

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
Congregational Meeting
Minutes, April 30, 2017

Attendance 60 (Quorum is 25)

Pastor John began the meeting with prayer.

Sue Buday called on each Ministry Team Chair or representative to make additions to the report and answer any questions. All teams indicated their reports stood as printed.

A question was asked of Member Care concerning the status of the Stephen Ministries program.

Pastor John reported three persons (Kurt Schmerberg, Lily Tinker Fortel and Carol Durnwald) have agreed to be Stephen Leaders and will receive training in the fall. They will then train others as Stephen Ministers.

Jan Burnham added Member Care has developed a Care Meals program, providing meals to families where a family member has had surgery etc.

Laura Seyfried pointed out the Outreach Team will continue to support many of the same groups and will do some new things.

Fellowship Chair – As it was not included in the Fellowship report, Jane Ziesemer will provide the Leadership Council with the total freewill offering from various events.

Marilyn Pearson - Cemetery Board President, indicated a new Cemetery Website is nearly ready.

Pastor John mentioned his report is also included in the Annual Report.

• **A motion to accept the 2016 Annual Report as submitted was approved.**

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted, Karen Samford, Secretary

Bethlehem United Church of Christ Leadership Council Minutes

April 11, 2017

Present: Sue Buday - President, Judy Coucouvanis, Kris Lovelace, Shannon O'Reilly, Karen Samford, Sue Wortman and Pastor John Kennedy

Not Present: Ron Dechert

Sue Buday opened the meeting with a meditation and prayer.

Kurt Schmerberg, Welcome Ministry Team Chair, and John Samford presented the current state of the new church website.

We went over the new version of the Core Values and made a few changes. Thanks to Sue Wortman, Judy Coucouvanis and Ron Dechert for their work on this.

- **A motion to accept the minutes of the March 14, 2017 meeting was approved.**
- **A motion to accept the Phoenix proposal concerning the Fellowship Hall, not to exceed \$12,980, presented by Facilities was approved.**
The proposal will go back to Facilities and Finance to allocate funds and negotiate a payment schedule.
- **A motion to create a task force responsible for Stewardship and the "Legacy Giving Campaign" was approved.**
The task force will report to the Leadership Council.
Sue Buday and Pastor John will develop a description of duties and be responsible for finding task force members.
Sue Buday will be the Council Representative.
- **A motion to call for a Congregational Meeting to be held April 30th following the 10:00 service for the purpose of accepting the 2016 annual report was approved.**

Pastor John's Report

John will be putting out something soon to announce hiring Lily Tinker Fortel who started today. We have several people joining the church this month.

Miscellaneous –

Kris mentioned we need to come up with proposed dates (years) for the items on list of facilities issues prepared by Scott Lovelace.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

The next regular Leadership Council meeting will be Tuesday, May 9th at 6:00 PM.

Submitted by Karen Samford, Secretary

Facilities Ministry Team – Bethlehem UCC

Meeting Minutes of April 12, 2017

Present: Steve Darr, Tom Ziesemer, John Irwin, Michelle Loukotka, Ron Dechert (LC Liaison), and Carol Leyshock. Absent: Rev. John Kennedy and Erich Santifer.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm. The minutes from March 13, 2017 were approved with no additions or changes.

MARCH FINANCIAL REPORTS:

