

West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship
Church Council Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2019

Attendance: Pastor Lorie Hershey, Elder Ethan Tan, Deacon Jeff Knightly, Elder Amanda Esh Bouwman (Council Chair), Deacon Rebecca Weber, HRC Matt MacNeill, Elder Mark Michalovic

Amanda began meeting at 7:07 p.m. with a moment of silence and prayer.

Updates:

Pastoral Team:

- Pastoral Team is recognizing some shifting norms in membership within our congregation and the church at large. So they see a need for a conversation around membership in the congregation and will start by touching base with some congregations that have changed some of their church membership policy. Attenders and members can participate in CDMs at congregational meetings and members-only vote. If membership as we know it is changed, we would want to find ways to express our commitment. We would love to hear other congregations' processes and reasoning. We don't have many requirements of membership; engagement, baptism, and covenant.
- Marcy Zimmerman was affirmed as an Elder.

Deacons:

- August giving was sparse as per usual this time of year, a short announcement was added to email and bulletin.

HRC:

- Marcy Zimmerman has filled the Elder position. All ministry positions are filled. Child protection policy update is in the works, HRC updated some items and offered some clarification on our policy. HRC is planning a fall policy review and training for congregation.
- HRC has created the questionnaire for the pastoral-congregational review and plan to distribute it in October. This review is done every three years. PCRC is helping with this process and questions.

Franconia Mennonite Conference:

- Mark, Tim, Lorie, Drick, and Amanda met with members/leaders of Franconia Mennonite Conference (FMC). WPMF shared heartfelt concerns regarding our decision to transition to a new conference and left feeling a sense of peace that it was the right decision. Two members of FMC shared that they respected our discernment process. WPMF is working with Franconia Mennonite Conference on the logistics of being officially "released" to our new conference.
- WPMF will write FMC a letter of intent and will send an announcement to the church with an update. Emily (Franconia Conference) and Dave (Allegheny Conference) will then come to our worship to do a blessing around releasing and welcoming us, probably in November or December, after being voted into Allegheny Mennonite Conference at their November Assembly. At the FMC November Assembly, something regarding this process will be acknowledged and if we are invited to speak we would likely accept the invitation to do so. The message would be similar to what will be written in the letter of intent, explaining that we could not be a fully welcoming congregation within FMC.
- Pastor Lorie hosted the FMC women's pastors' luncheon here at the Calvary Center and also discussed us leaving. We will continue to build a relationship within Kingdom Builders that is not tied to FCM.

Partners for Sacred Spaces Update:

- In August, Lorie and Jeff met with the interviewing team from Partners for Sacred Spaces (PSS). PSS asked direct and general questions regarding our experiences working in the building and with other building users. Next step of the PSS process is focus groups with all building user groups.

- In mid October, Amanda will make a verbal and written announcement that will include the progress with the PSS study.
- Mark Michalovic arrived about 7:55 pm.
- Philadelphia Free School is now meeting in the building during the week. We received very little notice of this update and Lorie communicated concerns with Calvary Center leadership.
- Partner study will also address the question of the feasibility of shared-ownership of the building.
- Calvary Center is waiting to have the next building users meeting until *after* PSS report.
- Calvary United Methodist Church's Pastor, John is retiring within a year.
- We are planning to have another meeting with The Common Place.

WPMF Google Calendar:

- Ethan shared that we should take advantage of the benefits that Google for Nonprofits' offer by creating a more detailed and accessible calendar for leadership and volunteers.
- The calendar will include a roster of events for each Sunday that is accessible by people involved in Sunday services, as well as other helpful resources that foster smoother communication. Private information on the calendar could be accessible on a password-protection section of the website.
- Dorianna will look into creating a calendar and ask Ethan questions, if needed. Council will try it out before using it with the congregation.

Roots of justice request :

- Lorie was approached by Roots of justice (formerly, Damascus Road) to help sponsor a training on November 23. Roots of Justice deals with aspects of oppression, We could use \$500 of the grant we received from Bread and Roses because it is consistent with the intent to offer a training that builds up the community.
- Some specifics about sponsorship for the upcoming Roots of Justice training are a \$2000 donation that allows 5 people from our congregation to attend and scholarships for 3 other individuals to attend outside of our congregation, our logo would be used on materials and wpmf would be noted. Council members agreed that it would be good to support this group and training, we need to let them know soon.
- ARC has tried to have all its members attend a training similar to this. If we are unable to sponsor for the full \$2000 we could offer a smaller amount and ask what kind of support that would cover. It may be helpful to have one of the facilitators/organizers come and speak to the congregation about this opportunity.
- Lorie will email Roots of Justice this week and say right now we have \$500 and would like to invite the congregation to give towards the goal of \$2000. She will also ask if a representative from Roots of Justice can come to a worship service soon and talk about their vision and needs.

Next meeting will be Tuesday January 21, 2020 7 p.m.

Amanda concluded meeting at approximately 8:35 p.m.