

# 2017 January Stewards Minutes

SEEKERS CHURCH

Stewards Minutes

January 8, 2017

5:00 p.m.

**Present:** Marjory Bankson, Peter Bankson, Kevin Barwick, Ken Burton, Cynthia Dahlin, Michele Frome, Judy Lantz, David Lloyd, Sandra Miller, Trish Nemore, Brenda Seat, Keith Seat, Margreta Silverstone, Deborah Sokolove, Vincent Shepherd, and Jacqie Wallen.

**Absent:** Joan Dodge.

**Guests:** Glen Yakushiji, Sharon Lloyd, Leslie Smith.

**Worship** was offered by Sandra.

**Housekeeping:** Stewards will next meet on Sunday, February 12, at 5pm at the church.

Moderator: Keith

Worship: Dave

Recorder: Michele

Angels: Sandra, Margreta

**Bokamoso Report – Leslie Smith with Sharon Lloyd:** The report focused on the upcoming visit by the Bokamoso youth. (A comprehensive report to Stewards will be made later this year.) There will be twelve of them, of whom six were with us last year. They will offer the word at Seekers on January 22. This service will be followed immediately by lunch and the first career workshop. There will be no coffee hour. Seekers will be encouraged to leave the second floor as soon as possible, although help will be needed to set up tables. The worksite visits will take place on Tuesday. If weather makes this impossible, they will not be rescheduled. The second workshop day will be Thursday. For more information, contact Leslie or Sharon.

**2016 Yearend Financial Report – Marjory:** On behalf of the Financial Oversight Group (FOG), Marjory distributed a preliminary report. She noted that there were both income and expense transactions missing and that some building

expenses may be capitalized. An updated version will be emailed to Stewards when it is ready. Even with this caveat, it was clear from the preliminary report that there will be little or no budget surplus this year. Given known sources of past giving and the changes in lives of those givers, Seekers may need to re-emphasize the role of giving in the community and work to reduce expenses in the upcoming year.

## **The State of Seekers – Annual Report of the Servant Leadership Team (SLT)**

(The following summary of this report was prepared by the SLT. It has been lightly edited for inclusion here. The report is in three sections.)

### **1. Churning – growth, death, loss, change**

**Joan Dodge and Dave Lloyd joined the Servant Leadership Team.**

**Koinonia put down its call.** Have we adequately processed that loss? What work still needs to be done? Who's keeping an eye on new comers in Koinonia's absence? How do we hold up the values of hospitality and welcoming? Is there more for Stewards to attend to in this regard?

**Seekers put down the Guatemala pilgrimage as a mission of the church.** What have we learned about putting down valued parts of our community life? Will something new emerge for Seekers and for those most directly involved in the pilgrimage?

**OMG sounded its call.** What does this new mission group mean for the life of Seekers?

**Individuals/couples new to us became regular attenders.** How are we doing at integrating them? Is this a time for a Semi-Secrets of Seekers orientation?

**Carroll Café's leadership changed mid-year.**

**Our Gallery has had regular shows under curator Sandra Miller.**

**A few Seekers became excited by what they saw and heard at the Wild Goose Festival.** This is an opportunity to explore connections with other progressive Christians around the country. The Festival this year is July

16-18. Are there connections to be made with other churches whose values we share through this event?

**Emily Gilbert stopped attending Seekers.** She continues to be part of the Living water Mission Group, which meets in her room at Goodwin House. As Seekers continue to age, we will need to pay more attention to how we keep elderly members included in the life of the community.

**Marjory and Peter Bankson are closer to moving to Takoma, DC.** They expect to make the move in 2017, but this means the loss of another of our Virginia “anchors.”

**We have had several new people attending worship in recent months.**

**The Children’s Team** was newly formed early last year (2016) under Judy Lantz’s leadership and including Judy, Dave Lloyd, Sallie Holmes, Jacqie Wallen and Larry Rawlings – has created great opportunities for our children this year. Rather than using weekend retreats for a “confirmation” style class, as we’ve done in the past, the team decided to do the work during Sunday School hours and have given many months over to that this year. The class includes both teens and pre-teens and will continue into the spring. Camp participation was also high and enthusiastic.

