

April 2008 Stewards Minutes

SEEKERS CHURCH STEWARDS MEETING

Minutes

April 6, 2008

Present: Marjory Bankson, Peter Bankson (recorder), Ken Burton, Lewis Busch (angel), Pat Conover (shepherd), Kate Cudlipp, Cynthia Dahlin, Jane Engle, Sue Johnson, Muriel Lipp, Dave Lloyd (worship), Trish Nemore (angel), Brenda Seat, Keith Seat, Deborah Sokolove (moderator).

Absent: Margreta Silverstone, Sandra Miller

Worship: Dave Lloyd led us in a worship focused on long-standing ministries of our community life that it may be time to lay down and new calls to ministry that we may consider picking up.

Housekeeping: Next meeting will be May 4, starting at 5:30. Dave will moderate, Kate will take notes, Pat will lead worship and Brenda and Keith will serve as dinner angels.

Seekers Overnights. Brenda, reporting for Koinonia Mission Group, provided a review of the declining community participation in Seekers overnights at Wellspring, including the news that it was necessary to cancel the event twice in the last two years. (Costs have increased. The current fee for the overnight is \$65.00 per person, up from \$30.00 a few years ago. The cancellation fee is currently \$600.00.)

Koinonia has decided to set down this effort to build community and free time and energy for other emerging initiatives.

There is much to mourn in setting down this tradition, including informal opportunities to be with our children and time to help introduce newcomers to the life of Seekers Church, but the gathering has not been attracting newer arrivals at Seekers. Wellspring staff reports that we are not the only community that is experiencing lower attendance at community events at their facility. In fact, use of the facility has declined significantly in the recent past.

Other new initiatives are emerging in Seekers to offer informal time for getting acquainted and sharing conversation. One is a recent dinner for newer Seekers, sponsored by Koinonia and held at the Conover-Nemore home. Another possibility is a "movie night" at Carroll Street.

The Stewards affirmed the decision of Koinonia Mission Group to set down the Seekers overnights until the situation changes.

Website. Keith reported that Time & Space Mission Group had received and reviewed the final invoice from the Center for Educational Design and Communications (CEDC) for programming the renovated web site for Seekers Church.

The final invoice was received after we had closed the financial records for 2007 and sufficient funds were not

programmed in 2008 to cover this cost. The final invoice included programming several features, including the rotating "welcome" banner on the front page and the rotating "Meet A Seeker" function which were not anticipated in the original bid for the work. The final invoice is larger than the initial estimate by about \$950.00.

Keith proposed that the 2008 budget be increased by \$3,000.00 to cover this obligation. (This is an increase of approximately \$970.00 since the 2007 budget had been closed with \$2,032.11 remaining in the web site line.)

Conversation about the web site included these points:

- Some Seekers are still not able to access the "Members Area." (The Seekers Web Information Management (SWIM) Team will work on this immediately.)
- The new web site structure for web site maintenance involves lots more Seekers and requires more coordination, but it is part of our life together. (The SWIM Team, currently convened by Pat Conover, is working on an evolving list of priority upgrades and innovations.)
- We should consider paying more to get professional help to deal with our problems. (The SWIM Team would be the logical place to initiate such a request.)
- We need a current directory of Seekers members and Alumni. (Kate C will circulate the current directory by e-mail.)

After the conversation the Stewards affirmed the requested budget change by consensus.

Emergency shelter. Kate reported for the Servant Leadership

Team (SLT) and an ad hoc support group that a recent arrival at Seekers lost his housing recently and needed a place to stay. Pat and Trish were able to provide a place for about a week. Then the individual began staying at Carroll Street. (The Time & Space Mission Group developed a detailed list of 'house rules' to help make sure that our temporary resident did not prevent other uses of our space for ministry.)

The Servant Leadership team convened a support group to help support this individual and look for a longer-term housing option. The individual is working to secure another housing option.

Kate requested that Stewards approve:

- An additional week of housing at Carroll Street if that should be necessary;
- Reimbursement to John Morris for out-of-pocket support given to the individual;
- Up to \$200.00 from the Seekers Holy Spirit Fund to be provided by Kate as needed.

After an extended, compassionate conversation, which identified other possible sources of information about housing and emergency support, the Stewards affirmed the SLT request.

Dinner.

Taking a Position on Torture. Kate led Stewards into an exploratory conversation on a request from the National Religious Coalition Against Torture (NRCAT) for churches to display a banner opposing torture as a way to invite Stewards

to explore how we might engage questions that are in the public sphere when we suspect there may be differences in viewpoints among Stewards. Should we engage these questions at all? If so, how do we want to do that so that everyone's point of view is elicited and honored?

The specific request is for Seekers Church to join other churches across the country during the month of June in displaying a banner saying either "Torture is Wrong" or "Torture is a Moral Issue."

The opportunity for Stewards was to explore not only the specifics of the particular question but also how we might work with a current public policy issue that carries political overtones.

After a lively conversation the Stewards agreed that we'd need more time to reach a consensus.

Steward's sharing by Marjory and Brenda.

Soul talk.

Adjourn.