

Ministry and Counsel Committee Minutes, September 2021

Met via Zoom on Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2021

In Attendance: Donna Knight, Ellie Haun, Judy McCarthy, Margie Riley

The Assistant Clerk opened the committee meeting with a moment of silence.

We discussed the role of Julia Storberg-Walker, who is taking on greater responsibility with her teaching and department chair work at GWU, and has asked to step down from Ministry and Counsel. Julia is highly regarded for her thoughtful, wise counsel and we are asking her to remain as a consultant to Ministry and Counsel. We respect and support her expanding career opportunities yet would like to keep her in the information loop of items Ministry and Counsel addresses.

Our current Covid protocols were reviewed. Our hybrid Meeting for Worship is working fine, our Zoom participants report that they feel the silent worship is inclusive. There are some frustrations with our Adult Religious Education time, though, mainly due to sound concerns. When someone in the Meeting House is talking, our Zoom participants do not adequately hear their voice. While the visual Otter display of conversation text helps, it's not giving the full support desired. Donna Knight suggested we try a microphone that plugs directly into the computer. This would be an inexpensive added tool to experiment with. The committee agreed to try this out. Additionally, Judy McCarthy has a consulting group (Best Buy GEEK Squad) she can ask about other possible solutions. We recognize and appreciate that conducting a hybrid activity is an ongoing process, we're learning as we go, and it takes time to figure out how to best reach our on-line participants.

The committee also considered what effects fall and winter weather might have on our Covid protocol. One specific concern is our fellowship time in the limited kitchen/gathering area as the cooler weather will necessitate closing the doors. The committee felt this was something to monitor as Covid is an ever-changing set of conditions and if needed, we could always ask people to socially distance for our fellowship time using the greater worship space.

The next topic of discussion was our RE (Religious Education) calendar.

Martha Hanley has requested time to recognize and honor the outdated carriage shed before it's removed and replaced by a new shelter. The Shelter Committee will use our September 19 RE time for this purpose.

Sept. 26 - Cynthia Bourgeault - The Wisdom Jesus

Led by Margie Riley, Richard Cooper, Peter Ford

Oct. 3 - Part II: Cynthia Bourgeault

Oct. 10 - Meeting for Business

Oct. 17 - Sharing: Inspirational Websites - watch for an email on details for this

Oct. 24 - Potluck Fellowship at Centre

The committee briefly discussed fund-raising for the new shelter and will ask Jim Riley to give an update on that as part of his financial report in Meeting for Business. (He has been asked and agreed to do so.)

Our Community Prayer Group activity was briefly discussed. We would like to encourage community participation in this bimonthly meeting and it was suggested that Advancement and Outreach address putting an announcement sign up outside of Centre Meeting House for cars and walkers who pass by. It was noted that John Guiser has requested a move from the Pastoral Care Committee to Advancement and Outreach to focus his work with the Community Prayer Group.

Committee members pointed out that many people need spiritual support right now due to the variety of social and political issues our country is working through. The Community Prayer Group is a strong outreach to support that need.

It was brought to our attention that The Frederick County Historical Society would like to hold their annual meeting at Hopewell Meeting House on Saturday, April 23, 2022. The committee recommends that this would be a positive community support and agreed to put it on the agenda for Meeting for Business for full Meeting approval.

Our final item was that one of our attenders, Maureen O'Hara, has identified Japanese Lantern Flies on our Hopewell property. The committee recommended this be a topic for discussion at Meeting for Business.