Scranton Area Ministerium Minutes 8 May 2017

Temple Hesed Knox Road, Scranton PA

**Present:**

Darian Banks Bev deBarros Uta Dreher Mildred Harvey

Ruth Jones Charlotte Ledbetter Darlene Leonard Timothy Maloney

Anthony Pauline Tiffany Pauline Dan Swartz Phil Yevics

Phil Yevics called the meeting to Order at 7:40.

Rabbi Swartz welcomed the group to Temple Hesed, noting the congregation’s historical roots in the struggles for justice that were characteristic of the 20th century, and offering a prayer that the commitment to equality and justice would continue through our own work together.

**Minutes** from Previous Meeting were made available in printed copies, and had been distributed earlier with the agenda. They were accepted by acclamation without amendment.

The **Financial Report** had been distributed with the agenda, and printed copies were available for review. It was accepted without amendment. Phil reminded the group of Dr. Hussain’s persistent plea that those who are capable of paying dues do so, which are billed on a calendar year basis.

1. **National Day of Prayer**, Circle the Square with Prayer May 4, 2017

Phil shared the following letter form Michael Warner.

OPEN LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN LACKAWANNA COUNTY:  
  
How does one begin to express the wonderment of what took place in the Body of Christ yesterday, and the gratitude for the MANY hands that made this possible? Let it suffice to say that Heaven's courtyard indeed received the prayers of His faithful. That the God of Heaven heard the heart's cry of His people. That the heavens were shaken for the concerns of this land.  
  
Yesterday's National Day of Prayer gathering on Courthouse Square was indeed a watershed prayer event in our county. My prayer is that indeed we can continue as the united Body of Christ in such fellowship - as one voice; as one people. That we would continue to pray, worship, and gather as one - as often as we are able.  
  
To even begin to thank the MANY who made this possible would be to omit many others! I will endeavor to do so PERSONALLY in the days to come. However, I want to recognize the 3 ministeriums who envisioned, contributed, prayed, and labored toward this end. The Scranton Ministerium, The Carbondale Ministerium, and of course Christ Together, whose leadership foresaw & sparked this event in the first place. To the many congregations who turned out, labored, and prayed - thank you.  
  
Lastly, to the County of Lackawanna whose cooperation & help were indispensable & overwhelmingly accommodating - specifically DA Scanlon's Office, members of the Sheriff's force, and County Commissioner Laureen Cummings - thank you, and BLESS you.  
  
Now, let us DWELL according to the things we lifted before Heaven, as we recall the thunderous words of Pastor Roy Nantoka, whose closing prayer rang out in his native tongue of Malawi, Africa. As he then turned to English, he exhorted us finally with this eternal truth from God's Word...  
  
Eph 3:20-21 "Now to Him who is able to do infinitely more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen..."  
  
Michael Warner, 2017 Lackawanna County Coordinator  
and the team from "Circle The Square With Prayer"

Phil recognized the prominent role Anthony Pauline and the Bethel AME Choir played in the evening worship service. He also voiced the concern that had surfaced before the event that it was limited to Christian communities. The group confirmed that they want to communicate to the organizers that a National Day of Prayer should make a conscious effort to include all the faith communities of our area, and specifically the Jewish, Muslim and Ba’hai groups that are part of our membership would be eager to participate in the future.

1. **Leader Enrichment Series** (See attached flier)

Phil reminded the group that the intent of this series was to raise the profile of the Ministerium by offering free enrichment opportunities that should be of interest to community leaders. The March program had to be postponed because of weather, and no one came to the April event. We need to work to get better representation at the next two events.

April 22 Healing Communities

July 21 Suicide Prevention

September 21 Mental Health First Aid

1. **Ramadan Food Drive** – Mr. Maloney distributed fliers that could be used in non-Muslim communities to raise awareness about the Muslim holy month of fasting by collecting food that would be donated to the St. Francis Kitchen.
2. **Prison Ministry**

Book Donations – Bev deBarros reported that book donations have been coming in at an impressive pace, and after review they are being made available to the inmates. She has proposed the purchase of library carts from the Commissary fund that could be used to make the books more accessible on the Units.

Reentry Task Force Outreach – Phil noted that the Lackawanna County Reentry Task Force was hoping to have a monthly outreach meeting at a different location on the final Wednesday of each month. Members who could volunteer their meeting places for such a gathering were encouraged to speak up.

Reentry Task Force August Fundraiser 5 K at Nay Aug Park. The Housing committee of the Task Force is planning an August fundraiser at Nay Aug Park and are currently seeking sponsors. Pastor Banks made a motion that the Ministerium become a contributing sponsor to the event, Rabbi Swartz seconded it and the motion passed unanimously. We will seek to find out more information for the next meeting.

1. **Web Page** – Scrantonareaministerium.org Rabbi Swartz made his laptop available so the group could see what has been produced so far. Mrs. Jones [and her husband!] have volunteered to learn what will be needed to maintain the site, and they have been given access to it.
2. **Expanding Involvement** in Ministerium

Sr. John Michelle and colleagues have compiled a list of faith communities in Lackawanna County which is still in need of expansion and refinement. Rabbi Swartz volunteered to begin reaching out to communities listed to invite them into participation in the Ministerium.

Mrs. Ledbetter noted that while it was a positive development that lay leaders have been welcomed into the Ministerium, there is still a need for the pastoral leadership of each community to be involved and supportive at some level, a pint Mrs. Jones enthusiastically affirmed.

It was agreed we need to think more strategically about the best way to continue our outreach efforts.

1. Tiffany Pauline reported on the progress of her plans for the **Celebration of Youth** being offered by Bethel AME to the community on July 17-21. The group expressed a desire to support this activity in any way we can.
2. **Rally for a Peaceful Planet** – Tim Maloney reported that this was envisioned as a non-partisan gathering to promote peace and non-violence. He hopes it will take place on Courthouse Square July 1 or 15, with the active coordination of Action Together.
3. **Election of Officers?** – it was agreed that as long as the current officers are willing to continue in office, there was no need to re-elect them.
4. **Summer Gatherings** – given the amount of activities planned for the Summer, Pastor Banks suggested we do hold a June meeting. All agreed it should return to the traditional second Wednesday at 9 AM at a site to be determined.
5. Members were asked to consider hosting **future meetings** in the Fall, These are the dates of the second Wednesday of each month this Fall.

September 13

October 11

November 8

December 13

Pastor Banks made a motion to **adjourn**, Charlotte Ledbetter seconded, it passed unanimously.