

## West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship

### Church Council Meeting Minutes

January 08, 2019

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

Tim began meeting at 7:05 p.m. with scripture readings from 1 Peter 5 and Ephesians 4:11-16 and prayer

Approved the minutes from the last council meeting

Committee reports

HRC

- Elaine shared that they have been working with Dorianna and Lorie on annual reviews.
- Eliana N. has volunteered to be the adult Sunday school coordinator through May 2019.
- HRC Will begin checking in with volunteers soon.

Deacons

- Rebecca – budget meeting for 2019 will be in January instead of December.
- We have a budget surplus this year, we have exceeded budgeted giving amount and underspent for 2018.

Elders

- Ethan shared about a new small group for those who are looking for a job, experiencing a career transition, new life stages, graduating college, or are unhappy and looking for new job. This group will be a space to share resources. Sheldon, who is a recruiter, will kick off first meeting in the beginning of February.

Lorie shared that they are gathering a group together to address Mennonite Church USA's twelve scriptures project. This group will design the process for the congregation to discern our top scriptures that align with our mission and values. The process will begin over lent and conclude at church retreat in May.

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Google for non-profits

- Tim shared that Ethan has offered to help council set up a better system for sharing resources and communicating with one another. Ethan shared that he applied to *Google for Non-profits*, which will allow us to access several helpful tools. A main benefit is organizational team drives that will be attached to the team (HRC, deacons, etc.) and organization (WPMF) instead of individuals. A second benefit is team access to Google calendar easily. There is a drive space limit only if you upload Non-Google Drive documents. Transitioning to *Google for Non-Profits* will provide better security for each team with creating, sharing, and owning documents.

## Conference affiliation

- Tim shared that Pastor Lorie and Tim contacted *Atlantic Coast Conference* and *Allegheny Mennonite Conference* and are proposing that a representative from each conference visit with our congregation on a Sunday. This will hopefully happen before council meets again, during a meal or a space that makes it easy to meet and greet them. Because many congregants may not feel personally tied to our conference, it makes sense for council to agree on a conference and then propose it to the congregation. Council will aim to make decision at the next Council meeting and then propose Council's recommendation(s).
- Pastor Lorie asked that if any Council members have questions or reservations regarding conference to reach out to her. Last communication with Franconia Conference was a letter last year requesting dialogue and has stalled at an odd place. An open dialogue with (all) credential leaders regarding why we may leave Franconia Conference. It is valuable that if we leave that we do it in a considerate manner that will allow both sides closure. Lorie will be engaging in these conversations.

## Meeting Space

- Tim shared that at the recent congregational meeting there was an essence of consensus building when discussing moving to The Common Place, staying at Calvary Center for Culture and Community (CCCC), or transitioning to an evening service.
- 5 people from our congregation have volunteered to be on the CCCC board – Sheldon Rich, Nancy Geryk, Joe Syzdek, Mel Esh, and Zac Steele. Tim met with them recently, they discussed strategy and sharing tasks and have a good understanding of the situation here at CCCC. CCCC is okay with a team rather than an individual to represent us. Appears that CCCC leadership has received the message that *something* needs to change from user groups.
- Council shared individually and shared their thoughts from the congregational meeting or the report summary of the meeting:
  - Rebecca – Change is difficult – in that context it is very significant that half the people said their first choice is moving. Next step would be to hold a service at TCP and continue to work toward consensus.
  - Carol – Agreed with Rebecca – was interesting because a lot of people appeared to be actively processing information at the meeting and changing their minds – seems like we may be moving toward consensus for moving.
  - Ethan – Got the sense that it feels like the right time to take next step to explore what needs to happen to move. Half people willing to move is enough for us to start seriously considering.
  - Amanda – Happy with how flexible people seemed – makes sense to visit The Common Place and try an evening service here.
  - Jeff Knightly – Agree with what has been said so far. Personally, leaning toward staying at CCCC. However, with the amount of people interested in The Common Place it makes sense to move toward next steps, such as trying a service there. Seemed that many people would rather an evening service in the neighborhood than move *out* of the neighborhood. Additionally, some people may not foresee actual issues with evening service at this time. Appears that we need to move ahead with The Common Place and view the next six months here is a trial.

- Lorie – Surprised to hear how many times the afternoon/evening service was discussed. Seeing that half of people wanted to stay in neighborhood and half moving. We need to have a worship service at The Common Place and an evening service here. We need to get a feel of sharing space at The Common Place, such as the parking lot and building accessibility. There is a new congregation at CCCC three Sundays out of the month. Will need to see what is available for an evening service.
- Elaine - Noted that many people are willing to move to The Common Place. Had interpreted this overall as a strong preference for TCP, but could understand how we might interpret the remaining two options as both advocating for staying in the neighborhood.
- Tim –It felt like there was an openness to move from many people and a good spirit in the room. There was also a lot of concern expressed regarding the staff – guessing that for some, needs of the staff was what nudged them in the direction of The Common Place.
- We will plan to have a Sunday morning service at The Common Place within the next several weeks. We need to also consider the best time to have an evening service in the neighborhood, as a 4pm service is very different than a 7pm service.
- WPMF’s CCCC team will get a sense of how things are going here at CCCC. Their next meeting is a Sunday at the end of January with Tim and Lorie.
- A neighborhood church, such as Monumental Baptist *may* let us meet in an evening service. Would be good to visit at a different location within the current neighborhood for the evening service.
- Lorie will contact the conferences’ leaders about when a rep. will visit with us before we set a date to meet in evening and at The Common Place.
- Rebecca will call Monumental to see if a few of us will be able to tour it and then see if we can meet there one Sunday *evening*.
- Sheldon arrived at the council meeting and gave quick update about the Building User meeting last night and tonight’s Advisory Committee meeting. What was explained to the advisory team was that they have a voice and can do most except for voting. It felt as if there was a sense of urgency from CCCC leadership. Sacred Spaces is present and exploring whether CCCC is worth investing in. Calvary CCC will need to be assessed to see what needs to be done and what the vision is from the neighborhood. This *assessment* will likely cost a substantial amount of money. An additional assessment will need to be conducted to see what each building user group’s vision is.
- It may also be helpful to understand if WPMF contributes to any frustrations for other building users.
- Tim will make an announcement with an update this Sunday and send it to Dorianna for the bulletin and google group.
- After dates for conference visits, evening service, and The Common Place are confirmed, an additional announcement will be given to the congregation.

Next Church Council meeting is Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

Tim concluded meeting at 8:39 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Administrative Assistant, Dorianna Lordi.