

Mission

Minutes from the VPC Mission Committee Meeting at 8:45 – 10:15 March 9, 2021 in Room 5 at the Church and at our homes via ZOOM due to COVID19 quarantine

Present: Doug Clark, Kay Brouwer, Reed Olson, Joan Bolin, Pat Nau, Mary Horn, George Curtis, Rev. Diane Christopher and Rev. Craig Lindsay.

Absent: Steve Larson, Mark Horton, Patti Bright, Judy Aguayo, Tom Spurlock, Larry Craft and Charlie Ashton

Doug presented our Spiritual Growth lesson on the Joy in Suffering. The suffering of humans has a purpose and a hope. Of all creation, only men and women suffer. Suffering can be mental, physical or spiritual and has benefits which often lead to joy. When a body suffers, sin loses its power. When we suffer, we might ask, "What is God teaching me?" Christian suffering makes each of us different, so we might be excluded from groups and thereby join the company of martyrs. Suffering keeps us focused on eternity and the joy of being with Christ. In conclusion, Doug encouraged us to think about times we experienced suffering which ultimately led to joy.

Doug opened the business meeting with prayer.

Bob and Kristi Rice joined our ZOOM session and shared experiences they've had in South Sudan since 2017. At present they only meet remotely with their local partners who they greatly miss. Kristi has been working with individuals and groups experiencing conflict. She and other leaders are demonstrating how to become reconciled with an opposing faction, working toward forgiveness, healing and peace through the love of Christ.

Bob is teaching at the Nile Theological College which prepares students for Christian ministry. He has taught two classes remotely using What's App and chat boxes. One of the classes focused on the origins of Christianity 2000 years ago in the northern part of Africa. The realization that Christian Communities developed long ago in Africa gave the students a feeling of empowerment.

Bob has been accepted into the PhD program at Stelebash University and has begun study on his dissertation. He and Kristi have missed their life in South Sudan, but have enjoyed experiences of camping and connection with American family and friends. They hope to return to South Sudan this July after the travel ban for missionaries is lifted.

We send our thanks and prayers to Bob and Kristi for continued good mission work in South Sudan. They, in turn, thanked the Valley Presbyterian Church for our support of them.

Business Begins –

Approval of Minutes: The approved minutes of the January and February meetings never got to the session meeting nor onto the Website. Kay will send those minutes to Pastor Diane who will forward them to Dick Horn.

Financial Report: The 2021 budget is \$81,250.00. Mission Committee emergency funds are currently at \$1,528.61. We should consider how to disburse these funds.

MISSION REPORTS/COMMENTS

Amado-GV-Sahuarita Food Bank – Betty Kiesle-Yoder has resigned from the Mission Committee because she is needed at home. Betty has been a huge help to our committee as she represented the Community Food Bank. She will be missed. A search for her replacement will begin.

Posada Community Services – Mark Horton sent word that there are no changes.

Casa Vida Nueva para Niños – Reed Olson reported that, during a mission breakfast in April 2015 featuring Casa Vida Nueva para Niños, he had announced a major fund-raising project - \$40K was needed for solar panels with batteries. Then in December 2015, a VPC check for \$43K was given to the Home. The new solar panel system was installed in February, 2016. At that time there were 25 children with limited power being provided by gas generators at a cost of \$54 USD per day. The generators provided only enough electricity to power the bare electrical needs of a livable one-story facility: refrigerators, clothes washers (no dryers) and very limited lighting (lighting was not provided in any bedrooms).

Today, the two-story Home has 50 children, many laptop computers for home schooling, computer monitors, large smart TVs, multiple clothes washers / dryers and abundant lighting throughout the facility. However, with more electrical needs comes the need for more power. Gas generators are now back in use to help supplement the solar system which cannot keep up with the growing electrical demand.

