

Outreach Ministry Team
8-1-17 Meeting Minutes

Present: Linda Varblow, Sally Bober, Linda Kinsinger, Linda Laubscher, Sarah Zink
Guests: Rick Clendaniel, Kristin Somers (interested in joining committee, along with Cheryl Allen)

- 1) Devotions: Linda V.
- 2) June Minutes: Approved with corrections noted via email.
- 3) Council Report: Committee liaison assignments were decided at the July meeting. Linda Kinsinger will continue with Outreach. Council continued its discussion of the capital campaign to renew the Ministry Center.
- 4) Old Business / Program Updates
 - a. Food for the Summer: Flyer has been running in the Rosemary Thymes. Program seems to be operating successfully.
 - b. Safe Passage: Between services on August 13, Annika and Andrea Narbut will present on their orphanage volunteer service in Guatemala. Shannon Brice also plans to give a presentation on her YAGM year in Hungary (date TBD).
 - c. El Centro Drive: A collection box was placed in the narthex in late July for sunscreen, bug spray, gloves, and other supplies for construction day workers. HTLC members are also invited to put monetary donations in the collection plate. A Unitarian church is collecting donations to print T-shirts, hats, and water bottles. Linda L will be in contact with El Centro to deliver anything we collect over the next two Sundays. Sally suggested that we tie late donations into Rally Day (September 10)—e.g., ask kids to bring a specific item to the first Sunday school of the fall. Linda V will check in with Holly about this idea and ask if Heidi has emptied the collection box so far.
 - d. New Outreach Webpage: An expanded description of Outreach projects, with photos and links to partner organizations, is now live. It is accessible under the Congregational Life menu on the homepage. Linda V will craft an announcement for the Rosemary Thymes and weekly e-mail blast to alert congregational members to the updates and hopefully attract new committee members.
- 5) New Business
 - a. Refugee Project Update: The Lutheran Services Carolinas refugee coordinator is not available to come to our next meeting, so Linda V will meet with her separately. The coordinator expects a lot of new partner assignments in October/November; we want to be well prepared ahead of time. Kristin Somers suggests that an alternate use for refugee funds would be to help pay for the citizenship applications/fees of families we settled in the past.
 - b. Guatemalan Family: Erica Bjornstad approached Kristin Somers with a request to help the family of an 11-year-old kidney patient who lives in substandard housing. The family

(single mom, one son, three daughters) currently travels two hours to UNC three times a week for dialysis. With a livable home, the boy could receive treatments local to the Turkey/Faison/Clinton area east of Fayetteville. Rent may be as low as \$300/month. Kristin and Sarah Zink would like to fundraise \$5,000 to secure housing and utility payments for this family for one year. Community members have already donated diapers and baby equipment, and many are ready to donate cash. (Kristin and Vicar Christy are also checking on university programs that may offer free housing to refugees.) Kristin and Sarah do not anticipate making an appeal to the HTLC congregation; most funds will come from outside the church.

Kristin submitted an Outreach Grants application, asking for \$500 to seed an aid fund. At its August 15 meeting, she will ask the Congregational Council to approve the establishment of this fund so that HTLC can house donations and disburse payments directly to landlords/service providers.

Questions/concerns: (1) Because these donations go to help an individual rather than an agency, are they tax deductible? (2) Would administration of this fund be a burden on our financial secretary? (3) Have we supplied money to individual needs before? Many recipients have been official refugees filtered through agencies like Lutheran Services Carolinas. Sally Bober cited Support Circles and Kristin Somers a Hurricane Katrina victim's relocation as examples of past support to individuals who had no affiliation with HTLC. (4) Does this request meet the Grant Fund rubric? Original vision was to fund projects undertaken by HTLC members, but the current guidelines are not definitive. Regardless, Outreach has already allocated \$400 of the initial \$500 put into this fund. But we also have approximately \$6,000 of discretionary money in the general budget to spend before December.

There is disagreement among committee members as to whether this type of need falls within the scope of Outreach. Pastor Will was not present, but it would be good to know (1) how many personal aid requests he receives each year, for what situations, and for what amounts; and (2) the annual amount of money in the discretionary Pastoral Fund.

After long debate, Sally Bober made a motion: To allocate \$500 to the Helping Neighbors project proposed by Kristin Somers, contingent upon the Congregational Council's approval of an aid fund held and managed by HTLC. The Outreach money would come from the general budget rather than the Grant Fund. Linda Laubscher seconded this motion, and it passed unanimously.

c. August Budget Allocations

- \$1,000 to IFC
- \$500 to TABLE

d. God's Work Our Hands: We need a service project for September 10. Holly sent a list of suggestions from Lutheran Services Carolinas, such as collecting winter coats for foster children or household items for newly settled refugees, undertaking a home improvement or landscaping project for refugees, or leading an activity at a senior living center. Kristin mentioned the Transplanting Traditions Karen Community Farm (<http://transplantingtraditions.com/>), and Sarah recalled past discussion of the Carolina Campus Community Garden (<http://uncgarden.web.unc.edu/>). Both provide fresh produce to

underserved communities. Given our congregation's interest in off-site, community-oriented service projects, we will look into both garden options. Need to start the publicity for our chosen project ASAP.

6) Next meeting: September 12. Sarah will do the devotion.