

**MINUTES of March 19, 2015**

**Members present (13):**

Rodney Bluml, Erin Broich, Brian Daugherty, Allen Fisher, Alan Fletcher, Susan Liddell, Cedric Lofdahl, Brenda Mitchell, Jim Siegling, Joan Thaler, Todd Thalblum, Nathan Williams, and Jen Yukl

**Guests (2):** Jeremy Brigham and Jim Thornton

President Todd Thalblum called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

**INSPIRATION**

**The 1964 Civil Rights Act: One Brief Shining Moment? Or a Model For What We Can Achieve Today?  
– Reflections by Allen Fisher**

*Below are some statements from what Allen shared. The complete inspiration can be found at [www.irclc.org](http://www.irclc.org).*

Eighteen years ago, Dr. David Hay – a professor of religion at Coe College – and I were asked to write a history of First Presbyterian Church, as we marked our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As we researched and wrote that book, which we titled In the Heart of the City, one of my greatest joys was discovering that our senior pastor in the 1960s, Dr. Francis Pritchard, and a small but very vocal and persistent group of prominent lay members of the church, were strong and effective advocates of what became the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Through their many letters, phone calls, marches, newspaper ads, and personal visits with members of Congress, they – along with many, many other persons of faith in Iowa – contributed significantly to the ultimate passage of that landmark piece of legislation.

...Senator Hubert Humphrey, the Democratic floor leader for the civil rights bill, often said that the Civil Rights Act would never have been passed if it had not been for the tenacity of religious activists – black and white, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish.

Alas, political realities have changed in the past 51 years...

But why, I wonder, can similar movements by people of faith not succeed in the same way today as civil rights did a half century ago – whether to fight climate change, or to advocate for gun safety?..

**MINUTES of February 19, 2015**

Motion by Nathan Williams to approve as submitted – Second by Jim Siegling – Carried

**GUN VIOLENCE – topic continued from February’s meeting**

Guest: Jeremy Brigham – Iowans for Gun Safety, Eastern Iowa Chapter

Last month, Dan Baldwin and Allen Fisher shared on this topic.

Tonight, Jeremy Brigham related his involvement with agencies who work for gun safety. For many years, he also worked with an organization to prevent suicide.

Iowans for Gun safety is a coalition of organizations and individuals seeking reasonable laws and policies to help reduce gun violence. This coalition supports the proposals made by the Biden Task Force and President Obama to reduce gun violence. At the state level, it opposes legislation that would expand gun rights beyond that of the second amendment of the United States Constitution. Iowans for Gun Safety is currently working to oppose SF 425, a bill that would dismantle current common sense gun laws in Iowa. SF 425 would repeal Iowa’s longstanding handgun permit-to-purchase law and allow people to buy guns in private sales without background checks. It would also loosen Iowa laws on concealed carry permits and make it easier for more people to carry guns in public spaces.

More information about Iowans for Gun Safety and directions for you to take individual action can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/IA4GS>. The website is <http://www.iowansforgunsafety.org>.

Americans for Responsible Solutions and the Sandy Hook Advisory Commission are two good resources. It was also noted that Iowans for the Prevention of Gun Violence, one of the organizations referred to at last month’s meeting, no longer exists.

## **RACIAL TENSIONS – Resolution regarding police-involved violence**

Chad Simmons of Diversity Focus was to speak to us tonight on this issue, but was unable to be here.

Discussion about the resolution (2<sup>nd</sup> draft) led to consensus to get more feedback moving forward. Todd will again contact Chad Simmons, Executive Director of Diversity Focus. Several others were suggested as points of contact – Sgt. Christy Hamblin, Community Relations at CR Police Dept.; Wayne Jerman, Chief of Police; Brian Gardner, Linn County Sheriff; Karl Cassell, President of Horizons; and Dedric Doolin, President of CR branch, NAACP. One suggestion was to email the resolution draft to these individuals and ask for their input.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE – Alan Fletcher, Treasurer/Chair**

1. **Financial Report:** Itemized Receipts & Disbursements – 2/19/15 thru 3/19/15 – reviewed. Cash balance as of 3/19/15: \$15,340.79 [Checking = \$338.34 / Money Market = \$15,002.45] Motion made by Allen Fisher to approve financial report – Second by Joan Thaler – Carried.
2. **Tracking of delegates and monthly vote to approve new delegates:** Alan will verify new delegates each month. Jen has started a new column on our current database that indicates those individuals and communities of faith who have paid annual dues for 2014 and 2015.

