

Faithful Action Council Meeting
Notes: November 26, 2017
Cummins Room

Present:

Council members: Justin S, Karen K, Marjorie H, Jeff S, Kris H, Muriel A, Matt K, Cindy M, Katrina M, Joan N,
Community Partner Team Leads: Ingrid Y, Geoff L, Jess L, Stan S, Mark B, Cathy M.

* Opening reflection - Justin

* Ice breaker exercise - Karen

* Overview of Faithful Action Council Principles and Goals – Karen. All Council work is grounded in principles about Racial Justice, Community, Lived Experiences, Spiritual Journey, and Learning & Reflection. The core role of the Council includes supporting the work of our community partners. While Team Leads are viewed as essential to the Council but their focus, understandably, is on their partner and volunteers. Therefore, this meeting is an opportunity to connect with the Team Leads directly.

* Sharing from Team Leads/Assistant Team Leads covered the following questions:

1. Something to celebrate from the partnership
2. How was your Spotlight Sunday (if applicable)? Did you get volunteers?
3. If you used the Spiritual Reflection toolkit with your teams (housing issues), what worked and what could be improved?
4. What are your current challenges and how can the Faithful Action Council support you?

Ingrid: Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity:

- There are many things to celebrate with this long-standing partner, including a core team of builders from our church. They are creating community during the builds, and it's a valued way to live into our faith in action.
- Spotlight Sunday will be in early 2018
- Reflection toolkit was tested in September --- the toolkit was very effective especially with small group sharing.
- Challenges are to attract new and younger people to build. Personal outreach is useful. Discussion included how to attract at-home parents with childcare provided by others who aren't able to do construction themselves.

Jess: Families Moving Forward/Beacon.

- Many things to celebrate – including two remarkable weeks in August with 70 volunteers. Relationships built and our guests felt safe and comfortable.
- Spotlight Sunday – TBD
- More volunteers are needed for evening activities and overnight hosts.

- The spiritual reflection event was awesome and powerful. Discussion about how to enhance future events.
- Challenges included leadership changes, mentoring upcoming leaders and how to use the new database to recruit.

Geoff – Simpson Housing Services

- Many things to celebrate – this is an opportunity for families to volunteer together; there are an abundance of volunteers to serve meals. It's enjoyable and the ultimate bonding experience with immediate feedback from recipients that is very positive. Meeting and talking with homeless people across the table and sharing food is a very powerful spiritual practice.
- Challenges include succession planning and leadership changes, and to attract volunteers for longer-term tutoring or mentoring opportunities.

Cindy/Cathy – Augsburg Fairview Academy

- Celebrate the ongoing support of our church for AFA. We are the primary support for two important programs. We empower kids to go to school via food, clothes, toiletries.
- Spotlight Sunday in November was very powerful; they received a large offering plate. Cathy reported that the funds were used to purchase jackets (on black Friday sales) for the kids.
- Challenges include the need for more visibility with the church and to find ways for people to help in small ways, along with back-up for the existing small volunteer team.

Stan & Mark – MNIPL Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light.

- This work is a movement builder in UU congregations, part of national UU work on climate justice. Celebrating the push back on the crude oil pipeline and provided guidance and comments on the Enbridge Line 3 project. IPL staff works with 13 youth interveners at the proceedings. They also participated in a series of events with the solar coalition, Red Lake for solar on reservation, and a presence in the social hall every Sunday.
- Opportunities include finding ways to use the new volunteer database.

Joan N – Housing advocacy for Beacon/FMF, Habitat for Humanity, and Simpson.

- Celebrate a growing number of congregants engaged in direct advocacy through our partners and at the state capitol.
- There will be a Racial Justice/Housing Justice Table Talk event at church in January for all to attend, to connect the dots between these important issues.

* Reflection on what we heard (General discussion and Idea sharing regarding the challenges) . The Council and Team Leads surfaced a number of common themes and opportunities that would support the work of the community partners. These will be discussed at future meetings.

- Making connections was a theme – providing ways for congregants to do things together through faithful action
- Succession/leadership change challenges
- Spiritual reflection suggestions, refinements, and broadening to other partner groups.

- Access opportunities – removing barriers to action on faith; engaging young people; removing transportation issue.
- Challenges for the team leads – design opportunities possible for improvement.
- Creating a culture of invitation –personally asking people in to this work. Using 1:1 connections. Finding ways to connect with volunteers.
- Communications challenges. How to tell our story better? Use videos? Opportunities for FAC members to sit down with congregants to share.
- Providing opportunities for congregants (or one another) a ride-along to better understand partner volunteer opportunities.
- Opportunities to address specific partner challenges.
- Appreciation for the work being done, and pride in our church.
- Living our values and being intimate with others by being proximate

* Process for new/renewing Community Partner applications will occur in late winter with the application due date April 1. Partners for the next two-year cycle starting July 1, 2018, will be announced in May. The Partnership working group needs additional members from the Council and are urged to volunteer (see Joan N.).

* Closing

Notes by Joan Naymark
Submitted Dec 4, 2017