SCRANTON AREA MINISTERIUM Minutes 13 September 2017

Islamic Center of Scranton 1509 W. Pass Avenue Scranton PA 18508

**Present:**

Bev deBarros Exodus Ministries Rev. Lou Divis St. Peter Episcopal

Uta Dreher World Citizen Meghan Loftus Friends of the Poor

Tim Maloney Islamic Center Rev. Jack Munley HHC Prof & Hospice

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

José Sanchez U of Scranton Sr. John Michelle Southwick IHM Marywood

Rabbi Daniel Swartz Temple Hesed Vera Walline Bahå’î Community

Dr. Helen Wolf U of Scranton Phil Yevics Prison Ministry

President Munley called the group to order at 9:06, and invited Tim Maloney to **welcome** members to the Islamic Center. He asked Rev. Lou Divis to offer the **Opening Prayer**, and then offered a special welcome to **first time attendees** Lou Divis, Meghan Loftus and José Sanchez.

**Minutes** from previous Meeting were distributed; after all had time to peruse them Sr. Terry made a motion to accept them as presented which Vera Walline seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Copies of the **Financial Report** were distributed. Sr. John Michelle made a motion to accept, Fr, Redington seconded, the motion passed without dissent.

1. **Reports on Unfinished business and activities since the last meeting**
2. Feedback to Organizers of Circle the Square with Prayer

Rev. Munley was notified of the group’s intention to ask for a more inclusive representation of the religious diversity of the area. He will work with Rabbi Saks to share our concerns.

1. June 9, Rabbi Capers Funnye at Temple Israel – no report.
2. June 9 Social Justice Sabbath at Temple Hesed

Several members spoke of how impressed they were with the quality of the speakers, the attentive interaction among those in attendance, and the respectful attention to the Jewish and Muslim worship services.

1. June 25 World Refugee Day – no report.
2. July 11 LES on Suicide Prevention and Postvention at Marywood University

Sr. John Michelle reported that there was an excellent presentation, but there were only 5 people in attendance.

1. July 15 Peace Meal at Temple Hesed

Bev deBarros and Vera Walline reported that there were about 30 people present, and that the interaction at each table was good. Uta Dreher suggested it would be helpful to promote interaction with people you had not yet met. There was a nice article in the Times/Tribune about the event.

1. August 19-20 Suicide Prevention Presentation

Rev. Munley noted that about 60 attended and the presentation was well received.

1. July 17-21 Celebration of Youth at Bethel AME

Tiffany Pauline sent an email thanking the Ministerium for their underwriting the cost of a bust to take folks to a night of family bowling, reporting that about 100 people participated.

1. July 22 Sounds of Fellowship and Praise, Bethel AME – no report
2. August 24 Prayer for National Peace and Against Hate – Shiloh Baptist

Phil Yevics noted that the event was hastily organized in response to the events in Charlottsville VA by Dr. Earl Johnson of Shiloh Baptist. The Ministerium was well represented in the program by Rabbis Marjorie Bermann, Moishe Saks and Dan Swartz, Dr. Riaz Hussain, and Deacon Ed Shoener.

1. **Ongoing areas of Concern**
2. Prison Ministry
   1. Second Chance Festival – Phil Yevics was present with the Ministerium Banner; Bev deBarros and Uta Dreher were present and reported on the enthusiastic participation of a broad sampling of the community, from Judges to returning citizens. The money raised will assist citizens returning to Lackawanna County in paying their initial housing costs
   2. Books – Bev deBarros reported she has had an enthusiastic response in book donations, but there seems to be some confusion in getting the books distributed within the prison. [The day after our meeting Bev learned that books had in fact already been made available to the inmates.]
   3. Dr. Wolf noted that last Spring a group of students led creative writing activities for the female inmates in a program called LEAP. Plans are underway to continue the program this Fall.
   4. Bev deBarros announced that a new group has been formed under the title NEPA Prison Advocates. Phil Yevics will forward an email from the group and SAM members can decide individually if they would like to receive more information.
3. Web Page Tim Maloney volunteered to assist with maintaining the web page. There is a need for photographs of events we have been involved with.
4. Expanding Involvement in Ministerium
   1. Members were given the link for our current version of the list of faith communities in Lackawanna County.  The group agreed to look it over and suggest additions and corrections so that it can be "marketed" in September.
   2. Phil shared his vision that the Ministerium should become a “network of networks” sharing information among people of faith throughout NEPA. He will be attending the quarterly meeting of Christian Communities Gathering later this morning, and th Wyoming Valley Interfaith Council on September 14.
   3. It was mentioned that several of the future activities are aimed at raising community awareness of the existence and activity of the Ministerium.
5. **Future Activities**
6. September 17 Interfaith Dialogue, St. Peter’s Episcopal Tunkhannock
7. September 21 LES – Mental Health First Aid
8. September 25 LRCA Lantern walk
9. September 26 Diocese of Scranton Social Concerns Convocation
10. Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

An email consultation lst month gave approval to the suggestion from Sr. Ann Walsh that the Friday Sabbath service of Temple Hesed be adapted to the Interfaith Thanksgiving service. Rabbi Swartz will work with representatives of Friends of the Poor and the Ministerium to prepare the program. Bev deBarros volunteered to contact ECTV to see if the service can be broadcast.

1. Distribute Information Supporting Organ Donation

Chaplain Kathy Kaskel made contact with Lisa Litchkowski of the Gift of Life Program, who provided packets of information that were distributed at the meeting. The group agreed to review the materials and discuss possible future action at the next meeting.

1. First Fridays, *Questiones Disputatae* – Rev. Munley spoke in support of pursuing this idea.
2. Diversity Circles – Phil Yevics mentioned how profitable he had found this program of structured conversations on race. He would like to see the Ministerium become active in promoting these Circles. Sr. Terry and José Sanchez had participated in the pilot Circles earlier last year, and both were enthusiastic about the possibilities of the program.