

January 9, 2024

Minutes from the VPC Mission Committee Meeting

January 9, 2024, in Room 1 from 8:45 – 10:15

Members Present: Doug Clark, Pastor Craig Lindsey, Kylene Joplin, Kay Brouwer, Steve Larson, Ed Storey, Visitor- Marleen Brealey

Members Absent: Patti Bright, Steve Larson, Mary Horn, Ann Ball, Les Walter, Reed Olson, Judy Aguayo, and Jan Farrington.

8:45 Devotional:

Ed Storey

If You Want Peace; Seek Justice

Some time ago, I began a relationship with Diedone Panzo, a missionary in Ecuador, at Paz y Esperanza (Peace and Hope). He wanted me to come, but I thought it unsafe. He then moved to the DRC and by comparison, Ecuador is very safe.

We also met Michael Zoughbi, both stayed at our house when they were visiting our church. Michael is a Christian Palestinian, living in Bethlehem. He was part of a cooperative of olive wood carvers. His job was to work with churches in the rest of the world to market olive wood carvings. His business card said, *"If you want peace, seek Justice"*. We learned a lot from Michael about life for non-Jews in Israel. His wife was born in Jerusalem. He could visit her home during the day but was not allowed to stay there after dark.

To help him market the carvings, I wanted to put together a story about the carvers & maybe their families. I thought if people saw who they were helping and how the carvers had small children who needed their fathers to make a living, they would be more favorably considered. Michael would never share anything but some very obscure images. The carvers were afraid of being targeted if their pictures were used.

There were many other stories he shared. Israelis have elevated roads over the Palestinian areas so they can safely pass, without contact. The result is Palestinians live in the shadows of these tall, noisy structures. No doubt, Michael's perspective was not perfectly unbiased, but it sounded like quite a bit of mistreatment.

I have often thought about the statement Michael shared. In Mark, we are told to Love our neighbor as ourselves. If we truly loved our neighbor, wouldn't we want him to be treated justly? We see many countries torn apart by the demand for drugs in the US. I said Ecuador is a safe place to live. That was 6 years ago. Today parts are being torn apart as a trans-shipment point for drugs to the US and Europe. We need to see Ecuador as a place damaged by the drug epidemic from outside its borders, rather than as a perpetrator. Bangladesh, once East Pakistan, is struggling economically. The situation is made worse by the rising waters of climate change. Places once almost habitable are being inundated. They receive no justice for a problem not of their making.

When Bob & Kristi Rice were here from South Sudan, a land of 64 tribes, they talked about how young children learn a song about killing those of a different tribe. There is no justice to be seen & therefore, no chance for peace.

In church, we sing "Let there be peace on Earth and let it begin with me". Maybe we should sing "Let there be justice on Earth and let it begin with me". We need to make this more than a song. We need to be part of the change & not just observers.

9:00 Call to Order

Doug Clark

Prayer

Doug Clark

Announcements: Prayers and condolences for the passing of members Pat Nau and Carol Stephens. Many thanks for their service and they are missed.

Approval of Minutes: November 14, 2023, minutes were approved and submitted to the Session.

Financial Report: The 2023 Mission Budget was presented and reviewed. Total giving is \$201,196.29(all sources). Noisy offering is \$3868.20, and Mission Breakfast is \$12,185. The Contingency Funds which are passed to 2024 is \$1, 322.45

MISSION REPORTS/COMMENTS – Round Table

Amado-GV Food Bank –

Kylene Joplin

Kylene Joplin reported that 69 pounds of food was delivered to the Food Bank and \$1,260.25 was given to each Food Bank (Green Valley and Amado). These two food banks are separate, but under one “umbrella.” We give each food bank the same amount of money, but food donations stay in Green Valley. Our donations are directed to milk and eggs. The yearly donation is 678 pounds of food and \$9,403.99 to each Food Bank (Green Valley and Amado). The Mission Breakfast scheduled for March 23,2024 will introduce Roberto Hernandez as director of Amado-GV Food Bank.

Casa Vida Nueva para Niños –

Reed Olson

Status Quo with no new report.

Compañeros en Misión –

Judy Aguayo.

Bricks (\$10) are for sale and approximately \$36,000 is still need for completion of their building project. A group including Judy Aguayo, Pastor James Martin, and Gail Griffin visited the program this month.