Two weeks ago, an out of state couple, who had visited the Home 4 years ago, sent me an email asking if there were any projects at the Home which they could help fund. After talking with Elias, The Home's director and Julio, from New Life Church of God, they decided to ask for help funding an expansion of their solar system. The cost would be \$14K USD. This couple immediately agreed to help and then sent a check for \$15K (just to round up the request). The check was delivered by Julio to Elias and the children on March 5th. They are now working on securing an installation date for the additional solar panels. The Home is truly blessed to have the support from the Green Valley Community and others from across the county. The children are safe, healthy and thankful for the generosity of their expanding supporters. To learn more about the Home, please visit: www.risesa.org

Compañeros en Misión – No report

Crossroads Mission, Nogales, Arizona – Joan Bolin reported that she and her sister, Jan Sullivan, took another trip to Crossroads Mission on Friday, March 5, 2021, to deliver hand-made knitted hats and sweaters, numerous pairs of socks, a grocery bag full of kitchen spices to

use in the on-site kitchen, and many gallon-size cans of vegetables and tomato sauce for the lunches and dinners they prepare at the Mission.

Also, on our March 5th visit to the Mission, I spoke to Jason, an employee of the Mission who handles the day-to-day activities at the main Mission's property. The following is what I learned:

---I inquired about the absence of Ben Wenke, Co-Director of the Mission, since I hadn't been able to reach him by phone. Jason said Ben has been at Barrows Neurological Institute in Phoenix, Arizona, getting tested for a possible mass on the brain. Because his gait is so unsteady, he keeps falling.

---Two pastors have committed to preach at the Mission a couple times a month.

---Two of the three women's transitional houses are open and running but not occupied to capacity. The other women's house is closed, in need of work.

---I asked what is the most needed thing at the Mission right now. Jason said "Money." Because of the coronavirus, donations are down. The Mission doesn't have the volunteer support they had before the virus hit. The Mission depends on volunteers to prepare lunch and dinner meals, and for repairing/updating their property buildings. Jason mentioned that canned food is also needed, either the gallon-size cans for use in the on-site kitchen or smaller cans for the food boxes they hand out to needy people who come to the Mission looking for food.

Pray that a new Director for the Mission can be found. With Ben's medical problems he has wanted to retire for the last few years.

NOTE: At today's Mission Committee meeting, Pat Nau made a motion to send \$1000 to Crossroads Mission with the money designed to purchase food. The motion was seconded by Reed Olsen and approved unanimously. The food will be used in their kitchen to prepare take-out meals in clamshell containers or given directly to the needy that come into Crossroads Mission looking for food. The money will be taken out of our church's Mission Committee Emergency Funds.

General Mission Support – No report

PCUSA Seminary Support – No report

Hands of a Friend – Pat Nau has not been able to contact Colleen Hanson for information. However, she knows that there are women living in Genesis House who find the current director very kind and helpful. Pat will contact Colleen to ask her to present information at our next Mission Meeting on April 13.

Mission Quilts – Patty Bright reported that, during the first week of March, the quilters did an inventory and organizing of all fabric left in fabric room and made a list of needed colors of fabric. Three of the quilters went together and purchased the colors needed to do sashings and borders.

The girls are still working on quilts to be delivered to Aviva. They give away a lot of quilts each year to children going into the foster system. We hope to make a good donation to them by end of March.

Linda and Richard were very impressed with both places.

Operation Mobilization – Pam and Dave L. have informed us that, for 50 years, a ship full of books has been donating free books to countries around the world. These books are written in the language of the people. Beginning in 1971 a ship with crew plus 300 volunteers has been sharing Christian charity with the world. Currently, the ship is in the Bahamas spreading news and books with the people.

Presbyterian Campus Ministry – George Curtis read a letter written to the Campus Christian Center Board that the Presbyterians plan to withdraw their use of the center by December of 2021. They will continue activity up to that time.

The Lutherans have already left and the Methodists have not declared anything yet. George thinks the facility will probably be sold with the revenue going to several owners of the property.

Pastor Diane asked why is this happening. George answered that very few students are involved possibly because college age students would prefer a multi-denominational group. Also, fundraising is decreasing. They have learned the current leader's spouse will attend Vanderbilt next fall so Baily will probably be leaving for Nashville.

Doug asked how might services be offered to Christian youth in the future. George thinks that the local Presbyterian church might step up to provide some discussions for interested students.

Bob and Kristi Rice (PCUSA missionaries) – The report was presented to us at the beginning of our meeting.