Overall maintenance & repair expenses remained within budget. All utilities were within the normal range. \$2,303 was charged to the new Emergency Repairs line item for the new sacristy refrigerator. The prior one that dated from the 1970's had reached the end of its life. The Feldkamp Fund received a required minimum distribution deposit of \$6,503 from PNC.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Phoenix Construction Proposal – The Leadership Council approved the proposal with conditions. Scott and Kris Lovelace raised a few more questions. Facilities agreed that Carol would email them and ask them to submit their questions in writing so they can be presented to Phoenix.
2. Property Insurance – John Irwin led the research and analysis of many different plans, meeting with several insurance agents. A separate meeting will be scheduled to discuss the options.
3. 2016-2017 Capital Projects –
 - a. Parsonage renovation –
 - i. Last job to be done after Easter: painting the siding – estimated cost is \$6,315.
 - ii. Additional problem identified: rotted wood in the sunroom door threshold.
 - iii. There are also 2 water leak marks in the living room ceiling from old plumbing leaks. Carol will call Randy.
 - b. Sanctuary, N. Narthex & 4th Ave inside wall repainting – All work has been completed at the quoted price. Todd Tribble came back and painted part of the S. Narthex at no additional cost. He also paid for the repair of a broken stained glass window.
 - c. 4th Ave women's restroom renovation – All work has been completed within the approved budget. Awaiting invoices for the mirror installation and reduction of the pipe from the removed radiator.
 - d. Nursery and pre-school room improvements – All work completed within budget.
 - e. Boiler and pipes – The pipe along the east wall of the dining room pantry/storage room required emergency repair due to several large leaks. This is part of the pipe replacement project that has already been approved. Replacement of additional pipes and the condensate pump will occur after the boilers are turned off for the season.
 - f. Medical loan closet – Carol will follow up with Randy regarding the floor repair.
4. Foundation repair – Payeur came out on 4/6 and will send a quote for repair of the south wall. Additional problems were noted in the east wall in the pantry/storage room and the boiler storage room. Carol will follow up with Payeur.
5. The storage room will need to be emptied prior to the pipe and foundation repairs. The asbestos floor should be removed at that time. We have one quote from ML Quality Painting for \$2200 to remove the tile and apply a coat of epoxy.
6. Slate roof – Butcher & Butcher is returning the week of 4/17 to repair shingles. A new leak was noted in one of the gym locker rooms. This appears to be on the repair plan sent by the roofers.

7. Flat roof – Jesse showed Carol areas in and near the Youth Room where leaks are occurring. The warranty inspection is due in August. Carol will call and have them come out sooner.
 - a. Leaves accumulate around a drain in the flat roof. These need to be cleaned off weekly. Carol asked for volunteers.
8. Exterior lighting – Jim Stadel will install a new LED light on the side of the 4th Ave house.
9. 4th Avenue house – Lily Tinker Fortel will be moving into the house sometime in May. Painting, general cleaning and carpet cleaning are completed. Jim Stadel will do some minor repairs.
 - a. Pastor John wishes to swap out the washer/dryer with the ones he brought from Wisconsin that are not being used. We will donate the others to Habitat for Humanity.
 - b. The chimney cap blew off in the recent storm. Carol will ask Randy to replace it.
10. Sanctuary lights – Carol spoke to Jeff from Vedder about the cheaper system he was going to quote. He said the manufacturer is not willing to warranty that system with our existing lights, so he doesn't think it's a viable option. He recommends the original Lutron that he quoted and will reprice it, since his last quote was done 18 months ago.
11. Handyman – Only one potential name was received. Steve will talk to the people at Fingerle. Carol will email the elected ministry team members for referrals.
12. Sacristy refrigerator – The old one was removed and the new one installed. No major construction was required. We only needed to remove the doors to the room and the new unit.
13. Cemetery wind storm damage – The Cemetery Board is still gathering quotes. The tree removal cost was \$6,000 with one more tree to be removed, as well as the fence repair. Carol will be filing a property insurance claim shortly.
14. Ants in the parsonage – Griffin quoted about \$370. Pastor John will try traps and granules first.
15. Holes in cement block in 4th Avenue house – Steve will take a look and call a mason he knows.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Elevator repairs –
 - a. Ken Cook's Plumbing removed the water and sludge from the elevator shaft and replaced the sump pump at a cost of \$1,867, charged to Emergency Repairs.
 - b. Schindler has ordered new piston seals for the hydraulic jack assembly.
 - c. Schindler gave a quote for replacement of the infrared sensor on the back door: \$5,086. This expense is not covered by our new service contract. Tabled to next month.
2. Parsonage roof replacement – Kleinschmidt quoted \$11,495 for the full roof and \$1,445 for just the damaged ridge cap. Randy is also sending quotes for both a full roof and replacement of the ridge cap with small patches.
3. Ann Arbor Asphalt quotes – In connection with his capital project plan, Scott Lovelace received several quotes for sealing the north parking lot and repairing parts of the south lot. Facilities tabled this until after Payeur comes out to repair the foundation.
4. Sprinkler system – Brad Bouchie repaired the leak in the system and will replace some bad sprinkler heads and move a couple of heads that are in the wrong spots.
5. Mulch for church grounds – 16 yards of hardwood mulch were delivered and spread by Brad.
6. Emergency contact lists – The alarm, elevator and cleaning company lists were updated.
7. Air conditioning the sanctuary – There has been an offer from a deceased member's estate to pay for air conditioning the sanctuary, if feasible. Facilities asked Carol to obtain a couple of quotes. It may be advisable to combine this project with the dining room restoration.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, May 8, 2017 at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Leyshock, Parish Administrator

