

Notes from ~~Unglued Church Project~~ Pathfinders Gathering April 6, 2019

Present: Betty Bauer, Wally Blyth, Bev Callahan, Carrie Duckett, Gale Dyke, Larry Dyke, Joanna Elletson, Jim Holding, Gloria Lasher, Rebecca Taylor

The gathering began in prayer with refreshments in hand.

Rebecca opened the gathering with a reading from John 14 in which Jesus tells his disciples that he is the **WAY**, the TRUTH, and the LIFE. She then read the list of values/attitudes that were identified at the previous gathering as being important to exercise in every gathering:

- To be clear about the PURPOSE for gathering
- To be RESPECTFUL of others' opinions and ideas
- To have an OPEN mind
- To WONDER about others' journeys (one of the Touchstones)
- To LISTEN
- To remember that we are BOUND TOGETHER as family
- To hold open both the FREEDOM to speak *and* to call for suspending a topic until the next gathering
- To ACCEPT that not all issues will be resolved/all ideas implemented

Carrie Duckett began the conversation with a suggestion of opening the building to the community more frequently. She asked if there was a policy about alcohol served at events held in the building because more groups from the community might utilize the building if it was permissible. The church's current building use policy prohibits alcohol in the building. She further described a fundraising event she would like to hold to benefit Paws Along the River, specifically to raise awareness of the need for cat adoption. She is investigating potential locations for the event and wondered if the church might be a possibility.

"Minutes" of the gatherings were discussed, and Rebecca mentioned her desire to post the notes she currently distributes only to participants who were present on the website and a bulletin board for potentially wider awareness of what is discussed. This idea was enthusiastically embraced.

Larry Dyke mentioned that he had become deeply concerned about the number of children in distress in the community. He mentioned that he had been unaware of the dire circumstances that exist until he heard Ruth Nelson speak about Help Our Children. He wondered if there is more that the congregation could do if members became aware of needs (clothes, shoes, food, emotional support, etc.). Rebecca mentioned that a conversation in the Christian Education Committee meeting had lifted up the possibility of working in collaboration with the Mission Committee for the upcoming rummage sale with a common focus of CHILDREN... nurturing the children within the congregation and reaching out to help children in the community.

A lively discussion ensued, contemplating inviting speakers from various organizations and agencies to present information about the ongoing needs that are present and issuing a challenge to help in a specific way. Conversation about how often and when such speakers would present followed and the group discerned that ten minutes during a worship service would be most effective. Some possibilities were identified:

- Help Our Children (Ruth Nelson)
- Free Books for Kids (Ruby Wiles)
- The Women's Care Center (Mary Brown or Charity Seymour)
- Warren Area School District (Patty Hawley)
- Moments on Target (Gary Lester)
- Produce Express (Colleen Witmer)
- Salvation Army
- Children & Youth Services
- Children of incarcerated parents (Marcus Briggs, chaplain)
- Sharing Place (David Snyder or Kate Reed [who reads to children])
- Hospice Day Camp/counseling services for children (Ellen Scalise)

A "name" for this potentially year-long focus was discussed with a suggestion of "Suffer the Children" (because Jesus said it) but it was objected to. An alternate name of "Cherish the Children" was offered and appreciated. Rebecca asked for at least two people to put together a proposal to be considered at the next Session meeting (April 25th); Carrie Duckett volunteered, and Joanna Elletson offered to work with her.

Betty Bauer mentioned that she had something in the works with Hospice but did not elaborate.

A conversation about the need for volunteers for the Sharing Place followed. Bev Callahan mentioned that the lack of a monthly newsletter may be contributing to a lack of awareness of the serving schedule. Rebecca mentioned that Marilyn had added it to the bulletin and to the weekly update.

Finally, the group engaged in the challenge of scheduling another gathering! With numerous dates and times suggested, the consensus was to keep it on the first Saturday of the month but adjusting the time because of the rummage sale.

NEXT GATHERING FOR CONVERSATION: Saturday, May 4th, 2019 at 12:00 NOON