### **COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE – Brian Daugherty, Chair**

1. **Children of Abraham:**  
Among the Traditions: Sundays (2 to 4 pm) at Coe College, Keslar Auditorium in Hickok Hall
  - April 26 – Prophecy, Revelation, and the Scriptures
  - August 23 – Marriage in the Modern Era
  - November 8 – Kingdom of GodBetween the Traditions: Chris Seeman will be in Cedar Rapids in July to present another program.
2. **Ethical Perspectives on the News:**  
A new program schedule will be available after the next planning meeting – scheduled for Tuesday, March 24. Cedric reported that this Sunday’s program will be “The Value of Higher Education”.
3. **University of Religion:** Buddhism course – The Life, Teachings, & Legacy of the Buddha  
Brian reported that there were 20 people who attended the four-part February course consistently, and often attendance was around 25. Reviews given were excellent.

### **EVENT COMMITTEE – Charles Crawley and Allen Fisher, Co-chairs**

1. **Holocaust Remembrance – April 12-14, 2015 – Speaker: Renata Laxova**
  - Sunday, April 12 (7:00 pm): Mount Mercy University Chapel  
Todd will be writing up the order of service soon, so email him if you wish to participate.
  - Monday, April 13 (1:00 pm): Coe College, Sinclair Auditorium
  - Monday, April 13 (6:30 pm): Cornell College, Hall-Perrine Room in Thomas Commons Bldg.
  - Tuesday, April 14 (12:30 pm): Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Hall
2. **Armenian Genocide of 1915 Commemoration – Thursday, April 30 (6:30 to 8:05 pm)**  
Cedar Rapids Public Library, Beems “A” Auditorium  
The PBS documentary, *The Armenian Genocide*, will be shown, with discussion following.  
A petition, asking the State of Iowa to acknowledge this genocide, will be available to sign.

### **COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE – Brenda Mitchell and Jen Yukl, Co-chairs**

– Nothing new to report this evening.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

1. **Bylaws discussion:** Motion made by Cedric Lofdahl to accept the revised bylaws and to present these for ratification at the annual meeting in December – Second by Jim Siegling – Carried.
2. **Inspiration for next meeting:** Nathan Williams volunteered.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS of other events in the Cedar Rapids area**

1. **Intersections – next civil dialogue & luncheon – Friday, April 3 (11:45 am to 1:00 pm)  
“Protecting Iowa’s Fair and Impartial Courts”**

- Martha Rogers: Project Coordinator, Eastern Iowa JUST Courts
- Andrew Mertens: Communications Director, Iowa Association for Justice  
Vice President, Justice Not Politics

Location: First Presbyterian Church, 310 Fifth St. SE Cost: \$10 per person (payable at the door)

Registration required: See <http://interfaithallianceiowa.org/events/intersections/> for more details.

2. **Labyrinth and Taizé Service at Christ Episcopal Church, 220 40<sup>th</sup> St. NE**

The labyrinth is located in the church parish hall/undercroft. The office entrance, with available stairs or elevator to the lower level, is located near the northeast corner of the church.

- **Labyrinth “Walking to the Cross” – Sunday, March 22 through Easter Sunday, April 5**

Self-guided booklets will be available and the labyrinth will be open for walking meditation (private or group) whenever the church is open (Monday – Friday, 9:00 am to 3:30 pm) and during weekend services. If your group would like to experience the labyrinth during an evening when the church is not open, contact Judy Welch at 319-721-9776 or [judy-welch@uiowa.edu](mailto:judy-welch@uiowa.edu) to make arrangements.

- **Taizé music service at the labyrinth – Monday, March 30 (7:00 pm)**

## **Next Board Meeting: Thursday, April 16 (7:00 pm) at the Ecumenical Community Center**

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm: Motion to adjourn by Allen Fisher – Second by Joan Thaler – Carried.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Yukl, Secretary