

August 2008 Stewards Minutes

MINUTES OF THE SEEKERS STEWARDS MEETING

August 3, 2008

Present – Marjorie Bankson, Peter Bankson, Ken Burton, Lewis Busch, Jeannine Caracciolo, Pat Conover, Kate Cudlipp (angel), Jane Engle (recorder), Sue Johnson, Muriel Lipp, Sandra Miller (worship), Trish Nemore (moderator), Brenda Seat, Keith Seat, Deborah Sokolove.

Absent – Cynthia Dahlin, Dave Lloyd, Margreta Silverstone. Sue Johnson left early because of an injury.

Visitors – Aeren Martinez

Worship – Sandra had us paste together a story from cut out sayings while she read Ps. 17.

Housekeeping – The next Stewards meeting will be Sept. 7, starting at 5:30. Deborah will moderate, Peter will record, Muriel will lead worship, and Sandra and Lewis will serve as dinner angels.

"A Guide to Seekers Church" – Peter distributed copies of the "Guide" which had just been edited by him and Deborah and requested that suggestions and corrections be made in the "Guide" and returned to him by the next Stewards meeting. He requested we write our name on the pamphlet so he would know who was making the suggestions.

Spiritual Autobiography by Jeannine – Jeannine read her spiritual autobiography. She was warmly and enthusiastically welcomed into the community of the Stewards.

Kate's Review – Sandra, the convener, reported on the work of the review team, composed of Marjory, Jane, and Jeannine. Kate told the team she felt called to continue to serve on the SLT and that the workload was manageable. She affirmed the current size and structure of the SLT. Kate's work on the ecumenical council as moderator is beginning to be an important focus of her work. The review team unanimously recommended to the stewards that Kate continue to serve on the SLT and the Stewards responded with a resounding "Yes!". Sandra will report this to Seekers at Circle.

Budget Report – Marjorie presented the first half (Jan-Jun) of the 2008 budget. She emphasized the work Sue had done in preparing the figures. We have received just over 50% of the budgeted amount in income. \$48,000 was budgeted for domestic missions; \$30,000 for international missions. Sue sends out checks to these entities according to our cash flow. Community life expenses have been only 33% (\$6,778) of the budgeted amount, although the Dayspring item of \$5,000 was not included in this amount. Building expenses have been 53% of budgeted amount (\$24,652). Forty-seven percent of the interest on building loans has been paid; principal payments will be made

at the end of the year. Staff expenses have been \$28,541. Total expenses for the first six months have been \$119,800, giving us a net income of \$24,000. See attached reports for complete data.

One Steward to Share – Trish shared her current journey.

Shepherds in Stewards – The follow-up conversation about the shepherd's role in Stewards was postponed until the next meeting because of limited time and the pressing need to discuss the next steps in the racial reconciliation journey.

Racial Reconciliation – Stewards had an intense conversation on the next steps in the racial reconciliation journey. Deborah reviewed the history of the journey from the first sermon that was given several months ago to the present and gave the reasons for and complexities involved in the planning of worship on 8/24/08. Among the points she made were that:

- *Covenant Community requested that the conversations last six months and the planning committee, Eyes to See & Ears to Hear, and Celebration Circle concurred.*
- *Covenant Community offered their worship time for the last conversation.*
- *The Time & Space Mission Group has talked about the need to build community with the other communities sharing our building.*
- *Celebration Circle was having difficulty fitting the racial reconciliation conversation into the usual time slot for worship*

unless they included circle time.

- *The conversation on 8/24 will include an extended sermon time (one hour), but other usual parts of worship will also be included.*

The original e-mail from Celebration Circle about the 8/24 service had been misunderstood.

- The idea for the 8/24 service didn't seem that radical since the only big change was truncating circle time and Celebration Circle does lots of different things in worship.

- Celebration Circle didn't need to ask permission to make new/different designs on worship.

- Celebration Circle has been accused in the past of not being creative enough. Seekers can't rescind the hospitality we have already offered to the other communities.

- The changes in the 8/24 worship shouldn't have been announced in an e-mail, but that this was done in the moment of excitement about it.

And, finally, that Celebration Circle wanted ideas about how to do the service. Some of the issues and thoughts raised in the Stewards' conversation included:

- There is too much light and space in the sanctuary for "hard" stories to be told.

- The last conversation was very powerful. The sanctuary is the right place for such a conversation. Covenant Community provided lunch at the last one. There is a need to trust the Holy Spirit and to understand that we won't be totally in control.

- Maybelle had a clear sense of ownership in the last conversation and this sense goes beyond that one time. You

can't take this ownership away from her or it will wither away.

- When Seekers is host, Seekers should be in charge. Planning Committee members from Seekers include Jeannine, Kevin, Pat, Sandra, Kate, and possibly Jacqie. Covenant Community is very committed to this process. '

- Seekers should provide food – sandwiches and lemonade – and invite participants to stay for lunch.

- Concern was expressed for people who haven't been in the previous conversations. Previously participation was optional, but now all who attend worship on 8/24 need to participate. This will complicate the conversation and doesn't bode well for the conversation or the people involved.

- Controversial issues are raised all the time from the pulpit.

- Most of the Seekers have participated in the previous conversations.

- During the last conversations, there were significant efforts to create trust. How will this trust be nurtured the next time?

- We are going to have the worship service. The question is not whether to do it, but what parameters we put around the time problem.

- Stewards who have concerns should express them to the Planning Committee.

Celebration Circle has made the plans and these can't be derailed.

- Why not have the conversation after worship? Have a time then for this deeper sharing and then have lunch.

- If we did the conversation after worship, we fear we might appear inhospitable.

- We can't protect the conversation and we can't manage it. It is volatile. There are implications for Seekers and we need to have a conversation about these. We need to say things to each other that we can't say in public.

- We should ask Reverend T to help us as a congregation come together.

- The vast majority of Stewards participated in the previous conversations.

Stewards authorized the planning group to proceed with the ongoing planning process and to take into consideration the spirit and the content of the Stewards' conversation.

The meeting adjourned without Soul Talk because of the lateness of the hour.