Education Ministry Team Minutes

March 29, 2017

(April 5th meeting held early)

Present: Jane Schmerberg-chair, Jan Edie, Wanda Modica, Nancy Pieske, Karen Samford and Diana Slaughter

Not Present: Julie Feldkamp

We welcomed Eileen Koprowski to the team

Jane opened the meeting with prayer

Palm Sunday –

Brunch is being taken care of by Fellowship

Jane and the Marshalls will bake cookies on Saturday for frosting on Sunday

Paul and Barb will come early Sunday to make the frosting

The Sunday School Class will start frosting right after Children's Time

Jane will bring the tots down to help

Jane will bring boxes and sprinkles

The baskets for table decorations are ready

Scholarship Applications –

Applications are now available

Information will be in the newsletter and bulletins

Karen will get the one on the website changed

Washtenaw Refugee Mission Project –

We are in need of more shirts and bikes.

The Stone Soup fundraiser made just over \$600

Last day of Sunday School, July 4th –

We will have hot dogs in the play yard

Education Ministry Team Website Pages –

The Welcome Team is updating the church website so we went over the pages on the current website for Education. It was decided Karen would send the copies to the team electronically and members could suggest changes via email.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting will be moved to Wednesday, May 3rd at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by Karen Samford

Worship Ministry Meeting Notes

Thursday, April 20, 2017

Present: Caroline Ashenfelter, Pastor John Kennedy, Gary Rogers, Jennifer Vasquez and Tom Ziesemer
Absent: Arianne Abela, Sue Buday and Harriette Ehnis

Opening Devotion

Review of March Minutes

Old Business

1. **Children's Choir:** agreement to ask Arianne and Lily to start up a Children's Choir
2. **A2 Marathon Feedback:** went very well, after communication with mayor and city council, as well as meeting with the race organizer, people could get onto 4th Avenue to head toward church; security guard was standing outside the car and allowed people in. Recommendation to stay in conversation with city organizers again next year.
3. **Mother's Day Plan:**
 - a. Tree of Wishes: Arianne's idea to have a "tree of wishes" (slips of seed paper available for people to write a wish or prayer and then hang on the tree in sanctuary, yarn to hang). Afterwards, the slips of paper can be planted in a designated area in the back yard of the church for a garden of wildflowers. Check into budget for planned expenses. Possible source: <https://bloomin.com/>
 - b. Flower Orders: Jenny Foster organizing the flower orders for people to order ahead of time; set up in sanctuary on Saturday before; and Jenny will organize planting afterwards with assistance from K. Lovelace and other volunteers.

New Business

4. **Holy Week Feedback:**
 - a. Maundy Thursday offered a beautiful service, though not as well attended as we hoped.
 - b. Good Friday: 45 for Noon, evening had a few more than previous year; overall mood was right on. The candles lit on the steps up to the cross were beautiful, low lighting, bells and violin, choir, scripture and candle extinguishing. Next year don't block the black candles with the cross...perhaps move the cross to the side of the altar. People departing in silence, carrying the mood on their way out. Ideas for getting the youth more involved in both services next year.
 - c. Sunrise service at cemetery: weather held, next year add instrumentalist (guitar?), hymns were sung a capella, about 26-34 people attended. Idea from Tom to create a permanent, larger, seating/gathering space for future services b/c the space was a bit cramped; would ideally like to face east.
 - d. 10:00 service: we need to find a place to do radio announcements for the radio broadcast b/c there wasn't a passing of the peace (eliminated to manage time). Communion in the back worked well, with good traffic flow. Need to figure out when the prelude/introit are going to finish (before 10:00) so the procession can start. Next year, have the choir in the back so the procession can happen unobstructed. Concerns that several hymns in recent services, including Easter, are played too slow.

