

Community for Interfaith Celebration Townhall Minutes-Dec. 8, 2024

Welcome and Review of the Agenda: Hugh O’Neill, facilitator

Attending: Jo & Thad Curtz, Cindy Guertin-Anderson, Betty & Dick Hauser, Peg Henry, Karen Lohmann, Hugh O’Neill, Corey Passons, Penny Purkerson, Carol & Jamie Rainwood, Karen Ray, Jan Rocks, Pat Starzyk, and Karen Tvedt, and Robert Walker.

Racial Justice Centering: Karen Tvedt reflected on the Alien Enemies Act which was used as authority to incarcerate thousands of Japanese citizens during WW II. The same Act is being used to justify mass deportation of immigrants.

Review of the Oct. 20 Townhall Notes: Karen Tvedt provided highlights from the Oct. 20 Townhall meeting minutes.

Minister’s Report (Corey Passons):

- Corey has been reaching out to new people about joining CIC and is planning to do a gathering for new people after the first of the year to provide information about CIC including its history. He anticipates that five or six people will attend.
- There is a slight change in the lease with United Churches. The library will no longer be part of CIC’s space. Miriam and Corey are exploring an alternative space for the middler group.
- United Churches is implementing a weapons-free policy (with an exception for law enforcement).
- The Christmas Eve Celebration will be at the Grange on Dec. 24, 11:00 am. There will be a potluck lunch.

Children’s Program. The report below was submitted in writing by Miriam Sterlin (Corey presented highlights during the meeting). Corey noted that Steering Circle will meet with Miriam to discuss how we can better support her. In the short term, we plan on publicizing the Christmas Eve Celebration.

Over in the Children’s Program, we are reading and creating on the theme of gratitude. Through empathy building activities such as group storytelling, game creation, and practice identifying emotions (our own, and those of others), we are building skills! In the past couple of months, children have created their own story telling games to take home, built gratitude tabernacles, made papercraft stress-relief fidgets, created lighthouses as a countdown to solstice, read stories, and spent time together with Aubrey.

Aubrey continues to remain creatively engaged with the program material and, most importantly, with the children! Aubrey is able to “read the room,” and gauges the pace of the activities and transitions to suit the needs of the group. I am so happy to have Aubrey on board as a teacher! So thankful!

Our middlers program continues to look for a teacher that is comfortable with the balance of interfaith, social justice, spiritual and personal development that is part of the work of an early teen. Though we have had two leads, we have not yet found the right fit. The work continues! In other news, we have a fabulous new text we are working with: Holy Saints and Unconventional Troublemakers. This book highlights movers and shakers from all faiths and walks of life and asks the reader to contemplate how to see the actions of each featured person in our current world.

On the note of the middlers program, we are losing our sweet library space next year in service of the young Wildwood Community. The middlers will be looking for a comfy landing place in the building, and ideas and help are welcome and appreciated!

We are a small but mighty group, and open to families that would like to become part of our sweet community. Questions? Ideas? Concerns? Please do get in touch! Thank you for your support and interest in the Children's Program! Miriam

Financial Report and 2025 Budget and Pledges (Thad Curtz/Penny Purkerson).

- As of the end of Nov., we spent \$65,751 and income was \$64,635 (including \$1,342 from the begging bowl). Thad forecasts a deficit of \$1,116 (not counting carry-over from prior years and accounting for a gap between 2024 pledges made and received).
- Thad reviewed a draft 2025 budget proposal that assumes a three percent increase and two teachers. Our expenditures would total \$75,106. Assuming \$68,828 in 2025 pledges so far, we would have a projected 2025 deficit of \$6,278 and likely require that we use most of our prior year carryover funds. Thad questioned whether we might reduce funds in SPEF, Outreach and Tech Support (categories underspent in 2024).
- Penny asked about the possibility of putting out another call for pledges. Betty Hauser suggested that we do an end-of-year report outlining our finances.

Decision: With the understanding that we need to do more to educate ourselves about the importance of pledges next year, there was consensus that we're comfortable with the proposed budget.

Call Shepherd Report (Cindy Guertin-Anderson).

- Cindy reported that Karen Lohmann has agreed to assume the role of CIC clerk in Jan. Thank you Karen L!
- There was discussion about the altar tender role which involves cleaning candles, etc.
Decision: We agreed that the altar doesn't need weekly or even monthly attention, and that we'll let the issue rest for now.

Committee Reports:

- **Social Justice Committee:** committee is working on a page for the CIC website and an information card with resources that can be given to homeless people.
- **50th Anniversary Celebration:** committee is currently focused on the 1980s A save-the-date for the March event will be sent after the holidays.
- **Community Kitchen:** The following report was submitted in writing by the coordinators: The Community Kitchen has continued to be well-supported by CIC members and other volunteers. Early this year we expanded meal production and purchases, which has

increased costs to over \$400 per month. This is mainly due to increased demand, but CCS is also providing somewhat less on-site food items for our use, which means we are buying more of the food and packaging needed to prepare, serve and deliver our monthly meals. Contributions via CIC Fish Sale proceeds are a fantastic and welcome boost to our efforts to supply meals each month, but food prices show no evidence of a downward trend, so costs are likely to remain high. With increased meal production, we now cook and serve 288 meals per month. Amazingly, the average cost of each meal is very low--around \$1.50 per meal. Demand has generally remained high, and while there is some month-to-month variation, our pork enchiladas, kernel corn, tortilla chips, salad and dessert provide a hot, hearty, tasty, and well-liked meal.

CCS (Christian Community Services) has continued to maintain many of its COVID-related safety and health policies and practices, and we have not heard of any future changes thus far. CCS has extended its decision to not re-open or serve meals in the cafeteria area of the building. Also, while youth are allowed to volunteer in preparing and serving meals, they must be age 16 or older. There are no restrictions or requirements about masking or COVID immunization, but of course CCS requests that volunteers remain attuned to basic safety and sanitation practices, such as handwashing, gloves when handling food items, and not volunteering if you are ill.

We have generally been able to assemble full volunteer teams to shop, prepare, serve and deliver meals. During summer months and holiday periods it can be challenging to build a full team, but the list of potential volunteers continues to grow, and participation has been steady. It's really valuable to have full teams in place as it lightens the load on each volunteer, and provides excellent training and mentoring opportunities, which we need to add new volunteers to our outreach list and increase future meal production and distribution, if needed. Our volunteer teams are playful, fun and caring, productive and compassionate, dedicated and grateful. It is a joy and an honor to work with them to make a difference in our community. Alan, Bethanie and Richard, TCK Co-Coordinator

- **Community Support (Corey reporting):** things are relatively quiet with a couple of households receiving support.
- **Connections Committee (Hugh):** no report this month.
- **Capital Campaign (Betty Hauser):** Betty reported that there will be a longer report in Wavelinks. The ceiling tiles in the social hall will be removed soon so that HVAC work can proceed. Corey will discuss timing with Jessica Babcock who is the United Churches facilities manager (our microphones in the ceiling will need to be removed).
- **Fundraising Committee:**
 - The fish sale was a huge success with 1,440 pounds of fish sold. We netted \$3,147.86 to be used for Community Kitchen. A huge thank you to Gene Maltzef, Leeann and all the CIC volunteers!
 - Peg Henry reported on our Jan. 23 fundraiser with Harlequin Productions. The performance will be a modern approach to "MS. Holmes and MS. Watson Apt. 2B" and take place Thurs. evening Jan.23 at State Theater. All proceeds will be used to purchase

groceries for the meals we serve monthly at Community Kitchen. We have 150 tickets to distribute. The fee will be “pay what you choose” \$0-\$25 or more.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.