.

Carol showed photographs from her laptop. and fielded questions from the congregation. Others who have visited most recently helped answer questions as follows:

There is room for WPMF to have an office.

Space for Sunday School would be sufficient but would be spread out around the facility.

Handicap accessible areas include the sanctuary, one restroom, a nice kitchenette. The fellowship hall is not accessible.

Being installed is a commercial kitchen. It will be next to the Fellowship Hall, and not accessible. It is projected to be finished by Easter and so far is well done.

There would be opportunities for partnership with entities currently occupying the space.

Drawbacks include lack of accessibility, the unknowns involved in the impending merger of the two congregations, and the less desirable geographic location.

Regarding our current location: what are the losses we would sustain by giving it up? The discussion transitioned to possibilities for resolving our problems with the Calvary location. Is the entity that owns Calvary (the regional Methodist conference) aware of the prospective exodus of tenants? As our staff bears the brunt of the facility problems, is it right to consider continuing here another year to see if recent changes make a difference? Could we do this while continuing to pursue the possibility of the Common Place? Could we move to The Common Place temporarily until we see if things have changed enough at Calvary for us to move back?

It was noted that Calvary has hired new maintenance and cleaning staff, the heat problems have been resolved, and a couple of new trustees seem to better understand the nature of the management leadership. We would have more impact if we join with the other main tenants (Curio and Kol Tzedek) to force the issue. We could not be effective if we are considering leaving.

Because of the make-up of our congregation, we may have more resources in working through these issues than some of the other groups do.

Calvary does not push the issue with the Methodist conference as much as it might because their status as a "Reconciling Congregation" makes relations delicate.

What concrete changes would we need to see at Calvary to decide to consider staying?

Could we use some of our Building Fund, and/or get MVS volunteers, to help deal with some of Calvary's building deficits?

Council and staff will send to the congregation the already compiled list of changes that we would require to stay at Calvary. They will also send the list of problems we have experienced with Calvary leadership and management.

WPMF Church Council is to meet next on September 12. Pastor Lorie and Tim MJ will attempt to meet with Kol Tzedek and Curio to get updates on their experiences and thoughts about the situation. This information gathered will be taken to Council, then we will hold another congregational meeting before going to Calvary to communicate our next steps.

Andy will try to find out how to approach the appropriate Methodist conference representatives to discuss what is going on and ask about possibilities for addressing the issues.

The building committee is no longer considering the 46th and Locust Street location because of insurmountable barriers.

Meeting ended at 12:10 pm

Minutes submitted by Sylvia Horst