SCRANTON AREA MINISTERIUM **Minutes** 13 December 2017

University of Scranton, DeNaples Student Center

**Present:**

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

Bev deBarros Exodus Ministries Uta Dreher World Citizen

Amy Hoegen University of Scranton Barb King University of Scranton

Charlotte Ledbetter Community Activist Darlene Leonard Salvation Apostolic Temple

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

Tiffany Pauline Bethel AME Rev. Jim Redington S.J. U of Scranton

Jose Sanchez University of Scranton Cathy Seymour, University of Scranton

Sr. John Michelle Southwick Marywood University Vera Walline Ba’Hai Community

Helen Wolf University of Scranton Phil Yevics Volunteer at LCPrison

Rev. Munley called the group to order at 9:10. Dr. Wolf welcomed the group on behalf of the University of Scranton, Mother Rebecca Barnes offered the Opening Prayer. President Munley invited each person present to introduce themselves.

Neither Minutes from the November Meeting nor a current Financial Report were available for review.

1. **Reports on Unfinished business and activities since the last meeting**
2. Interfaith Thanksgiving Service November 17, Temple Hesed
   1. Fr. Redington read a complaint had been received on the website which was circulated to the officers:

My boys and I came to the Interfaith Thanksgiving service; I have never felt more unwelcome. First I got dirty looks and overreaction when my three year made noice. Then the woman got up and moved but continued to turn and give me dirty looks. I took the boys out to where the food was so that I could continue to listen to the service. I was then told that I had to take them to the lobby. Basically I would not get to hear the service. I was watching them and was attempting to control them. They are 3 and 5 years old. I don’t have anyone to watch my children. None of the paperwork states that it was a child free event.

Fr. Redington sent this response:

  I am sorry! And I'm confident that I speak for our whole Scranton Area Ministerium membership in saying that we are sorry that you and your boys were made to feel unwelcome to our Interfaith Thanksgiving Service last Friday night. I wasn't on our planning committee, but I'm quite sure that we had no intention of saying it was to be a child free event. Especially if you had no other way of coming to the event than to bring your boys. Be sure that I will bring the matter up at the next monthly meeting of our Ministerium. Meantime, please accept my apology. And very best wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving in spite of this,

He received this response.

Thank you for your kindness. I have prayed on it and my hurt is starting to leave. John and James are very spirited and loud boys and I was trying but I know they are loud. I am going to take it as a learning experience. Again thank you. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Group members thanked Jim for his well chosen words. It was agreed we should look into providing child care next year. Tiffany Pauline, Youth Minister at Bethel AME, was asked to consider taking on that task,

* 1. Members then discussed their personal reactions to the evening, which were unanimously positive. The number attending was an improvement on the last two years, the participation was impressive, the service itself was quite moving. There was support for continuing with this format next year.
  2. The event was video-taped by Electric City TV. We will try to find out when it will air.

1. Bethel AME Winter Homeless Shelter
   1. Rev. Banks clarified that the biggest concern was providing reliable supervision.
   2. Several members spoke to their appreciation to Bethel AME for taking on this important ministry, and to the fact that it is a responsibility that should be shared by the entire community. The Ministerium members would like to do anything we can to support the ongoing operation of this Shelter.
   3. The group would like to invite Mr. Hanley to discuss our community’s response to the homeless. Phil will try to arrange this.
2. Request from Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Dr. Hussain did send a check for $100 from the Ministerium.
3. Survey from PA IPL. Phil shared the following message which was received at the Secretary’s email.

We are now asking for your kind help with the *last* step of the information-gathering that will help PA IPL move forward in thoughtful and intentional ways as we build our strategic plan: **a**[**survey**](https://goo.gl/forms/3XEPJpiIONvLu0bo2)**of our Institutional Members** (congregations, educational institutions, peer advocacy organizations, and other organizations)**to learn about their**(your!)**perceptions of our work.**

However you complete the [survey](https://goo.gl/forms/3XEPJpiIONvLu0bo2), it should take just a few moments, and will be so helpful to us.

Given that Rabbi Swartz is an officer of this organization, it was decided to refer the matter to him to see if he would recommend we take any further action.

1. **Ongoing areas of Concern**
2. MLK Weekend
   1. Awards Dinner, Sunday January 14, 2:30 – 5:30, U of Scranton DeNaples Student Center 5th floor Ballroom. Last year SAM sponsored a table and those who could reimbursed the Ministerium for the cost of $25/person. Fr. Redington made a motion that we do the same this year, Rev. Banks seconded, all voted in favor.
   2. Interfaith Service Monday evening will be held at Salvation Apostolic Church, 223 North Main Avenue, beginning at 7 PM. Charlotte Ledbetter has already been practicing with the choir!
   3. Supporting other activities – see the full list at <http://www.scranton.edu/equity-diversity/mlkcommission.shtml>
   4. Diversity Circles. Last year the MLK Commission brought Diversity Circles to the area. Sr. Terry and Jose Sanchez participated in the first series of offerings, Phil Yevics took part last Summer. Phil suggested we try to get the program scheduled this Spring for Marywood University, the University of Scranton, and the Hill Section of Scranton, in addition to Penn State Worthington. Information about the program will be distributed with the agenda for the January meeting.
3. Prison Ministry
   1. December First Friday at St. Luke’s. Mother Barnes reported that the display of artwork by two inmates, along with masks created at the Juvenile detention center, was very well received. Hal Donohue did a series of radio interviews that can be accessed at <https://soundcloud.com/wkcv-lp-908850132/veterans-perspective-st-lukes-church-110817-live-hosted-by-hal-donahue>
   2. Phil promised to forward information about NEPA Prison Advocates, after which SAM members could decide for themselves if they want to sign up for further information from the group.
   3. Books at Lackawanna County Prison. Bev deBarros reported that the distribution of books at LCP is going well. She shared some thank you notes that illustrate the impact the books can have on the inmates. There is an ongoing need for paperback books. Contact her if you have books to donate or would be interested in volunteering to help distribute them.
4. Web and Facebook Pages. Phil has not been able to devote time to maintaining the Web Page, and Rabbi Swartz would welcome assistance in maintaining the Facebook Page.
   1. Jose Sanchez expressed a willingness to assist with the Facebook page. Phil will ask rabbi Daniel to give him administrative privileges, after which we can send information to Jose to be posted on Facebook.
5. **Future Activities**
6. Dr. Wolf mentioned that the University of Scranton will be hosting a free community breakfast on Christmas morning beginning at 8 AM. Volunteers can arrive at 7:30.
7. Mother Barnes noted that the Social Justice Book Club and St. Luke’s will be hosting a discussion of Bryan Stevenson’s book *Just Mercy* on Monday January 8.
8. Future Meetings
   1. Jan 10 – will be at the Swartz Conference Center of Marywood University
   2. Feb 7 [note, first Wednesday to avoid conflicts on Ash Wednesday] will be at Bethel AME on Washington Avenue, across from Coopers.
   3. Hosts are still needed for the meetings on
      1. March 14
      2. April 11
      3. May 9
      4. June 13