

PROGRAM COUNCIL MINUTES: meeting of May 5, 2010

present: Jane Oldfield-Spearman, chair; Ginny Berrien (Small Group Ministry); Gail Nostrom (Outreach); Pat Yosha (Social Justice); Frank Merrick (Team FUUSION); Deb Merrick (board of trustees); Kimberly Wootan (RE); Janet Szarmach (Hospitality/Membership); Sylvia Foster (Green Sanctuary); David Weber (Adult RE/Sabbatical)

I. Committee Reports:

Green Sanctuary is preparing for the congregational vote 5/23 on whether FUUSE will seek formal Standing from the UUA as a Green Sanctuary.

Sabbatical Committee has been very happy with FUUSE's general culture and energy during Kendra's absence but has noted the apparent lack of response to her challenging questions about our deep purposes. Paul Robinson's offer to collect individual thoughts has gone unheeded. However Dan Chartrand is weaving the questions into a forthcoming service; and Small Group Ministry will address the questions as well. Other ideas are welcome.

Adult RE has the fall program of courses nearly ready.

Social Justice was pleased with the turnout at their 4/25 forum on Afghanistan: 48, of whom about a third came from outside FUUSE. On May SJ had a three-hour long-range planning session and chose five priorities from twelve suggestions. SJ envisions a Survey Monkey for the congregation as a whole based on these preliminary results. The group will meet on Saturday mornings instead of after services.

Team FUUSION has four coaches on board. It has scheduled a demonstration at South Church, hoping to help that congregation launch its own team. The Communications Task Force is promoting the use of conference calls when they are a practical way to replace a meeting without the use of cars. CTF would also like to see broader use by committees of the FUUSE website.

Debbie Merrick reported that the revised operations manual is nearly complete; it will include the Safe Congregation language, the by-laws, and committee policies (with respect to day care, e.g.); the board is working on the 2009 annual report. Tish Lewis is being trained through the District and the UUA in leadership development.

Debbie distributed the new Covenant for Civil Discourse adopted by the District. It can pertain to both internal and public programs. The board will discuss it at their next meeting. She reminded the group about the annual meeting on 5/23. Kimberly also distributed the RE Master Calendar for 2010-2011, which reflects a stronger Social Justice presence in the RE program.

Gail reported that the Outreach Task Force's provision of volunteers and food donations to the Seacoast Family Promise (formerly known as the Seacoast Interfaith Hospitality Network) emergency family shelter at Christ Church is working well. She will provide figures [to David for the minutes] for the most recent give-it-away Sundays.

There was discussion of issues related to the process by which new members join the church. Welcoming and connecting new members is a goal of numerous committees and staff members in the church; it is the role of the Program Council to figure out how to coordinate these efforts so that up-to-date information is delivered and so that efforts are not duplicated. A need was identified to integrate and coordinate the efforts of the Pathways to Membership class with those of the Membership Committee. Pathways is universally admired and appreciated but may be able to become even more fully successful by making the transition to membership more transparent and inviting. Jane will invite Mary Alice Lapoint and Susan Gorman, the Pathways leaders, to the June Program Council meeting.

Another area for fuller integration is the Finance Committee oversight of committee spending as the church year draws to a close. There is a desire to prevent the end-of-year spending freeze that happened this year, so that programs can run smoothly.

Ginny reported that Small Group Ministry will be focusing on Kendra's question about FUUSE's deep purposes. She made an eloquent plea for SmGpMin and expressed puzzlement that it seems to remain marginal at FUUSE. Perhaps closed groups are not the right model here. This question will be on Kendra's plate when she returns. Perhaps testimonials could be a mechanism for promoting and integrating it. Perhaps involvement by new 'graduates' of Pathways could be enhanced. There is considerable feeling that small groups are key to committed membership in FUUSE itself. SmGrMin may need to be reinvented.

II. There was general discussion of whether broader participation might be fostered by a use of time-limited Projects in place of some committee commitments. Such an approach might dovetail well with three-year committee rotations. In the Project approach leaders pull additional members into the performance of specific tasks, which are short-term and concrete. Periodic horizontal movement between committees promotes increased personal contact and relationship between members of the congregation.

III. Assignments for the June 6 (between the services) celebration of volunteers:
Outreach- Gail: pastry and coffee and set up; RE - Kimberly: breads, veggies, dips;
Social Justice- Pat: snacks, cookies, pastries; Adult RE- Dave: gluten-free eatables;
DRE Relations - Jane: fruit salad; SmGpMin- Ginny: bagels and cream cheese;
Membership- Janet: fruit salad; trustees - Debbie: baked goods. Gail will ask Tony to help set up the Community Room, since the Parish Hall will be occupied by the labyrinth. We will have one big food table instead of kids and adults tables as the children always eat the adult food anyway; Janet will recruit for clean-up.

Jane needs a sentence or two from each committee about the year's highlights. This year's event will celebrate the work itself rather than try to be a full roster of individual names. Besides the committees, the Choir and the RE teachers should be recognized. Committees should forward their blurbs on 8x11 colored paper to Gail Nostrom at the 6/2 Program Council meeting for presentation as a mosaic on the walls of the sanctuary. During coffee hour Jane will make remarks of appreciation for the work of volunteers this year and will highlight the accomplishments of each committee. She will also encourage members and friends to consider signing up for committees for next year.

Jane would like this volunteer recognition event to be listed in the Order of Service and on the Thursday update, but we will refrain from printing a special handout this year in order to be environmentally conscious. Kimberly will coordinate with Will Young so that during both services volunteers will be asked, committee by committee, to stand up to be recognized for their service to our community. By the end of the roll call, nearly everyone should be standing!!! Jane will send last year's list of volunteers which can be used as a guide for Will Young, as it has an exhaustive list of the roles people serve.

Ongoing projects: mission statement; enhanced recruitment of volunteers; expansion of the welcome of new members so that the whole church is involved; problem-solving when things are being missed or if there is disagreement or duplication of effort.

IV. The Program Council gratefully and enthusiastically designated Jane Oldfield-Spearman as next year's chair/facilitator. PC members should decide or learn who will represent their committee on the PC next year and bring that name to the next meeting.
DW 5-9-2010