5. **Sponsoring Sounding Light:** request from Arianne to bring the concert group to BUCC to perform sacred music. Cost to church for hosting the group would be \$2500-\$4500; tickets can be sold to offset costs. 2018 dates: 2/1, 2/4, or 10/16. Decision made that we would prefer to rent our facilities to groups wishing to perform, but not pay groups for their performances.
6. **Father's Day:** June 18, idea of Weenie Sunday but need to see if end of Sunday School year will be doing hot dogs on first Sunday in June. If so, then we wouldn't want to repeat that activity. We need to brainstorm what we can do in the service to honor fatherhood.
7. **Leadership Council Update:** approved Facilities proposal to hire Phoenix, a builder to present a design to remodel Fellowship Hall for \$12K (architecture, engineering, and then manage the project). Plan would include new bathrooms in Fellowship Hall; new tiles in ceiling grid; new lighting; new paint; new flooring; make it look current. There will be a capital campaign to help fund the project. Other plans include bathroom remodeling to modernize them and dressing up entryway near office corridor. Other projects to come in future years. Every step will require congregational approval. Goal to make our church home more desirable, attract people to visit and rent our facilities. Council is working on mission statement.
8. **Capital Planning:** Idea from Tom to consider as part of capital plan, getting a new sound system, video, screens, etc for sanctuary? Adapting chapel to make it more versatile. Perhaps different seating that can be more flexible; piano/guitar instead of organ?
9. **Closing Prayer**

Next meeting is Thursday May 18, 2017

Respectfully submitted

Caroline Ashenfelter

Worship Ministry Team

Minutes, March 16, 2017

Present: Arianne Abela (by phone), Caroline Ashenfelter, Pastor John Kennedy, Gary Rogers and Jennifer Vasquez

Absent: Sue Buday, Harriette Ehnis, Tom Ziesemer

Old Business

1. The 10 o'clock service still has some irregular starting times. The bells are being rung on time by 10 minutes to the hour. Contact Gail to make certain that the prelude is timed accordingly to allow for approximately 5 minutes of announcements.
2. Discussion of Children's choir tabled at this time since Tom Ziesemer is not present.
3. Pastor John and Carol Leyshock both spoke with the race coordinator for the upcoming A2 Marathon and asked for a map to be drawn up of the exact route and which streets specifically will be impacted. The coordinator will comply with request and has also committed to having passable barricades at the Packard/4th Ave intersection and security personnel visible in order to allow church members to pass.

New Business

1. The Good Friday Vigil will not take place this year. Other Holy Week offerings will be the labyrinth and DeGrazia display in the lounge. Times will be printed in the Visitor and on the refrigerator page in the bulletin. Maundy Thursday service will include a simple meal, foot and hand washing. Discussion about extending an invitation to the youth to attend service this year since they have youth group during that time. This also led to discussion about how the youth could be included in the service, not just as worshippers but as participants, in years to come. Good Friday 7pm service will have the handbell choir playing and the choir singing from the balcony. Kris Lovelace will again set up the pathway of palm leaves and candles leading to the wooden cross on the chancel.
2. Easter Sunrise service will be held at the cemetery at 6:42am. Communion will be served by intinction, and light refreshments will be provided following the service. Easter 10 o'clock service will include the flower display in the front of the altar (as last year) and Pastor John also wants the procession of the communion elements, Bible, cross, paraments, etc., to be done this year. Caroline Ashenfelter will work with Altar Guild to arrange for this. Communion will also be served at this service by intinction. Arianne confirmed that the brass quintet will be playing as well as timpani and orchestra accompanying the choir. Their placement will need to be taken into consideration for the traffic pattern during communion and for microphone set-up (Gary is aware).
3. Pastor John provided a short update from Leadership Council. They have 4 candidates for the 2 part-time positions posted. They are setting up in-person interviews with the candidates and hope to include meeting with youth and parents as a part of that time.
4. The group was asked to start thinking about plans for Mother's Day service which is May 14th. Arianne brought up a suggestion she had last year about including a "tree of wishes" that could be placed in the sanctuary and used as a part of the service that day. All members are asked to

bring any other suggestions or ideas to the next meeting in April. Jennifer Vasquez also reminded the group to start considering plans for Father's Day, in June. Some discussion was had about starting "Weenie Sunday" again as a part of that celebration.

