SCRANTON AREA MINISTERIUM Minutes 11 October 2017

Temple Hesed 1 Knox Road Scranton PA 18508

**Present:**

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

Lillian Burnett Amerihealth Caritas Rev. Lou Divis St. Peter Episcopal

Uta Dreher Peacenik Charlotte Ledbetter Community Activist

Darlene Leonard Salvation Apostolic Temple Rev. Jack Munley

Sr. Terry O’Rourke IHM Friends of the Poor Rev. Jim Redington SJ U of Scranton

Pastor Dave Searing St. Peter Lutheran Sr. John Michelle Southwick IHM Marywood

Rabbi Daniel Swartz Temple Hesed Phil Yevics Volunteer at LCP

Rev. Munley called the group to order at 9:15, since road construction had forced some into a detour.

Rabbi Swartz welcomed the group to Temple Hesed, and offered the **Opening Prayer** rooted in the Jewish celebration of Sukhoth or Booths.

**Minutes** from the September Meeting were distributed: Rev.Lou Divis corrected the spelling of her last name. Sr. Terry made a motion to accept the Minutes as corrected, Uta Dreher seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

There was no **Financial Report** submitted for this meeting. Rev. Munley explained to the group that Dr. Hussain had submitted his resignation as Treasurer of the group, given his retirement from the University of Scranton next May. He suggested we ask if Dr. Hussain would continue with this responsibility at least until early next year. The group supported that suggestion, which he will implement. The group also strongly supported his recommendation that we work to recognize the contributions Riaz has made to the Ministerium. Pastor Searing suggested working with the Islamic Center and/or the University of Scranton to cooperate on this recognition, a suggestion that received support from the membership.

