SCRANTON AREA MINISTERIUM Minutes 8 November 2017

Rectory, St. Peter Roman Catholic Cathedral

**Attendance:**

Rev. Rebecca Barnes St. Luke Episcopal Bev deBarros Exodus Ministries

Uta Dreher World Citizen Edith Ismael Salvation Apostolic Temple

Pastor Anthony 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

Rev. Jim Redington S.J. U of Scranton Msgr. Dale Rupert St. Peter Cathedral

Rabbi Moshe Saks Temple Israel Rabbi Daniel Swartz Temple Hesed

Vera Walline Ba’Hai Community Phil Yevics Volunteer at LCPrison

Rev. Jack Munley, President, called the group to order at 9:07, asking Msgr. Rupert to welcome the group and offer the **Opening Prayer**.

**Minutes** from previous Meeting were distributed by email the night before, and copies were available for those present. Fr. Redington clarified that the speaker referenced in Item C3 is Erin Cline, who will be speaking in the DeNaples Student Center Room 401 on February 22. Charlotte Ledbetter made a motion to accept the minutes as amended, Fr. Redington seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

**Financial Report.** There was no discussion of the Financial Report, since the officers did not realize Dr. Hussain had emailed it the night before. However there should not have been any changes from the previous month’s report. It was noted that the group needs to recruit a new Treasurer before Dr, Hussain retires in May, and that our funds were below $1,000 at this point.

1. **Reports on Unfinished business and activities since the last meeting**
2. Interfaith Thanksgiving Service November 17, Temple Hesed

Publicity – Friends of the Poor has created a flier for all the activities of Thanksgiving week. Meghan will explore creating one just for the Interfaith Service.

Program – Rabbi Swartz met with his committee earlier this week. Temple Hesed will print the programs.

1. Bethel AME Winter Homeless Shelter. Concerns were raised at the meeting that the Shelter at Bethel AME would not be opening this year,. After the meeting Phil contacted Mike Hanley, Executive Director of United Neighborhood Services. Here is his reply.

The Scranton Area Ministerium became aware that Bethel AME had decided not to offer the Homeless Shelter this year, using the time to seek a more solid financial and volunteer base for  offering the Shelter in the future.  
  
The Ministerium was concerned about those the shelter has served in the past, who presumably will be left in the cold this winter, and wold be willing toward with whatever groups who might be mobilized to address this need this year.

We just discussed this at the Housing Coalition meeting yesterday. A few years ago we had a similar situation when Bethel did not open for the season.  Catholic Social Services operates the year round shelter and we were concerned they would have an overflow without Bethel. Msgr. Kelly and I met with a group of funders who agreed to put up money to place any overflow at the CSS shelter into hotels until we got a handle on the extent of the problem. Surprisingly we did not need to tap those funds. You may want to contact Steve Nocilla at Catholic Social Services but it was my impression yesterday that they were taking a wait and see attitude. Currently they have had vacancies each night. Which brings up the natural question of where do the people who use Bethel go if there is no Bethel. I think the answer is complex and varies person to person.  Some live in SRO's the rest of the year and move into Bethel for the winter saving money on rent, some move on to other communities and some move in with friends. I'm sure there are many other reasons but these seem to be the dominant ones. I'd be happy to discuss this in greater detail if you would like.

The group did want to pursue this issue with Mr. Hanley at a future meeting. Phil will let him know.

1. Reformation Commemorations The Bonhoefer Seminar will meet at St. Peter Lutheran Church at the corner of Ash Street and Taylor Avenue in Scranton on Sunday November 18 at 3 PM to conclude their discussion of “Martin Luther and Pope Francis”.

4 Request from Big Brothers/Big Sisters – The agenda contained the text of a request from Denise Jensen of Big Brothers/Big Sisters for financial assistance in providing Christmas gifts for their clients. Sr. Terry made a motion that SAM donate $100 to be used as best the organization saw fit, Vera Walline seconded, the motion passed unanimously. The Secretary will communicate that to the Treasurer. Individual members are also encouraged to donate. Pastor Ismael commented on the importance of these efforts.

1. **Ongoing areas of Concern**
2. Prison Ministry
3. Mother Barnes reported that St. Luke’s is working with NEPA Prison Advocates to sponsor a First Friday exhibit of art done by two inmates, masks created at the Juvenile Detention Center, along with commentary by 3 or 4 speakers. All are welcome to attend.
4. Books Bev deBarros reported that books are now being distributed to the inmates, so there is an ongoing need for donations of paperback books, especially in Spanish.

6. Web Page and Facebook Page. With Tim Maloney cutting back his involvement, there is a need for more assistance with the Web page and Facebook page.

**C. Future Activities**

7. Future Meetings

a. Wednesday December 13 we will meet in Room 405 of the DeNaples Student Center at the University of Scranton, starting at 9 AM.

b. Future meetings – Please volunteer to host a future meeting.  
    Jan 10 Feb.14 Mar 14  
    April 11 May 9 Jun 13