Meeting closed at 8:35pm

Next meeting will be Thursday, April 20 at 7pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Caroline Ashenfelter

Worship Ministry Team

Minutes, February 16, 2017

Present: Caroline Ashenfelter, Sue Buday, Pastor John Kenendy, Gary Rogers and Jennifer Vasquez

Absent: Arianne Abela, Harriette Ehnis and Tom Ziesmer

Old Business

1. Feedback that committee members have had in regards to the scripture passages being printed in the bulletin has all been positive. Will continue to print passages when they differ from the pew Bible for the foreseeable future.

2. Lent Services will closely resemble last year's format. Ash Wednesday will include ashes from 6-8am by Pastor John, then 2 services to follow. Maundy Thursday service will take place in the Gallery and will include Communion and the washing of feet for those who are interested. Good Friday will include a vigil and have noon and 7pm services. The Labyrinth will be set up in the gym during Holy Week. There will also be a display of artwork in the Lounge. Easter will have a sunrise service and the 10:00 worship service. There will be no 8:30 service.

New Business

1. The newest member of the Worship Committee, Jennifer Vasquez, was given a warm welcome. The committee looks forward to having her insight and fresh ideas.

2. A short overview of the approved 2017 budget as received from the Finance Committee was discussed. A portion of the budget was removed from the Section Leaders line item. Funds were approved for Sanctuary and Chapel organ repairs. These funds are from Memorials and Gifts and cannot be assigned to any other line item in our budget. They should be used during this fiscal year or will be returned to the fund. Repairs were already made to the Chapel organ this month to address a buzzing noise. No other issues or concerns were discussed regarding this year's budget.

3. Update from Leadership Council covered by Sue and Pastor John. They have been assigning liaisons from LC to the various committees. Also discussed was the joining of new members in March; there are 4 new members expected. A building rental taskforce is being developed. Some remodeling has begun around the church including the nursery and preschool rooms which have been repainted and organized thanks to Education Ministry. The ladies' bathroom on the 1st floor has been repainted and is awaiting finishing touches on plumbing and lighting. Other bathrooms are being scheduled for improvements shortly.

4. The committee held a discussion regarding ways to provide a more contemporary service including incorporating "non-traditional" music into our services in order to appeal to a broader audience. Tom Z. would like to see the youth and other church members who are not a part of the organized church music groups (ie Chancel Choir, Bells) join in the church service with their musical talents. Also discussed were options for integrating more visual aids into the service. Potentially through digital screens mounted in the sanctuary. We will continue to brainstorm and look into any ideas that are presented.

5. Gary presented information regarding the irregularity of the service start times. Some feedback has come from radio listeners that because of the new prelude/announcement format the beginning of the service has not been predictable. The group discussed how to correct the issue. Continuing to check with the ushers that bells are rung precisely at 10 minutes to the hour in order to ensure the prelude is given ample time to play and any announcements can then be made. We will continue to monitor start time and discuss further if there continues to be an issue.

6. The Ann Arbor Marathon takes place this year on Sunday March 26th. As per Pastor John's promise last year, the 8:30am service will be held. He will be in contact with the race organizers in order to better coordinate the opening of the intersection at Packard and 4th Ave. Last year there were barricades which were only pulled aside when a vehicle approached the northside of the intersection and requested to get through. The committee discussed having a church member available prior to both services that could provide better signage and a physical presence to facilitate members' entrance to the parking lots. We will follow-up at our next meeting.

Meeting closed at 9:00pm.

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 16 at 7pm.

Respectfully submitted by

Caroline Ashenfelter

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
Member Care Ministry Team

Notes of March 22, 2017 Meeting

Present: Jan Burnham (Chair), Mary Jean Raab, Mary Friend, Brian Paton (notetaker), Pastor John Kennedy and Judy Coucouvanis (Leadership Council Liaison). Karen Goforth was not in attendance.

We opened with a reflection from the Upper Room.

Pastor Kennedy related activities of the Leadership Council, including work on a proposed revision to the mission statement; painting and other work to the nursery; and a refurbishment of the Fourth Avenue women's restroom. A list of other capital projects and priorities is being developed. Pastor Kennedy advised that the hiring process for the open position(s) is moving forward.

We talked about the Stephen Ministry program and identifying Stephen Leaders and getting them trained. Pastor John believes he has two people interested in serving as Stephen Leaders, but both cannot attend Stephen Leader training at the same time.

