Scranton Area Ministerium Minutes for February 8, 2017

Bethel AME Church, Washington Avenue, Scranton

**Present: n = 21**

Rev. Wanda Anderson Rev. Darian Banks Ms. Bev deBarros

Ms. Jackie Doughlitt Mrs. Mildred Harvey Dr. Riaz Hussain

Ms. Edith A. Ismael Ms. Deborah Johnson Mrs. Ruth Jones

Mrs. Charlotte Ledbetter Ms. Darlene Leonard Mr. Timothy Maloney

Rev. Jack Munley Sr. Terry O’Rourke, I.H.M. Mrs. Tiffany Pauline

Rev. Jim Redington, S.J. Mr. Chandra Sitaula Sr. John Michelle Southwick I.H.M.

Rabbi Dan Swartz Mrs. Vera Walline Dr. Phil Yevics

Rev. Munley called the meeting to order at 9:04 and invited the host pastor Rev. Darian Banks to offer the opening prayer. All present introduced themselves, with a special welcome being offered to those attending for the first time: Jackie Doughlitt, Edith Ismael, Deborah Johnson, Darlene Leonard, Timothy Maloney, and Tiffany Pauline

Minutes from previous meeting had been distributed previously by email and printed copies were distributed to those in attendance. Rev. Munley gave the group an opportunity to review the minutes, after which Rabbi Swartz made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Pastor Banks seconded the motion which passed without exception.

Dr. Hussain distributed copies of the Treasurer’s Report for January 2017. Fr. Redington made a motion to accept the report, Sr. Terry seconded it, the motion passed unanimously.

1. **Interfaith Service Thanksgiving Week**

The group continued exploring ideas for improving participation in 2017

* 1. There was discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of trying different times such as Sunday afternoon around 3 or 4 or Monday morning at 10. It was noted that youth would be available to come on Sunday but not on Monday.
  2. Several members spoke of the importance of more publicity, including fliers, articles in the paper, and personal outreach to local officials. Bev deBarros gave an example of how she included a notice in the weekly bulletin at Elm Park.
  3. Rabbi Schwartz wondered if it would help to add a service component.
  4. If there were a change in location or time, ECTV might be able to pick up the broadcast of the service.

1. **Martin Luther King weekend**
   1. The Interfaith service on Monday evening was well attended, but there were few political leaders in attendance. The Ministerium was well represented by Rev. Munley, Rabbi Berman, and Charlotte Ledbetter’s choirs.
   2. The meeting at the Police station was very positive and could be expanded in the future.
   3. The SAM president is an *ex officio member* who will make an effort to participate in GSMLK Commission planning over the next year. We will also seek to have a mutual sharing of minutes by email.
   4. Phil Yevics had attended the presentation about Diversity discussion groups and felt it could be a very useful way for the Ministerium to get involved with the ongoing work of the commission.
2. **Awareness of the Ministerium** 
   1. **Facebook Page** Rabbi Swartz is willing to maintain the page. He asked folks to send him information that should be posted there.
   2. **Web page**. ScrantonAreaMinisterium.org. Phil Yevics reported the page is not yet live but he hopes to make progress over the next month.
   3. **Contact list –** the provisional contact list was circulated for folks to make corrections and additions.
   4. **NEPA “Indivisible Under God”**

An organizational meeting was held on Tuesday Jan 31 at Elm Park UMC that produced the following working description:

*The Scranton area has its second Indivisible group. Four dozen area residents from the Scranton Area Ministerium, the Scranton chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Pax Christi NEPA, area religious leaders, and many religious sisters met on January 31st to launch NEPA Indivisible: Under God.*

*The new group, which takes its strategic inspiration from the national grassroots Indivisible movement, hopes to cooperate with other individuals and groups to advocate for social justice on issues which directly impact the citizens of Northeast Pennsylvania.  We aspire to be the “jealous guardians of democracy” called for in the Farewell Address of George Washington.*

Phil Yevics suggested that for the moment, SAM members continue to receive information about the group, and individual members can then decide to participate or not.

* 1. **“We All Belong:” An Interfaith Vigil in Support of Immigrants and Refugees**

1. The event is planned for Saturday February 18 beginning at 7 PM at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church on Wyoming Avenue in Scranton.
2. After discussion Phil Yevics made a motion that SAM join as a sponsor of the event, Sr. Terry O’Rourke seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.
   1. **Promotional Brochure** Phil Yevics suggested this be tabled until the website was up, as the website could provide content for the brochure.
   2. **Alternative meeting times**. Rev. Munley suggested we try an evening meeting time to see if that would make it possible for some faith leaders to attend who cannot make our Wednesday morning gatherings. It was agreed the May meeting will be in the evening. Temple Hesed offered to host the May meeting on Monday May 8 from 7 to 9:30 PM.
3. **Discussion of Outreach to youth.**
   1. Tiffany Pauline, Youth Minister at Bethel AME, shared her plans for a Youth Celebration July 17-21. She would like it to be open to youth from throughout the city, without cost to the participants.
4. **Leader Enrichment Series** 
   1. Winter, “It’s a Family Matter *Living with Advanced Illness, Dying Well, and the Importance of Talking About It with Family.*” This program from the Geisinger Health System that encourages families to discuss end of life issues as soon as possible, before decisions need to be made. It will be presented by Dan Hoegen, LSW, clinical ethicist for Geisinger. **Temple Israel, *March 14***
   2. Spring, “Healing Communities”, a national program that encourages faith communities to become involved with the criminal justice system. Presented by Rev. Sandra Strauss, Director of Advocacy and Ecumenical Outreach, PA Council of Churches. ***EOTC,*** ***April 25.*** www.healingcommunitiesusa.com
   3. Summer, “Suicide Prevention and Postvention” a program that helps leaders understand factors leading to suicide, learn how to intervene in a constructive way, and discuss ways to help communities deal with a suicide. Northeast Suicide Prevention Initiative [NSPI] *Date? Marywood* Resources for faith leaders available at Action Alliance <http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/faithhopelife-0>
   4. Fall, “Mental Health First Aid” NAMI OF NEPA *Date? Place?*
5. **Recognizing Organ Donors** This discussion was tabled until Chaplain Kathy Kaskel could be present, as Kathy had recently attended a training session on this topic.
6. **Prison Ministry**

Bev deBarros reported she has succeeded in getting permission for a library to be provided at the Lackawanna County prison, and thus she was soliciting paperback books.

**Future Meetings**

March 8 U of Scranton, DeNaples Student Center, 9-10:30 AM

April 12 LIFE Geisinger [Marywood Campus] 9-10:30 AM

May 8 Temple Hesed, 7 – 8:30 PM

June ?