Crossroads Mission, Nogales, Arizona –

Les Walter

Thanksgiving donations were used to serve approximately 180 people with a similar number of souls present for Christmas dinner on December 16,2023. A summary of gifts for these programs includes for the Thanksgiving dinner \$150, donated items of 3 turkeys, and assorted gifts. For Christmas dinner \$315 was donated for hams, etc. More donations were 12 bags from Patio Sale, Christmas gifts ages 3 to 10, 2 blankets, and pantry items. Addition monies were given by pass through giving. We continue prepare and serve lunches at the Crossroads Mission every second and third Wednesday. Volunteers may sign up with Les Walters in Fellowship Hall if interested in this mission opportunity. A car of 3 or 4 volunteers will leave VPC front lot at 8:15 on mission days and return will be about 1:00.

Posada Community Services – Deb Jones reported that "It's Just Fellowship Lunch" is a proposed program to foster congregation fellowship by having lunch at Posada Live Community Service with church members. Planning is still in progress but could include a sign-up table in Fellowship Hall after advertising by pulpit, Valley Voice, and Email. The cost of the fellowship lunch is \$3.00 per person and does require reservations. This plan was discussed at the Fellowship Committee on October 23, 2023, and was well received. The contact person for Posada Community Services has been passed from Regina Ford to Claudia Ortega.

General Mission Support – There are some parts of our planet where the leaders are getting increasingly repressive. We should pray for those brave enough to take the Word of Good to oppressed people. If Christianity did not mean anything, those in charge would not care either way. We need to be firm in our faith and believe God will prevail. Places like Iran, Mozambique and Somalia all have people in need of the message. Our support can sustain those who take the Word and pay for Bibles.

Hands of a Friend –

Jan Farrington

NO Report

Operation Christmas Child Box Mission-

Ann Ball

Destination of given boxes pending

Mission Quilts –

Patti Bright

During Dec. four of the quilters made deliveries to three agencies that serve children, More Than a Bed, Springboard Home for Youth in Crisis, and Aviva Children's Services. We were once again Wowed with how much Grace with More Than a Bed has grown their activity for foster families in Tucson and surrounding Tucson areas. The girls also delivered quilts to Springboard Home for Youth in Crisis. We were also impressed with Springboard's program of Christian nurturing and counseling for young women with problems in their background and families. Year-end summary was 157 quilts valued at \$4,965 given to 7 groups.

Operation Mobilization –

Doug Clark

50th anniversary of Operation Mobilisation in Bangladesh. Pam and Dave Served there from 1986 to 1988 where their daughter Rachel was born. Amazing growth in believers and leaders has occurred to reach 600 million unreached Muslims.

Young Adult Volunteers (YAVs)

Ed Storey

Through our local Synod we are helping to support one of five YAVs. They are, for example, helping low-income people in the Tucson area with needed home repairs. Much like Habitat for Humanity, the YAVs install lighting and insulation improvements or help with plumbing issues. They are learning a skill while spreading the Love of God. They will also be working at Montlure Presbyterian Church Camp later in the spring and summer.

Presbyterian Campus Ministry –

Judy Aguayo

Presbyterian Campus Ministry (PCM) is a mission of the Presbytery de Cristo, We collaborate with the Lutheran Campus Ministry and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Bible study and dinner are Wednesday's at 6:00 p.m. at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Tucson. It seeks to be a community of students searching together for what it means to be embraced by God, follow the Way of Jesus Christ, and trust the power of the Holy Spirit. Its mission is to be a rich community that enables its members to grow in (towards, around) our faith, to become committed disciples of Jesus Christ, and to learn to be leaders in their communities and the world.

Bob and Kristi Rice (PCUSA missionaries) –

Doug Clark

Tis the Season...for Baptisms! During the Christmas season in South Sudan, many congregations celebrate baptisms. This weekend, we were invited to worship with one of these congregations' celebrating baptisms, and it was truly a joyful celebration. More than 15 children were baptized, along with around 10 teenagers and adults. What struck me as remarkable is that this is a new congregation, less than 1 year old. This is the first time they have celebrated baptism in the congregation, and the number of people is a sign of the strong growth. We praise God for giving new life and celebrate baptism as a sign of spiritual vitality in that new life. Next week we plan to visit another congregation in Juba, also planning to do baptisms - on Christmas Day!