We talked about the membership and attendance. Last month, we divided the membership list alphabetically to analyze those who have not been attending as much or at all lately. We discussed possible methods of connecting with them, including e-mail, a survey, and telephone calls. We will meet on Wednesday, April 5 at 7:00 to further delve into this matter.

We plan to have our next regular meeting on April 26 at 7:00.

We closed with the Lord's prayer.

Submitted by Jan Burnham, Chair

Bethlehem UCC Welcome Ministry Minutes

April 17, 2017 (DRAFT)

Attendance: Kurt Schmerberg, Gary Kade, Barb Marshall, Paul Marshall; LC liaison Chris Lovelace.

- 1.) Meeting was called to order at 5:10 PM. Kurt led the group in an opening prayer.
- 2.) Minutes Approval – MOTION was made and SUPPORTED to approve the minutes of our last meeting. MOTION CARRIED.
- 3.) Awning Update – Gary reported that Marygrove Awning submitting an estimate for our Fifth Avenue entrance canopy. Total estimated cost is \$6900 which would be ~21' x 13' and extend to the concrete stairway. The Welcome Team went out to the entrance to envision what was proposed. We agreed that it is a difficult area to deal with given the configuration of the walls and the need to divert the water away from the door and walkway. We surveyed the area and agreed a smaller ~5' x 13' canopy might be better and more affordable. Gary will call Marygrove and ask them to submit a new proposal for the smaller canopy. We also discussed another major issue at the 5th Avenue entrance which is the large tree between the doors and the shed which constantly is dropping debris which plugs the drain and the wind blows into the doorway. MOTION was made to ask Leadership Council to recommend to the Facilities Ministry that the tree be removed. Welcome Team will research the cost of the removal of the tree and the stump and will fund the costs from the Welcome Ministry budget. SUPPORT. MOTION CARRIED. Both Gary and Kris will seek bids from different tree removal contractors they know.
- 4.) New Member Celebrations: New member receptions are scheduled at coffee hours after the 10AM service on both April 23 and April 30. Barb and Paul will order the cakes, but there is a question regarding how many new members will be joining and if we could put each name on the cake. Barb and Paul will check with Pastor John and make the proper arrangements.
- 5.) Website Review – After the last Welcome Team meeting John and Karen Samford met with Kurt and reorganized the content on the Beta site. They then made a presentation to the Leadership Council to seek their feedback. Many good suggestions were made and John and Karen will work to implement them in the coming weeks.
- 6.) OTHER BUSINESS: (A) Kurt relayed a conversation he had with Tom Ziesemer regarding the Welcome Ministry supplying pretzels for the live nativity on 12/1/2017. We discussed the event and felt it would be a great opportunity to invite others to worship at Bethlehem for the ADVENT season. In addition to pretzels we would like to offer hospitality in also having Coffee, Hot Chocolate and giving out the remainder of the BUCC Christmas ornaments. Paul will investigate having a large post card printed with scenes from the Church on the front, and the space on the back to list the times and dates of the Advent services that we could

include in a visitors "goodie bag". Kurt will check with Tom regarding how many they believe will be attending so we can get some cost estimates. We would also like to have some temporary lighting to backlight the stain glass windows during the event. (B) Gary relayed that he feels it has been very positive having the Welcome Center staffed on Sunday mornings.

7.) Having no further business the meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 6:35 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt Schmerberg,

Welcome Ministry Chairperson

BUCC Outreach Ministry
Field Trip Meeting Notes - Food Gatherers

May 2, 2017

5:00 - 7:00pm

Attendees: Sue Wortman, Mary Raab, Lily Fortel Tinker, Sue & Roy Muir, Laura Seyfried

“We believe that in a land of plenty, no one should go hungry!

As the food rescue and food bank program serving Washtenaw County, Food Gatherers exists to alleviate hunger and eliminate its causes in our community.”

The Outreach Ministry team met at Food Gatherers for their Spring Gathering event on Tuesday, May 2nd instead of a regular meeting. The overall reaction was “Wow!” We should be proud to be partnering with this organization. with volunteers, in kind donations and financial support. After learning so much about Food Gatherers in a short amount of time we agreed that a visit (if possible) to all other organizations we support would be the best way to become informed about their programs and services. We will also work with each of the agencies to bring a presentations or mission moment to share at Bethlehem.

