

**MINUTES of February 19, 2015**

**Members present (10):**

Brian Daugherty, Allen Fisher, Alan Fletcher, Susan Liddell, Cedric Lofdahl, Brenda Mitchell, Jim Siegling, Todd Thalblum, Nathan Williams, and Jen Yukl

**Guests (2):** Dan Baldwin of First Lutheran and Jerome Deister of St. George Orthodox

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

**INSPIRATION**

– provided by Erin Broich and read by Jen Yukl

**Peace and Justice – Messages from Oscar Romero**

Recently within the Catholic Church, Pope Francis officially declared Archbishop Oscar Romero a martyr. This has pushed his name further up the list towards sainthood, and fully acknowledges the work and sacrifices he made in order to stand for the poor and oppressed of El Salvador in a time of government upheaval and violence.

The season of Lent in Christian denominations is a time of reflection and penance. As this season begins, I want to take a moment to reflect on some of Archbishop Romero’s words and messages about peace and justice. It is the duty of all people to stand for those who cannot stand for themselves, to speak for those who are forced into silence, and to demand justice for those too scared and beaten down to demand it for themselves.

“What good are beautiful highways and airports, beautiful buildings full of spacious apartments, if they are only put together with the blood of the poor, who are not going to enjoy them?”

“Peace is not the product of terror or fear. Peace is not the silence of cemeteries. Peace is not the silent result of violent repression. Peace is the generous, tranquil contribution of all to the good of all. Peace is dynamism. Peace is generosity. It is right and it is duty.”

“I will not tire of declaring that if we really want an effective end to violence we must remove the violence that lies at the root of all violence: structural violence, social injustice, exclusion of citizens from the management of the country, repression. All this is what constitutes the primal cause, from which the rest flows naturally.”

– Oscar Romero

As we continue with our own work, and within our various communities, let us never forget those who have worked tirelessly to bring justice to those in greatest need of it, even if it meant making the ultimate sacrifice for their fellow human.

**MINUTES**

- 2014 Annual Meeting Minutes (December 18, 2014):  
Motion made by Cedric Lofdahl to approve as submitted – Second by Allen Fisher – Carried.
- Minutes of the January 15, 2015 Board of Directors Meeting:  
Motion made by Brenda Mitchell to approve as submitted – Second by Nathan Williams – Carried.

**GUN VIOLENCE DISCUSSION**

Dan Baldwin, intern pastor at First Lutheran, shared about his desire to investigate the issue of gun violence in our community. He plans to meet with neighborhood associations, the department of corrections, and the police department. Dan is in the planning stages of organizing a vigil focused on nonviolence in order to raise awareness; he feels that making this an interfaith event would be more effective. As the planning develops, he will keep us informed.

Allen Fisher shared what he learned at a recent meeting of local organizations concerned with gun violence prevention (Feb. 7). He distributed a handout with contact/website information for three organizations:

## **GUN VIOLENCE DISCUSSION continued...**

- Iowans for the Prevention of Gun Violence – Next meeting is Thursday, March 12 (Noon to 1 pm). Contact Jeremy Brigham at [brighamjeremy@q.com](mailto:brighamjeremy@q.com) and ask to be put on their mailing list.
- Protect Iowans Not Guns – Next meeting is Friday, March 6 (5 pm). Contact Laura Kline at [protectiowans@gmail.com](mailto:protectiowans@gmail.com) and ask to be put on their mailing list.
- Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America – [www.MOMSDEMANDACTION.ORG](http://www.MOMSDEMANDACTION.ORG) – Susan Brehm, Organizing Manager – [sbrehm@momsdemandaction.org](mailto:sbrehm@momsdemandaction.org)

Also included in this handout: contact information to support several Iowa bills (HF77, HF76, and HF70) and to oppose “Stand Your Ground” legislation (HF52, HF92, and SF137).

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

1. **Financial Report:** Itemized Receipts & Disbursements – 1/1/15 thru 2/19/15 – reviewed. Cash balance as of 2/19/15: \$14,954.64 [Checking = \$53.34 / Money Market = \$14, 901.30] Motion made by Allen Fisher to approve financial report – Second by Nathan Williams – Carried.