1. **Reports on Unfinished business and activities since the last meeting**
2. Interfaith Thanksgiving Service
   1. Previous discussions had decided the Service will be held at Temple Hesed on Friday November 17 as part of their weekly Sabbath observance.
   2. Rabbi Daniel agreed to Chair a Committee which will work on the Program. Sr. Terry O’Rourke and Sr. Ann Walsh will represent the Friends of the Poor on that Committee, which will also include Mother Rebecca Barnes, Rev. Jack Munley, Chandra Sitaula, Vera Walline, and Phil Yevics.
   3. Bev deBarros had made inquiries about having the Service televised through ECTV. So far nothing further has been heard.
   4. Publicity was a concern in previous discussions about the low attendance at the Service. This will require attention at our November meeting.
3. Feedback to Organizers of Circle the Square with Prayer
   1. Rev. Munley will work with Rabbi Saks to present our concerns that the event better represent the range of faith traditions in our community.
   2. Jack reported that the gentleman who organized last May’s event has already indicated he will not be able to do so next year, when the National Day of Prayer is scheduled for Thursday May 3, 2018,
   3. The group expressed support for working with whoever took on that responsibility, and would even consider sponsoring the event ourselves.
4. July 17-21 Celebration of Youth at Bethel AME
   1. Tiffany Pauline sent a note on August 4 expressing her thanks to the Ministerium, noting that about 100 people took advantage of the activity we sponsored. She asked where to send a thank you, and Phil Yevics suggested just coming to a meeting whenever she could.
5. September 17 Interfaith Dialogue, St. Peter Episcopal Tunkhannock
   1. Rev. Lou Divis reported the Muslim/Christian dialogue went well and was well received.
   2. The dialogues will continue from 4-5:30 PM on Sunday October 15 and Sunday November 19.
6. September 23 Diocese of Scranton Social Concerns Convocation
   1. The program provoked good attendance and enthusiasm. The Ministerium was well represented with Rabbi Daniel, Msgr. Grimalia, and Phil Yevics included among the presenters.
7. September 25 LRCA Lantern walk
   1. Rabbi Daniel helped plan the event, where Rabbi Marjorie, Mother Barnes, Uta Dreher, and Uta Dreher also participated.
8. September 26 Reformation Commemoration –
   1. Dr. Robert Shaffern from the University of Scranton History Department shared his original research on Johan Tetzel OP and the context for Martin Luther’s 95 theses.
   2. The lecture can be viewed on the University of Scranton’s You-Tube channel at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wne6BswLSnQ
9. Pastor David Searing reported that Bishop Bambera spoke at the Lutheran Assembly earlier this Fall.
10. **Ongoing areas of Concern**
11. Prison Ministry
    1. Second Chance Festival – The Ministerium was among over 20 sponsors of this activity, which was organized by the Lackawanna County Reentry Task Force to raise money that can be used to assist returning citizens in obtaining housing on their release from Lackawanna County Prison. There was a good turnout from a variety of agencies and community leaders, as well as a good number of returning citizens themselves.
    2. Books – Bev deBarros is continuing her efforts to collect paperback books which can then be utilized at the Lackawanna County Prison. She has recruited some volunteer librarians and is organizing a training from the Prison so that a system for distribution can be implemented.
    3. NEPA Prison Advocates is a recently organized group attempting to promote a restorative justice response to people involved with the criminal justice system. Phil will circulate a future email from them and members of the Ministerium can then decide if they wish to be added to the groups mailing list.
       1. St. Luke Episcopal Church on Wyoming Avenue will be hosting a showing of Prison Art as part of the November 3 First Friday celebrations.
       2. A committee that includes representatives from Progressive Women of Northeast PA is attending Prison Board meetings and monitoring some of their activities.
12. Web Page
    1. Tim Maloney has volunteered to help develop the web page.
    2. Currently there are several different formats used in the listing of events. Members are asked to review them and offer feedback on what format should become the standard.
13. Facebook Page
    1. Rabbi Daniel has created and maintained the Facebook page for the Ministerium.
    2. Tim Maloney has offered to assist in the maintenance. Rabbi Daniel will give him administrative access.
14. Expanding Involvement in Ministerium -
    1. All members agreed to review the list on google that was compiled by Sr. John Michelle and her colleagues at Marywood University and then revised by Phil Yevics. When refined, this list can be moved to the Web page and used to reach out to potential new members.
    2. Networking possibilities – Phil Yevics expressed his hope that the Ministerium could become part of a Network of networks for sharing information about interfaith activities in Northeast Pennsylvania.
15. Other activities have been suggested that the Ministerium could initiate to raise their profile. While members expressed interest in these there was no time to discuss them at this meeting and so they will be addressed in future gatherings.
    1. First Fridays, *Quaestiones Disputatae*
    2. Third Thursday Cultural programming?
    3. Diversity Circles
    4. Leader Enrichment Series
16. **Future Activities**
17. Homeless Shelter at Bethel AME – Pastor Darian Banks reported that at this point in time, Bethel AME did not have the volunteer resources necessary to open the shelter for the Winter months as they had for the last several years. He promised to keep the group informed as things develop.
18. Supporting Organ Donation
    1. Several members reported positive reactions to the materials from the Gift of Life Program that had been distributed at the September meeting. Those materials asserted that all of the major religious traditions supported donor donation. If any of our members are aware of faith groups that have concerns about organ donation they are asked to bring that to our attention.
    2. Rabbi Daniel shared that Temple Hesed had participated in a different program also called the Gift of Life, which encouraged folks to be tested to see if they would be compatible for medical procedures.
19. Fr. Redington reported that the U of Scranton will be offering a presentation in February by Erik Klein, who has written a book on using the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola with people from other faith traditions. He will keep us informed as details become available.
20. Future Meetings
21. November 8 at the Rectory of St. Peter Roman Catholic Cathedral, Wyoming Avenue in Scranton,
22. December 13 in Room 405 of the DeNaples Student Center at the University of Scranton.
23. Members are asked to consider volunteering to host one of our meetings in 2018.  
        Jan 10 Feb.14 Mar 14  
        April 11 May 9 Jun 13