

Social Justice Ministry Meeting September 20, 2021 [via Zoom]

Present: Josh Case (co-chair), Frank Hairston (co-chair), Pam Quellhorst, Donna Hess, and Barb Hanniford

Josh opened the meeting with a prayer.

Prophetic Community Engagement Grant

Barb shared an update on this grant proposal. An initial planning meeting with Dr. Nelson from NAACP, Frank, Donna, and Barb led to the idea of requesting funds to purchase an office computer and office supplies as well as to pilot a summer program for middle school youth. A draft proposal had just been distributed to committee members. However, we are scaling back this proposal to focus solely on what is needed to get the NAACP office up and running. This is on the advice of Pastor Amy, who had just talked with Rev. Michael Anthony Howard from the Living Water Association. A future proposal may focus on programming. Pastor Amy will work with Barb on revising the draft.

2022 Budget

The discussion of NAACP led into questions about whether expenses for the NAACP office should be included in the Social Justice budget for 2022. We agreed that it made sense to include them in our request. We know that phone service is needed, but we don't know what type or the cost. We also wondered if the chapter will fall under the church's liability insurance since they will be housed in our space or whether they have their own insurance. Frank was going to check with Dr. Nelson on this question. The Property and Finance Ministry is working on office space needs and expenses.

Regarding our overall budget request, our 2020 expenditures were \$350. Additionally, some money was spent out of the special funds line. Our 2020 budget request was initially \$1,450, but this was reduced to \$1305 [note: the budget shown in the annual report was adjusted upward to \$1305]. As of mid-August, our 2021 expenditures were \$605. We didn't conclude what to request but were inclined to request something in line with last year, with the addition of NAACP expenses that the church agreed to pay.

Yard Sign Sales

We have sold a number of yard signs but haven't had nearly the response we did last year. The timing is different this year, but the message will continue to be important. We need to continue to market them. Josh was going to ask Jen if she spoke to Leah about including a message and image on our electronic sign. Pam was going to try to get an announcement in the Living Water Association e-newsletter. Josh was going to see if Logos Bookstore might be interested in selling them. We also need to keep alert to any gatherings where it might be appropriate to sell them. After the meeting, Barb checked on the cost and income from the signs. Cost was \$622.50, and we have collected around \$400 in total to offset the cost.

PRIDE Parade

Frank expressed his thanks to all who represented our church at the parade.

Future Sunny Matthews Program

Sunny Matthews still owes us one program. We need to decide on a topic and get it scheduled.

Dr. Love Follow-Up

When we met with Dr. Love via Zoom, we talked about her doing an Introduction to Sacred Conversations program for our group. We discussed doing it sometime in late September-October, although it may need to be later at this point. Pastor Amy is the contact person who can follow up with Dr. Love. We'd like her to see what the next steps may be.

Outreach Spaghetti Dinner—King Kennedy Fund Raiser

Donna shared that the Outreach Ministry wanted to do an in-person dinner fall but is postponing it until the COVID surge is not an issue. Frank said that he's seen this done as a carry-out meal and there's been a big response. Donna will discuss this further with the Outreach Ministry at their next meeting.

John Brown Recognition

Frank would like to see Kent UCC honor John Brown as a member of our congregation who stood for racial justice. One suggestion was to include his name in our proposed "Blues and Barbecue" fund raiser for the NAACP Nancy and Bruce Hansford Scholarship Fund. For example, it could be called the "John Brown Blues and Barbecue Dinner" or something like that. Food for thought.

Input for Stewardship Mission Spending Plan 2022

The Social Justice Ministry's work directly addresses one of Kent UCC's five mission priorities: social justice and global engagement. Despite COVID, we have had an active year and have been blessed by our involvement. We hope our work has been a blessing to others. In 2021, we've:

- Participated in the NAACP Martin Luther King Jr. breakfast (via Zoom)
- Sponsored an ongoing anti-racism book group
- Paid two black female speakers (Sunny Matthews and LaTasha Dukes) for special presentations, one on Martin Luther King Jr. and the other on Stacey Abrams' book, *Our Time is Now*.
- Participated in the Akron PRIDE Parade
- Created a new yard sign: "Racism is a sin. Period." Proceeds from the sale benefit Social Justice Ministry activities and outreach.
- Supported establishing an office for the Portage County NAACP chapter in our church, including seeking grant funding to help furnish the office.

In 2022, we will continue efforts such as these, with the hopes that some activities will move to in-person in the future. We plan to collaborate with NAACP more closely as the office becomes operational in our building. We also hope to meet again with Dr. Velda Love, UCC's Minister for Racial Justice.

Upcoming

LaTasha Dukes will facilitate a book study September 27 and October 25 on Stacey Abrams' book.

Our next meeting will be Monday, October 18.

Respectfully submitted, Barb Hanniford