

2023 September Stewards Minutes

Seekers Church

9.3.23 Stewards Meeting Minutes

Present: Deborah Sokolove (moderator), Margreta Silverstone (reflection), Sandra Miller (recorder), Trish Nemore, Ken Burton, Marjory Bankson, Peter Bankson, Brenda Seat, Glen Yakushiji, Vince Shepherd, Judy Lantz, Joan Dodge, Dave Lloyd, John Morris, Cynthia Dahlin, Elizabeth Gelfeld, Jacqie Wallen

Absent: Keith Seat

Visitors: Lucy Slater, Marta Brenden

Reflection: Margreta offered portions of this week's lections from Romans and Jeremiah

Housekeeping: next meeting will be on the 2nd Sunday of the month, October 8th, about 20 minutes after worship, and will contain a break for a BYO meal

FOG: Marjory shared that Seekers had received a bequest of stock from an unknown donor, and reminded us that Seekers does not keep stock, and has started the process of valuing and selling the stock. It turns out that it is from Jean Adams, and may be valued at \$180K.

Also made a recommendation that we invite Faith & Money Network to do an all Seekers workshop on personal and institutional finances. Passed unanimously. Recommendations for specific areas to cover can be sent to FOG via Marjory.

Learners & Teachers Report: Dave – the Fall term will begin with 2 classes on September 12th. Approaching the End of Life

led by Marjory Bankson and Cynthia Dahlin will meet in person with Okima Bryant cooking dinner. **The Good News in Luke's Acts of the Apostles** led by Dave Lloyd will meet on Zoom.

L&T will host a poetry night with John Morris in mid-October, and in late October Dave and Mary Mehala will offer a Teeny Tiny Book of the New Testament class, and Deborah will offer a class on worship.

The Spring term will lead off with an Introduction to Seekers class led by Peter Bankson and an as yet undetermined "new" Seeker. Other offerings will be:

- a class led by Kolya Braun Greiner based on the book *The Land is Not Empty*, written by Sarah Augustine, an indigenous Tewa woman who is Mennonite and founded the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery.
- God is Love in the Old Testament led by Brenda Seat
- The Problem of Evil led by John Morris
- Contemplative Photography led by Jacqie Wallen

Later in May under consideration are Journaling and Writing Spiritual Autobiographies, and Songs of Hope and Lament. Other suggestions for classes are welcome.

Sunday School Review: Judy – Review of the past year:

Starting last September, I conducted a zoom meeting each week on Sunday at 12 noon for about 20 minutes. On occasion, we would have a guest leader such as Mary Mehala, Joan Dodge or Linda Nunes-Schrag. This practice concluded in June at the end of the school year.

We decided to meet in person once a month going forward. In July we did that for the first time. This was while the Kraybill boys were visiting from Israel. Cynthia Birungi and I shared leading the session using the Whole People of God curriculum. Arnold, Elijah, Jonah, Zanna, Dylan, Eli, Elad and

Kemonie attended. We had no gathering in August. There was no week everyone could attend because of vacations

New Sunday School year:

Judy reports

Woodlake Publishing Co. stopped publishing their Whole People of God curriculum in August. We had used this one for many years. I have been working to find one the whole month of August. There are three I've looked at in detail. They require the purchaser to pull from a list of components to put together a plan and order. Also, each one requires the use of technology in the classroom that is beyond my own abilities. I reached out to Brenda who suggested that David sit with me to choose one. Then I will engage a parent in each class and possibly use Elijah or Arnold to connect the video/DVD as needed.

Today we met in person without technology using a plan I devised. If we purchase a curriculum this month, we'll gather on the 24th in person.

Active:

Arnold 14

Elijah 12

Zanna 10

Jonah 8

Dylan 3 $\frac{1}{2}$

Takoma Park Street Festival Update: Joan – Announcements about our participation and need for volunteers to staff the booth have been made for the last 2 weeks during worship. While planning is happening there are challenges as some members who have played pivotal roles will not be available. People power

is needed both for set up/take down, and a suggestion was made that the Dongo family might help. Kurt, Kevin, Glenn, and Dave are doing a dry run next week, and Dave offered to help with set up and take down on the day of the festival, but will need help. There was some discussion about how to pare down tasks and it was decided not to offer water or lemonade. Joan is in charge of the signup sheet for volunteer staffing of the booth.

Mission Group reporting on survey questions for mission groups:

Earth & Spirit – Lucy reported that they:

- do develop servant leaders
- invite Seekers to participate in events such as the Anacostia River Cruise
- have a spiritual reporting structure, and also share during mission group meetings and retreats, Kolya is their spiritual guide, and they all support one another
- profound discussions around trends of spiritual growth and the need to build resiliency around eco-anxiety
- looking at ways to build relationship between spirituality and earth care consciousness to Seekers

Lucy also offered the possibility that Seekers form some sort of support group for Ron while he is away on his UN assignment in the Solomon Islands. Please be in touch with her if you're interested.

Learners & Teachers – Dave reported:

- mission group preaches annually during Recommitment season
- have structure to hold spiritual health in the mission group, and review practices during Recommitment
- Marjory receives spiritual reports, and she reports to

someone, though they may need to provide better support for Marjory

- listen to what's bubbling up in Seekers to inform what is offered in School for Christian Growth

Eyes to See, Ears to Hear Peace Prayer MG – Trish reported:

- while we don't so much consciously engage in developing leaders for the whole community, several members of the mission group are in community leadership roles, and deeply involved in organizations Seekers supports such as New Story Leadership, Museum of the Palestinian People, Festival Center, etc., and support Rosa & Oswaldo as possible in their work with Nicaraguan refugees. Pre-Covid all mission group members at the time offered a worship service about gun violence
- some members engage regularly with spiritual guides inside or outside the mission group, and we have a practice of deep personal/spiritual sharing during meetings that is preceded by 30 minutes of prayer/meditation
- exploring what our role might be to support Seekers during the Trump trials

Bokamoso Visa Status Report: Trish-

Background is that Visas were denied in 2022 for no apparently good reason, but then told that it was because the group members were flight risks. They resubmitted twice after the denial with more support and case for historical safety, but denied. The U.S. board has reached out to Jamie Raskin, and VA Senator Tim Kaine who recommended the group get known to the consulate. Another official recommended the same. A pro bono lawyer with strong connections in State has been engaged for assistance wherever possible. The theories of denial concern current relationship between SA and Russia and that the

relationship with consulate front desk suffered due to Covid. Other ideas being pursued include sending a delegation to the South Africa desk at State Department here, contacting Peter Story, the Carpenters and someone in Anglican Church SA.

Pastoral Concerns

Soul Talk