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

1. **Children of Abraham:** Brian gave the following update on programming for 2015.  
Among the Traditions:
  - Prophecy, Revelation, and the Scriptures – April 26
  - Marriage in the Modern Era – August 23
  - Kingdom of God – November 8All dates are on Sundays / Time – 2:00 to 4:00 pm  
Location for all three events: Coe College, Keslar Auditorium in Hickok Hall  
Between the Traditions: Chris Seeman will be in Cedar Rapids in July to present another program.
2. **Ethical Perspectives on the News:** Next planning meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 24. Cedric provided the current program schedule and reported that a new online transcription service, Rev, is now being used. Cost is now \$30 per program; previous cost was around \$60.  
EPON program schedule (Feb. 22 through March 29):  
“The Dilemma of Torture” (2/22); “The Accessibility of Healthy Foods” (3/1); “The Militarization of the Police” (3/8); “The Consequences of Poverty on Schools” (3/15); “The Value of Higher Education” (3/22)  
[Note: EPON bumped by ABC programming on 3/29.]
3. **University of Religion:** Buddhism course – The Life, Teachings, & Legacy of the Buddha  
Brian reported that this course is going well, with approximately 25 in attendance. There are two more sessions left (February 21 and 28 – 2:00 to 4:00 pm).

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

1. **Holocaust Commemoration – April 12-13, 2015 – Speaker: Renata Laxova**
  - Sunday, April 12 at 7 pm: Mt. Mercy University chapel. Todd will email flyer to Jen for distribution. Email Todd if you wish to be involved in the service.
  - Monday, April 13: twice at Coe College. Schools will be busing students to these presentations.
2. **Armenian Genocide of 1915 Commemoration – Thursday, April 30 (6:30 to 8:05 pm)**  
Report on planning for this service (provided by Allen Fisher):  
**Date and Time:** Thursday, April 30, 2015, 6:30-8:05 pm (auditorium reserved from 6 until 8:30)  
**Place:** Cedar Rapids Public Library, Beems “A” Auditorium / capacity = 75 people  
**Refreshments:** These “have to be homemade,” so it would be helpful if at least a few board members would volunteer to bring a dozen cookies and/or a beverage.  
**Purpose:** to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian genocide. The genocide in Turkey began April 24, 1915, and continued until 1923. Over a million Armenians were killed. The main perpetrators were never punished, the crime has never been officially acknowledged by the Turkish government, and the victims were never compensated for loss of life and property.  
**Petition:** will be available to sign, asking the State of Iowa to acknowledge the Armenian genocide. Iowa is one of eight states that have not officially acknowledged it.

## EVENT COMMITTEE / Armenian Genocide Commemoration planning continued...

### **Proposed Order of Service:**

**Welcome** by Todd Thalblum; **Remarks** by Charles Crawley (approx. 10 minutes)

**Showing of PBS Documentary**, “The Armenian Genocide” (55 minutes)

**Discussion of Film and Closing**, Al Fisher (25 minutes)

**Refreshments** (15 minutes)

**Cleanup and Vacate Room** (15 minutes)

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

1. **Newsletter:** Plan to publish next newsletter in May and still looking for someone to write the main article. This can be something about a religious “holy day” important in their tradition.
2. **Website:** need to organize a meeting with Ashok and Hassan to post pictures.
3. **Membership Letter & Donation Form:** was mailed on February 6.

## OTHER BUSINESS

1. **Registration of board of directors with secretary of state (biennial report):**  
Jen will send Todd the link and information she has from filing this for another organization. Todd will investigate as to when this needs to be filed.
2. **Resolution concerning racial tension:** Nathan presented the second draft. Discussion was tabled until March, when we plan to vote on this. Jen will send out an electronic copy. Todd will ask Chad Simmons, from Diversity Focus, to speak on this topic at the March meeting.
3. **Bylaws update:** Todd provided two marked-up versions of the bylaws to easily compare where deletions and changes have been made. These proposed changes are submitted by the subcommittee – Brian Daugherty, Brenda Mitchell, Nathan Williams, and Todd Thalblum.
  - Current bylaws as of March 10, 2014: The current wording is marked in red where changes have been suggested. Deletions are marked by a strikethrough and are also in red.
  - Proposed bylaws as of Feb. 10: Proposed changes and additions are marked by underlining.Plan made to vote on the proposed bylaws on March 19. Todd noted a change to be made in one of the handouts. After this is corrected, Jen will send out electronic copies of both documents.
4. **Database to track yearly membership donations:** Todd suggested starting a new database to keep an ongoing record of delegates in the Assembly (Bylaws, Article V & III) – of those who submit a membership-donation form each year. Jen and Al Fletcher will begin work on this.
5. **Inspiration for next meeting:** Allen Fisher volunteered.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS of other events in the Cedar Rapids area

1. **Intersections – next civil dialogue & luncheon – Friday, March 6 (11:45 am to 1:00 pm)**  
“The State of Mental Health & Disability Services in Iowa and Linn County”  
– Ben Rogers, Linn County Supervisor  
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, March 19 (7:30 pm) at the Ecumenical Community Center

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm: Motion to adjourn by Brenda Mitchell – Second by Nathan Williams – Carried.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Yukl, Secretary