SCRANTON AREA MINISTERIUM Minutes 13 February 2018

*The meeting scheduled for February 7 had to be postponed because of weather conditions.*

St. Luke Episcopal Church, 232 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton PA 18503

**Present:**

Rev. Darian Banks Bethel AME Mother Rebecca Barnes St. Luke Episcopal

Marion Beddoe-Lobst Elm Park UMC Bev deBarros Exodus Ministries

Michael Hanley United Neighborhood Centers Mildred Harvey Community Activist

Edith Ismael Salvation Apostolic Temple Ruth Jones Community Activist

Charlotte Ledbetter Community Activist Darlene Leonard Salvation Apostolic Temple

Rev. Jack Munley Rescue & Restore Church Sr. Terry O’Rourke IHM Friends of the Poor

Anthony Pauline Tree of Life Ministries Fr. James Redington S.J. U of Scranton

Rabbi Moshe Saks Temple Israel Sr. John Michelle Southwick Marywood University

Phil Yevics Volunteer at LCP

Rev. Munley called the group to order at 9:01 and welcomed all. Those present introduced themselves before Mother Barnes offered the Opening Prayer.

**Minutes from January Meeting** had been distributed by email, and printed copies were available. Charlotte Ledbetter made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Sr. John Michelle seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Financial Report for 2017**

At the January meeting there were two questions raised which led the group to table approval of the 2017 Financial Report.

1. Meghan Loftus had questioned if the dues from Friends of the Poor had been deposited. The Financial Report showed that they had, and Meghan later confirmed that the check cleared after her previous inquiry.
2. Mother Barnes noticed that there were two deposits from St. Peter’s Cathedral for dues. Dr. Hussain clarified that one was for the 2016 dues and another for the 2017 dues.

**Review of January Financial Report**  The Financial Report for January had been prepared by Dr. Hussain and distributed by email. Printed copies were available at the meeting.

Sr. Terry made a motion that both Financial Reports be accepted as presented, Rev. Banks seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

**Reports on Unfinished business and activities since the last meeting**

1. Housing and the Homeless in NEPA – Mike Hanley, UNC
   1. Mr. Hanley explained how a Housing Coalition of 8 agencies was formed in the 1990s that later focused on providing a “continuum of care.”
   2. This group is able to apply to HUD for funding, and currently receives about $2.5 million/year, distributed among the participating agencies to provide supportive housing programs. This money cannot be used for shelter programs.
   3. In the survey conducted on January 31, 2018 168 homeless individuals were identified, only 4 of whom had no immediate shelter. Thus there are 164 people receiving Supportive Housing for the Chronically Homeless from the Coalition agencies.
      1. This is defining homeless according to HUD criteria. There are folks awaiting release from Prison or Hospitals who do not have a place to go.
   4. Mr. Hanley noted the number had been between 250 and 300 in the recent past.
   5. Mr. Hanley will share the annual report to HUD when it is completed later this year.
   6. Discussion followed on what our faith communities should be doing to address the needs of the homeless.
      1. Sr. John Michelle suggested our members be encouraged to provide financial support for the shelter at Bethel AME.
      2. Mr. Pauline noted the need for a 24 hour shelter with supportive services, and asked that the Ministerium advocate for such a facility.
   7. SAM will revisit this topic and potential action items when we have the opportunity to review the HUD report.
2. Phil Yevics informed the group of developments with the Diversity Circles program.
   1. Publicity will now be echoed on the SAM Website/FB Page
   2. Programs for the Spring 2018
      1. Penn State Worthington Scranton Campus held 2 sessions facilitated by Martin Lacayo
      2. Marywood University is planning a session – Facilitator Dr. Lia Palmiter
      3. A session is planned for the Hill Section in Scranton – Facilitators Cathy Hardaway and Sahar al-Masri on Sundays late afternoon from April 29 to May 27. We still need to finalize a location.
   3. Summer 2018 – A program is being planned at the University of Scranton – Facilitator Jennifer Pennington and another is planned for the Penn State Worthington Scranton Campus
3. Rev. Munley reminded the group of decisions that have already been made concerning the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service which will be held on Friday November 16, 2018 at the Friday Sabbath service of Temple Hesed on Knox Road in Scranton.
   1. Decisions still need to be made on whether or not to provide Child care and if we should pay to have the service video-taped and broadcast over ECTV.
   2. Phil Yevics noted that Greg Palaskas had volunteered to edit the Video from the 2017 service, but it has not yet been provided to him.