St. Andrew's Children's Clinic –

Kay Brouwer

There was no Clinic on January 4 because the end of the holiday season was hectic. Laura's staff had made 10 appointments, but only 2 showed up. Kay and friends plan to visit the clinic on February 1 with Valentine surprises for the children. She is inviting another one or two people to go with her. Laura was at Desert Hills Lutheran Church at lunch time Monday, January 8 to present information about the clinic. We hope to have her come to a VPC Mission Breakfast within a year or two. Bob Kaiser, a member of the St. Andrews' Board, asked how fundraising is going to help pay rent for the current facility. Kay will gather information and send it to Bob after this meeting. The rent of \$56,000 for ½ a year is due in February 2024. After discussion within our committee, we think the rent is unreasonably high for once a month when the facility is used as a Clinic. That information will be shared with Bob Kaiser.

Valley Assistance Services –

Steve Larson

Chris Erickson will present on the current environment and challenges at Valley Assistance Services at the January 13th Mission breakfast.

-Empty Bowls, our primary annual fundraising event, is February 17, 2024.

-Donations continue to be critical. The needs in the area we serve continue to increase; lack of affordable housing, increase in costs of rent, lack of transportation, social isolation, health changes, food insecurity and adequate nutrition.

Youth on Their Own (YOTO) –

Mary Horn:

We will look forward to doing a church group tour/info session at YOTO on Thursday, February 15, 2024, in the morning. (pending YOTO approval). YOTO is partnering with Ben's Bells to do a special YOTO Bell that will be available during tours. I plan to put info about the organization Ben's Bells in the January newsletter to give people some background. YOTO CARD MAKING will resume "in person" on Wednesday, January 24 from 1-3:30. All are welcome to come and create cards of inspiration for the students! Sunday, January 21 will be COLLECTION SUNDAY for Yoto's Mini-Mall. We will be collecting: Individually packaged snacks (chips, granola bars, trail mix, fruit snacks, jerky, etc.)

Possible Replacement for SNACK SACKS-Homeless Packets Project-

Mary Horn

The Salvation Army Hospitality House, we're seeing a rapid increase in the number of homeless patrons either living at or visiting our shelter due to the cooler winter weather. As you can imagine - more clients equal an increased need for essential hygiene items that many take for granted. To that end, we're humbly asking our neighbors to partner with us in collecting new, travel-sized toiletry items.

Our donation drive officially begins on January 16th and will end on March 31st. We're happy to drop off a Salvation Army collection box (*if needed!*). Participating volunteer groups will also be invited to The Hospitality House to help us create the "**Caring Kits**" for distribution.

Homeless Packets Project –leadership is being sought. Consideration for program with Salvation Army proposed and well received.

Old Business

Mission Breakfast

- January 13, 2024 – Valley Assistance Services-Arrangements reviewed.
- February 10, 2024 – Youth On Their Own/ sign-up sheet emailed
- March 23, 2024 – Amado-GV Food Bank

Noisy Offering – 5th Sunday of month for 2023-2024

- December 31, 2023 - Compañeros en Misión – \$637.79 donation
- March 31, 2024 – YAV (Young Adult Volunteers)- Ed Storey
- June 30, 2024 – Pam & Dave Lovett- Doug Clark
- September 29, 2024 – Crossroads Nogales Mission
- December 29, 2024 – Hands of a Friend

"It's Just Fellowship Lunch" at Posada Life Service-update plan on hold.

Improving communication short information on a specific mission in eblast- in process

Financial Reports- All agencies' latest Financial Reports received and accepted. Improved data discussed as some reports are incomplete.

Mission Outreach Report/Mission Sunday is January 14, 2024, Outlook Report reviewed, and front-page picture chosen. Distribution on Sunday Assigned.

Valley Voice articles – Voice articles- 8 or more / month- December (9) January (9) February (10) March (10) April (11) May (11) June (12) July (9) August (11) September (15) October (12) November (11) December (9) January (11)

New Business

The 2024 Mission Budget of \$130,000 was presented with \$800 for Mission Quilts and the remaining money equally distributed to the remaining 14 agencies. Moved by Ed Storey and seconded by Kay Brouwer and approved.

Ed Storey gave the closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Doug Cark

The next Mission Committee meeting will be at 8:45, February 13, 2024, in Room 1.