Minutes of Mission Council

Monday March 18, 2019

6:30 PM Parlor

Present: Ron Ehresman, Richard Taiwo, Dave Ivaska, Younan Shiba, Cam Traut, Dick Warnecke, Sharyn Wilson-Woods, Caryl Weinberg, Craig Baxa

Dinner

Devotion

How do we read scripture? What was God’s intension in calling Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel)? Look at God’s promises to Israel in the Old Testament. Read Romans 2 – Paul grieves for Israel. Is the Israel of the Bible the same as Israel today?

Prayers

Prayers for Dave Ivaska’s trip to the Balkans for two IFES speaking engagements, the Albanian National Student Conference and the Balkan Regional Staff Conference in Montenegro

Mission Update and Discussion

* Final Budget numbers for Mission: The audit was just finished. Mission was told we owed just over $1,000, back toward the overall church budget. (We had overspent our budget purposely, knowing it would take funds to ramp up communication – particularly during the 150th year celebration. And we had two special guests with us for that celebration.) After that deduction, the Mission Carry Forward balance is $30,502.
* There was considerable discussion around how the budget process happens. One member said he had volunteered to be part of the church budget team but was turned down. The council just wants to be made aware of and engaged in discussions about mission funding. The decision to lower the percentage of funds given to mission council (by the exclusion of loose plate offerings), was made completely without any input from mission. The year before when part of Caryl’s salary was added into the mission budget (effectively decreasing the budget by $30,000), there was only a “heads up” versus an actual discussion with the Mission Council. We are not sure why there has been no communication with mission about the budget in advance of decisions made these past two-three years. Session members on the council said they will watch for discussions for the future to see how mission might have a voice.
* Adult Education Curriculum Discussion
  + Holy Land Class: The class is 12 weeks, with a variety of speakers, films, and a field trip. It is an “edgy” class – that is prompting some uncomfortable conversations. These are good though as it challenges us to try to understand how Jesus might look at some of the issues. And it challenges us to think about how we “stand with our partners” in this very politically charged situation. Everyone felt this class had started well (70+ people the first week -) and that it encouraged discipleship and growth - We need continued prayers.
    - A note: during Dave and Sally’s part of the class there was made mention that the UN is focusing on the Holy Land next year. It was said the theme would be “resistance”. But this was clarified to be “resilience”. Both Dar al Kalima University and Bethlehem Bible College will be taking up that particular theme.
* Mission Videos by May Tchao
  + Two-minute videos on mission projects here and abroad: (both partners and our serving groups) These should help toward the stewardship goal being added to the goals of the Strategic Plan. (Six are complete. Two are in process, and plans are made to develop at least two more additionally this year.)
  + Staff agreed that one mission video be presented on the second Sunday of each month during “Faith in Action” or before “Prayers of the People”

Misc. Items

* Holy Land Trip this spring: There are 27 people going. Eight people are staying for the extension time at the end for meeting with Christmas Lutheran Church, Bethlehem (our sister church); the ministries of Bright Stars Bethlehem, including Dar al Kalima University of Arts and Culture; possibly with Nadar from IFES in Palestine
* Tumekutana Speaker, Dr. Dorcas Dah will be here in June or early July to preach and possibly hold an Adult Education Class
* Fall, September 28, 29 Event with Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac (Senior Pastor of our sister church in Bethlehem, Academic Dean of Bethlehem Bible College, Director of Christ at the Checkpoint, chair of Board of Christian Students of Palestine; and Jack Sara, President of Bethlehem Bible College: *Mission Council needs to help shape this time.* Caryl was asked to follow up with Munther: “What does he see happening this weekend? And who is the audience? Will it be possible for Mitri to speak?
* Bright Stars of Bethlehem Anniversary and Gala Fundraiser September 29 with Rev. Dr. Mitri Rahab. Mitri and Munther are talking to see how we might be able to combine these events in some way.

Review of 2019 Priorities (Look at Mission Architects’ Goal and Benchmarks)

* Adult Education/curriculum
* Communication/Congregation Engagement
* Mission Partner Care
* Community Outreach (Evanston)
* Mission Trips
* Refugees/First Friends