**We continued our varied support of refugees and immigrants.** Eli was born with much support from the community. The SLT continued to work with how to be supportive of the Dongo family. Trish attended meetings of immigrant support organizations. Can our experience working with the families within our congregation be useful to others as they seek to help those fleeing violence and economic deprivation? Is there more we need to do to protect our members under the Trump administration.

## **2. Structures – bricks and mortar and core documents**

**We experienced more than 700 building uses by 42 groups in 2016.** Much credit goes to Katie Fisher, our building manager. The heavy use and the passage of time mean that our building needs ever more substantial work. Time and Space is attending to the ordinary and capital improvements needed. Its budget has been increased for these improvements and we continue to put

year-end money into a capital fund. T&S budget has increased by almost \$9.000 since 2014.

**Documents/Website** – Great new brochures, post cards and generic business cards for any Seeker to use were produced by the hard work of Keith, Peter, Katie and Dave. These folks have been our “documents” group for years. Do we need to review/revise our core documents and if so, who should do that? This group? The Outreach Mission Group? We’ve also had a conversation pending about our website for quite a while. Is this the year to move ahead on these various projects?

**Alcohol Use Policy** –SLT and Time and Space worked together to create an alcohol use policy for both ourselves and other building users. The policy’s finalization is pending a last look by several lawyers within the congregation.

### **3. Decisions and Processes**

#### **How Does SLT work?**

In a process in Stewards last June, some expressed a yearning for more information on how SLT spends its time and how decisions are made in Seekers, overall.

Believing that mission groups are the primary locus of much decision making in Seekers, as a general matter, SLT tries to stay out of mission group business. We recognize the authority of the mission groups at point of call so that decisions made within the mission group related to their mission are honored. We will step in when asked by a mission group that is struggling with a particular matter or when a decision is made that has repercussions beyond those apparently considered by the group.

More generally, SLT meets formally and in person twice a month, usually for close to three hours. One meeting is devoted to anything and everything; the second meeting is primarily devoted to planning the agenda for the upcoming Stewards meeting. Between meetings, many emails and text messages – and occasionally conference calls – move back and forth as issues arise that need more immediate attention.

Much of our time is spent discussing and acting on pastoral matters that arise outside of mission group life (where, we believe, primary pastoring of members occurs).

### **Responding to requests for financial assistance**

We believe this is deeply spiritual work for our whole community and especially for SLT. We have great wealth and significant poverty within our small community and being family and community to each other in those circumstances presents us with many opportunities to discern what Jesus' teachings mean for us.

### **Our desires for 2016 – how did we do?**

In the January 2016 Stewards meeting, we expressed these desires for the coming year: finding our voice, trusting our gifts, acting boldly, loosening the holds of tradition to expand who is at our table, finding support for our Sunday School curriculum. How have we done?

(End of SLT report)

**Visioning Seekers for 2017** – We broke into four small groups to discuss our vision for Seekers in 2017. The following are highlights from the feedback from those groups.

- Integrate new people more deeply.
- Explicit teaching/preaching about Seekers vocabulary and practice.
- Make greater use of informal spiritual companions.
- Consider greater social justice advocacy as a response to election. We live now at the intersection of the political and the theological.
- What does C of S mean for us? Include in our thinking about this question other congregations around country who try to use the C of S as a model.
- Caring for those in our community who are aging and separate from family?
- Shift anxiety to embracing joy.
- Explore alternative preaching: dance, Interplay, clowns.

- Be proactive not reactive. Classes here are a possibility.
- Develop a theological basis for why we need to be caring.
- Learn how to equip ourselves for offering undergirding support.
- Dealing with aging within Seekers.
- Work with how we use time and money.
- Develop more connections to Dayspring/Wellspring.
- Need for corporate rituals for endings, e.g. laying down the call of Kononia.
- How can Stewards support SLT pastoral work?
- Encourage SLT to ask others for help.

**Two Stewards to Share:** David and Margreta

**Soul Talk**

**Amen.**