A few comments on the Food Gatherers field trip from Outreach Ministry team members:

1. Notes from the Food Gatherers Tour - Susan Wortman

There is a program which teaches clients how to cook with the produce they are given. Many people are not familiar with a wide variety of vegetables or are used to canned produce so they need help. For example some may not know the difference between cooking summer squash compared with Hubbard squash.

There is a pantry with different items which may be more unusual for those with allergies or other needs. Nonprofits and organizations can come in a shop for specific needs.

Healthy School Pantry Program – distributes food to 13 schools in Washtenaw County with the most children qualifying for free lunch during the school year. They offer free fresh fruits and vegetables.

Food Gatherers get a number of grants to help with their work but they are always looking for ways to improve what they do and offer better services as needed.

They offer food help for children once school is out for the summer. Children up to college aged students can qualify for healthy meals during the summer.

There are many volunteer opportunities, even if it's just peeling carrots and cutting them into pieces. These packages of pre-cut carrots are very useful for seniors or those with disabilities who have difficulty cutting safely and can provide simple snacks or dinner options.

Clients at food pantries may not have the time to sit through a class or a workshop provided by Food Gatherers and other agencies. Different pantries provide different food options so people have to make several trips to various places, not because they are trying to scam the system but because one pantry may only provide canned goods while another provides meat and a third only provides fresh produce. Shopping can be time consuming.

I was impressed with the amount of data collected by Food Gatherers. They keep records of everything they do, the number of people served, the amount of food prepared and distributed and where. They are always looking for the most efficient way to serve the most people in the community.

Food Gatherers has a Registered Dietitian on staff, Shaira Daya who helps to organize and promote resources for healthy, nutritious eating. Student interns from local universities help her with this effort.

Food Gatherers partners with 150 non-profits to help with food security for those in need. They are a key resource for many agencies and non-profits throughout Washtenaw County. Food Gatherers was founded in 1988 by Zingerman's but is now an independent 501(c)3 non-profit with its own board of directors. It is a well run organization and a critical resource for our community.

2. Reflections on visit to Food Gatherers- Roy and Sue Muir

It was a wonderful evening for our Outreach Committee members to visit Food Gatherers facility on Carrot Way and to be part of the Spring Reception and Gathering Awards. The tour of the facility was very informational. The statistics are amazing, in terms of what Food Gatherers is doing to try and abolish hunger in Washtenaw County. Over 45,000 persons benefit from their food distributions. We would love to have as many members of our congregation as possible take a tour of Food Gatherers. It was especially meaningful to attend this Awards Evening with the Outreach Committee. And to see how many other persons in the community, that we know, were there for the same reason....to support such an incredible nonprofit in our community.

3. Another perspective of Food Gatherers - Laura Seyfried

I have visited the Food Gatherers facility many times over the past 6 years and I have worked closely with most of their staff during that same time. Part of my job is running a food pantry

here in Washtenaw County - one of the 150 agencies that Food Gatherers supports. I can tell you first hand what it means to families and individuals who get food from a pantry to have options - fresh fruits and vegetables, lean meats, healthy grains, and special dietary foods. Food Gatherers makes this service possible in so many ways. They offer food pantries the opportunity to buy food from a shopping list, and they deliver too! Food Gatherers offers annual grants to the higher capacity pantries to help pay for the food that is purchased through their ordering web site. In return, our agency along with all of the other agencies, collect and share data on who is using the pantry and how often. This information is used to determine the numbers of seniors, children and adults who are "food insecure". This helps direct future programming in the fight against hunger.

Bethlehem UCC currently partners with Food Gatherers in the following ways:

- Volunteers at the Community Kitchen on the first Sunday each month
- Faith & Food Garden at Bethlehem Cemetery
- Fresh Produce Collection on the third Sunday each month
- Non-perishable food item collection bins in the Library is ongoing
- Financial support via outreach ministry donation

Please visit the Food Gatherers web site to learn more.

<http://www.foodgatherers.org/?module=Home>

Submitted May 3, 2017,

Laura Seyfried, BUCC Outreach Ministry chairperson

Next meeting: Tuesday, June 6, 2017

2017 BUCC Outreach Ministry –theme - *Supporting healthy children and families*