

West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship  
Church Council Meeting  
Wednesday, September 12, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

Attendance: Elaine Shenk (HRC), Lorie Hershey (Pastor), Jeff Knightly (Deacon), Carol Buhrman (Deacon), Tim Martin Johnson (HRC; Council Chair), Rebecca Weber (Deacon), Sheldon Rich (Elder), Amanda Esh Bouwman (Elder), Matt MacNeill (HRC), Ethan Tan (Elder), Dorianna Lordi (Administrative Assistant)

Minutes recorded by Administrative Assistant, Dorianna Lordi

Tim Martin Johnson began meeting at 7:04 p.m. with a reading from Ephesians and prayer

Tim gave all committees the opportunity to report

#### Pastoral Team

1. Over the summer, some met with the new small group coordinator, Ariel Ressler MacNeill. Some responses from the last survey revealed that many people don't have time to invest or lead a group though, there is interest around joining small groups. During the meeting, they talked through different opportunities for people to connect. Ariel suggested the possibility of intergenerational small groups, groups based around book studies for a few weeks at a time. Ariel may initiate a lunch small group like ones that have been done before.
2. Pastoral team has been discussing for the last year and a half a study around sexual ethics. This was brought up again with our guest speaker in the spring. Pastoral team wanted council to know that they hear the need for this discussion and are processing and considering how to address it appropriately. This is the very early stages of working through this. The congregational interest for a discussion around sexual ethics was also brought up during congregational meetings in 2012.

#### HRC

1. Sherri asked to be relieved of her job as adult Sunday school coordinator in December 2018. HRC is working on filling the adult Sunday school coordinator position(s).

#### Deacons

1. Nothing to report

#### Building Space Search

Jeff Knightly gave brief overview of the process regarding relocating to a new building space. Deacons would like to hear from council about where they currently are on the topic and determine if council members are on the same page.

Deacons will give a status update and then discussion. This was sand-which'd between a group process exercise. Jeff asked council members to stand in a section of the room that represents where they are right now, prior to the status update and then again post status update. This exercise was simply to get an idea of where people are and if the new information influences their decisions or thoughts.

Council members took a moment to think about how they viewed the spring 2018 decision to move to new building and how they viewed the building issue(s) at the time.

Council members took another moment to think about how they view the issue/ decision right now.

Council members were then asked to stand in the area that best represents how they currently feel.

Options of positions included:

1. Stay at Calvary center through thick and thin, understanding the energy and commitment involved.
2. Stay at Calvary center cautiously, investing in the possibility of change. Not fully convinced that it will work but are hopeful that it will. Will continue to look at other options but truly hope to stay at Calvary Center.
3. Stay at Calvary Center through our next lease cycle. Though very likely to eventually move but could be a year or several before doing so. Keeping our ears open and continue to actively look for other options.
4. Move as soon and as quickly as we can. There is little hope that the situation will improve.

Rebecca gave a brief status report and summary from the recent congregational meeting.

Noting that they started with 75 options from market to woodland and 40<sup>th</sup> – 56<sup>th</sup>. They toured about a half-dozen spaces. focusing on several key factors, including cost, classroom space, accessibility etc. Findings from their overall search included some that they were unable to contact, and many did not meet our criteria for spaces which resulted in very few options to seriously consider. So far, The Common Place meets the most criteria, with the main downfall being out of the neighborhood.

Carol gave an update on The Common Place, noting that they toured it more than once with different coordinators and leaders in our church. Planning to meet with the director of The Common Place and other Pastoral leaders to find something that works well for all of us. There is a possibility of two churches merging which will mean new transitions and changes that may take some time to settle. Wayne Presbyterian is still doing renovations and will eventually step back after final phase is complete which is the kitchen renovation which should be finished next year.

Pastor Lorie gave an update on Calvary Center for Culture and Community (CCCC).

At last congregational meeting, Lorie and Tim were to meet with Calvary and Kol Tzedek and it became clear that the CCCC needed to be the main decision makers of the building and an executive director oversee fundraising and running the building.

Rich, from CCCC emailed Lorie informing her that he has hired an additional sexton with clearer responsibilities and updates of around the heating repairs, Lorie took this opportunity to share with Rich that the heat was not the main issue, but rather a symptom of other overlying issues. Rich then shared Lorie's letter to the CCCC board at their meeting on Monday.

Lorie helped clarify the structure of CCCC, including that their board must have most Methodist board members. This also clarified that Calvary United Methodist Church trustees are the ones designated to make financial decisions. Whereas, the CCCC is designated some money, which will be designated toward new sexton position.

Jeff outlined a list of ongoing concerns and issues at CCCC and gave an update on the status of the boiler. Someone has been successful in figuring out the main issues with the boiler and continues to make improvements. CCCC is confident in the improvements with the boiler, however we have not had the opportunity to test it in cold weather.

Rebecca asked council members to consider what our options are. Noting that the ideal solution would be to stay in this space with all of our needs met. However, the ideal solution simply doesn't exist. All options, including staying at the CCCC will require flexibility and compromise. Council members were asked to consider what aspects that could potentially be flexible, which included meeting time, separating our office space from worship space, waiting for a new opportunity, and geographic location.

Lorie asked council members to think about being a consensus building church. She also asked members to consider who is doing the consensus building with the congregation. Deacons had fulfilled the role of finding building options, and council must determine next steps going forward.

Carol began a time for council members to discuss options. Discussion included accessibility and the possibility of a stair chair at The Common Place and determining if council members were on the same page of what to do next. Also noting that the congregation may not understand what the issues are, and work needs to be done to communicate the longstanding concerns with them.

We have met with Calvary and/or CCCC for different times over that last several years and have a good sense of the situation here at CCCC. It was also noted how deciding on a good space will require gaining some aspects and losing some aspects. One member felt that too many things up in the air and that it makes more sense to wait. A new building space will come with new and different problems. More coordination with CCCC may be needed before moving forward. It would be helpful to share the list of concerns with congregation in an appropriate manner, perhaps adding categories to break down concerns may be necessary.

Moved on to second exercise, with the same options from before. Some members outlook had shifted slightly after the discussion. Council members then contemplated what the next steps will be. It was decided that church council members need to be on the same page before meeting with the congregation. It was not clear that all council members were all on the same page or had all their questions answered. It was decided to meet again in a few weeks to further discuss the building and decide for what to do next.

Next meeting will primarily be a follow-up of building on Wednesday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.

Meeting concluded at 9:13 p.m. with prayer