St. Andrew's Children's Clinic – Kay Brouwer reported that there is a slight chance that the border will open on March 2. Nothing is definite. If that happens, staff & volunteers at St. Andrews Clinic hope to offer some clinic services to a very few children in August or September at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.

A suburban full of baby necessities is coming from Idaho. On Monday, March 28, staff and volunteers will meet the car at the small, temporary Clinic office in the Springs. They will sort and organize the items. Then they will be bagged & taken for storage.

Valley Assistance Services – In Steve Larson's absence, Chris Erickson reported that the Empty Bowls event will be on Saturday, March 27th at VPC in the large front parking lot from 10 am - Noon. This will be a contactless drive through with bowls been displayed on carts next to cars. Traffic control will be routing the cars down on either side of the solar panels. It has truly been a year of emptiness. This year, unlike previous events, your bowl will be truly empty. No soup will be served. The proceeds go towards programs that assist members of our community with basic needs, support/advocacy, and homelessness prevention.

This will be the 15th year of Empty Bowls at VPC. We are very grateful that we are able to hold this at Valley Presbyterian Church and for their support. It is our major fundraiser for our programs that are essential to those needing assistance in our area. Some of the bowls are displayed at the Chamber of Commerce.

We will have an on-line auction - those who would like to participate in the silent auction can just call and let us know their email addresses. They will be invited with a link to the on-line auction. The items are very nice donations so far, including a golf package, garden design consultation, and others. Chris expressed thanks to the mission committee for all our support.

Youth on Their Own (YOTO) – Mary Horn sent a report that:

- 1) Donations of 13 hand knit scarves, stretch/yoga pants, sweaters and sweat pants were delivered to Youth on Their Own on Monday, February 22. In addition, 153 cards of inspiration were also delivered. Ladies worked from home to make these and logged 15 hours and 20 minutes of volunteer time.
- 2) Four ladies met at church on Wednesday, February 24 to make Inspirational Cards. We made 57 cards and logged 6.5 hours of volunteer hours. One lady working from home added 18 cards and logged 9 hours of volunteer time. Our next scheduled meeting of Inspirational Card Making will be on Wednesday, March 24 at 2:00 p.m. in Classroom 5.
- 3) Mary learned from a member of our congregation that she missed our Snack Bags for The Homeless project. She understood why we were unable to do it this year. She and her husband decided to make their own bags and have given them out both in Green Valley and Tucson. Mary will plan to talk to this member to see if she might be interested in overseeing this project in 2022.

Old Business:

Mission Breakfasts:

- November 13, 2021 – YOTO (Mary Horn)
- January 15, 2022 – Pam and Dave L. (Doug Clark). Pam and Dave will also do the Sunday Sermon.
- February 12 or 19, 2022 – Food Bank (Someone will need to replace Betty Kiesle-Yoder)
- March 28, 2022 – St. Andrews' Children's Clinic (Kay Brouwer)

Noisy Offering

- May 30, 2021 – Seminary Support lead by Larry Craft
- August 29, 2021 - Presbyterian Christian Ministry lead by George Curtis
- October 31, 2021 – Nogales Crossroads Mission lead by Joan Bolin

One Great Hour of Sharing March 28, 2021 – Tom Spurlock will head up this collection. Rev. Diane wrote an article for the Valley Voice and sent information on the Church E-Blast. Envelopes for donations will be located at the church entrances.

Revision of Mission Outreach 2021 Booklet – It has been revised and reprinting has begun.

Mission Sunday is January 16, 2022: Planning for a Mission Festival. Assign a subcommittee? Brain Storm!

Valley Voice articles – Our goal is to have 4 or more per month; there were 8 in February. Thanks and keep writing!

Review and Update of Mission TV Assignments - None planned.

Mary Horn mentioned that she heard that the Homeless Packet Program was a good idea and is missed. We might bring it back again in 2022.

New Business: Brainstorm?!

The next Mission Committee meeting will be at 8:45, April 13, 2021, in Room 5 with a ZOOM option.

Pastor Diane gave the closing prayer and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Kay Brouwer, Secretary