**Ongoing areas of Concern**

1. Prison Ministry
   1. Bev deBarros gave an update on the Book Project. There is an ongoing need for donations of paperback books, especially large print and Spanish books.
   2. Phil Yevics asked the group for reactions to the “Tell me a story” proposal that had been distributed with the minutes. He noted that Vera Walline had already volunteered to donate 10 books to help the project get started. He asked for any other suggestions before the proposal is submitted to the Prison Administrators. The group affirmed that they approved being listed as contributors to the project.
   3. Work Release transportation problems. Jo Anne Perri from the PA Prison Society reported to NEPA Prison Advocates that she has been told there are problems with inmates in the work release program obtaining transportation to and from their places of employment. Phil Yevics is contacting the Director of Work Release to get his perception of the issue, but it is hoped that one of the local faith communities with a van might be able to provide transportation, for which they would be reimbursed.

1. Web Page/Facebook Page
   1. Phil Yevics reported that Gregory Palaskas, the manager of the Keystone College Radio Station who is Producing the series on Interfaith Dialogue, has volunteered to give us assistance in developing our web page.
   2. As a first step he has asked what is the goal of the page, what action do we want people to take as a result of viewing it.
   3. Jose Sanchez has been given access to post items on the Facebook page, and has done so for several items over the last month.

**Future Activities**

1. Future Meetings
   1. March 14 St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, 310 Broadway Scranton
   2. Hosts are still needed for meeting on these Wednesdays
      1. April 11
      2. May 9
      3. June 13
2. Other Activities
   1. March 17 Friends of the Poor St. Patrick's Day Dinner for Adults & Elderly @St Mary's Center
   2. March 20, Marywood

All are invited to this event at Marywood in observance of Women's History Month.  It is a free performance on March 20 at 7 PM. Contact Melinda Krokus for more information:  [krokus@marywood.edu](mailto:krokus@marywood.edu) .  I can send posters to anyone who is interested.  
**Tres Vidas**  
"A chamber music theatre work for singing actress and trio (cello, piano and percussion) based on the lives of three legendary Latin American Women: Mexican painter Frida Kahlo, Salvadoran peasant activist Rufina Amaya and Argentinean poet Alfonsina Storni. Text is by Marjorie Agosin. The show features a wide stylistic range of music, including popular and folk songs of Mexico, El Salvador and Argentina, vocal and instrumental tangos by Carlos Gardel and Astor Piazzolla and new music written especially for the Core Ensemble by Osvaldo Golijov, Orlando Garcia, Pablo Ortiz and Manuel DeMurga."   
<http://www.coreensemble.com/shows-on-tour/tres-vidas/>

* 1. March 25, Rock for Ruth, Temple Hesed 4-7 PM

This charity music concert will feature a number of local female musical talents. The event's purpose is to celebrate Women History’s Month and promote gender equality. $5 cover at the door. All proceeds will go to Ruth's Place - Shelter for Homeless Women. This event is hosted by the Peace and Justice Center. Chelsea Collins, The Charming Beards, and others will be performing.

* 1. March 27 Friends of the Poor Easter Basket and Food Giveaway at St Mary's Center.

Charlotte Ledbetter made a motion to adjourn, Rev. Banks seconded, all were in favor. Rev. Munley adjourned the meeting at 10:38.